

CIFREM SEMINARS

The spatial diffusion of female labor force participation: evidence from US counties (with Alessandra Fogli and Laura Veldkamp)

Stefania Marcassa
from University of Minnesota - USA

Thursday 14 June 2007

4 PM Disa Seminar room

Facoltà di Economia- Via Inama, 5

Many theories have been proposed to explain the dramatic rise of women' labor force participation over the last century in the US. However, few authors have explicitly incorporated the role of spatial diffusion in the analysis. Using data for about 3100 counties over the period 1930-2000, this paper shows that the rise of female labor force participation in US has a strong spatial component. In particular, drawing on techniques developed by geographers for measuring the spatial dependence of social phenomena, we show that the inter-county variation in labor force participation is well explained by a spatial effect term that captures the potential impact of all geographic units on all other units, even after controlling for several demographic and economic factors. Moreover, with the use of thematic maps, we illustrate the dynamic spatial evolution of labor force participation over time and document the spreading of high level of female participation across US. Lastly, we estimate a dynamic model of spatial diffusion which includes lagged values of the variables of interest and quantify the effect of spatial diffusion on female labor force participation growth. Our results suggest that the evolution of women's labor force participation has a strong spatial component and brings empirical support to those theories for which geographic proximity matters. Key words: Female labor force participation, spatial diffusion, contagion, geography, counties. JEL Nos.: J21, N32, R12, Z13.

Referente

cifrem@economia.unitn.it (tel. 0461/882290)