

Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital  
 Department of Demography, University of Vienna  
 +43 (0) 1 51581 7753  
[sonja.spitzer@univie.ac.at](mailto:sonja.spitzer@univie.ac.at)

LINKS:  
[Website](#)  
[Google Scholar](#)  
[Twitter / X](#)

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Health and earnings across the life course • Human capital • Socio-economic disparities • Gender differences • Ageing • (Health) data reliability

## RESEARCH POSITIONS & APPOINTMENTS

<b>University of Vienna, Department of Demography</b> • Postdoctoral researcher and lecturer	07/2020-present
<b>Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology</b> • Visiting fellow	10/2024-present
<b>Vienna Yearbook of Population Research</b> • Editor	07/2021-present
<b>International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, World Population Programme</b> • Research assistant	01/2019 - 06/2020
<b>Vienna Institute of Demography, Economic Demography group</b> • Research scientist	03/2017 - 06/2020
<b>Chamber of Labour for Vienna, Division of Business Economics</b> • Several short-term consultancy contracts	12/2014 – 02/2017

## EDUCATION

<b>Ph.D. with specialisation in Economics and Demography</b> (with distinction) • Vienna University of Economics and Business • Thesis: <i>Health measures and healthcare utilisation in ageing populations</i> • Supervisors: Prof. Wolfgang Lutz and Prof. Alexia Prskawetz	03/2017 - 04/2020
<b>Master's Degree in Applied Economics</b> (Top of the class) • Vienna University of Economics and Business	10/2014 - 08/2016
<b>Study abroad</b> (with distinction) • University of Sydney, Australia	07/2015 – 12/2015
<b>Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Socio-Economics</b> (Top 5% of the class) • Vienna University of Economics and Business	04/2011 – 09/2014

## INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH VISITS & INVITATIONS

University of Chicago, US - Host: Prof. James Heckman	02/-03/2025 (planned)
Karolinska Institutet, Sweden - Host: Prof. Agneta Herlitz	04/-07/2025 (planned)
Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology, Japan - Host: Yuliya Kulikova	10/2024-01/2025
Hertie School, Germany - Host: Prof. Mujahed Shaikh	9/2022
University of Hohenheim, Germany - Host: Prof. Alfonso Souza-Posa	5/2022
Norwegian Univ. of Science and Technology, Norway - Host: Doriane Mignon	10/2021
Max Planck Inst. for Demographic Research, Germany - Host: Christian Dudel	10/2018
Paris School of Economics, France - Host: Prof. Hippolyte d'Albis	04/2018

## AWARDS, HONOURS & RECOGNITIONS

---

<b>Invited Population Europe Expert</b>	2022-present
<b>Health Expert Advisor</b> for the Austrian Socio-Economic Panel survey	2022-present
<b>Dr. Maria Schaumayer Foundation Award</b>	2021
<b>Emerging Scholar Award</b> at the Aging & Social Change Interdisciplinary Conference	2021
<b>Award for Outstanding Research Achievements</b> from the Vienna University of Economics and Business	2020
<b>Honourable mention at the AK Science Award</b> on <i>Challenges in public healthcare and long-term care</i>	2020
<b>Top 10% most cited papers in PLOS ONE</b> for the publication <i>Reporting biases in self-assessed physical and cognitive health status of older Europeans</i>	2019
<b>Poster winner at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting</b> Poster titled <i>The subjective cost of young children: A European comparison</i>	2019
<b>1<sup>st</sup> rank out of 112 in the student ranking</b> Vienna University of Economics and Business, Master's Programme in Economics	2017

## GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

---

<b>Data:Research:Austria Grant from the Austrian Academy of Sciences</b> <i>Skill loss during parental leave and its role for gender disparities in earnings</i> € 334,228, PI	2024 - 2026
<b>COI-NEXT Grant</b> <i>Life is about timing: Health shocks and socioeconomic inequality across the life cycle</i> ¥ 36,600,000, Co-Author (PI: Yuliya Kulikova)	2024 - 2026
<b>Strategic Partnership Mobility Fellowship</b> to visit the Center for the Economics of Human Development at the Univ. of Chicago	2024 - 2025
<b>Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Postdoctoral Fellowship</b> <i>Age at cardiovascular health shocks, survival, and labour market outcomes</i> ¥ 1,086,000	2024
<b>Kaiserschild Advance Grant</b> <i>The effect of parenthood on human capital and income trajectories over the life course</i> € 9,600, Co-PI with Claudia Reiter	2023 - 2024
<b>postdoc:muv Fellowship</b> at the University of Vienna	2021-2022
<b>Mobility grant for Ph.D. candidates</b> to visit the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany	2020
<b>Austrian Ministry of Education, Science, and Research</b> € 4,000 to conduct research on the reliability of popular health measures during the <i>Young Scientist Summer Programme</i> at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis	2018
<b>Scholarship from the Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand</b> € 2,500 to attend the workshop <i>Demographic analysis with applications to ageing societies</i> at the College of Population Studies in Bangkok, Thailand	2018
<b>Merit-based scholarship grant</b> Vienna University of Economics and Business	2013, 2014 & 2016
<b>Foreign Studies Scholarship</b> Julius Raab Scholarship to study at the University of Sydney, Australia	2015

## PUBLICATIONS

---

### JOURNAL ARTICLES (PEER-REVIEWED)

12. Di Lego, V., **Spitzer S.** and Lazarevic P. (2024): [Mismatches in Health: A Global Analysis of Discrepancies Between Self-Reported and Tested Mobility and Cognition](#), *Comparative Population Studies*
11. **Spitzer S.** and Shaikh M. (2022): [Health misperception and healthcare utilisation among older Europeans](#), *The Journal of the Economics of Ageing*
10. **Spitzer S.**, Shaikh M., and Weber D. (2022): [Older Europeans' health perception and their adaptive behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), *European Journal of Public Health*
9. **Spitzer S.**, Greulich A., and Hammer B. (2022): [The subjective cost of young children: A European comparison](#), *Social Indicator Research*
8. **Spitzer S.**, Di Lego V., Kuhn M., Roth C., and Berger C. (2022): [Socio-economic environment and survival in patients after ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction \(STEMI\): A longitudinal study for the City of Vienna](#), *BMJ Open*
7. Scherbov S., **Spitzer S.**, and Steiber N. (2022): [Thresholds for clinical practice that directly link handgrip strength to remaining years of life: Estimates based on longitudinal observational data](#), *BMJ Open*
6. Lutz W., Striessnig E., Dimitrova A., Ghislandi S., Lijadi A., Reiter C., **Spitzer S.**, and Yildiz D. (2021): [Years of good life is a well-being indicator designed to serve research on sustainability](#), *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*
5. Hammer, B., **Spitzer S.**, and Prskawetz, A. (2021): [Age-specific income trends in Europe: The role of employment, wages, and social transfers](#), *Social Indicator Research*
4. **Spitzer S.** (2020): [Biases in health expectancies due to educational differences in survey participation of older Europeans: It's worth weighting for](#), *The European Journal of Health Economics*
3. Hammer H., **Spitzer S.**, Vargha L., and Istenic T. (2020): [The gender dimension of intergenerational transfers in Europe](#), *The Journal of the Economics of Ageing*
2. Reiter C. and **Spitzer S.** (2020): [Wellbeing in Europe: Decompositions by country and gender for the population 50+](#), *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*
1. **Spitzer S.** and Weber D. (2019): [Reporting biases in self-assessed physical and cognitive health status of older Europeans](#), *PLOS ONE*

### BOOK CHAPTERS (PEER-REVIEWED)

**Spitzer S.** and Reiter C. (2024): [Demographic change, health care, and long-term care](#). In: Renner A.-T., Getzner M., and Plank L. (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Infrastructure*. Edward Elgar Publishing

### POLICY REPORTS

**Spitzer S.**, Hammer B., and Reiter C. (2023): [Intergenerational inequalities: How to close the gaps?](#), *Eurofound Policy Brief*

**Spitzer S.** and Wieser C. (2017): [Women on boards \(Frauen.Management.Report – Aufsichtsrat, Geschäftsführung und Prokura\)](#), *Chamber of Labour Report*

**Spitzer S.** and Wieser C. (2015): [Women on boards \(Frauen.Management.Report – Frauen in Geschäftsführung und Aufsichtsrat der Top 200 Börsennotierten Unternehmen\)](#), *Chamber of Labour Report*

### EDITED SPECIAL ISSUES

**Spitzer S.**, Di Lego V., Greulich A., and Muttarak R. (Eds.) (2021): [Demographic aspects of human wellbeing](#), *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*

## WORKING PAPERS & OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- Renner A.-T., Shaikh M, and **Spitzer S.** (2023): [The long-term impact of maternal leave duration on smoking behavior](#), *MPRA Working Paper*
- Spitzer S.**, Hammer B., and Reiter C. (2023): [Intergenerational income dynamics in Europe: Past trends and current challenges](#), *Eurofound Working Paper*
- Spitzer S.** (2022): [How healthy are you really? Cross-country comparisons of wellbeing with survey data](#), Contribution to the *Population-Environment Research Network (PERN) Cyberseminar*
- Hammer B., **Spitzer S.** and Prskawetz A. (2022): [Income disparities between young and old Europeans: The role of employment, wages, and pensions](#). In: *European Demographic Datasheet 2022*. Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital
- Spitzer S.**, Di Lego V., Greulich A., and Muttarak R. (2020): [A demographic perspective on human well-being: Concepts, measurement and population heterogeneity](#), Introduction *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*
- Spitzer S.** and Reiter C. (2020): [Years of Good Life: A novel indicator to measure wellbeing](#). In: *European Demographic Datasheet 2020*. Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital
- Spitzer S.** and Shaikh M. (2020): [Health misperception and healthcare utilisation among older Europeans](#), *VID Working Paper*
- Spitzer S.** (2019): [Biases in health expectancies due to educational differences in survey participation of older Europeans: It's worth weighting for](#), *IIASA Working Paper*
- Hammer H., **Spitzer S.**, Vargha L., and Istenic T. (2019): [The gender dimension of intergenerational transfers in Europe](#), *VID Working Paper*
- Spitzer S.** and Weber D. (2019): [Who is telling the truth? Biases in self-reported physical and cognitive health status of older Europeans](#), *IIASA Working Paper*
- Spitzer S.**, Greulich A., and Hammer B. (2018): [The subjective cost of young children: A European comparison](#), *VID Working Paper*
- Spitzer S.** and Hammer B. (2016): [The division of labour within households: Fractional logit estimates based on the Austrian Time Use Survey](#), *AGENTA Working Paper*

## MEDIA COVERAGE & DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

---

- 2024      Medianet
- [Der Falter](#) • [Radio Ö1](#) • [Daily Mail](#) • [Hindustan Times](#) • [ORF ZIB Magazin](#) (TV Interview) • [Podcast Baby & Job](#) • [Der Standard](#) • [Die Presse](#) • [Kronen Zeitung](#) • [Ö1 Mittagsjournal](#) • [Tiroler Tageszeitung](#) • [Heute](#) • [Gazzetta](#) • [Poradnik Zdrowie](#) • [Femme Actuelle](#) • [ÖAW SciencePop](#) • [ORF.at](#) • [Kurier](#) • [Salzburger Nachrichten](#) • [Puls24](#) • [Wiener Zeitung](#) • [Der Standard](#) • [PopDigests](#) • [Mein Bezirk](#) • [Voice Philly](#) • [Kurier](#) • [APA](#)
- 2022      • [Portal Hospital Brasil VOL.at](#) • [Radio Wien Stadtjournal](#) • [ORF.at](#) • [New Business](#) • [Vienna.at](#) • [Kronen Zeitung](#) • [Newsweek](#) • [News18](#) • [ScienceDaily](#) • [Studium.at](#) • [IIASA News](#) • [WIC Fact Sheet](#) • [The Hill](#) • [European Demographic Data Sheet](#) • [Kurier](#) • [SciTechDaily](#) • [Hello Zdrowie](#) • [Clarín](#) • [Mediafax](#) • [News Medical](#) • [Mdienoticias](#) • [Irytas](#) • [Mint Lounge](#) • [Deine Apotheke](#) • [Wiener Zeitung](#) • [ygeia mou](#) • [Kurier](#) • [medinlive.at](#) • [Zeitung der Arbeit](#) • [MedMedia](#) • [Dolomiten](#) • [Der Standard](#) • [Ö1 Nachrichtenjournal](#)
- 2021      [OEAW ScienceBites Video](#) • [Kurier](#) • [European Researchers' Night](#)
- 2020      [Wiener Zeitung](#) • [Population Europe PopDigest](#) • [Nexus Blog](#)
- 2019      [Die Presse](#) • [Nutraingredients.com](#) • [ScienceDaily](#) • [MedicalXpress](#) • [Generational Economy](#) • [IIASA News](#) • [Generational Economy](#) • [Nemokennislink.nl](#)

## TEACHING, MENTORING & SUPERVISION

---

- Teaching at the University of Vienna (four courses per academic year)** 2021-present
- Human capital and economic demography (Master level)
  - Mortality, health, and ageing (Master level, with Marc Luy)
  - Advanced quantitative data analysis and microeconometrics (Master level)
  - Scientific working (Master level, with Ester Lazzari and Nicholas Gailey)
  - Statistics for social scientists II (Master level)
- Teaching at the Austrian Academy of Sciences** 2022
- Where do demographers get their data from?* (with Dilek Yildiz and Claudia Reiter)
- Supervision of PhD thesis** 2022
- The causal effect of schooling on obesity and diabetes in low- and middle-income countries*  
Lili Liwin, Co-supervision with Daniela Weber during the Young Scientist Summer Programme of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
- Supervision of Master theses** 2024-present
- Jana Ströbinger: *Socioeconomic differences in the onset of cancer and its role for labour market outcomes*
  - Constantin Kumaus: *Gender differences in family, childcare & retirement policies*
  - Nina Marie Dippold: *The effect of maternity leave duration on retirement income*
- Supervision of Research Assistants** 2024-present
- University of Vienna
  - Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology
- Mentor of economics students** 2020 - 2021
- VrauWL* mentoring programme for female economics students

## PRESENTATIONS

---

### INVITED TALKS & PANEL DISCUSSIONS

- Absence from work and lifetime smoking behavior: Evidence from European maternal leave policies* 2024  
Research Seminar, Chung-Ang University, Korea (planned)
- Parental leave and smoking behaviour: Causal evidence from 14 European countries* 2022  
Research Seminar in Economics, University of Hohenheim, Germany
- Leave duration after childbirth and smoking behaviour in later life* 2022  
Centre for Regional Development and Planning (CEDEPLAR) Seminar Series, Department of Demography, Faculty of Economics, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil (online)
- Biased health perception and health behaviour: An overview of Europe and China* 2021  
Department of Economic Seminar, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
- Women in leadership in a COVID-19 world* 2021  
500 Women Scientists, IIASA, Austria (online)
- How healthy are you really? Health misperception and healthcare utilisation among older Europeans* 2020  
Socio-economics Research Seminar, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria (online)
- Who is telling the truth? Biases in self-reported health status of older Europeans* 2019  
European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Austria
- Understanding child poverty (Kinderarmut verstehen)* 2019  
Bildungsverein Offene Gesellschaft, Austria
- The subjective cost of young children: A European comparison* 2018  
Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Germany
- Atypical employment: Trends, facts, myths (Atypische Beschäftigung: Trends, Fakten, Mythen)* 2017  
Gesellschaftspolitisches Diskussionsforum, Austria

## PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

- 2024 European Population Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland • European Health Association Conference, Vienna, Austria
- 2023 American-European Health Economics Study Group, Boston, US • IHEA, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2022 European Health Association Conference, Oslo, Norway • Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Atlanta, US
- 2021 International Population Conference, Hyderabad, India (online) • Annual Meeting of the Austrian Economic Association (NOeG), Innsbruck, Austria (online) • Austrian Health Economics Association Conference, Vienna, Austria • Population Association of America Annual Meeting, St. Louis, US (online)
- 2020 Global Meeting on Population and the Generational Economy, Honolulu, US (online) • European Population Conference 2020, Padova, Italy (cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic) • European Health Economics Association 2020 Student-Supervisor Conference, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (online) • Annual Meeting of the Austrian Economic Association (NOeG), Vienna, Austria
- 2019 International Workshop on the Socio-economics of Ageing, Lisbon, Portugal • Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Austin, US • Wittgenstein Centre Conference, Vienna, Austria • National Conference on Health Economics, Lisbon, Portugal (talk by co-author Mujaheed Shaikh) • German-Austrian-Swiss Demographer’s Meeting, Vienna, Austria (talk by co-author Daniela Weber) • Austrian Health Economics Association Conference, Vienna, Austria
- 2018 British Society for Population Studies (BSPS) Conference, Winchester, UK • European Population Conference, Brussels, Belgium (talk by co-author Bernhard Hammer) • Austrian Health Economics Association PhD Workshop, Vienna, Austria • Wittgenstein Centre Conference, Vienna, Austria • YSSP Final Colloquium, Laxenburg, Austria • Wittgenstein Centre Workshop on Health and Wellbeing, Vienna, Austria • Young Economists Conference, Vienna, Austria
- 2017 British Society for Population Studies (BSPS) Conference, Liverpool, UK • Wittgenstein Centre Conference, Vienna, Austria • Young Economists’ Meeting, Brno, Czechia

## ACADEMIC SERVICES & INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

---

Health expert advisor for the Austrian Socio-Economic Panel survey	2022-present
Editor of the Vienna Yearbook of Population Research	2021-present
Selection Committee for the Master programme “Global Demography”	2021 - 2023
Co-Organiser of the Demography PhD Club at the University of Vienna	2021 - 2022
Development of the curriculum for the Master programme “Global Demography” in collaboration with the teaching team	2020 - 2021
Guest Editor of the Vienna Yearbook of Population Research	2021
Coordinator of the Wittgenstein Centre Colloquium Series	2017 - 2020
Coordinator of the Wittgenstein Centre Conference on <i>Demographic aspects of human wellbeing</i>	2019
Organiser of the Wittgenstein Centre Workshop on Health and Wellbeing	2018