

CHELSEA E. CARTER

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2020 (expected)

Dissertation Title: *Essays in Place-Based Policies and Economic History*

Main advisor: Robert A. Margo

Dissertation Committee: Robert A. Margo, James J. Feigenbaum, Megan MacGarvie

M.A., Economics, Boston University, Boston, MA, 2011

B.A., Economics (*Summa Cum Laude*), Boston University, Boston, MA, 2011

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Urban/Regional Economics, Economic History, Empirical Microeconomics

SUBMITTED PAPERS

“The Road to the Urban Interstates: A Case Study from Detroit,” revise and resubmit (2nd round), *The Journal of Economic History*.

WORKING PAPERS

“Forts and the Frontier: The US Army and the Spatial Distribution of Population,” (Job Market Paper), September 2019.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Financing Creativity: Crowdfunding in 19th Century Fiction” (joint with Megan MacGarvie and Petra Moser)

PRESENTATIONS

Economic History Association (poster), Atlanta, GA, 2019

NBER DAE Summer Institute (poster), Cambridge, MA 2019

Cliometrics Society, Tallahassee, FL, 2018

Social Science History Association, Montreal, Canada, 2017

Urban Economics Association, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2017

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Henry S. Newman Graduate Student Fellowship, Boston University, 2019-2020

Cambridge University Press Dissertation Fellowship, Economic History Association, 2019

Susan K. Jackson Award for “Excellence in Service to the College,” Boston University, 2018

Student Research Award, Institute for Economic Development, Boston University, 2017

“Best Second Year Paper” Award, Boston University, 2017

Cambridge University Press Pre-Dissertation Grant, Economic History Association, 2017

Phi Beta Kappa, inducted in 2011

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for Claudia Steinwender, Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016-2018
Research Assistant for Johannes Schmieder, Department of Economics, Boston University, 2017
Research Assistant for Megan MacGarvie, Questrom School of Business, Boston University, 2016-2018
Billing Associate, Calpine Energy Solutions, San Diego, CA, 2013-2014
Analyst, Compensation Advisory Partners LLC, New York, NY, 2011-2012

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Principles of Microeconomics, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2015, Summer 2017, Summer 2018
Teaching Assistant, Principles of Macroeconomics, Department of Economics, Boston University, Summer 2017, Summer 2018

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Discussant on “Freeway Revolts!” by Jeffrey Brinkman and Jeffrey Lin, Economic History Association, 2019
Graduate Peer Advisor, Department of Economics, Boston University, 2017-present
Co-founder, Women in Economics (*WEorg*), Boston University, 2016-2018
Officer, Graduate Economics Association, Boston University, 2016-2017

COMPUTER SKILLS: STATA, ArcGIS, Python, LaTeX

CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS: USA

REFERENCES

Professor Robert A. Margo

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CHELSEA E. CARTER

Forts and the Frontier: The US Army and the Spatial Distribution of Population (Job Market Paper)

Exploiting a unique setting in United States military history, I study the origins of and persistence in the spatial distribution of the US population. I build a new dataset on the 19th century Army's frontier forts to document their place-based effects. Forts predict initial increases in population measures, indicating their role as man-made factors in explaining the origins of local agglomeration. Increased population measures persist long after fort abandonment, indicative of path dependence. Persistent effects are not driven by variation in fort size or length of time in operation – evidence that historical place-based policies, however small or temporary, can have long run consequences. Separately, demographics of forts locations reflect those of the US Army itself. Fort locations have increased shares of men and foreign-born but only in the short run. Using the spread of the transcontinental railroad, I show that early rail access was critical for continued growth at fort locations and that forts are necessary, but not sufficient, in determining long run spatial patterns.

The Road to the Urban Interstates: A Case Study from Detroit

I use the city of Detroit to examine the political economy behind site selection for urban segments of the Interstate Highway System and to measure effects of construction on neighborhoods. Using variation at the census-tract level, I show that interstates were routed through neighborhoods with low property value to minimize land acquisition costs and future losses to the city's tax base. Following construction, interstates led to short-run declines in property values, population density and the percentage of black residents. In the long run, property values continued to decline in tracts with an interstate, and tracts closest to construction remained less densely populated and had lower shares of black residents relative to those further away.

Financing Creativity: Crowdfunding in 19th Century Fiction

(with Megan MacGarvie and Petra Moser)

Demand uncertainties create major obstacles for financing technological innovation, as well as creativity in the arts. This paper uses detailed book-level data on Romantic Period English literature to investigate crowdfunding as a mechanism to finance innovation in the presence of significant demand uncertainties. A simple model yields conditions under which authors choose alternative financing, and specifically, crowdfunding. We show that new authors, female authors, and authors in new genres face substantially greater demand uncertainty than established authors, men, and authors working in established genres. Detailed book-level contract data reveal that entrants, women, and authors in new genres are more likely to crowdfund their works. We find that crowdfunded works have lower payoffs on average but are substantially more likely to become a major hit. Exploring variation across genres, we show that crowdfunded novels for women, and by women, were more likely to be published in multiple editions, suggesting that realized demand exceeded expected demand in this emerging genre. Crowdfunded women's novels are also more likely to be translated and have an increased probability of long-run success. Using text analysis to measure novelty, we show that crowdfunded titles are likely to present new ideas than publisher-funded works.