2nd Meeting and Workhop

Berlin Network for Research on Well-being

Program

When? Thursday, 13:00-14:00 p.m.

Where? online Sessions (WebEx), we will send a separate invitation for each talk

11th February 2021: 13:00-14:00 p.m.

Mario Lawes (FU Berlin): "Immediate Effects of Involuntary Unemployment on Cognitive, Affective and Eudaimonic Well-being"

Abstract: Unemployment can have long-lasting negative effects on well-being. The existing literature on the effects of unemployment is, however, mainly based studies with rather long intervals between measurement occasions and focusses on cognitive indicators of well-being. We use novel panel data from a longitudinal app study of German job seekers to differentially investigate the immediate effects of unemployment on cognitive, affective and eudaimonic well-being. We use a matched control group design to identify the causal effect of unemployment of the different well-being indicators. Moreover, we inspect whether time-to-reemployment moderates the well-being changes.

18th February 2021: 13:00-14:00 p.m.

Julia Schmidtke (IAB): "The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and Nationwide Lockdown on Well-being and Mental Health in Germany"

Abstract: Since it's outbreak in China at the end of 2019, Covid-19 has spread rapidly over the entire planet. In response to the threat of the highly contagious and often lethal disease, drastic measures including contact restrictions, closure of businesses, schools and kindergartens were implemented. Large shares of the workforce were in short-time work, furloughing without pay or even lost their job. An increasing number of workers worked from home. Working parents of young children were presented with the task to arrange job needs with home schooling and increased childcare responsibilities. It therefore seems all too likely that the effects of the pandemic are not only limited to those who were infected with Covid-19, but impact all those who experienced radical changes in their working and social life. Using monthly data from the German Job Search Panel, we apply an event-study design to test this hypothesis. We find that the first federal lockdown in Germany during March 2020 had no substantial effects on life satisfaction, but reduced people's mental health and affective well-being.

25th February 2021: 13:00-14:00 p.m.

Alan Piper (Universität Bonn): "Disability and the U-shape relationship between age and life satisfaction."

Abstract: Tentative abstract: The U-shape relationship, with its midlife low, has been described as one of social sciences first-order findings, and something that will outlive those investigating the relationship by several hundred years. Such statements reflect the results from the vast majority of investigations into the age and well-being relationship, which find this pattern despite being based on different datasets, from different countries at different times, with different methods and different confounders. In contrast, there is little known about why this relationship exists and what can be done to mitigate the sizeable midlife low which, so far, seems universal. This study adds to the handful of studies that systematically investigate and compare the age-life satisfaction relationship of different groups, in pursuit of potential reasons for the U's existence and, in midlife its mitigation. Results so far demonstrate that both the disabled and non-disabled experience an approximate U-shape relationship, with the midlife low being deeper and coming earlier in the lifecycle foe the disabled. Explanations for this difference are also pursued, and what it might mean for the U-shape finding generally are discussed.

4th March 2021: 13:00-14:00 p.m.

Antje Jantsch (IAMO): "To whom do we compare ourselves? Empirical evidence on reference individuals from a student survey"

Abstract: Empirical evidence supports the hypothesis that an individual's relative income rather than the absolute level of income determines subjective well-being. However, most empirical studies settle for reference categories, which refer to abstract collectivities (e.g., the citizens of a region) or general socio-demographic strata, such as individuals of similar age or education. Whether such abstract collectivities are congruent with the actual comparison that results from individualized reference groups is not clear. Therefore, addressing this gap in research, the objective of this paper is to first present a unique survey tool to identify reference individuals and their characteristics. Such a tool allows us to investigate in detail to whom and how people compare themselves, and how this affects their subjective well-being. Second, we present first empirical results from a student survey from two universities in Thailand.

Melanie Borah (Universität Magdeburg): "The invisible homemaker – Who values household work and by how much?"

Abstract: While extended definitions of households' material wellbeing are gaining importance in national accounts as well as welfare distribution and poverty analyses, the evaluation of the proceeds from household production remains a major challenge to researchers. The present paper contributes to a relatively new strand in the literature that uses subjective wellbeing data to estimate the value of time spent on non-market activities. Using 16 waves of SOEP data for childless singles and couples living in Germany, I try to uncover the value assigned to housework by comparing its effect on individuals' living standards satisfaction with that of household income. I account for the ordinal nature of living standards satisfaction in fixed effects regressions employing the Blow-up-and-Cluster estimator. The results suggest that total housework time does not have a significant effect on satisfaction with living standards.

Differentiating between individuals' own and their partner's housework time within the sample of couples shows that own housework has a significantly positive effect on satisfaction, whereas the partner's efforts do not. This effect is largely driven by women. This together with the finding that women's housework seems to be evaluated positively only if carried out on weekdays raises the question of social norm effects.

Sumit Deole (TU Dortmund): "Suffering and prejudice: Do negative emotions predict immigration concerns?"

Abstract: Despite being a regular suspect, a causal role of individuals' emotions in predicting their opposition to international immigration has not been investigated. To bridge this gap in research, using detailed longitudinal data from Germany, we construct an index of negative emotions, constituting individuals' experience of sadness, fear, and anger, and investigate the impact of negative emotions on immigration concerns. After controlling for person fixed effects and battery of individual-level and macroeconomic controls, we find that negative emotions are statistically significantly associated with immigration concerns. To estimate the causal impact of negative emotions, we exploit the exogenous variation induced by the parent's death and employ IV fixed effects regressions. We find that individuals' negative emotions affect immigration concerns, primarily among females, while males are not affected. The effects are more forceful among females irregularly employed, older in age, and rarely use social media. While our results show that negative emotions predict individuals' support for far-right political parties, no effect on their worries about crime, xenophobic hostility, and own financial situation is found.