Discussion of "Lifetime Outcomes"

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Market Design Perspectives on Inequality, August 7-8, 2016

Administrative Records and Market Design

In the last decade we have witnessed an incredible growth of two things that will hopefully have a large impact on our capacity to reduce inequalities more effectively through policy:

1) Great increase in access to micro data

2) Economist have transformed many assignment procedures that were previously mostly randomized.

The chapters in this sessions illustrate how access to data can improve our policy evaluation and our policy design.

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- This is very valuable achievement, but is this is the best we can do?

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- Provision of information has become a policy in itself, and its impact has been shown:
  - ▶ Returns to Education: Nguyen (2008), Jensen (2010, 2012) Nielson et al.
  - ▶ School Quality: Hastings and Weinstein (2008) or Mizala and Urquiola (2013)
  - ▶ Application and financial aid: Hoxby and Turner (2014), Carrell and Sacerdote (2013) or Dinkelman and Martinez (2014)
  - ▶ Reassignment info to unemployed: Belot, Kircher and Muller (2016)

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- We know that individual heterogeneity is significant and may impact the appropriateness of a given policy.
- Data can help match individuals to their best-fitting policy!
- Could the NYC summer job program assign individuals to jobs or to tasks in a way that improves the impact of the policy?

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- We need to make use of mechainsm design and data mining to allow individuals to have a say on the policy they should be exposed to, to match policies with individual heterogeneity and to obtained improved outcomes (?!).

Measuring the unobserved for Policy

- We need to make a big effort in defining and measuring the objectives of our policies:
  - ▶ In health the relevant outcomes that they have used so far is self-resported happiness (they can easily do much better!)
  - ▶ In school choice: what is the objective function? Is it aggregate only aggregate welfare? Is it improving access to better schools? Reducing neighborhood segregation?
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- Once the objective is defined and we have measurements for them, then we know how to proceed!!
- For example, in most studies there is mismatch between long run and short run results.
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- Need to develop outcome variables that can capture those traits so