

Seminar  
“**Topics in Organizational Economics**”  
(Summer Term 2020)

Prof. Dr. Gerd Muehlheusser and Dr. Niklas Wallmeier

**Preliminaries:** The seminar will take place as a *Blockseminar* from TUESDAY May 26 to THURSDAY May 28, 2020 at the youth hostel Dikjen Deel in Westerland (Sylt). All three seminar days will be fully occupied with seminar slots so that participants are expected to arrive on MONDAY May 25 and to leave on FRIDAY May 29. The seminar will be held jointly with students from the University of Regensburg (Prof. Dr. Andreas Roider).

**Expenses:** The cost per night in the youth hostel is 40 Euro per person (shared rooms, including full board). The total amount for accommodation of 160 Euro (4 nights à 40 Euro) must be paid in advance (cash only) at the startup meeting on March 26, 2020 (see below).

**Important:** You need to bring the exact amount of 160 Euro in cash. Moreover, students must organize and pay for their trip on their own. The price for a one-way trip with the *Schleswig-Holstein Ticket* is 29 Euro. Groups of 5 can ride on for a total of 41 Euro (8.20 Euro per person) for the whole group.

**Outline:** The seminar is paper-based and covers a number of recent topics in organizational economics (i.e., the application of economic tools - theory, experiments, empirical studies - to foster our understanding of what affects the performance of organizations, such as firms or administrations). Each session is centered around the core reference(s) on the respective topic on the reading list, to be presented by groups of two students, followed by a discussion (again by groups of two), and a general in-class discussion. The written paper (Seminararbeit) is supposed to build on a larger base of the relevant literature. The main language of the course is German, but, if preferred by you, your presentations and seminar paper may be in English as well.

**Prerequisites:** Solid knowledge in Microeconomics, Game Theory and Microeconometrics.

**Assessment:**

1. Seminar presentation (ca 30-45 min, 45%)
2. Written paper (Seminararbeit, 12-15 pages, 45%)
3. Presentation as a discussant (ca 10 min, 10%)

Group work (presentations and seminar papers) will be graded for the group as a whole, and each group member receives the same grade. Students who insist on individual grades must notify us **in advance**. Active participation in the general class discussions following the presentations is strongly encouraged and can upgrade your final grade by up to 0.4.

**Important Dates Before the Start of the Seminar:**

- March 26, 2020, 12:00 - 13:00, room 2053 (VMP 5): **Startup meeting** and assignment of groups for the presentations and discussions. This is also the **deadline for payment** of 160 Euro for the youth hostel (see above).
- May 10, 2020, 23:59: **Deadline** for submitting the **written papers** (Seminararbeiten) by email to Niklas Wallmeier (niklas.wallmeier@uni-hamburg.de). This ensures that discussants have enough time to prepare their discussion.
- May 17, 2020, 23:59: **Deadline** for submitting the **slides of the main presentations** (not for the discussions) by email to Niklas Wallmeier (niklas.wallmeier@uni-hamburg.de). Note that this means that you must submit this material **before the seminar takes place!**

# Seminar Topics

For each of the topics, there will be a presentation and a discussion by a group of students. Half of the topics will be assigned for presentations by students from Hamburg (those are marked “**H/R**”), the other half for presentations by students from Regensburg (those are marked “**R/H**”). The respective discussion will be held by students from the other place.

## I. Contests and Tournaments

- **Topic 1 (R/H)** : Heterogenous Contestants I  
Core reference: Brown (2011)
- **Topic 2 (H/R)** : Heterogenous Contestants II  
Core reference: Muehlheusser, Schneemann, and Sliwka (2016)

## II. Contracts and Incentives

- **Topic 3 (R/H)** : Biases in Contract Choice  
Core reference: DellaVigna and Malmendier (2006)
- **Topic 4 (R/H)** : What Motivates Effort?  
Core reference: DellaVigna and Pope (2018)
- **Topic 5 (R/H)** : The Role of Communication of Incentive Schemes  
Core reference: Englmaier, Roider, and Sunde (2017)
- **Topic 6 (H/R)** : Incentives on the Team Level  
Core reference: Friebel, Heinz, Krüger, and Zubanov (2017)

## III. The Role of Managers in Organizations

- **Topic 7 (H/R)** : Managers’ Impact on Organizational Performance  
Core references: Muehlheusser, Schneemann, Sliwka, and Wallmeier (2018)
- **Topic 8 (R/H)** : What Drives Differences in Management Practices?  
Core references: Bloom et al. (2019)
- **Topic 9 (R/H)** : CEO Behavior and Firm Performance  
Core references: Bandiera et al. (2017)

- **Topic 10 (H/R)** : Management and Digitalization  
Core references: Bloom, Sadun, and Van Reenen (2012)
- **Topic 11 (H/R)** : Management of Bureaucrats and Public Service Delivery  
Core references: Rasul and Rogger (2018)

#### IV. The Impact of Organizational Structure on Performance

- **Topic 12 (H/R)** : Face-to-Face Communication  
Core references: Battiston, Blanes i Vidal, and Kirchmaier (2017)

## References

- BANDIERA, O., S. HANSEN, A. PRAT, AND R. SADUN (2017): “CEO Behavior and Firm Performance,” *NBER Working Paper 23248*.
- BATTISTON, D., J. BLANES I VIDAL, AND T. KIRCHMAIER (2017): “Is Distance Dead? Face-to-Face Communication and Productivity in Teams,” *CEP Discussion Paper No 1473*.
- BLOOM, N., E. BRYNJOLFSSON, L. FOSTER, R. JARMIN, M. PATNAIK, I. SAPORTA-EKSTEN, AND J. VAN REENEN (2019): “What Drives Differences in Management Practices?” *American Economic Review*, 109, 1648–83.
- BLOOM, N., R. SADUN, AND J. VAN REENEN (2012): “Americans do IT better: US multinationals and the productivity miracle,” *American Economic Review*, 102, 167–201.
- BROWN, J. (2011): “Quitters Never Win: The (Adverse) Incentive Effects of Competing with Superstars,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 119, 982–1013.
- DELLAVIGNA, S. AND U. MALMENDIER (2006): “Paying Not to Go to the Gym,” *American Economic Review*, 96, 694–719.
- DELLAVIGNA, S. AND D. POPE (2018): “What Motivates Effort? Evidence and Expert Forecasts,” *Review of Economic Studies*, 85, 1029–1069.

- ENGLMAIER, F., A. ROIDER, AND U. SUNDE (2017): “The Role of Communication of Performance Schemes: Evidence from a Field Experiment,” *Management Science*, 163, 4061–4080.
- FRIEBEL, G., M. HEINZ, M. KRÜGER, AND N. ZUBANOV (2017): “Team Incentives and Performance: Evidence from a Retail Chain,” *American Economic Review*, 107, 2168–2203.
- MUEHLHEUSSER, G., S. SCHNEEMANN, AND D. SLIWKA (2016): “The Impact of Managerial Change on Performance. The Role of Team Heterogeneity,” *Economic Inquiry*, 54, 1128–1149.
- MUEHLHEUSSER, G., S. SCHNEEMANN, D. SLIWKA, AND N. WALLMEIER (2018): “The Contribution of Managers to Organizational Success: Evidence from German Soccer,” *Journal of Sports Economics*, 19, 786–819.
- RASUL, I. AND D. ROGGER (2018): “Management of bureaucrats and public service delivery: Evidence from the nigerian civil service,” *The Economic Journal*, 128, 413–446.