

NEWSLETTER 2026|13

CALENDAR

IOS Seminar
Mikayel Tovmasyan (Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt)

"The Education Gambit: Chess, Cognitive Skills, and a Natural Experiment in Armenia"

Tue, June 9
15:00 - 16:30
109 and zoom



ABSTRACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

IOS Seminar

Mikayel Tovmasyan (Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt)

"The Education Gambit: Chess, Cognitive Skills, and a Natural Experiment in Armenia"

This paper examines whether a nationwide policy mandating chess instruction in Armenian elementary schools since 2011 enhances students' cognitive skills and academic performance. Using a Triple Differences identification strategy and student-level data from the Kangaroo International Math Competition (2009–2019), I compare cohorts exposed to early chess training with those who were not. The medium-run main effect, measured three years after the last chess instruction in grade 4, is positive and statistically significant while the direction of violation of the parallel trend's assumption points to the underestimation of the positive effect. The DDD estimate implies that the 7th-grade treated cohort scored 0.155 standard deviations higher relative to the 9–10 grade placebo comparison, corresponding to about 2.4 additional Kangaroo points or 7 percent of the median contest score. Heterogeneity estimates are generally positive across observable subgroups, but the strongest common-FE estimates appear for town/urban students, Yerevan students, and public-school students. The results align with mixed evidence on the far-transfer benefits of cognitively demanding activities. These findings provide practical insights for policy-makers considering the inclusion of chess in school curricula, in terms of its cognitive impact and cost-effectiveness.

Info:

Zoom-Meeting:

https://https://ios-regensburg-de.zoom.us/j/68902085574?pwd=ZaptxzIAMAhcX3UuBDDJzcl6NrkVGW.1

Meeting ID: 689 0208 5574

Passcode: 210393

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Wednesday, June 10 | 11 am

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