DISCUSSION:
The Cognitive and Economic Impact of Social Activities in Older Age: Evidence from 17 European Countries

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Summary

• Social activities have a positive effect on cognition
  ➔ Positive economic consequences

• Causality? Methodological concerns!

• Empirically robust estimates of the causal effect of participation in social activities on the cognitive abilities of older Europeans
  – Nonparametric estimation methods that bound the causal effect of interest
  – Addresses endogeneity/Weak assumptions of data
What I like about the paper

- Methodology
- Offers clarity on causality and the magnitude of the effect of social activity on cognition
- Potential policy implications
How could the paper be improved?

• Positioning
  – State more explicitly
  – Methodological not substantive
  – Shed light on the magnitude of the effect, establish causality through nonparametric estimation methods

• Explanation of findings
  – Why is the effect stronger for women than for men?
How could the paper be improved?

- **Definition “social activity”**
  - “number of concepts in the social sciences & philosophy”
  - “agency, social relations/actions, interpersonal relationships, human migration”

- **Conceptualization “social activity”**
  - Not included: having/meeting friends
  - 79% not socially active! Result of conceptualization?
  - Greece, Portugal, Poland, Italy, Spain score low
How could the paper be improved?

**Policy implications**
- Link to methodological contribution
- Vague: “policies targeting the reduction of the employment gap between older women and men”

“Promoting active aging should be a priority/subsidized”
- Many opportunities but 79%(!) are not active
- Not offering more but getting people to do something
MORE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?