

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](#)

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

---

Health economics (health behaviour) • Demographic economics • Measuring health • Data reliability

## RESEARCH POSITIONS

---

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>University of Vienna</b><br>• Postdoctoral researcher and lecturer, Department of Demography                         | 07/2020 - present |
| <b>International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)</b><br>• Research assistant, World Population Programme | 01/2019 - 06/2020 |
| <b>Vienna Institute of Demography (VID)</b><br>• Research scientist, Economic Demography group                          | 03/2017 - 06/2020 |
| <b>Chamber of Labour for Vienna</b><br>• Several short-term consultancy contracts, Division of Business Economics       | 12/2014 - 02/2017 |

## EDUCATION

---

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| <b>Ph.D. with specialisation in Economics and Demography</b><br>• Vienna University of Economics and Business<br>• Thesis: <i>Health measures and healthcare utilisation in ageing populations</i><br>• Committee: Wolfgang Lutz, Alexia Prskawetz, Marcel Bilger, Alfonso Sousa-Poza<br>• <b>Top grade in all evaluation dimensions</b> | 03/2017 - 04/2020 |
| <b>Master's Degree in Applied Economics</b><br>• Vienna University of Economics and Business<br>• Thesis: <i>The division of labour within households</i><br>• Supervisor: Prof. Jesus Crespo Cuaresma<br>• <b>Ranked top-of-the-class</b>   | 10/2014 - 08/2016 |
| <b>Semester abroad</b><br>• University of Sydney, Australia<br>• <b>With distinction</b>   | 07/2015 - 12/2015 |
| <b>Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Socio-Economics</b><br>• Vienna University of Economics and Business<br>• <b>Ranked among top 5% of the cohort</b>   | 04/2011 - 09/2014 |

## INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH VISITS

---

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway | 10/2021 |
| Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany   | 10/2018 |
| Paris School of Economics, Paris, France                          | 04/2018 |

## PUBLICATIONS

---

### PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

**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*

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](#), *PNAS*

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*

**Spitzer S.**, Di Lego V., Greulich A., and Muttarak R. (2020): [A demographic perspective on human wellbeing: Concepts, measurement and population heterogeneity](#), *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*

**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*

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*

Reiter C. and **Spitzer S.** (2020): [Wellbeing in Europe: Decompositions by country and gender for the population 50+](#), *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*

**Spitzer S.** and Weber D. (2019): [Reporting biases in self-assessed physical and cognitive health status of older Europeans](#), *PLOS ONE*

### UNDER REVIEW

**Spitzer S.** and Shaikh M.: Health misperception and healthcare utilisation among older Europeans

**Spitzer S.**, Di Lego V., Kuhn M., Roth C., and Berger C.: Socio-economic environment and survival in patients after ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI): A longitudinal study for the City of Vienna

Scherbov S., **Spitzer S.**, and Steiber N.: Thresholds for clinical practice that directly link handgrip strength to remaining years of life: estimates based on longitudinal observational data

**Spitzer S.**, Greulich A., and Hammer B.: The subjective cost of young children: A European comparison

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Hammer B., **Spitzer S.**, and Prskawetz, A. (2021): [Age-specific income trends in Europe: The role of employment, wages, and social transfers](#), *TU Working Papers in Economic Theory and Policy*, 01/2021

**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*, 01/2020

Hammer H., **Spitzer S.**, Vargha L., and Istenic T. (2019): [The gender dimension of intergenerational transfers in Europe](#), *VID Working Paper*, 07/2019

**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*, WP-19-002

**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*, WP-19-003.

Spitzer S., Greulich A., and Hammer B. (2018): [The subjective cost of young children: A European comparison](#), *VID Working Paper*, 12/2018

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*, No 4/2016

#### 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*

#### AWARDS & HONOURS

---

<b>Dr. Maria Schaumayer Foundation Award</b>	2021
<b>Emerging Scholar Award</b> at the Aging & Social Change Eleventh 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>Poster winner at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting 2019</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 (cohort of 2014)</b> Vienna University of Economics and Business, Master's Programme in Economics	2017
<b>Placed in the top 5% of students (cohort of 2011)</b> Vienna University of Economics and Business, Bachelor's Programme	2014

#### GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

---

<b>Mobility grant for Ph.D. candidates</b> from the Vienna University of Economics and Business to visit the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany	2020
<b>Grant from the 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 (IIASA)	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	2018
<b>Merit-based scholarship grant</b> Vienna University of Economics and Business	2016
<b>Foreign Studies Scholarship</b> Scholarship from the Stipendienfond (scholarship fund) Julius Raab to study at the University of Sydney, Australia	2015
<b>Merit-based scholarship grant</b> Vienna University of Economics and Business	2014
<b>Merit-based scholarship grant</b> Vienna University of Economics and Business	2013

## PRESENTATIONS

---

### INVITED LECTURES & PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Department of Economic Seminar, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway <i>Biased health perception and health behaviour: An overview of Europe and China</i>	2021
500 Women Scientists, IIASA, Laxenburg, Austria <i>Women in leadership in a COVID-19 world</i>	2021
Socioeconomics Research Seminar, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria <i>How healthy are you really? Health misperception and healthcare utilisation among older Europeans</i>	2020
European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna, Austria <i>Who is telling the truth? Biases in self-reported physical and cognitive health status of older Europeans</i>	2019
Bildungsverein Offene Gesellschaft, Salzburg, Austria <i>Kinderarmut verstehen (Understanding child poverty)</i>	2019
Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany <i>The subjective cost of young children: A European comparison</i>	2018
Gesellschaftspolitisches Diskussionsforum, Vienna, Austria <i>Atypical employment: Trends, facts, myths</i>	2017

### PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES

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, Hawaii, 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 given by co-author Mujaheed Shaikh) • German-Austrian-Swiss Demographer's Meeting, Vienna, Austria (talk given 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 given 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

## TEACHING & MENTORING

---

- Teaching at the University of Vienna** 2021 - present
- Advanced quantitative data analysis and microeconometrics (Master level)
  - Mortality, health and ageing (Master level, with Marc Luy)
  - Human capital and economic demography (Master level)
  - Scientific working (Master level, with Nicholas Gailey)
  - Statistics for social scientists II (Master level)
- Mentor for female economics students** 2020 - 2021
- *VrauWL* mentoring programme for female economics students

## TECHNICAL & LANGUAGE SKILLS

---

- METHODS:** Econometric methods, demographic methods, survey methods
- SOFTWARE:** Stata, R, LaTeX, Mendeley, Adobe Cloud, MS Office
- DATA:** EU-SILC, SHARE, SAGE, HRS, World Value Survey, NTA, ELSA, European Time Use Survey, Austrian Household Budget Survey, Austrian Microcensus, Austrian Labour Force Survey, Austrian Commercial Register, Health Survey for England, European Census Data etc.
- LANGUAGES:** German (native speaker)  
English (fluent)  
Spanish (intermediate)  
Portuguese (basic knowledge)

## ADDITIONAL TRAINING

---

- Digital and computational demography**, one week 2020  
Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany
- Multistate Models: Analysis from event histories and panel data**, one week 2020  
Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany
- Data visualization – the art/skill cocktail**, one week 2020  
International Advanced Studies in Demography Research Training Program  
Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany
- Microsimulation for multidimensional population projections**, half day 2019  
International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Laxenburg, Austria
- Demographic analysis with applications to ageing societies**, two weeks 2018  
College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

## ACADEMIC SERVICES & INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

---

### CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP ORGANISATION

- Wittgenstein Centre Conference on *Demographic aspects of human wellbeing*, Vienna, Austria 2019
- Wittgenstein Centre Workshop on Health and Wellbeing, Vienna, Austria 2018
- Wittgenstein Centre Colloquium Series, Vienna, Austria 2017-2020
- Wittgenstein Centre Internal Seminar Series, Vienna, Austria 2017-2020

## EDITORSHIP

Vienna Yearbook of Population Research 2019-present

## COMMITTEES

Selection Committee “Master programme Global Demography”  
at the University of Vienna 2021-present

## REFEREE ACTIVITIES

Health Economics • Demography • Social Science & Medicine • Vienna Yearbook  
of Population Research • Special Report on *Health, Demography, and Climate  
Change* by the Austrian Panel on Climate Change • 5<sup>th</sup> Asian Population  
Association Conference • Fondazione Cariplo Programme • Wittgenstein Centre  
Conference on *Demographic Aspects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its Consequences*

## MEDIA COVERAGE & DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

---

### MEDIA COVERAGE

*Junge zahlen die Zeche der Wirtschaftskrise 2008*, [Kurier](#) 2021  
*Auf den Spuren der Wissenschaft*, [Wiener Zeitung](#) 2020  
*Ältere vertun sich in der Selbsteinschätzung*, [Die Presse](#) 2019  
*Self-reported health: Who can we trust?*, [Nutraingredients.com](#) 2019  
*Who is telling the truth about their health?*, [ScienceDaily](#) 2019  
*Who is telling the truth about their health?*, [MedicalXpress](#) 2019  
*Het beeld van je eigen gezondheid strookt niet altijd met de werkelijkheid*,  
[Nemokennislink.nl](#) 2019

### DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

*Are younger people being left behind?*, [PopDigests](#) 2022  
*Gesundheit - überschätzen wir unseren Körper?*, [European Researchers' Night](#) 2020  
*Gesundheit - überschätzen wir unseren Körper?*, [OEAW ScienceBites Video](#) 2020  
*How healthy are you really?*, [SHARE Blog](#) 2020  
*Gender (Im)Balance: Intergenerational transfers over the lifetime for men and women  
in Europe*, [Population Europe PopDigest](#) 2020  
*It is worth weighting for better health measures*, [Nexus Blog](#) 2020  
*Reporting biases in self-assessed health*, [Generational Economy](#) 2019  
*Who is telling the truth about their health?*, [IIASA News](#) 2019  
*The gender dimension of intergenerational transfers in Europe*, [Generational Economy](#) 2019  
*Children and subjective economic wellbeing: poster award for Sonja Spitzer*,  
[Generational Economy](#) 2019  
*Endstation Mittleres Management (Final destination middle management)*, [A&W Blog](#) 2017  
*Frauenquote auf österreichisch (Female quota in Austrian)*, [A&W Blog](#) 2015