

Mobilizing Forces: Military Conscription as a Driver of Mobility in Argentina*

Scott Weiner[†]

Columbia University

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Abstract

A vast literature documents the presence of unexploited potential gains from migration within a country, in both developing and developed economies. One possible explanation of what prevents people from migrating is that a lack of experience living outside one's hometown earlier in life could make it more difficult to migrate later on. In this paper, I use the natural experiment of military conscription in Argentina, which randomly assigned not only military service, but also the location of service, to study the effect of this temporary displacement on long-run migration rates. I then use a rich source of administrative earnings and employment data to investigate the labor-market implications of this displacement. I find that assignment to military service outside of one's province of origin increased the likelihood of living outside the province of origin by 2.5 percent, and increased workers' positions in the earnings distribution by approximately 0.2 percentile points on average.

*This is the abstract only. Full paper coming soon. All errors are my own.

[†]Email: scott.weiner@columbia.edu