How Costly is Spatial Mobility?

Faculty Member: Michael Peters

Proposal Description:

Economic change induces people to move in the search for economic opportunities causing booming regions to grow at the expense of declining regions. How quickly this reallocation takes place depends crucially on the costs of spatial mobility, which are hence a key determinant of economic growth. In this project we are going to use historical data from 8m displaced refugees in post WW2 Germany to try to estimate such costs. Because these refugees were initially randomly assigned across space, this episode provides an interesting and unique setting to infer people’s preferences for different locations and hence the costs of moving.

Requisite Skills and Qualifications:

This project involves both extensive empirical work using newly collected historical data as well as the programming and computation of a spatial general equilibrium model. Hence we are looking for motivated students who can bring (some of) the following skills to the project: strong computational and quantitative skills (i.e. experience with Matlab and being comfortable with equations), data processing and analysis skills (i.e. experience in STATA and/or R), experience with spatial data and maps (e.g. experience with GIS software). Please indicate the area of your interest in your application.

Students, who have taken ECON 417 (Computational Methods), AMTH 437 / ECON 413 (Optimization Techniques), CPSC 440b (Numerical Computation) or ECON 350 (General Equilibrium Theory) are especially encouraged to apply. Please list your major(s) and relevant courses that you have taken in your cover letter.

HSSRO Application Link: HSSRO Application Link

Award: Noah Stetson '18
Adam Harris '17

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