

# Sönke Hendrik Matthewes

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CONTACT INFORMATION      Email: [soenke.matthewes@wzb.eu](mailto:soenke.matthewes@wzb.eu)      WZB Berlin Social Science Center  
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Germany

PERSONAL INFORMATION      Date of birth: 29.04.1991  
Citizenship: German & Dutch

RESEARCH INTERESTS      **Economics of Education, Applied Microeconometrics, Labour Economics**

EDUCATION      **Ph.D. Candidate in Economics**      since 2015  
WZB Berlin Social Science Center and Freie Universität Berlin, Germany  
Academic Supervisors: Prof. C. Katharina Spieß and Prof. Jan Marcus

**Graduate Coursework**      2015-2017  
Berlin Doctoral Program in Economics and Management Science (BDPEMS)

**M.Sc. Economics of Public Policy**      2014-2015  
Barcelona Graduate School of Economics (BGSE), Spain  
Thesis supervisor: Prof. Caterina Calsamiglia

**B.A. Liberal Arts and Sciences (Honours)**      2010-2013  
Majors: Economics & Political Science  
Amsterdam University College (AUC), Netherlands  
Thesis supervisor: Prof. Jose L. Moraga-Gonzalez

WORKING PAPERS      **Better Together? Heterogeneous Effects of Tracking on Student Achievement**  
(single-authored). (December 2018). DIW Berlin Discussion Paper No. 1775. [SSRN Link](#).  
*R&R at the Economic Journal*.

*Abstract:* This study estimates mean and distributional effects of early between-school ability tracking on student achievement. For identification, I exploit heterogeneity in tracking regimes between German federal states. After comprehensive primary school, about 40% of students are selected for the academic track and taught in separate schools in all states. The remaining students, however, are either taught comprehensively or further tracked into two different school forms depending on the state. I estimate the effects of this tracking on students' mathematics and reading test scores with a difference-in-difference-in-differences estimator to eliminate unobserved heterogeneity in achievement levels and trends between states. I find substantial achievement gains from comprehensive versus tracked schooling at ages 10–12. These average effects are almost entirely driven by low-achievers. I do not find evidence for negative effects of comprehensive schooling on the achievement of higher performing students. My results show that decreasing the degree of tracking in early secondary school can reduce inequality while increasing the efficiency of educational production.

WORK IN PROGRESS      **De-Tracking at the Margin – Estimating Effects of Vocational Upper Secondary and Comprehensive Schools on Attainment**  
(joint with Camilla Borgna, *Collegio Carlo Alberto, Turin*)

**De-Tracking and the Student Achievement Distribution – Evidence from Staggered Reform Implementation in Germany**  
(joint with Jan Marcus, *DIW Berlin & University of Hamburg*)

WORK AND  
RESEARCH  
EXPERIENCE

- Visiting PhD Student** Centre for Vocational Education Research (CVER) **since 2019**  
Centre for Economic Performance – London School of Economics, Supervisor: Sandra McNally
- Affiliated Researcher** Department Education and Family **since 2017**  
DIW Berlin, Supervisors: Prof. C. Katharina Spieß and Prof. Jan Marcus
- Researcher** Research unit Skill Formation and Labour Markets **since 2017**  
WZB Berlin, Supervisor: Prof. Heike Solga
- Co-Coordinator** College for Interdisciplinary Educational Research (CIDER) **2017-2019**  
WZB Berlin, Head of project: Prof. Heike Solga  
Tasks include: organisation of biannual workshops; organisation of the final CIDER conference in April 2019; organisation of soft skill workshops & summer schools; coordination of funding applications; reporting on Fellows’ activities.  
For more information on CIDER see: <https://ciderweb.org>
- Intern** Financial Markets Department of the Dutch Competition Authority **2013**  
Nederlandse Mededingingsautoriteit, The Hague (Netherlands)

PRESENTATIONS

**2019**

CIDER International Conference 2019 at WZB, Berlin (Germany); Seminar presentation at Collegio Carlo Alberto, Turin (Italy); Anglo-German Workshop at WZB, Berlin (Germany); PhD Workshop “Empirical Research Methods in Labour Economics” at University of Hamburg (Germany)

**2018**

30th Conference of the European Association of Labour Economists (EALE), Lyon (France); Counterfactual Methods for Policy Impact Evaluation (COMPIE) Conference 2018, Berlin (Germany); Amsterdam Centre for Inequality Studies (AMCIS) “Educational Inequality” Conference at University of Amsterdam (Netherlands); DFG SPP1764 Workshop on “Demographics, Immigration, and the Labor Market” at IAB, Nuremberg (Germany); Annual Conference of the Berlin Interdisciplinary Education Research Network (BIEN) at DIW, Berlin (Germany); PhD Workshop “Labour Economics” at University of Hamburg (Germany); Seminar presentation at Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education (DIPF), Berlin (Germany)

**2017**

Annual Conference of the Berlin Interdisciplinary Education Research Network (BIEN) at DIW, Berlin (Germany); PhD Workshop “Labour Economics” at University of Hamburg (Germany)

PROGRAMMING Stata, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Microsoft Office, R (basics)

LANGUAGES German (native), Dutch (native), English (fluent)

EXTRACURR. ACTIVITIES PhD Candidates Representative at WZB Berlin **since 2018**  
Chairman AUC Debating Society at Amsterdam University College **2011 - 2013**  
Zivildienst (‘civil service’) in SEN school for blind and handicapped children **2009-2010**  
Bildungszentrum für Blinde und Sehbehinderte Borgweg, Hamburg (Germany)