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Mevlude Akbulut-Yuksel, Melanie Khamis, Mutlu Yuksel



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Women Make Houses, Women Make Homes

By MEVLUDE AKBULUT-YUKSEL, MELANIE KHAMIS AND MUTLU YUKSEL*

This paper examines the persistent effects of historical labor market institutions and policies on women's long-term labor market outcomes. We quantify these enduring effects by exploring quasi-experimental variation in Germany's post-World War II mandatory reconstruction policy, which compelled women to work in the rubble removal and reconstruction process. Using difference-in-differences and instrumental variable approaches, we find that mandatory employment during the postwar era generated persistent adverse effects on women's long-term labor market outcomes. An increase in marriage and fertility rates in the postwar era and a physical and mental exhaustion associated with manual labor are some of the direct and indirect channels potentially explaining our results.

JEL: J16, J24, N34

Keywords: historical institutions, female labor supply, occupational choice

* Akbulut-Yuksel: Dalhousie University, 6214 University Avenue, Halifax, B3H 4R2, NS, Canada, email:mevlude@dal.ca; Khamis: Wesleyan University and IZA, email: mkhamis@wesleyan.edu; Yuksel: Dalhousie University, 6214 University Avenue, Halifax, B3H 4R2, NS, Canada, email:mutlu@dal.ca. We are grateful to Anna Aizer, Aimee Chin, Gordon Dahl, Amanda Goodall, Richard Grossman, Joyce Jacobsen, Chinhui Juhn, Stephan Klasen, Adriana Kugler, Peter Kuhn, Andrew Oswald, Shelley Phipps, Kosali Simon, Todd Sorensen, Olga Shemyakina, Fabian Waldinger and Courtney Ward as well as seminar participants at Amherst College, Dalhousie University, IZA, Universitaet Gottingen, Vassar College, Wesleyan University, CLSRN and SOLE for their helpful comments and suggestions. We thank the Research Data Center (RDC) of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Laender for access to the Microcensus data and in particular Rafael Czaja for continued support. Parts of this paper were prepared during our stay at the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA). We thank IZA for providing financial support and a stimulating research environment. We also thank Margard Ody and Georgios Tassoukis for their help with the data and historical records. The authors bare the sole responsibility for any errors that may remain.

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