

## **BIBB-Kolloquium zur Berufsbildungsforschung**

**11.12.2025**

14.15 Uhr, Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, Bonn, Raum 1.3.25

*(Achtung: ggf. aktuelle Änderungen im Intranet/Internet beachten)*

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*zum Thema:*

### ***How Do Occupations Work? Employers, Occupational Closure, and Skill Requirements***

Occupations are central to sociological research as key units for analyzing income inequality, inter- and intragenerational mobility, and demographic outcomes. However, growing evidence challenges the assumption that occupations consist of jobs requiring similar skills. The reasons for this variation remain underexplored. This study examines the relationship between occupational closure mechanisms and skill heterogeneity in job advertisements. Specifically, we investigate how employers' job postings reflect skill variation within occupations, focusing on closure mechanisms such as standardized credentials, licensure, and unionization.

We hypothesize that stronger closure mechanisms reduce skill heterogeneity in job advertisements by enforcing standardized skill sets and restricting access to tasks. Using a large dataset of German job advertisements, we apply natural language processing (NLP) to extract skill requirements based on job tasks mentioned in postings. Descriptive analyses reveal substantial variation in skill requirements across job ads. Our multivariate multilevel regression analyses show that certain closure mechanisms, such as licensure, occupational specificity and job title similarity, are associated with lower skill heterogeneity. However, other closure mechanisms do not exhibit a consistent relationship with skill variation.

These findings highlight that while occupational closure influences skill requirements, its effects vary across different closure mechanisms.

By focusing on Germany, a country with a highly coordinated labor market, this study provides new insights into how closure mechanisms shape occupational boundaries and contributes to broader discussions on skill heterogeneity in labor markets.