Do Smart Parents Raise Smart Children? The Intergenerational Transmission of Cognitive Abilities

Silke Anger
German Institute for Economic Research

Guido Heineck
University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

(November 2008)
LASER Discussion Papers - Paper No. 23
(Edited by A. Abele-Brehm, R.T. Riphahn, K. Moser and C. Schnabel)

Correspondence to:
Silke Anger, Mohrenstraße 58, 10108 Berlin, Germany, Email: sanger@diw.de.
Abstract

Complementing prior research on income mobility and educational transmission, we provide evidence on the intergenerational transmission of cognitive abilities in Germany using data from the Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP). Based on two ultra-short IQ tests, our estimates suggest that both individuals’ word fluency and coding speed are positively related to the abilities of their parents, even when educational attainment and family background is controlled for. We further differentiate between mothers’ and fathers’ IQ transmission and find different effects on the cognition of sons and daughters.

JEL: J10, J24, I20

Copyright statement

Please do not quote without permission from the authors. Only the final version that will be accepted for publication should be cited. This document has been posted for the purpose of discussion and rapid dissemination of preliminary research results.