# Individual Paper Session VII

**Thursday, April 6th, 2017, 11:30 – 13:00**

**Paper Session: Civic engagement and migrant skills**

**Chair**  
Paula Protsch *(WZB Berlin Social Science Center)*

**Room:** Richard Strauss

## Presentations

- **Title:** The effect of different forms of learning activities on social capital development  
  **Authors:** Mariel Leonard & Vlad Achimescu *(University of Mannheim, Germany)*

- **Title:** A multilevel analysis of risk of social exclusion for young people lack of literacy  
  **Author:** Suehye Kim *(UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Germany)*

- **Title:** State institutions, social trust and participation in continuing vocational education and training: Immigrants and natives differ across 27 societies  
  **Authors:** Nate Breznau *(Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, Germany)* & Judith Offerhaus *(Institute for Sociology and Social Psychology (ISS), University of Cologne, Germany)*

- **Title:** Educational tracking and the ethnic skills gap: An analysis of 14 countries  
  **Authors:** Jan Paul Heisig *(WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany)* & Merlin Schaeffer *(University of Cologne, Germany)*

- **Title:** Language matters: The outcomes of migrants in PIAAC  
  **Authors:** Fernando Sols & Francesca Borgonovi *(OECD, France)*

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**Title: The effect of different forms of learning activities on social capital development**

**Authors**  
Mariel Leonard & Vlad Achimescu *(University of Mannheim, Germany)*

**Abstract**  
Do different forms of learning activities have differing effects on levels of social capital? Research has shown that education plays a significant role in increasing an individual's levels of social capital (Huang et al. 2009), regardless of age, gender, health, and income (Nie et al. 1996; Putnam 2000). However, the effects of different forms of learning activities remains relatively unexplored. While some research has compared participation in open or distance education (Francescato et al. 2006; Mays 2016), the effects of on-the-job training and participation in seminars have not yet been considered. This project will compare the effects of four forms of learning activities (formal education, open/distance education, on-the-job training, and seminars) on an individual's level of social capital, as measured by their levels of trust and of participation in voluntary associations, using data from Round 1 of the OECD's survey of adult skills (PIAAC). In doing so, we hope to shed further light on the mechanisms by which education effects social capital.

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**Title: A multilevel analysis of risk of social exclusion for young people lack of literacy**

**Author**
**Suehye Kim (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Germany)**

**Abstract**
From research to practice, it has been substantially suggested that young people develop their literacy and foundational skills to fully participate in society. A well-documented literature has mainly concerned the rise of youth unemployment rate around the world since the global financial crisis (Bruno, Marelli, et Signorelli, 2014; Siraj, et al., 2014; Russell, 2013). It mainly focuses on causes of the youth unemployment in different dimensions such as individual risk factors, educational risk factors, and structural barriers. However, the relationships between literacy and the other social outcomes are relatively less researched. This presentation aims to fill this gap using the data sources from the Programme International Assessment for Adult Competencies (PIAAC). To take account of international variations in the association of multiple literacies with social engagement, it will adopt a multilevel and multisource dataset pertaining country level predictors available from the PIAAC and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning survey data on the third edition of Global Report on Adult Learning and Education. For a comparative analysis, I will bring key measures of adult learning and education as a national indicator into the multilevel modeling. Considering the multilevel structure inherent in the relationships literacy and social engagement of young people, two-level analysis will be used to disseminate empirical evidence on how key cognitive skills (literacy, numeracy, and problem solving skills in technology-rich environments) are related to engage in society among those aged 25 to 34 years. As an outcome of social engagement, two measures will be available from the PIAAC Background Questionnaire survey items for civic engagement and NEET (Not in Education, Employment, and Training). Key interesting variable will be measured by a set of proficiency scores in the PIAAC Assessment of the Competencies of Adults, and I will include socio-demographic background variables such as gender, years of schooling and parents’ education level. This study will contribute to an extended understanding of the returns to literacy skills from economic to social outcomes. Also, it will further discuss the question of how to encourage young adults with low skills in shaping appropriate patterns of socio-economic engagement and rethink literacy as a set of broader skills with a wide range of applications across different life spheres.

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**Title: State institutions, social trust and participation in continuing vocational education and training: Immigrants and natives differ across 27 societies**

**Authors**
Nate Breznau (Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, Germany) & Judith Offerhaus (Institute for Sociology and Social Psychology (ISS), University of Cologne, Germany)

**Abstract**
Theoretically, strong social states promote generalized trust through transfers and service-provision. However, the process may not work across all social strata. Here we observe state involvement in work-related education and training (hereafter VET). We aim to confirm previous research on the state linkage with general trust, by testing for a state-trust interaction on the likelihood of individual VET participation. Then we test whether this relationship is similar for natives (3rd generation or longer) in comparison to immigrants (1st and 2nd generation). Using PIAAC data for 27 countries we find that the ‘trust effect’ is largely confined to natives. All-in-all, the state-trust interaction taken at one standard deviation in differences, accounts for a 7–9 percentage point increase in the likelihood of individual VET participation. Immigrants do not have higher trust where the state is a
stronger proponent of VET, nor does trust predict VET participation. The role of the state in promoting trust is supported by this research; however, this effect exists mostly for natives. Immigrants experience only a tiny increase in trust and only taken at extreme ends of state provision of VET. Moreover the state-trust interaction offers evidence for how state involvement in education and labor markets can increase individual and employer willingness to participate or offer participation in mobility enhancing activities such as VET. But only for natives. We run additional models predicting the likelihood to train, all else equal and find that despite levels of state VET provision and levels of trust, immigrants are as likely to participate in VET as natives. If we spin this finding around, it suggests that trust may also be a barrier to native participation. States that are strong promoters and providers of VET may foster stronger status and/or trust distinctions for natives. Therefore, immigrants face trust as one less barrier to participation in VET. In fairness we have no information about the quality or quantity of VET, therefore we must exercise caution with our conclusions. Nonetheless, this research offers further evidence of immigrant social networks and their strong source of social capital operating in the realm of VET.

Title: Educational tracking and the ethnic skills gap: An analysis of 14 countries

Authors
Jan Paul Heisig (WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany) & Merlin Schaeffer (University of Cologne, Germany)

Abstract
Previous research shows that children of immigrants, the “second generation”, have comparatively high educational aspirations that translate into unusually high transition rates given their level of performance in school. But at the same time, research also demonstrates that second-generation immigrants tend to perform worse in school. Combined, these findings imply that second-generation immigrants have lower actual skills than natives with the same educational qualifications. In this study, we use data on 14 countries from the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) to investigate this possibility empirically and to study how it relates to the education system. In particular, we focus on tracking in secondary education as a key factor that strengthens the role of “gatekeepers” such as teachers in getting access to different educational tracks and thereby limits the extent to which higher aspirations can translate into higher educational attainment. We find that the actual skills of second-generation immigrants are indeed lower than those of natives with similar educational qualifications in open, “choice-driven” systems with little tracking.

Conversely, we find that this gap tends to be smaller and in some cases even goes in the opposite direction in tracked systems (perhaps indicating that second-generation immigrants need to perform better than natives to have the same chance of being admitted to a higher educational track). We discuss implications of our findings for comparative research on ethnic disadvantage on the labor market.

Title: Language matters: The outcomes of migrants in PIAAC

Authors
Fernando Solé & Francesca Borgonovi (OECD, France)

Abstract
Analyses of data from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) reveal that immigrants show lower levels of literacy proficiency and have on average less favourable labour market
outcomes than native-born individuals, even when they are highly educated. Furthermore, previous research reveals that poor language skills are one of the major hurdles for the social and economic integration of immigrants and acquiring such skills may be particularly time consuming for those immigrants whose mother tongue belongs to a different linguistic family than the language spoken in their destination country. By combining cross-country data from PIAAC with a unique measure of language dissimilarity, we examine the contribution of language proximity in explaining differences in literacy, numeracy, employment and wage levels across different groups of immigrants. The measure of linguistic distance is derived from the Automatic Similarity Judgement Program developed by the Max Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology. The index measures the degree of dissimilarity between any two pairs of languages identifying differences in pronunciation of words that have the same meaning.

Our paper broadens the existing literature in the following ways. First, Secondly, by using PIAAC, which includes an objective measure of literacy and numeracy skills, we avoid possible measurement errors included in previous analysis based on selfreported language metrics. Secondly, we develop additional evidence on the role linguistic proficiency plays in facilitating the integration of immigrants in host countries, developing a more fine-grained categorisation of language proximity which goes beyond simplistic dichotomous categorisations (speaks host country language as mother tongue or not. And thirdly, we obtain additional evidence on the validity of the Critical Period Hypothesis, which posits that language acquisition is costlier for immigrants settling at the age of 12 or older.

We find that differences in literacy and numeracy proficiency levels explained by differences in linguistic origin can exceed the gaps observed between employed and unemployed individuals, and that they remain significant even after migrants stay several years in the host country. We also find that the effect of linguistic distance is more pronounced among those immigrants who arrive at an older age to the host country.