

Abstracts of Posters Presented at the Annual Meetings

Was Gerschenkron Right? Exploring Factor Market Imperfections in Fin-de-Siècle Russia

With the end of serfdom in 1861, Russian peasants were collectively allocated land and associated payment obligations through their assignment into village communes. Alexander Gerschenkron and others have suggested that this land reform may have tied peasants to the land and reduced the supply of labor to industry. This poster explores this theme by drawing on a newly collected, household-level dataset from a Moscow province at the end of the nineteenth century. Descriptive and econometric evidence suggest that the choice to work outside agriculture was not limited by attachment to the land commune.

STEVEN NAFZIGER, *Yale University*

Getting Inside the Black Box of “White Flight”: The Role of Suburban Autonomy and Public Goods

Why did white households relocate to the suburbs in response to postwar black migration to central cities? This paper compares housing prices on adjacent Census blocks across the city-suburban borders in the 1950s and 1960s to estimate the implicit market value of suburban political autonomy and racial homogeneity, which together produced a distinct bundle of suburban public goods. A 10 percentage point gap in the jurisdiction-level black share (the sample mean) lowers housing values by 2.5 percent on the most-diverse side of the border. Education and property tax rates appears to be the most important area of policy contention between urban and suburbanites.

LEAH PLATT BOUSTAN, *Harvard University*

Banks, Credit Markets and Development: A Study of Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 1803–1850

This paper investigates the role of banks in economic development in early-nineteenth-century America. Using a unique dataset from the bank records and court records in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, I investigate what exactly the bank credit did that personal lending could not. The preliminary results show that, as opposed to personal credit markets, the bank lent to a very selective group of local borrowers in the first 30 years of its operation. This feature changed dramatically later in the mid-nineteenth century. The bank extended more credit to small local artisans and farmers; resembling the activities observed in the personal credit market.

TA-CHEN WANG, *Stanford University*

Rising Through the Ranks: The Evolution of the Market for Corporate Executives, 1936–2003

In this paper, I study the evolution of the market for corporate executives throughout most of the twentieth century. I present new information on the education, career paths, and compensation of top officers in large public corporations. The market for managers was characterized by low mobility across firms, relatively stable pay, and

low inequality among executives from the 1930s to the 1970s. However, these patterns have reversed over the past three decades. A plausible explanation for these trends is a shift in the importance of firm-specific skills toward more general managerial skills. I provide an analytical framework and empirical evidence that supports this view.

CAROLA FRYDMAN, *Harvard University*

Liquidity Constraints, Informal Lending, and the Timing of Emigration

This research measures the individual-level effect of liquidity constraints on the timing of emigration from Great Britain to present day Utah, 1850–1880. It explores the role of informal loans, in the form of prepaid passage provided through the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, as a method of financing emigration. Data are drawn from detailed records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At the time, universal emigration was official Church policy, so adult baptism signaled both conversion and intention to emigrate. The time lag between baptism and emigration is examined as a function of economic conditions, demographic characteristics, and loan receipt.

HEATHER WYNDER HOWARD, *Cornell University*

Strong and Weak Institutional Conflicts Within Nineteenth-Century Continental European States

The specter of fiscal expropriation by an unchecked ruler creates a strong state conflict in public finance; a weak state conflict arises in response to spatial fragmentation of a ruler's political and economic authority. I argue that nineteenth-century Continental European states faced two independent, yet interrelated, institutional shortcomings: politico-economic fragmentation characteristic of weak states and a lack of limited government characteristic of strong states. I find that centralization reforms overcame the political and economic fragmentation that plagued weak Continental states and enabled domestic markets to increase in size. Resolution of the weak state dilemma, however, engendered a strong state one in public finance. I argue that limited government mitigated the strong state conflict and established crown creditworthiness within Continental states. I draw historical lessons that I use to examine strong and weak issues in contemporary developing states.

MARK DINCECCO, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Enclosure and Agricultural Development in Scotland

Landowners in Scotland were free to enclose the open fields after the seventeenth century but it was not until the later eighteenth century that they did so. This study takes issue with claims that changes associated with the Scottish enclosure movement led to dramatic increases in productivity and output. The empirical analysis includes a demand-equation estimate of agricultural output, 1550–1850, as well as cross-sectional and panel data studies examining the productivity benefits of enclosure in Scottish parishes, 1649–1840. The findings do suggest that there were gains from enclosure, though much less than those claimed by its proponents.

CATHERINE DOUGLAS, *University of Oxford and University of British Columbia*

Coercion Power, Property Rights, and Technology Adoption: Watermill Construction in Ponthieu, France During the Eleventh through Twelfth Centuries

In this paper I study the effects of political structure over investment in technology adoption in feudal economies using the construction of watermills in Ponthieu, a region in the north of France, during the eleventh through twelfth centuries as a case study. I show that stronger political competition resulted in higher levels of investment and that evidence for mills is more intense where authority was fragmented and villages were held by different powerful landlords than in areas controlled by the count of Ponthieu with relatively weak landlords. This result is consistent with the predictions of the theoretical model presented in the paper.

KARINE VAN DER BEEK, *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

Labor Demand and the Production of Retail Services in the Early Twentieth Century

This paper uses labor demand to estimate the underlying technology and production function of retailers in 1929. Using a Cobb Douglas production technology three different retail segments are examined under cost minimization and partial profit maximization. Special attention is given to how the spread of the automobile affected the relative productivity of capital in the production of retail services. Results suggest stores considered changes in productivity and input prices when determining exactly how much retail service to bundle with the commodity goods and cities with greater automobile penetration may have been shifted away from the labor inputs toward fixed capital ones.

TODD C. NEUMANN, *University of Arizona*

“A Hard Day’s Night”: Evening Schools in Early-Twentieth-Century New Jersey

Nontraditional schools that organize instruction around children’s work potentially mitigate the adverse consequences of child labor on education. Evening, part-time and continuation schools, which are found frequently in developing countries, were also common in the United States in the early 1900s. This project uses a survey of child workers in New Jersey—a state where approximately 20 percent of children in 1900 ages 10–16, reported primary occupations other than “attending school”—along with New Jersey education reports and microlevel census data to explore the relationship between child work, family characteristics, educational alternatives, and educational outcomes in the early twentieth century.

LINDA CARTER, *Vanderbilt University*