

HANNAH ZILLESSEN

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Department of Economics, University of Oxford
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PRIMARY RESEARCH FIELDS

Labour Economics, Household Finance, Public Economics

POSITION

Assistant Professor, KU Leuven	starting 2024
Postdoctoral Fellow, KU Leuven	2023 - 2024

EDUCATION

University of Oxford <i>Doctor of Philosophy in Economics</i>	2018 - 2023 (expected)
University of Oxford <i>Master of Philosophy in Economics</i> Thesis: Integration and Assimilation of Migrants: Evidence from Germany Advisor: Prof. Johannes Abeler, Prof. Steve Bond	2016 - 2018
University of Cologne, Germany <i>Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Distinction</i> Thesis: The Impact of Personality Traits and Cognitive Ability on Gift Exchange Behaviour Advisor: Prof. Axel Ockenfels	2012 - 2015
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland <i>Visiting Student in Economics</i>	2014 - 2015

RESEARCH

Job Market Paper

Uncertainty, Citizenship & Migrant Saving Choices

In most Western countries, migrants hold significantly less wealth than natives. Migrants also face significantly more uncertainty about their future. This paper examines the central role of uncertainty over citizenship prospects and future location in explaining their saving choices. Exploiting quasi-experimental variation and panel data from Germany, I show that migrants with a right to citizenship save as much as comparable natives, while migrants without this right save 30% less. This unexplained gap is closed completely when migrants in the latter group gain access to citizenship. The effect is not driven by changes in resources, but rather willingness to save. While standard theory predicts that saving increases in uncertainty, I show that the effect can reverse if utility is state-dependent, malleable, or resources are not equally accessible across states. I build a life-cycle saving model with uncertain retirement location and heterogeneous country preferences. The model shows that agents can have a “preparatory saving motive” that decreases in uncertainty. I confirm the importance of this novel motive empirically, showing that migrants become significantly more likely to invest in illiquid assets if they gain certainty about their right to stay.

Work in Progress

The Effect of Conduct Grades on Non-Cognitive Skill Accumulation (With Marta Golin)

From an early age, children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds perform worse than advantaged children in standard tests of non-cognitive skills. These gaps persist into adulthood and shape life outcomes. We test whether grading primary school students on non-academic attainment, such as social conduct and work ethic, affects non-cognitive skill formation. We exploit quasi-experimental variation in conduct grades in Germany. We find that receiving conduct grades in primary school causes students to be more open to experience and willing to take risks at age 17. Further, we find that students from more disadvantaged backgrounds specifically grow up to be less neurotic and present biased adolescents. Both traits are correlated with worse adult outcomes, suggesting potential for welfare gains.

Labours of Love: The Search for Occupational Meaning & Worker Welfare (With Luke Heath Milsom & Shihang Hou)

Publications

Acceptability of App-Based Contact Tracing for COVID-19: Cross-Country Survey Study. (2020). Altmann S.; Milsom, L.; Zillessen, H.; Blasone, R.; Gerdon, F.; Bach, R.; Kreuter, F; Nosenzo, D.; Toussaert, S.; Abeler, J. *JMIR mhealth uhealth*, 8(8).

Google Scholar Citations: 365

COVID-19 Contact Tracing and Data Protection Can Go Together. (2020).

Abeler, J.; Bäcker, M.; Buermeyer, U.; Zillessen, H. *JMIR mhealth uhealth*, 8(4).

Google Scholar Citations: 252

EXTERNAL SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

2023: ASSA Annual Meetings, London School of Economics, Federal Reserve Board, University of Copenhagen, Stockholm University (SOFI), KU Leuven, Ludwig Maximillians University Munich, Goethe University Frankfurt, Trinity College Dublin, Maastricht University, Exeter University, Durham University, Bath University, Sachverständigenrat für Wirtschaft, University of Western Ontario*

2022: ES European Winter Meeting, Annual Conference on Immigration in OECD Countries*, International Behavioural Public Policy Conference LSE*, EEA-ESEM Congress, NBER Summer Institute Household Finance, RES Junior Symposium, HCEO-Briq SSSI, Transatlantic Doctoral Conference, RES Annual Conference

2021: Annual Research Conference European Commission, DG ECFIN Research Seminars European Commission
(*scheduled but unable to attend)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Department of Economics, University of Oxford **2018 - 2020**
Research Assistant to Prof. Johannes Abeler

Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford **2017 - 2018**
Research Assistant to Prof. Kate Orkin

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Mathematics & Statistics (1st Year Undergraduate) **2022 - 2023**
Teaching Assistant, Philosophy, Politics & Economics University of Oxford

Quantitative Economics (2nd Year Undergraduate) **2022 - 2023**
Teaching Assistant, Philosophy, Politics & Economics University of Oxford

Core Quantitative Methods (Graduate, Master) **2019 - 2022**
Teaching Assistant, Economic and Social History University of Oxford

Advanced Quantitative Methods (Graduate, Master and Doctoral) **2019 - 2022**
Teaching Assistant, Economic and Social History University of Oxford

SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Oxford DPhil Women in Economics, Oxford Mentor & Organiser	since 2019
Department of Economics, Oxford Graduate Representative for Doctoral Students	2020 - 2021
St Anne's College, Oxford MCR Welfare Representative	2019 - 2020

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Sony Pictures Germany	2015 - 2016
Other Professional Experience Constantin Entertainment, Tagesanzeiger, Charité Hospital, Japanese Gallery	2011 - 2012
Charitable Experience Balu & Du: Mentor for Disadvantaged Kids Caritas, Crisis: Volunteer for Vulnerably Housed Services	since 2014

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Department of Economics, University of Oxford <i>George-Webb-Medley Endowment Grant</i>	2020 - 2022
Department of Economics, University of Oxford <i>Doctoral Bursary</i>	2020 - 2022
German National Scholarship Foundation (Studienstiftung) <i>Full Fellowship</i>	2012 - 2019
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) <i>International Study Grant</i>	2016 - 2017
University of Cologne <i>Dean's Award for Best Academic Performance</i>	2015

MISCELLANEOUS

Citizenship	German
Languages	German (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate), Spanish (basic)
Software skills	Stata, Matlab, Qualtrics, L ^A T _E X