Meredith Startz is one of eight graduate students selected to speak at the Review of Economic Studies May Meetings. Informally known as the “REStud Tour,” the Review selects “promising graduating doctoral students in economics and finance in the world to present their research to audiences in Europe.”

The meetings are held during a week in mid-May at economics departments or institutes of three or four universities across Europe. With its aim to “introduce bright US-based scholars to European economists, and vice versa,” this year’s tour locations include Universität Bonn/University of Cologne, Bologna University, and University of Southampton.

Startz is a sixth-year Ph.D. student who studies international development and trade. Specifically, she focuses on how contract enforcement problems shape trade patterns, and how this relates to the process of economic development. “I’m very honored to have been selected, and I’m looking forward to getting a chance to talk to a new set of people about my work,” said Startz.

Her talk will investigate information costs in international trade, using original data she collected on Nigerian consumer goods imports. She finds that traveling to source countries like China to do business in person is a common way of dealing with both search problems (finding out what goods are available around the world) and contracting problems (ensuring that partners follow through on agreements in an environment with poor legal enforcement). Based on willingness to pay for travel, her estimation shows that search and contracting problems pose nearly as much of a barrier to trade as tariffs and transportation costs, combined.

According to Startz’s research, such barriers have a large effect on consumer welfare in countries like Nigeria, which reduce the variety of goods that are available, and make those that are available more expensive and out-of-date. She hopes her paper will bring more attention to why market integration policies beyond transportation and tariffs are
import.

After graduation in May, Startz will pursue postdoctoral fellowships at Princeton and Stanford, after which she will join the Stanford economics department as an assistant professor.

The *Review of Economic Studies* May Meetings have been held annually since 1989. Standard seminar presentations are given over two days to audiences invited by the local hosts and which include members of the journal’s editorial board. Over the years, six former Yale graduate students have been elected to present, as well as several past and current Yale Economics faculty, including: Zhen Hou (2015), Daniel Keniston (2011) Eduardo Faingold (2006), Ed Vytlacil (2000), Dirk Bergemann (1994), Judy Chevalier (1993), Penny Kougianou-Goldberg (1992), and Chris Udry (1990).

For the full meeting schedule and a list of presenters and their papers, visit the Restud Tour 2017 website.

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