

FEEDBACK FOR COURSEWORK

CANDIDATE NUMBER: 41783

DESIGN (appropriateness to research question, feasibility):

Unsatisfactory Fair Good Excellent

PRESENTATION (clarity, consistency, structure):

Unsatisfactory Fair Good Excellent

GENERAL COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENT:

The problem is very important and the motivation for this study is very clear. The borrowing of the synthetic control method from Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller (2010) is also a good methodological platform from which to explore the TMS effect outcomes. However a sentence or two stating the synthetic control method and how it overcomes the biggest potential problem – that TMS is not randomly assigned and is likely to be endogenously related to outcomes – is not explained. The issue here is that being that TMS is not assigned to regions exogenously but rather as part of the same cycle of factors as productivity and pollution. While recognizing that this is a short assignment that does not allow for full exploration of all such issues, I would flag this as the most important area for the larger development in the longer project.

Endogeneity is another major limitation: the issue being that TMS is not assigned to regions exogenously but rather as part of the same cycle of factors as productivity and pollution.

The data required seem to be readily available and the appendix is both reassuring and informative in this regard.

There is a missing section, however, related to the data analysis strategy. The synthetic control method is not in itself a prescription for how to link the TMS status to economic outcomes, which will require some statistical model which is not described. Likewise it should be fairly simple to describe how the data will be used to determine which industries and professions are most affected, but this needs to be detailed.

Some of the research questions are very broad, such as “How can spill-over effects be studied and estimated?” Better to focus on the manageable parts, or define how these questions can be analysed within your proposed framework and using your data.

PROVISIONAL MARK:¹ 68

¹ This mark is subject to confirmation at the final meeting of board of examiners.