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# Curriculum Vitae

## Mira Fischer


### Contact Information

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### Research Interests and Methods

My research interests are in education and ethics. I use lab and field experiments as well as analysis of survey and naturally occuring data to study the role of beliefs in educational and moral decisions, the effects of education on political preferences, and the distributional effects of education policies.

### Education

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| 10/2013 – 05/2014 | University of Zurich, Course Program for Doctoral Students in Economics of Education: PhD level courses in econometrics and education and labor economics |
| 04/2012 – present | University of Cologne, Cologne Graduate School in Management, Economics and Social Sciences: doctoral candidate in economics (advisors: Dirk Sliwka, Bernd Irlenbusch), PhD level courses in game theory and econometrics |
| 10/2008 – 03/2011 | University of Konstanz, Master in International Economics: Master's thesis on "Subjects Studied and Students Political Ideology" (GPA: 1.4, “excellent”) |
| 09/2010 – 12/2010 | Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow: visiting student |
| 10/2005 – 07/2008 | University of Konstanz, Bachelor in Philosophy with a minor in Political Science: Bachelor's thesis on "Political Liberalism from the Perspective of Richard Rorty's Pragmatist Philosophy" (GPA: 1.3, “excellent”) |

### Research Experience and Other Employment

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| 03/2017 – 04/2017 | Norwegian School of Economics: visiting researcher at the Choice Lab (scheduled) |
| 01/2015 – present | University of Cologne: associated researcher of the Excellence Center for Social and Economic Behavior (C-SEB) |
| 09/2014 – 11/2014 | University of Chicago: visiting researcher at Chicago Experiments/ Becker Friedman Institute, invited by John List |
| 11/2013 | National Institute of Economic and Social Research, London: visiting researcher at the Employment Group, invited by Alex Bryson |
| 04/2012 – present | University of Cologne: research and teaching assistant at the Seminar of Personnel Economics and HRM and the Seminar of Corporate Development and Business Ethics |
| 09/2011 – 09/2012 | Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IW Köln): junior economist in the Education, Migration and Innovation Research Group |
| 06/2007 – 08/2007 | University of Konstanz: tutor at the Chair of Philosophy and Theory of Science |
| 2006 – 2011 | internships (2-3 months) at Cologne Institute for Economic Research: Education, Migration and Innovation Research Group; German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP): Center for Central and Eastern Europe; and the local newspapers Südkurier (Konstanz) and Kölnische Rundschau (Cologne) |

## Publications

**Fischer, M., Kauder, B., Potrafke, N., Ursprung, H.W.: Support for Free-market Policies and Reforms: Does the Field of Study Influence Students' Political Attitudes?, European Journal of Political Economy (*forthcoming*)**

This paper investigates whether the field of study influences university students' political attitudes. To disentangle self-selection from learning effects, we first investigate whether the field of study chosen by the incoming students correlate with their political attitudes. In a second step we explore how the political attitudes change as the students progress in their studies. Our results are based on a German pseudo-panel survey, the sample size of which exceeds that of comparable student surveys by an order of magnitude. We find systematic differences between the students' political attitudes across eight fields of study. These differences can in most cases be attributed to self-selection. A notable exception is economics. Even though self-selection also plays an important role, training in economics has an unambiguous influence on the economics students' political attitudes.

**Fischer, M., Kampkoetter, P.: Effects of German Universities' Excellence Initiative on Ability Sorting of Students and perceptions of Educational Quality, Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics (*forthcoming*)**

We investigate potential spillover effects from the German Excellence Initiative on university education. Using data from a representative student survey, we find that winning the competition allows universities to enroll significantly better high school graduates in three subsequent admission terms. We then investigate a possible channel explaining the effect on admissions by studying whether the excellence label improves students' perception of educational quality. We find that the label significantly improves students' ratings of a university's educational quality and their job market expectations immediately following the award. However, ratings largely return to previous levels when students are surveyed three years later, although the status persists.

**Fischer, M., Lotz, S.: Ist sanfter Paternalismus ethisch vertretbar? Eine differenzierende Betrachtung aus Sicht der Freiheit, Sozialer Fortschritt/German Review of Social Policy, 63(3), March 2014**

(English version: *Is Soft Paternalism Ethically Legitimate? - The Relevance of Psychological Processes for the Assessment of Nudge-Based Policies, with Sebastian Lotz*, Cologne Graduate School Working Paper, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2014)

In this article we develop a taxonomy of behavioral policy measures proposed by Thaler and Sunstein (2008). Based on this taxonomy, we discuss the ethical legitimacy of these measures. First, we explain two common reservations against nudges (choice architecture) rooted in utilitarian and Kantian ethics. In addition to wellbeing, we identify freedom of action and freedom of will (autonomy) as relevant ethical criteria. Then, using practical examples, we develop a taxonomy that classifies nudges according to the psychological mechanisms they use and separately discuss the legitimacy of several types of behavioral policy measures. We hope to thereby make a valuable contribution to the debate on the ethical legitimacy of behavioral policy making.)

## Working Papers

**Confidence in Knowledge or Confidence in the Ability to Learn: An Experiment on the Causal Effects of Beliefs on Motivation, with Dirk Sliwka** (*submitted*)

Previous research has shown that feedback about past performance has ambiguous effects on an individual's subsequent performance. We argue that feedback may affect beliefs in different dimensions – namely beliefs about the level of human capital a person holds and beliefs about the ability to acquire human capital – and that this may explain some of the ambiguity in feedback effects. We designed a lab experiment to study the causal effects of an exogenously administered change in beliefs in both these dimensions on the subsequent motivation to invest in learning. Our findings have implications for the design of feedback policies and interventions aimed at improving skill acquisition.

## Work in Progress

**How does Ability Grouping Affect Motivation and Test Outcomes?** (*manuscript in preparation*)

In this project, I study the effect of ability grouping on motivational beliefs, learning effort and test outcomes in a lab experiment.

**Sweet Treats of Bitter Pills?: On Content and Timing of Rank Feedback, with Valentin Wagner** (*manuscript in preparation*)

In this field experiment in secondary school, we examine the question of whether high-stakes educational outcomes can be improved by making the change in past performance salient.

**Determinants of academic self-concept and its impact on skill acquisition: Evidence from the German National Educational Panel Study, with Bernhard Enzi** (*early stage*)

## Presentations at Conferences and Workshops

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| 2016 | ESA World Meeting, Hebrew University of Jerusalem |
| | Incentives and Behavior Change Conference, Tel Aviv University |
| | Cologne Social Cognition Meeting on "Self-Regulation and Self-Control", University of Cologne |
| | Workshop on Education, Skills, and Labor Market Outcomes, University of Trondheim |
| | TIER Workshop on Education Economics, University of Maastricht |
| | Ifo Workshop on Labor Economics and Social Policy, Dresden |
| 2015 | Workshop of the Excellence Center for Social and Economic Behavior, University of Cologne |
| | Mini-School "Coping with Difficult Decisions" by the Research Center for Rationality in the Light of Experimental Economics, NRW Academy of Sciences, Humanities and the Arts |
| | Colloquium on Personnel Economics, University of Vienna |
| | LEER Workshop on Education Economics, University of Leuven |
| | Maastricht Behavioral and Experimental Economics Symposium (M-BEES) |
| | TIBER Symposium on Psychology and Economics, University of Tilburg |
| | Workshop on the Economics of Education and Self-Regulation, University of Mainz |
| 2014 | Experimental Group Seminar, University of Chicago |
| | World Congress of the International Economic Association, Dead Sea, Jordan |
| | Workshop on Applied Economics of Education, Catanzaro |
| 2013 | German Academic Association for Business Research Workshop on University Management, University of Duisburg-Essen |
| | Colloquium on Personnel Economics, Tübingen |
| 2012 | Brown Bag Seminar, Cologne Institute for Economic Research |
| | TIBER Symposium on Psychology and Economics, University of Tilburg |
| | ESA European Conference, University of Cologne |

## Participation in Workshops and Summer Schools

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| 2016 | HCEO Summer School on Socioeconomic Inequality, University of Bonn |
| 2015 | Maastricht Behavioral Economic Policy Symposium, University of Maastricht |
| | Summer School in Economics of Education and Self-Regulation, University of Mainz |
| 2014 | Normative Ethics and Welfare Economics, University of Chicago |
| | MERIT Workshop "Experiments with Governments", University of Chicago |
| 2013 | Workshop on Natural Experiments and Controlled Field Studies, Ammersee |
| | Workshop in Philosophy „Wollen – Freiheit und Grenzen", University of Konstanz |
| 2012 | Cologne Summer School in Philosophy with Ralph Wedgwood, University of Cologne |
| | Workshop on Natural Experiments and Controlled Field Studies, Ammersee |

## Teaching

*– all at the University of Cologne –*

Seminar on Moral and Social Norms (advanced master and PhD level): summer 2016, winter 2016/2017

Tutorial on Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy (master level): winter 2015/2016, winter 2016/2017

Tutorial on Economics of Incentives in Organizations (advanced master and PhD level): summer 2015

Seminar on Experimental Studies in Personnel Economics (bachelor level): winter 2014/15

Seminar on Experimental Studies in Personnel and Education Economics (bachelor level): winter 2013/14

Tutorial on Human Resource Management (bachelor level): summer 2013, summer 2014

Seminar on Empirical Studies in Human Resource Management (master level): summer 2013

Tutorial on Strategic Human Resource Management (master level): winter 2012/13, winter 2013/14, winter 2014/15

Advisor of numerous Master's and Bachelor's theses in labor, education, and personnel economics and business ethics

## Awards and Scholarships

Best paper award (with Patrick Kampkötter) at Workshop on University Management of the German Academic Association for Business Research in 2013

Scholarship from DAAD for the semester in Moscow in 2010

Tuition fee waivers for being among the top 5 % of graduates of my Bachelor's program in 2008 and my Master's program in 2011