



News

[A decisive factor for democracy: Female empowerment](#)

[When feeling poor makes you sick](#)

[Strong parental networks: Not good for all children](#)



Publications

[New issue of WZB-Mitteilungen on the subject of family](#)

[Immigration and the welfare state](#)

[Winners and losers of globalization](#)

[New Discussion Papers](#)

[New Publications](#)



People

[Ryan Finnigan: Professor at the University of California](#)

[Jutta Allmendinger: Honorary Doctorate of the University of Tampere](#)

[Dissertation Award for Lukas Graf](#)



The WZB in the
Media

[Can online discussions give a clear insight into citizens' views on the EU?](#)

[Australian Fathers' Long Hours Affect Sons More Than Daughters](#)



News

A decisive factor for democracy: Female empowerment

Female empowerment is a core driver of democratization. Researchers from Western Australia and from the WZB Berlin Social Science Center draw this conclusion from an analysis of longitudinal data on 123 countries covering the period 1980 to 2005. Paula Wyndow, Jianghong Li, and Eugen Mattes question the widespread presumption that it is democratization that leads to improvements in women's lives. Their findings suggest a reversed causality: Female educational attainment, women's labour force participation, and low fertility rates jointly pave the way for moving a country towards democracy.

[More information](#)

When feeling poor makes you sick

Being objectively low income leads to poor health and a shorter life. This much we already knew. But poverty can also be a matter of subjectively feeling poor. WZB economist Maja Adena and her colleague Michal Myck (DIW Berlin and the Center for Economic Analysis, CenEA, Szczecin) have substantiated how the subjective assessment of being poor affects the health of the 50+ age group. A study of Germany and 11 other European countries shows that older people who assess themselves as poor get sick more often (38 per cent) and suffer more from health setbacks (48 per cent) than those who do not. The probability of dying earlier is also much higher – around 40 per cent for men in this age group.

[More information](#)

Strong parental networks: Not good for all children

Parents' social networks have an impact on their children's educational attainment. WZB researcher Anette Fasang and two US-based colleagues have studied the details of how parental networks affect the educational careers of adolescents. Their findings show that close contacts among parents primarily benefit students in affluent communities. In economically depressed communities, by contrast, frequent informal parental exchange tends to disadvantage students by reinforcing social inequities and standing in the way of upward social mobility.

Newsletter
01 14

 Publications

New issue of WZB-Mitteilungen on the subject of family

Departure from the standard of a male single-income household happened surprisingly quickly in Germany. Women still leave professional life when they have children. Two seemingly contradictory findings - two articles in the recently published March issue of the quarterly magazine WZB Mitteilungen. The issue focuses on the subject of family. The articles probe the field of controversy between tenacious role models and changes in cohabitation over generations.

[More information](#)

Immigration and the welfare state

Researchers have long contended that immigration undermines public support for welfare state policies. Purportedly, the native born lack solidarity with immigrants, so they are less supportive of welfare benefits when immigration is high. David Brady and Ryan Finnigan recently reviewed this argument. Using 1996 and 2006 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) data for 17 affluent democracies - including Western European countries, the United States, Canada, and Australia - they analyzed public attitudes regarding retirement and unemployment benefits. They find some evidence that immigration reduces support for public employment, but the most important finding in their study is that immigration does not fundamentally undermine public support for social policies. A strong influx of immigrants can even be shown to have positive effects on welfare attitudes. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that factors other than immigration are far more important for public support of social policy.

[More information](#)

Winners and losers of globalization

Globalization pressures have led to a new societal conflict in Europe. WZB researchers Céline Teney, Onawa Promise Lacewell and Pieter de Wilde have investigated not only whether political internationalization, deregulation of markets and increasing migration result in a new societal conflict but, additionally, whether this division is rooted in the normative ideologies of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. Winners of globalization tend to have cosmopolitan dispositions, while those who perceive themselves as losers exhibit more communitarian thinking.

[More information](#)

New Discussion Papers

A list of recent Discussion Papers can be found [here](#).

New Publications

A list of new publications can be found [here](#).

 People

Ryan Finnigan: Professor at the University of California

[Ryan Finnigan](#), researcher in the [Inequality and Social Policy](#) research unit, has accepted a faculty position at the University of California in Davis. Ryan will be an Assistant Professor of Sociology as of fall 2014. He will also be affiliated with the [Center for Poverty Research](#), which is one of three national poverty centers funded by the U.S. federal government.



[More information](#)

Jutta Allmendinger: Honorary Doctorate of the University of Tampere

The President of the WZB, [Jutta Allmendinger](#), has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Tampere for her achievements in the field of social sciences.



Dissertation Award for Lukas Graf

[Lukas Graf](#), former researcher in the unit [Skill Formation and Labor Markets](#), has been awarded the Best Dissertation Award for 2014 by the Comparative and International Education Society Higher Education SIG (HESIG) for his dissertation titled "The Hybridization of Vocational Training and Higher Education in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland".



” The WZB in the Media

London School of Economics EUROPP Blog, 2014, February 25

Can online discussions give a clear insight into citizens' views on the EU?

Pieter de Wilde on the nature of online discussions about the EU

[To the article](#)

Population Reference Bureau, March 2014

Australian Fathers' Long Hours Affect Sons More Than Daughters

About the study by Jianghong Li on parent's shiftwork and children's wellbeing

[To the article](#)

More articles: <http://www.wzb.eu/en/press/wzb-in-the-media>

[↑](#) Top of page

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[↑](#) Top of page