LECTIO MAGISTRALIS
The role of noncognitive skills for school-to-work transitions in Germany

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Abstract
Scholars in sociology as well as economics have shown the importance of cognition and behavior in determining socioeconomic achievement. They agree that both cognitive and noncognitive skills influence labor market outcomes. Much less is known, however, about how and for whom they affect labor market outcomes. This lecture provides theoretical and empirical insights into these latter issues, based on the example of access to apprenticeship programs, which serve as entry labor market positions in Germany. On the supply sides, higher cognitive and noncognitive skills might influence individual job search behavior. For the demand side, we know that employers make hiring decisions under uncertainty by searching for applicants with higher productivity. They might therefore not only use signals of cognitive skills but also of noncognitive skills as screens for trainability and productivity. Most previous studies estimated the supply-demand-side combined effects of cognitive and noncognitive skills on labor market outcomes. In this lecture, we will examine the processes on each side separately. Moreover, we will compare school leavers with different levels of formal qualification at the end of general schooling. In doing so, we are able to answer the question for whom noncognitive skills affects training chances—contributing to our understanding of whether the role of individual skills depends on one’s level of formal qualification, and why.