

Pre-Analysis Plan

Empirical Strategy

We will estimate treatment effects by regressing a specific outcome of interest (response rate, response time, response quality) on randomized treatment indicators using OLS models. In order to increase precision (and to account for small imbalances between treatment and control groups), we will include a vector of control variables in our main specification.

Our main specification will be the following:

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta M_{ij} + \gamma E_{ij} + \delta M_{ij} * E_{ij} + \mu X_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Y_{ij} : Outcome of interest regarding fictitious parent j measured in child care center i

M_{ij} : Dummy equal to 1 if fictitious email signals migrant background, 0 otherwise

E_{ij} : Dummy equal to 1 if fictitious email signals high educational status, 0 otherwise

X_i : Vector of control variables for child care center (or child care center fixed effects)

ε_{ij} : Idiosyncratic error term

With our randomized research design, the causal treatment effects of migration on the respective outcome can be derived from β and δ . The vector of control variables includes strata fixed effects (comprised of provider type, federal state, and degree of urbanization), whether the center also caters to older children, the number of children enrolled in the center, and the share of migrants in the region. In order not to lose observations due to missing information on control variables, we will impute missing control variables and add imputation dummies to our regressions.

Main Analyses

In a first step, we will estimate, whether the migration background has an impact on child care center managers' responses to an inquiry. To this end, we will estimate treatment effects on the likelihood of receiving a response on an inquiry.

To further study how migration background affects answering behavior, we will investigate treatment effects on the time until the child care managers send an answer to our inquiry, and on the quality of the answer (e.g., measured by message length or tone).

In a second step, we aim to understand whether the effects of migration background on answering behavior are (partially) driven by child care center managers' beliefs about parental education (taste-based vs. statistical discrimination). To do so, we leverage the treatment in which we include an email signature that fixes educational background.

Using the random variation of child and parental gender, we will also test whether treatment effects vary based on these characteristics.

Further Analyses

Given the structure of our data, we will also be able to investigate heterogeneity of our treatment effects. We plan to compare treatment effects by provider type (e.g., public vs. ecclesiastic) and regional characteristics (population, degree of urbanization, and share of migrants).

Because of large differences in timing of application deadlines and other institutional factors across municipality, we will also conduct analyses accounting for this variation.