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Estimating causal relationships using historical data from 20th-century wars

by **prof. Ing. Štěpán Jurajda, Ph.D., DSc.**

Wednesday, 2nd April 2025
from 1:30 PM

Faculty of Economics, VSB-Technical University of Ostrava,
17. listopadu 2172/15, Ostrava – Poruba (KA 416)

Statistical analysis of historical data provides a natural complement to traditional historical analysis based on qualitative research and on the descriptive use of (typically univariate) quantitative information. At their best, econometric methods applied to individual-level historical data can identify causal relationships. I will present three empirical studies based on data from 20th century wars that are meant to contribute to economics, demography, and political science. First, based on data on prisoners of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, we ask whether humans cooperate and whether preexisting social ties increase one's chances of survival when facing extremely low survival chances. To identify causal effects, we rely on quasi-random composition of transports into the camp. Second, we ask about the formation of political identity of newly re-settled areas in Sudetenland after WWII. We exploit quasi-random differences in the presence of individuals with strong political convictions, to explore the theory of the small seed of political identity. Third, we measure and study the sources of the willingness to die in battle to defend national independence, based on data on the Croatia-Serbia war of 1991-1995.

The seminar is open to the public. Contact person: Martin Macháček, Department of Economics, martin.machacek@vsb.cz

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