Research Statement - Allison Green

My research investigates how personal networks and residential choices interact to shape spatial inequality of opportunity. I examine the complex feedback loops between social characteristics such as race, income, and education and residential choice, which can perpetuate disparities in opportunity and deepen social stratification. Personal networks and preferences–such as homophily, the tendency to associate with similar others–influence sorting into labor markets and neighborhoods. Conversely, where individuals live and work shapes their personal networks and may transform their preferences regarding amenities and community characteristics (Contact theory). This dynamic interplay between social forces and spatial sorting can have profound implications for economic opportunity and political economy.

My work addresses these questions through novel datasets applied to natural experiments. I am passionate about developing methods that incorporate unique data sources, including World War II archival records to smartphone location pings. This research combines advanced computational and data processing techniques with econometric methods from labor and public economics, trade, and industrial organization to make large-scale datasets both tractable and interpretable.

Current Research

In my job market paper, "Networks and Geographic Mobility: Evidence from World War II Navy Ships", I use random assignment to Navy ships during World War II to identify how exposure to geographically diverse networks influences migration patterns. Using newly constructed data on 1.4 million sailors, I measure the impact of exposure to shipmates from different states on post-war migration decisions. I find that Navy networks influence both if and where individuals moved after the war. A one standard deviation increase in out-of-state shipmates raises out-migration by 4%-5% by 1950, with moves to fast-growing Census divisions increasing by over 15%. I then estimate a discrete choice migration model with embedded networks and show that ties formed long-distance moves that substituted for short-distance migration. Using variation from Navy networks as instruments, I find substantial returns to network-facilitated migration, indicating these connections enabled moves to higher-opportunity areas.

In "Demographic Preferences and Income Exposure", work with Victor Couture, Jonathan Dingel, and Jessie Handbury, we use commercial spaces as a laboratory to explore preferences over the characteristics of potential social contacts, directly examining the relationship between social networks and spatial inequality that is central to my research agenda. Us-

ing smartphone movement data covering millions of Americans, we analyze venue choices within business chains to isolate preferences over demographic composition from other venue characteristics. We find that racial homophily does not vary by income, and preferences for high-income co-patrons remain stable across racial groups. These demographic preferences interact with residential patterns to create persistent segregation: Black and Hispanic individuals face a trade-off between visiting venues with high-income patrons and those with more same-race patrons—a trade-off that Asian and White individuals generally do not face. Importantly, we also find evidence supporting contact theory: when people move to more integrated neighborhoods, their preferences for demographic exposure evolve, suggesting that spatial integration could help break down social barriers. This research demonstrates how new data sources—in this case, smartphone location data—can illuminate the mechanisms through which social networks and spatial arrangements shape economic opportunity.

In "Municipality Size and Local Public Good Provision: Evidence from the Post-War Annexation Boom", work with Kaan Cankat, we examine how municipality size affects local government performance by studying large-scale boundary expansions (annexations) in post-war America. This period saw dramatic divergence in city growth: the average Southern city above 100,000 residents grew sixfold in land area between 1944-1990, while Northeastern cities saw virtually no expansion. Using newly digitized data from Municipal Yearbooks and a difference-in-differences design around large annexation events, we find that 20% population increases through annexation led to significant economies of scale: per capita expenditures fell by 20-25%, total employment per capita decreased by 12%, and revenues per capita declined by 18%. However, efficiency gains in specialized services like policing and fire protection proved temporary, dissipating as cities adjusted service levels for annexed territories. These findings inform longstanding debates about optimal local government size and contribute to our understanding of how institutional boundaries shape public service delivery and spatial inequality.

Future Research Agenda

My future research agenda continues to explore how social networks and geography interact to shape economic opportunity and inequality. This work develops along three complementary tracks:

First, I plan to further leverage the novel World War II dataset constructed for my job market paper to examine how wartime social connections influenced post-war migration and neighborhood formation. I am particularly interested in studying how exposure to shipmates of different ethnic backgrounds affected veterans' residential choices and the growth of sub-

urbs. This research will shed light on how large-scale social mixing can reshape where people choose to live and potentially reduce geographic segregation.

Second, I am investigating how evolving institutions affect where Americans choose to live today. One project examines how the increasing politicization of school districts influences residential choice and political segregation at granular geographic levels. I am also interested in studying how the decline of traditional "third places" like churches affects the geographic composition networks and potentially contributes to economic isolation and social fragmentation.

Third, I aim to translate these insights into policy-relevant research that can inform efforts to promote economic opportunity across places. Understanding how social connections shape where people live—and how location in turn shapes social networks—can help design more effective place-based policies and identify interventions that leverage social ties to reduce geographic inequality. This work will combine novel datasets with rigorous empirical methods to evaluate potential policy solutions.

Teaching and Mentoring Statement - Allison Green

I am passionate about making the concepts of economics broadly accessible to students from all backgrounds and experiences. A core part of my teaching approach is creating space for students with different levels of preparation, especially in introductory courses. I do this through three main principles: teaching basic concepts with clarity and structure, building intuition through real-world examples that connect theory to experience, and designing materials that challenge students to make logical extensions of core ideas. In developing course content, I try to think from the perspective of someone seeing these concepts for the first time, rather than from an expert viewpoint.

Given my prior teaching experience, I am interested in teaching introductory microeconomics. Beyond that, I am also interested in teaching upper-level or graduate-level courses in urban economics, labor economics, and would also be interested in teaching applied econometric methods.

My commitment to fostering an inclusive academic community extends beyond the classroom. As President of Princeton's Graduate Economics Club and through my three years of service, I represented graduate student interests on the Graduate Steering Committee. I've dedicated significant time to mentoring junior PhD students - from providing feedback in student seminars and reviewing early-stage work to offering guidance and support during challenging periods of their academic journey. Looking ahead, I am committed to expanding access to economics for historically underrepresented groups and continuing to build a more diverse and inclusive field."

I have taught four courses as a graduate student teaching assistant during my time at Princeton. Below is a table of my average course reviews for the three courses I received as well as selected teaching reviews that highlight my teaching pedagogy:

Term	Course & Instructor	Score	N
S22-23	ECO 100 (Leah Boustan)	4.20/5	24
S21-22	ECO 100 (Leah Boustan)	4.25/5	38
S21-22	Agriculture and Trade Economics (Silvia Weyerbrock)	No Course Reviews	
F21-22	ECO 100 (Kelly Noonan)	3.50/5	21

Selected Teaching Reviews

"Allison was such a great preceptor. Her understanding of the concepts and the ways she could explain them, list them out, organize them logically, organize her thoughts logically and not trip up, understand the psychology of learning — everything was quite phenomenal.

I aspire to be able to teach like her one day."

    – Spring 2023, Introduction to Microeconomics (ECO 100)

"Allie was an amazing preceptor who ran precept in an incredibly organized way that helped all in attendance. She also agreed to meet with me outside of class on several occasions to ensure that I walked away from this course with the understanding she desired. She's quite possibly the best preceptor I've had and is a gift to her department"

    – Spring 2023, Introduction to Microeconomics (ECO 100)

"Allison was phenomenal. Precepts themselves were helpful for explaining content more thoroughly and showing how to apply knowledge acquired in lecture to solving actual problems."

    – Spring 2023, Introduction to Microeconomics (ECO 100)

"My preceptor was so great!! She made all of the ideas much more clear, while also helping us through more difficult portions of the assignments. She definitely gave the course much more depth, and she answered questions in a way that made many ideas intersect and become more relatable."

    – Spring 2022, Introduction to Microeconomics (ECO 100)

"Allison is a very organized and thorough preceptor, I'm glad I was in her class. She breaks everything so clearly and gave us multiple memorable examples that I could use to understand the concepts."

    – Spring 2022, Introduction to Microeconomics (ECO 100)