Wider Benefits of Continuous Work-Related Training

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Summary

Research question:

- Does participation in ***continuous training*** activities have a beneficial causal impact on ***social cohesion*** in terms of more political, cultural, and social participation?

Data:

- German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP)

Methodology:

- Principal component analysis: obtain 3 outcome dimensions from 8 social cohesion variables in SOEP
- Regression-adjusted, matched, diff-in-diff approach to mitigate selection bias when estimating treatment effect

Key findings:

- Evidence of strong (favorable) self-selection into treatment
- Positive treatment effect on political, cultural participation
- Evidence of heterogeneous treatment effects: effects are stronger for individuals who are already advantaged

General Comments

Provide stronger motivation for why social cohesion-related outcomes are interesting to study. Could "too little" or "too much" cohesion be bad for progress? Is there optimal level of cohesion? Can your research inform public policy?

Include theoretical discussion (background/model) of a likely mechanism underlying causal effect of training on social cohesion

More clarity upfront (in Intro) would help:

- What type of treatment effect are you most interested in? ATE, LATE, ATT, etc.
- Early on, give clear-cut definitions of treatment and outcome variables
- Present results in easier-to-understand/interpret way

Additional Comments (I)

Explain in more detail why white collar workers are separated from public servants. It is not as obvious as in case of blue collar workers

Double check that references in text correspond to tables and figures at the end. E.g., on p. 6, Appendix Figure A-2 should be Table A-2

A downside of principal component analysis (PCA) is that it is challenging to interpret a change in a principal component. Discuss costs vs. benefits of using PCA

Is your analysis robust to significant imputations done for *socialize, assist,* and *artistic/musical activities* variables?

Additional Comments (II)

Section 2.3 should provide a clear-cut definition of treatment variable. E.g., is it binary?

Also, it is obvious there is **A LOT** of heterogeneity in what underlies treatment variable. Both in terms of training amount (hours) and quality. In such case, does it even make sense to estimate models with just (binary) treatment $D = 1$ vs. $D = 0$? Is intensity dimension overlooked?

Could "heterogeneous" effects in Section 5 be side-effect of this $D = 1$ vs. $D = 0$ "binarization"? What if meaning of training ($D = 1$) differs substantially across subsamples?

Can your formally test your identifying assumption about selection on unobservables, Eq. (1)?