



Wittgenstein Centre

FOR DEMOGRAPHY AND
GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL

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Austrian Academy of Sciences
Welthandelsplatz 2/Level 2
1020 Vienna

WIC Colloquium

Transition Shocks During Adulthood and Health a Few Decades Later in Post-Socialist Central and Eastern Europe

Wednesday, November 20th, 2019
11:00-12:00
No registration required

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Background: Health of the population of post-socialist Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries lags behind the European Union average. Our aim in this paper is to analyse the link between transition shocks and health two-three decades later.

Methods: We use retrospective data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe. We estimate the implications of stressful periods, financial hardships and job loss occurring around the transition (1987-1993) on subjective and objective measures of health in 2017. We compare these implications across groups of CEE countries and with the health implications of similar difficulties reported by individuals from Western Europe, and of difficulties occurring before or after the transition.

Results: In the CEE region there is a peak in the timing of difficulties around the transition. Stressful periods, financial difficulties and job loss around the period of transition are generally associated with worse health at older ages in all groups of CEE countries, even after netting out the effect of childhood health and demographic factors. However, the consequences of hardships due to the transition are not specific, health implications of these difficulties seem to be similar to the implications of other shocks possibly unrelated to the transition.

Conclusion: Not the nature of the difficulties, but the high fraction of individuals experiencing them around the transition increased the current health disadvantage in the CEE region. Our results draw the attention to the long-lasting impacts of psychosocial stress and financial hardship during adulthood on later health.

About the presenter

Anikó Bíró is an empirical economist with research interests in the fields of Labour Economics, Health Economics, and the Economics of Ageing. She works as a senior researcher at the Institute of Economics, Centre for Economic and Regional Studies in Hungary. Previously, she was a lecturer at The University of Edinburgh. She has published in journals such as Health Economics, Health Policy and the Journal of Population Economics, among many others.

The Wittgenstein Centre is a collaboration among the Department of Demography of the University of Vienna, the World Population Program of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and the Vienna Institute of Demography of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (VID/ÖAW).

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