



PBS seminar series 6 May 2020, 4.00pm to 5.00pm (BST)

Speaker: Dr Ingo Outes

Host: Professor Paul Dolan

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Disappointed Parents: Subjective Well Being and Parental Preferences for Offspring Gender Parity

Abstract

Whether explicitly or implicitly, parents often hold preferences regarding their optimal offspring gender combination. Balanced gender parity is a commonly held belief. In this paper, we explore how offspring gender combinations (e.g. girl-girl-boy vs girl-girl-girl) affect parental subjective wellbeing in the short and long-term. Using two British Cohort studies (NCDS and BCS), we construct an experimental sample of parents that only differ in the gender of the 3rd born child. First, we find that gender combinations affect subsequent fertility choices: parents with boy-boy and girl-girl combinations are significantly more likely to increase subsequent fertility, than parents already holding balanced parities. Secondly, Life Satisfaction (LS) is negatively affected by missing out on the desired gender parity. Indeed, revealed preferences are well-defined: female LS suffers in the absence of a boy but not in the absence of girls. While male LS is only weakly responsive to missing out on either gender. Finally, we find that parental disappointed is long lived: missing on the desired offspring gender leads to reduced Life Satisfaction up to ten years after birth.

Ingo Outes Biography

Ingo Outes is a development economist with extensive experience in quantitative research methods, impact evaluation and longitudinal data analysis. His research is focused on poverty, nutrition, early childhood development and cognitive and non-cognitive skill accumulation, and spans the fields of economics, education and psychology. He is involved in a variety of large-scale psychosocial interventions aimed at improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in the Global South, including growth-mindset, MCII and exam-anxiety relief interventions.

Ingo Outes recently joined PBS as a Research Fellow in Behavioural Sciences. Previously he was a Department Lecturer in Economics of Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, and a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the Economics Department at the University of Oxford. He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Oxford, an MSc in Development Economics (Oxford), and an MSc in Global Market Economics (LSE).