The Department of Economics

SEMINAR

We are happy to invite you for a lecture that will take place on **Thursday, May 20 th** at **11:15**

The lecture will be on zoom.

Speaker: **Rafael Lalive** (HEC University of Lausanne)

Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7397512132

Title: **Can Outlawing Stated Gender Preferences Reduce Gender Segregation Across Firms?**

Abstract: In June 2004 the Austrian Equal Treatment Act banned the use of gender preferences in vacancy and recruiting notices. At the time over 40% of posted vacancies in the nation's largest job board included explicit preferences for either male or female applicants. We use data on posted vacancies, merged to administrative records on employer workforces and on the gender of workers hired to fill vacancies, to study how the legal prohibition of gender preferences affected hiring rates of women and men and the degree of gender segregation across firms. Consistent with recent evidence from China (Kuhn et al., 2018) we show that in the pre-2004 period employers with a stated preference were very likely (>90%) to hire a worker of that gender. We also show that most firms advertising for men had a high fraction of male employees and were seeking to fill a job in a highly-male occupation, with the opposite pattern for those advertising for women. Nevertheless, a small minority of employers appear to have been using gender preferences to recruit against stereotypes. Within two years of the new law, stated gender preferences in Austrian job ads largely disappeared, and employers were posting vacancies using both female and male versions of the occupation title. Classifying firms based on their share of female employees and their industry sector, we show that the elimination of gender preferences led to a 2.0-2.5 percentage point rise in the fraction of females hired by firms that were most likely to advertise for male workers in the per-2004 period, and a 1.0-1.5 percentage point rise in the fraction of males hired by firms that were most likely to advertise for females. We conclude that the law had a systematic but modest effect on reducing gender segregation across firms.

We look forward to seeing you.