**NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2025 Cover Letter:**

**Applicant Information:**

Name: Radostin Ivanov

Phone number: 408-507-9959

Email address: rivanov@usc.edu

Address: 955 W Adams Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90007

**Recommendation Letter Writer:**

Name: Vittorio Bassi

# Radostin Ivanov

955 W. Adams Blvd
Los Angeles, CA, 90007

Email: rivanov@usc.edu

## Education

**University of Southern California** 2022-present
Ph.D. in Economics
**San Jose State University** 2014-2018
B.S. in Economics and B.A. in Japanese

## Research Interests

Migration, Productivity, Innovation, Growth, Macro Development

## Research Projects

**"Do Coalitions Matter?", 2nd year paper**

Using cabinet data across 37 parliamentary democracies, I assess whether coalitions affect government outcomes. I conduct a fuzzy regression discontinuity with running variable the margin of seats won by the largest political party relative to the 50% threshold. I do not find a significant impact on days in power, protests, corruption, and primary expenditure, while I find mixed evidence on polarization, censorship, and minister retention rate.

**"Return Migration and Growth", in progress**

I am currently using scraped LinkedIn profiles to identify return migrants and match them to firm-level data. I aim to quantify the extent to which return migrants boost firm productivity and aggregate growth, as well as the relevant channels behind this process.

**"Erasmus and Post-Graduation Location Choice", planned work**

Using scraped LinkedIn profiles and publicly available Erasmus exchange data, I plan to evaluate the extent to which a study abroad experience influences subsequent location choice and earnings.

## Teaching Experience

**Introduction to Econometrics (Econ 318)** Los Angeles, CA
*Teaching Assistant* 2023-2024
- Led weekly discussion sessions for introductory STATA
- Answered students' questions at weekly office hours
- Graded problem sets, midterms, and finals

**Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory (Econ 305)** Los Angeles, CA
*Teaching Assistant* 2024-present
- Answered students' questions at weekly office hours
- Graded problem sets, midterms, and finals

## Awards, Fellowships, and Honors

Dornsife/Graduate School Fellowship, 2022-2023
Best Economic Paper, Honorable Mention, July 2021
Summa Cum Laude, May 2018
Economics Department Honors, April 2018

## Non-Academic Experience

**OnPoint Analytics** Emeryville, CA
*Research Analyst* 2018-2020

- Conducted industry research and wrote up findings as memorandums
- Extracted and visualized key information from complex datasets, such as pharmaceutical formulary
- Summarized deposition testimony
- Wrote cohesive arguments for expert reports by unifying scattered information

## Skills

Software: Microsoft Office, STATA, R, Python, Matlab, SAS, LyX
Languages: Bulgarian (native), English (bilingual), Japanese (limited)

**List of PhD courses:**

**Year 1, Fall:**

- Econ 601, Microeconomic Theory I
- Econ 602, Macroeconomic Theory I
- Econ 611, Probability and Statistics for Economists

**Year 1, Spring:**

- Econ 603, Microeconomic Theory II
- Econ 604, Macroeconomic Theory II
- Econ 609, Econometric Methods

**Year 2, Fall:**

- Econ 687, Urban Economics
- Econ 650, International Trade Theory
- Econ 686A, Empirical Methods in Economics I
- Econ 593x, Practicum in Teaching the Liberal Arts

**Year 2, Spring:**

- Econ 634, Political Economy of Institutions
- Econ 641, Empirical Analysis of Economic Development
- Econ 686B, Empirical Methods in Economics II

**Year 3, Fall:**

- Econ 692, Seminar in Economic Development
- Econ 694, Seminar in Dynamic Economics
- Econ 700, Macro Reading Group

**Year 3, Spring:**

- Econ 696, Empirical Microeconomics Seminar
- Econ 694, Seminar in Dynamic Economics
- Econ 700, Macro Reading Group

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp. A third-year Ph.D. student in economics at University of Southern California, my research is centered on migration, productivity, and innovation.

My current main project was born out of my personal experience as a first-generation migrant from Bulgaria, as well as the stories of countless others who migrated to the West for opportunity. I aim to first quantify the impact highly skilled return migrants have on firm-level productivity and aggregate growth and subsequently examine the key channels behind this process. Upon acquiring human capital in destination countries, return migrants integrate themselves in the home country's labor force. From managerial practices to technical know-how, return migrants may spur the transfer of frontier knowledge used by firms to boost productivity and expand operations.

Furthermore, I hope to answer the extent to which return migrants not only "imitate" foreign techniques, but also combine home and foreign knowledge to "innovate." A unique blend of skills acquired abroad and an understanding of their home culture and institutions makes these return migrants a suitable demographic to explore this question. For example, an entrepreneur who starts up a business once back home in Bulgaria might use the knowledge acquired from working abroad as well as from growing up in Bulgaria to devise an innovative product. The time spent at home would help the entrepreneur find a local niche in the market, while the knowledge acquired abroad would help him bring his product to fruition.

I am currently cleaning and analyzing a unique dataset of scraped LinkedIn profiles which allows me to identify return migrants based on their education and employment histories. Combined with firm-level data, I plan to use both quasi-experimental and structural methods to identify firm-level effects and quantify the impact on the aggregate economy. Using publicly available financial statements, I will first design an event study to see how the trajectory of productivity metrics such as revenue and number of employees changes after return migrants join firms back home. I can then run fixed-effects regressions to compare firms that received return migrants to ones that did not, controlling for confounds such as industry-specific trends.

Additionally, in future research I plan to explore the impact of the Erasmus student exchange program on post-graduation country choice and earnings. Does the study abroad experience encourage individuals from lower income countries to relocate to the host country, find employment there, and enjoy higher earnings than back home? Publicly available Erasmus exchange data in conjunction with the LinkedIn dataset will allow me to identify Erasmus participants, their study abroad destinations, and subsequent work and study locations.

I wish to attend the NBER Innovation Research Bootcamp to meet other participants working in the innovation space and learn from the talented speakers. The bootcamp will be an invaluable experience for a young researcher such as myself to obtain feedback on my ideas and help me come up with new ones. I am especially eager to meet Ina Ganguli, who is working on return migration and knowledge production, as well as Chad Jones whose work on macroeconomic growth I admire. I wish to interact with likeminded people working on similar topics to my interests and I am confident that the bootcamp is not an opportunity to be missed.

Thank you for your consideration,

Radostin Ivanov

USC Dornsife
Dana and David Dornsife
College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
***Vittorio Bassi***
*Assistant Professor of Economics*

February 6th, 2025

**Subject: Reference Letter for Radostin Ivanov**

Dear NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp Selection Committee,

I am writing to support in the strongest possible terms the application of Radostin Ivanov to attend the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp this summer. Radostin is a highly promising third year student in our Economics PhD program at USC. Radostin is interested in the role that skilled return migrants can play for knowledge diffusion and innovation in home country firms. To study this question, he has recently gotten access to a very promising dataset of scraped LinkedIn profiles that allows him to reconstruct the migration and job mobility histories of workers and managers across different countries and firms. This project strikes me as very innovative, and I believe could potentially turn into an excellent job market paper.

Radostin is precisely at the stage where he would benefit tremendously from attending the Boot Camp and strengthening his knowledge of the economics of innovation. His research interests are a great match with the Boot Camp. I have been impressed by his self-drive, motivation, and hard work, and I am sure he would make the most of this opportunity by being proactive and engaged at the Boot Camp and by participating fully in all activities. What's also important, Radostin is a very sociable person with great communication skills and a positive attitude, which further contributes to making him an excellent choice for the Boot Camp.

Radostin has my strongest support. Please let me know if I can provide any more information.

Sincerely,



**Vittorio Bassi**
Assistant Professor of Economics
University of Southern California

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