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CSAE RESEARCH IS FUNDED by the Department for International Development (DFID); the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC); the European Union through the FP7 programme; the International Growth Centre (IGC); RUSH Foundation; and the World Bank.

DFID, the Department for International Development, is the part of the UK Government that manages Britain’s aid to poor countries. Their work is focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals - the United Nations targets for fighting poverty that must be met by 2015. They work with charities, international organisations and the governments of poor countries to find lasting solutions to the global problem of poverty.

The ESRC funds research and training in social and economic issues. It is an independent organisation, established by Royal Charter, and receives most of its funding through the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The EU FP7 programme funds the research consortium ‘NOPOOR’, an international collaboration which aims to build knowledge on the nature and extent of poverty in developing countries.

The IGC promotes sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research. The IGC is directed and organised from hubs at the LSE and Oxford and comprises country offices across the developing world. The IGC was initiated and funded by UK aid from DFID.

RUSH Foundation was founded to help breathe new thinking into HIV policy and on-the-ground interventions in sub-Saharan Africa. RUSH aims to stimulate policy debate which leads to tangible improvements in government and donor HIV priorities.

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world.
2014 WAS ANOTHER VERY SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR THE CSAE. The Centre launched a research programme on the emerging challenges of African urbanisation, run jointly by CSAE and the Oxford Centre for the Analysis of Resource Rich Economies. Additionally, in October last year, the CSAE partnered with the University of Oxford Department of Economics to host the inaugural Oxford Development Economics Workshop – bringing together doctoral and post-doctoral researchers from nine institutions to present research across a wide range of topics.

These are important new initiatives, and in 2014, the Centre also continued to build on its traditional strengths. The 2014 CSAE Conference hosted more than 400 delegates, with more than 200 papers presented. Our CSAE Lunchtime Seminar continues to host leading researchers from around the world; in the last 12 months, we have had presentations from faculty at Brown University, the Center for Global Development, Colombia University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the London School of Economics, MIT, Stockholm University, University College London, UCLA, the University of Cambridge, the University of Mannheim, the University of Maryland, the University of Zurich and the World Bank. As this Research Summary shows, CSAE continues to produce rigorous and policy-relevant work, which is published in leading academic journals.


CSAE continues to collect new data from a wide range of developing countries. In 2014, CSAE researchers conducted fieldwork in countries including Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. As always, much of this work is conducted by doctoral and postdoctoral researchers; as always, CSAE is fortunate to have a large group of young development economists who are enthusiastic, diligent, and idealistic. As always, they represent the future of our profession and of the Centre.

Next year, we will celebrate our 30th anniversary. Like any good 30th birthday, this will be a chance for celebration and for contemplation. The Centre has achieved much, and many exciting new challenges lie ahead.

PAUL COLLIER (Director)
JAMES FENSKE (Deputy Director)
SIMON QUINN (Deputy Director)
THE INTEREST IN EXCHANGE RATE PASS-through (ERPT) in developing and emerging market (DEM) countries has burgeoned in the last two decades. By contrast, in the earlier comprehensive empirical survey of ERPT by Menon (1995), the majority of studies covered industrialised countries.

The adoption of inflation targeting by many DEM countries in the past two decades with its reliance on inflation forecasting, has enhanced the interest in ERPT. ERPT refers to the degree to which exchange rate variations influence trade prices and, through them, other domestic prices. Understanding the nature of the adjustment of aggregate import prices to exchange rate changes, and through import prices eventually to other aggregate domestic prices, is important for anticipating inflationary developments and monetary policy responses.

ERPT may be measured in both the short-run and long-run, but even in the long-run, the pass-through may not be ‘complete’ in that the change in the exchange rate may not be fully passed through to prices. ERPT in practice often displays significant asymmetries (though commonly it is assumed linear and symmetric), for instance when exchange rate depreciation elicits a price response of a different magnitude to an appreciation, or when smaller changes elicit a different proportionate response from larger changes. Much literature on the industrial countries investigates a different non-linearity: the apparent secular decline in ERPT with structural/regime changes, such as the adoption of a stabilising monetary regime.

For all its policy importance, the measurement and interpretation of ERPT measures is a complex and highly technical affair. Many published estimates, especially for the DEM countries, are

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**Figure 1:** Decline in headline inflation for sets of countries

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1 CSAE and Institute for New Economic Thinking at the Oxford Martin School
2 Nuffield College and Institute for New Economic Thinking at the Oxford Martin School
misleading in being from mis-specified models; and published measures from different methodologies are often not comparable, as the underlying assumptions differ. This poses challenges for the policy-maker.

It is important to take account of structural difference between economies. Where the exchange rate has been actively targeted, e.g. in Asia, systems methods with feedback effects on the exchange rate may be more reliable than single equation models. With extensive structural transformations, e.g. in South Africa (SA) and Central and Eastern European countries in the 1990s, secular shifts in ERPT should be tested for. The greater uncertainty facing DEM economic agents also raises the relevance of non-linearities from threshold effects (menu, hedging and other transactions costs). Finally, hyperinflation and macro-volatility can make for challenging empirical analysis.

A survey of recent research in DEM countries on ERPT (Aron, Muellbauer and MacDonald, 2014) categorises and compares the heterogeneous methodologies used to extract ERPT rates to different prices (with detailed typology tables), and it considers what meaning a policy-maker could attach to such estimates. The frequent misspecifications that produce unreliable ERPT estimates in empirical applications are highlighted.

In general there are five common misspecifications contributing to the malaise. First, many multi-country studies ignore the country heterogeneity (except in country fixed effects) that arises from different levels of development and trade regimes, different monetary policies and histories of inflation, and differences between commodity exporters and commodity importers. Thus, before restrictions are imposed that ERPT coefficients are the same across all countries in the sample, these restrictions should be tested. Barhoumi (2006), unusually in this literature, tests and soundly rejects the restriction.

A second common error, particularly in multi-country studies, is to specify a highly-restricted bi-variate relationship between, for instance, import prices and the nominal effective exchange rate when the relationship is likely multi-variate [i.e. it should include domestic costs, such as unit labour costs, and foreign prices, possibly also oil prices]. A third common error is to assume very restrictive lag structures without careful testing. The assumption of short lags and the omission of domestic unit labour costs (which though slow to adjust to shocks do eventually respond to imported inflation) could result in long-run ERPT being substantially underestimated. In countries where powerful unions create domestic wage-push shocks which depreciate the exchange rate, there is a risk of over-estimating the impact of the exchange rate on domestic inflation when neglecting domestic labour costs.

This leads to the fourth frequent misspecification of ignoring the potential endogeneity of the exchange rate and of domestic cost variables. Active anti-inflationary monetary policy may cause an initial exchange rate shock to be partly offset by an interest rate adjustment. This would lead to a negative feedback from exchange rate shocks, and reduce the longer term inflationary impact of the initial shock. Such issues are almost invariably neglected in ERPT studies, especially with micro-data. Equation systems are needed to develop a deeper understanding of ERPT.

Changing monetary policy regimes causes a fifth potential misspecification. Generally it is assumed that there are constant (unchanging) parameters in the ERPT models. But regime changes can shift the coefficients underlying the time profile of ERPT. This explains why many researchers work with quarterly or monthly differences of data in VAR models or single equations as it is likely to improve robustness for estimation of short-run ERPT or for short-run forecasting. But to estimate medium-term ERPT robustly, arguably the time frame of most interest
to monetary policy-makers, model selection strategies that test and control for regime breaks are needed, see Castle et al. (2012).

Where does this leave the policy-maker? Given pervasive empirical misspecifications in the literature on ERPT in DEM countries (see evidence in Aron et al., 2014), one can ask which stylised empirical facts emerge, apart from the obvious ones that short-run ERPT is smaller than long-run ERPT, that ERPT diminishes down the distribution chain from import prices at entry to consumer prices, and that there is considerable heterogeneity among countries. One important fact is that there is little systematic difference between advanced countries and DEM economies as a whole, once inflation history is controlled for. This is consistent with the view that ERPT has declined with more stable, anti-inflationary monetary policy regimes (see Taylor, 2000).

Higher exchange rate volatility may be associated with higher ERPT in the DEM countries with floating currencies, possibly because exchange rate changes are viewed as more permanent or because invoicing in DEM currencies is discouraged by volatility. However, in countries with occasionally shifting currency pegs, which tend to have lower exchange rate volatility, ERPT appears to be higher, probably again because exchange rate changes are viewed as more permanent. We view the evidence on asymmetries in the response of domestic prices to positive/negative or large/small exchange rate shocks as too inconclusive and too sensitive to the model specification errors for broad conclusions to be reached. Similarly, evidence on trade openness (import penetration) analysed using (endogenous) trade flows is ambiguous, though lower trade barriers measured using tariff measures appear to increase ERPT.

Fresh research work on ERPT in DEM countries should concentrate on addressing the empirical deficiencies: comparing single equation and systems methods; checking robustness to different empirical proxies and lag lengths in better-specified equations (using general-to-specific approaches), and to variable ordering (in VARs); and taking account of the non-linearities and regime changes (monetary and trade regime changes, implying instability in ERPT) and asymmetries of various types. A high priority for research on aggregate time-series data for DEM countries is to incorporate domestic costs in the form of unit labour costs.

For wary DEM country policy-makers, ‘forewarned is forearmed’ when it comes to the interpretation of ERPT results.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported by the British Academy, by grants from the Open Society Foundation, and by the Oxford Martin School.
A recent special issue of the Economic History Review has celebrated the revival of African economic history as a field since the start of the 2000s. My recent paper, ‘The battle for rubber in Benin,’ was among the papers in that issue. In that paper, I discuss the production of rubber in Nigeria’s Benin region during the Second World War.

The ‘battle for rubber’ in Nigeria’s Benin region proceeded in three stages. Before 1942, the Colonial Office worried that Nigerian rubber production could undermine its interests in Southeast Asia. The planting of rubber that had expanded throughout the 1930s posed a threat to the International Rubber Regulation Agreement (IRRA). While the Nigerian Agricultural Department convinced the Colonial Office that positive restrictions would be undesirable, Nigerian policies towards forest reservation and ‘permanent crops’ in fact restricted the development of rubber.

After the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia, Britain encouraged tapping wild rubber to exhaustion and maximum production on smallholder farms and large estates in Benin. After the fall of Malaya, Britain sought to achieve maximum production of both wild and plantation rubber in Benin. Inflation, compulsion and other pressures reduced the benefits to producers. The government faced difficulties incentivising producers and traders, managing distribution, and ensuring quality.

Once it was clear the war would be won, the government transitioned away from encouraging rubber production and struggled to respond to the unexpected boom in planting that had occurred. The government worried planting rubber would tie up land that should be used for food, and attempted unevenly and unsuccessfully to prevent further planting. The war was a turning point. Exports that had risen in the 1930s were consolidated, and peasant production was solidified by an increased stock of capital and knowledge.

The importance of the Second World War in African economic history is not settled. The war brought widespread government control over production and shipping, scarce imports, inflation, forced labour, and conscription to many colonies. Economic and political changes during the war initiated the ‘second colonial occupation’ of greater intervention in African economies.
There is, however, debate over the extent to which the war was truly a watershed. Londsdale, for example, argues that the war changed the balances of power in Kenya between Africans and settlers and between cultivators and herders. Anderson and Throup, by contrast, show that these changes continued trends from the 1930s. Martin, similarly, situates the war as the most severe phase of a long depression in African purchasing power spanning 1914 to 1945. The Second World War was a period of economic upheaval in sub-Saharan Africa. Colonial governments intervened in African economies, leaving changes that outlasted the conflict. This mirrors the literature in economics on how ‘history matters’. While there have been many specific historical institutions and investments that have been shown to matter for later outcomes, there is still debate about which aspects of history are relevant for explaining the present.

In Benin, many of these pressures were felt, though in modified form. Producers in Benin shared the African wartime experience of inflation amidst propaganda and coercion to produce raw materials needed by Europe’s armies. The war left changes in Benin’s rubber industry, but these were not the intended consequences of colonial policy. An increased stock of trees planted from 1942 constrained producers’ choices after the war. Africans’ options were further limited by the exhaustion of wild rubber. Firms were engaged in buying rubber, and continued the trade afterwards. Farmers gained experience and the position of smallholders was solidified. Conversely, forestry policies and quality problems were examples of continuity, rather than change.

Rubber in Benin during the war informs our understanding of the limits of government intervention and the weaknesses of the colonial state. Lacking resources and blinded by prejudices and misinformation, colonial governments relied on local elites to implement makeshift solutions that Africans manipulated to serve their own purposes. In Benin, the state lacked knowledge and struggled to provide incentives that encouraged producers and traders to engage in production at desired qualities, following regulations.

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IN THIS STUDY WE CONSIDER THE GLOBAL costs resulting from civil wars, homicides, assaults and violence against women and children. We estimate the annual costs of violence at around $9.5 trillion, which is about 11 per cent of world GDP. While civil wars and terrorism receive a lot of attention, they are relatively rare events. People are more at risk from other forms of violence. Approximate prevalence rates are:

- 1 in 100,000 people die in civil conflicts
- 9 in 100,000 people are victims of homicides
- 16,000 in 100,000 children are subjected to severe physical punishment
- 12,000 in 100,000 women are assaulted by their intimate partner

The high prevalence rates of violence against women and children make this the most costly type of violence; about 85 per cent of our total cost estimate is due to violence against women and children.

In 2000, the Millennium Development Goals did not include goals on violence reduction. While violence is part of the human condition we should consider violence reduction targets post-2015. Cross-country evidence suggests that there is a large variation in the prevalence of different types of violence. Some countries are more able to provide personal security than others. A world free of violence may be an unrealistic target, but the world is now more peaceful than at the end of the Cold War and a number of high income countries (such as the US and the UK) have seen a reduction in some forms of violence (homicide rates, intimate partner violence) over the past 20 years. Thus, it is potentially possible for countries with currently high levels of violence to reduce these levels by 2030.

In our cost estimates of violence against women and children we concentrate on violence perpetrated in the home, because it is the most prevalent form of violence against women and children. We argue that the domestic abuse of women and children should no longer be regarded as a private matter but a public health concern. In general, violence shares many features of diseases and can be tackled like other public health problems. Violence reduction programmes rely on the identification of the confounding factors of violence, the design of

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**FIGURE 1:** The global cost of violence

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3 Theodore and Francis Geballe Professor of Political Science and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Stanford University
measures to prevent the occurrence and spread of violence, and the isolation of cases to prevent the spread of violence. Ambitious targets and programmes for other public health problems, such as the eradication of smallpox, Rinderpest, Guinea worm, polio and measles have been very successful over the past six decades. As advances in medical science have resulted in a decline in deaths from communicable diseases, social causes of death, such as violence, have become relatively more important.

We highlight that currently almost no development aid is spent on the prevention of violent crime (only about 0.27 per cent of total aid spending). The little aid that is spent on the improvement of judicial systems and police performance is mainly spent in post-conflict countries. Setting violence reduction targets would acknowledge that the global agenda is evolving and would promote research in finding ways to reduce violence in low and middle income countries. We argue for moving beyond a near-exclusive focus on civil war violence – concern with which has increased in the development community and is admirable and important – to recognizing that the costs of interpersonal violence are probably much larger but are almost wholly neglected in current development programming.

Currently almost no development aid money is spent on the prevention of violent crime.

How the reduction of violence can be achieved is less well understood. There is an ongoing debate on what brought about the reduction in violence over the past three decades in high income countries but the phenomenon cannot be reduced to the application of a few societal programmes. Attitudes to violence typically change slowly over time; examples are wife beating and corporal punishment of children. Programmes aimed at reducing violence are thus unlikely to produce results quickly. In addition many programmes have not been set up in a manner which allows rigorous evaluation. For many of these interventions we neither know their impact nor do we know their costs.

A number of well designed, longer term interventions have been evaluated in high income countries but it is unclear whether these results could be replicated in low and middle income countries (external validity). Given that there is little knowledge and data on the impact of interventions such as policing reforms, programmes against domestic violence and parenting programmes outside high income countries, research on the impact of such interventions in middle and low income countries has potentially large returns.

Despite the uncertainty of what feasible targets for violence reduction are and how they can be achieved, we advocate the inclusion of such targets in the post-2015 agenda. However, the current suggestions produced by the High Level Panel experts within the UN have a clear focus on violence against women and children and we highlight the fact that this focus excludes important groups of victims. The vast majority of homicide victims are men (77 per cent), and elder abuse in the home appears to be widespread (some estimates suggest 1 in 20 elderly people are abused). We therefore suggest the discussion of violence reduction targets that acknowledge these neglected forms of violence.

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BEFORE THE ADVENT OF ANTI-retroviral therapies in the nineties, being infected by the HIV virus was equivalent to a death sentence. Now, thanks to remarkable advances in medical research, people who are HIV+ have the possibility to considerably increase their life expectancy and live relatively normal lives as long as they take antiretroviral drugs properly. In sub-Saharan African countries, the yearly cost of antiretroviral therapy (ART) is about USD500 for one person receiving treatment. While this cost seems low compared to world GDP per capita (about USD 11,000), it may prove unaffordable in poor countries characterized by a generalized epidemics. This is especially true since ART has to be provided lifelong and since people may have to switch to more expensive second-line therapies after few years of treatment. From a dramatic medical issue, HIV is turning into a large and growing threat to fiscal stability in high-prevalence and poor countries. In a recent paper (Collier, Sterck, Manning 2014), we explore the long-run economic implications of ART availability in poor economies.

Our argument starts from the proposition that if an individual can be saved from direct deadly threat with certainty at the cost of a few hundred dollars, there is a reasonable presumption that somewhere, globally, there resides a moral duty to rescue this individual. At a cost of USD500 per treatment per year, it would only require USD7.7 billion (using figures at 2012) to provide treatment to the 15 million individuals who need it. To put these numbers in perspective, this represents 0.01% of world GDP; 1.1% of the military budget of the U.S.; 50% of U.S. federal funding for fighting HIV/AIDS domestically; and 3.8% of what OECD countries committed to give as international aid at the 2005 G-8 summit in Gleneagles. Provided with these numbers, most people would agree that there exists somewhere a moral duty to provide free ART to HIV+ individuals who cannot afford to pay for their treatment.

HIV is a long-term infection causing the progressive failure of the immune system for which no definitive cure exists yet. Even if antiretroviral drugs are taken properly, the HIV virus will not fully disappear from the infected blood, and the viral load is expected to rebound if treatment is stopped. ART needs to be sustained in the long run, and is therefore more similar to the treatment of a long-term chronic disease than to a one-off treatment of a fatal disease. This difference has important economic implications in the long run. Offering life-long antiretroviral treatment to HIV+ people needing treatment generates a long-term financial liability which is analogous to the liability of sovereign debt.

Figure 1 presents estimates of the discounted cost of full ART coverage in the long run for high-prevalence countries as a fraction of their current...
GDP. Each bar represents the amount that a national government should save now in order to pay ART for their citizens in the long run. Figure 1 clearly shows that the moral duty of rescue constitutes a significant addition to the sovereign liabilities of high-prevalence countries. The fiscal impact seems particularly dramatic for countries like Malawi, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. A rule-of-thumb of the IMF proposes that the debt of developing countries should not breach 40% of their GDP (Geithner, 2002; Belhocine and Dell’Erba, 2013). The analysis of figure 1 shows that the moral duty to rescue imposes a financial liability which may be considerably higher than this threshold, thereby justifying the intervention of the international community. As shown in figure 2 for the case of Malawi, this quasi-liability is expected to rise over time for as (1) more people get infected; (2) more HIV+ individuals need treatment; and (3) more HIV+ individuals need second-line therapies. These estimates are a lower bound for what government will have to pay: the ageing HIV+ population on treatment faces an increased risk for many non-communicable diseases (NCDs) compared to an age-matched uninfected population, including cardiovascular disease, non-AIDS malignancies, liver and kidney disease, and osteoporosis.

Once these future obligations are recognized, it is sensible for governments to minimize them. In this context, prevention can be understood as an investment to reduce quasi-liabilities resulting from the moral duty to rescue. Interventions that prevent a person becoming HIV positive are worth paying as long as their cost is less than the cost of the obligation. Money should be devoted to prevention up to the point at which the marginal dollar spent on prevention reduces the cost of the moral duty to rescue, as measured by the discounted cost of treatment, by one dollar. While this theoretical rule provides a simple way of determining the optimal level of investment in prevention, estimating the two sides of this equation in practice is likely to be an empirical challenge given the complexity of data required. Context-specific data on the epidemiology of HIV and on the marginal cost of treatment and prevention are much needed to refine our analysis and be able to orient policy.

Even with optimal investment in prevention, the financial liability is likely to be unaffordable for poor and high-prevalence countries. This is a clear case for the international community to take over part of the quasi-liability, as indeed it has done.

Exactly how the burden should be shared

\[ \text{FIGURE 1: Discounted total cost of full antiretroviral therapy coverage in the long run} \]

4 The number of HIV+ individuals needing treatment was estimated using the SPECTRUM software. ART cost data comes from Schwartländer et al., 2011. Full ART coverage is assumed to be equivalent to a coverage of 90% per cent of eligible population at the CD4 count threshold of 500 cells/mm3. Transition from 1st line to 2nd line ART was modelled assuming that 2.83% of people on treatment switch to 2nd line therapy every year. The discount rate used is equal to 7%.
between the country and the international community is a normative issue beyond the scope of economics. However, there are some parameters that can assist in reaching a defensible position. The Arusha Target for health investment in Africa can be seen as providing a basis for determining how much countries should pay domestically for health care. The burden of HIV in the total burden of diseases then provides the amount that countries could reasonably allocate to their HIV epidemics. The debt relief provided to poor countries during Jubilee 2000 provides another basis for determining whether the quasi-debt burden of HIV is too large to bear.

Once a sharing rule has been determined between the international community and recipient countries, appropriate incentives should be put in place in order to foster adequate investment in prevention. In order to avoid moral hazard, one important rule for dividing responsibility is that if one party accepts to finance a share of the liability created by the treatment of future infection, it should also support at least a share of prevention efforts. Only this rule provides adequate incentives to invest in prevention.

This project is part of a research programme involving a team of economists and health specialists from the University of Oxford, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Imperial College, and Harvard. The research programme is supported by the Rush Foundation, whose mission is to encourage disruptive thinking about HIV/AIDS. The Oxford team consists of Professor Paul Collier, Professor Mthuli Ncube (until recently the Chief Economist of the African Development Bank), Richard Manning, Judith Kabajulizi, and Olivier Sterck.

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ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES TARGETED TO individuals or households, such as cash transfers and scholarships, are an important component of public sector activities in developing countries. Yet funders of these programmes, whether donors or national taxpayers, may be concerned about potential misuse of the money. Donor agencies often try to influence programme design to reduce mistargeting, but there is limited evidence on whether these efforts are effective. In this paper, we investigate whether politicians direct more assistance to their home villages, and whether changing programme designs and policies can reduce this political influence.

One challenge with answering this question is that politicians may come from wealthier, more educated communities. These communities are less likely to need and qualify for assistance. This could cause us to conclude – erroneously – that there is no benefit to being connected to a politician than there really is.

To address this, we compare the home villages of politicians who won in a close election, with the home villages of their rivals. Since both types of villages are connected to competitive politicians, they tend to be similar. The only difference between them is due to a small number of votes that got the politician from one village into office and left the other one out.

We find that after a politician narrowly wins a close election, his or her home village receives double the government assistance that his rival’s village receives.

Are the motivations personal or political? This can be important for understanding how widely political influence on targeting will spread.

To help understand this, we also looked at politicians who represent another constituency that does not include their home village. Their home villages benefited despite the fact that the politician did not actually represent their constituency. We found no difference in the effects, suggesting that the ‘home village effect’ is not due to politicians directly rewarding people for voting for them – these voters did not even have the option of choosing that politician on the ballot.

This suggests that the motivations of the politicians for benefiting their home villages may be more personal than political.
This work shows political favoritism for a small area that is well connected: the politician’s home village. But in related work (Vyborny and Chaudhry 2014, Vyborny 2014) we find that politicians influence the targeting of cash transfers to their own clans throughout their constituency, again almost doubling their likelihood of getting these transfers. But politicians’ clans only benefit when the politicians face close electoral competition. This makes sense given that clan is often invoked as a basis for voting in blocs in rural Pakistan. This suggests that while the influence on targeting the home village is very localized and personal, political influence also works on a larger scale as well – making its overall implications larger and more important for overall public expenditure.

We have clear evidence that politicians influence targeting. But from a policy perspective, the key question is: can we do anything about it? Our results suggest that the answer is yes.

During the period we study, the government, with close engagement from the World Bank, revamped the existing mechanism for selecting recipients of one major cash transfer programme, the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP). In the original setup of the programme, politicians were actually asked to identify recipients themselves – they were given stacks of forms to sign up recipients.

After less than a year, this system was scrapped, and a new proxy means test was introduced. In the new system, a very short questionnaire or ‘poverty scorecard’ is used to assess a household’s education and assets to get an approximation of the poverty level. The score on this ‘scorecard’ is now supposed to be the only criterion for selecting a household for the programme.

We compare the ‘home village effect’ before and after this reform. We find that after the reform, the bias towards politician’s home villages continued, but was much smaller as a percentage of total recipients. As the programme scaled up, more people in the rival’s home village received the cash transfer. This is encouraging: while changes to programme rules cannot completely eliminate political influence on targeting, it seems that they may be able to reduce its overall importance. Our results have implications for donor agencies and civil society organizations who aim to engage or pressure governments to reduce corruption and improve public spending. While a sceptical public might assume that connections will always trump the rules, reform can level the playing field, making it easier for those who are unconnected to access government assistance.

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JOURNAL ARTICLES


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CSAE STUDENTS
VELLORE ARTHI

GENDER, THE HOUSEHOLD, AND HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION

My doctoral research focuses on human capital formation, and investigates how households make investment decisions regarding children’s nutrition, health, and education, particularly in response to early-life shocks. For instance, in one paper, I test for the impact of childhood exposure to the American Dust Bowl, an environmental disaster, on later-life human capital; the mechanisms and developmental pathways by which this disaster affected health and education; and the scope for public relief spending and household-level investments to remediate these early-life insults. The use in the thesis of historical data on industrializing economies, primarily from 19th and early 20th century U.S. and Britain, allows for useful parallels with today’s developing countries. In research projects outside my thesis, I examine issues of agricultural productivity, child labour, and intra-household labour allocation in both historical and present-day African contexts.

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DAN BROWN

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES

I am studying the influence of norm-changing interventions on private attitudes and social norms that encourage domestic violence. Specifically, I am looking at radio edutainment programmes tackling domestic violence.

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STEFANO CARIA

EFFICIENCY AND OTHER-REGARDING PREFERENCES IN INFORMATION AND JOB-REFERRAL NETWORKS

In this thesis, I study the formation of networks and the provision of public goods over networks in a series of experiments carried out in India, Ethiopia and Ghana. Three of the experiments are carried out with farmers and one with urban workers. I ask three questions on network formation: Can individuals form efficient networks? Are some individuals unable to interact with high value partners? Under what conditions do new links reduce initial inequalities in social connections? In the last chapter, I study whether central individuals in networks contribute more to public goods than their less connected partners and whether they are influenced by the expectations of other players. The results of this work help us understand farmers’ information networks and workers job-referral networks and to draw lessons for the design of policies that support the diffusion of innovation and worker’s integration in the labour market.

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RACHEL CASSIDY

MICROFINANCE AND MICROSAVINGS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

My research focuses on two areas. First, I examine community-based microfinance groups in Malawi, using a novel dataset I have collected with the help of iiiG funding. I ask whether savers and borrowers are able to match efficiently through these groups, and how strategic interaction within such groups influences their sustainability in the face of common shocks. Second, I run a lab-in-the field experiment with female microentrepreneurs in Pakistan, to understand the role of peer effects in saving and borrowing behaviour within microfinance groups.

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CORNELIUS CHRISTIAN

ESSAYS ON THE ECONOMICS OF VIOLENCE

I am investigating lynchings in the US South, civil unrest in French West Africa, and witchcraft trials in Early Modern Scotland. By examining these episodes, I answer broad questions about why violence occurs, as well as its potential long-term impacts.

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FRANCES COSSAR

AGRICULTURAL INTENSIFICATION AND THE RISE OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY IMPORTS FROM THE EMERGING ECONOMIES: THE CASES OF ETHIOPIA AND GHANA

The aim of this work is to better understand the increasing mechanization of agricultural production in parts of Africa, especially in the context of changing rural labour markets, urbanization, and structural transformation. Furthermore, the research will seek to better understand the impact of increasing machinery imports from the emerging economies and the sustainability of these modes of technology transfer. The cases of Ethiopia and Ghana will be considered as these are countries where agricultural machinery imports have been increasing, government policies exist to promote mechanization, and agriculture is a key sector for economic development and poverty reduction.

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ELWYN DAVIES

RELATIONAL CONTRACTING, FIRM SURVIVAL AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GHANA

My research focuses on two questions: how do people use information and reputation when trading with each other, and why do some firms succeed while others fail?

For the first question I have been running laboratory experiments using a home-brewed mobile lab with students and entrepreneurs in Ghana. The goal of these experiments is to assess the effects of
reputational mechanisms on trusting behaviour in labour and other trade relationships. We find surprisingly low levels of cooperation and relational contracting.

For the second question I have conducted a survey on 1200 manufacturing firms in Ghana, where we went back to firms that were interviewed a decade ago as part of the industrial census and former CSAE surveys. We find strong regional and cross-sector differences, indicating that firms in Ghana have been impacted in different ways.

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MARIA FRANCO GAVONEL

DRIVERS AND EFFECTS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION DURING CHILDHOOD AND EARLY ADULTHOOD IN ETHIOPIA, INDIA, PERU AND VIETNAM

My thesis aims to contribute to the literature on how internal migration of children and young adults affect their well-being by providing empirical evidence from four developing countries. Specifically, it intends to identify the key drivers of children and young adults’ decision to migrate and to what extent does migration lead to an improvement on children and young adults’ welfare.

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SIMON FRANKLIN

LOW COST HOUSING AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN AFRICAN CITIES

I work on labour markets in large developing country cities, with a focus on search frictions and labour supply decisions. My most recent research finds that young job seekers are constrained by the costs of looking for jobs when they live far away from jobs, and that small randomized transport subsidies significantly reduce discouragement and increase employment rates. Other work makes use of high frequency weekly phone panel data to uncover surprisingly high volatility in labour outcomes and job turnover for the urban youth in Ethiopia. My final thesis chapter looks at how employment contracts can allow for significant flexibility in response to large economic shocks due to typhoons in the Philippines. Ongoing work with other researchers at CSAE investigates ways to better improve matching in Africa labour markets, using original firm recruitment data, in conjunction with randomized job fairs and applicant certification programmes designed to remove information asymmetries from the recruitment process.

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ANTHONY HARRIS

ESSAYS ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LARGE-SCALE LAND DEALS

My research focuses on the causes and consequences of large-scale industrial and agricultural land investment in developing countries. Part of my thesis models the strategic interaction between investors and host governments as they negotiate land deals. The other part evaluates the impact of land transfers using data from Ethiopia on households who have had their land expropriated to provide land for a factory.

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JAN JOZWIK

ESSAYS ON TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The main objective of my doctoral thesis is to study the factors limiting the adoption of yield-improving agricultural technologies in sub-Saharan Africa. Using field and lab experimental data from cocoa farmers in Ghana I investigate whether providing yield-improving inputs on credit or under an insurance scheme can lead to higher and sustained adoption of technology.

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MICHAEL KOELLE

LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

I am interested in labour markets in developing countries, especially how labour market participants choose different forms of employment. I study whether owners of microenterprises in urban Colombia base business decisions in part on alternative opportunities in wage employment, and how young Ghanaians search for jobs and decide upon careers.

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JONO LAIN

ESSAYS ON SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA

My research focusses on participation in self-employment in Ghana, with a special focus on the trade-off between domestic work, such as household chores and childcare, and market work. I examine the extent to which women and men are affected differently by domestic obligations, and consider the implications this has for time-allocation, occupational choice, and earnings. In my more recent theoretical work, I use a search-match framework to consider the role that discrimination may play in explaining female-male differences in outcomes in economies with large informal sectors.

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PAVEL LUENGAS-SIERRA

WELFARE IMPACT AND DESIGN OF FORMAL SAVING DEVICES

My research revolves around the design and welfare impacts of formal saving devices in Mexico. My analysis in particular is based on a novel savings instrument that combines commitment, flexibility, and a peculiar subsidy scheme. My main data source is a unique formal savings dataset. The data are administrative financial records at the individual level from Bansefi, a Mexican national savings institution that serves low-income population. The panel dataset comprises detailed monthly savings data from several savings instruments between 2008 and 2014 and covers 5 million individuals. My research will shed light on the saving devices mechanisms that help people to reach savings targets and improve their welfare.

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THOMAS McGRégor

THE IMPACT OF NATURAL RESOURCE SHOCKS ON FIRM INVESTMENT BEHAVIOUR IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

My research looks at the macroeconomic impact of natural resource booms in developing economies and the optimal monetary policy response. It will analyse the different channels through which resource booms may lead to positive or negative macroeconomics outcomes, with a particular focus on domestic firms’ investment behaviour. How do firms make investment decisions in resource rich economies? What are the mechanisms by which some firms in these settings prosper whilst others do not? What are the implications for optimal monetary and exchange rate policy in resource rich developing economies?

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MUHAMMAD Meki

FIRMS, FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

I am interested in the relationship between the financial structure of small firms, in particular the amount of equity in their capital structure, and their investment behaviour and growth.

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KARan NAGPAL

ESSAYS IN URBANISATION

My work is about urbanisation in India, with a particular focus on the effect of property rights on social, economic and political outcomes in informal and slum localities. I also investigate the economics of relocation and rehabilitation, and the broader macro processes of urbanisation in emerging economies.

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VIVIANA PEREGO

THE IMPACT OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION ON THE WELL-BEING OF RURAL-AREA WORKERS: MICRO-LEVEL EVIDENCE FROM DR-CAFTA IMPLEMENTATION IN CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES

My current research is a combination of Development Economics and International Trade topics. It analyses the effect on wellbeing of the implementation of DR-CAFTA (Dominican Republic – Central America Free Trade Agreement) in Honduras. The analysis, performed at the individual level, focuses on a broad range of dimensions, which encompass poverty measures based on asset ownership indicators, fertility, maternal health, and employment. The investigation also explores the transmission to children of the trade shock experienced by their parents, by inspecting patterns of child mortality, anthropometric measures, and school enrolment. Further investigation will check for the presence of an effect on intra-household allocation of resources and decisional power between spouses.

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CHRISTOPHER ROTH

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR: EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA

I am interested in the formation of endogenous social preferences, i.e. how economic factors shape social norms and social preferences. Moreover, I conduct research on how the (social) environment shapes an individual’s and a household’s behaviour. Currently, I have a project investigating peer influences on conspicuous consumption as well as a project that examines the role of economic shocks in shaping informal taxation, contributions to public goods and punishment norms.

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ANDREA RUEDIGER

SEED SECURITY AND AGRO-BIODIVERSITY IN EASTERN ETHIOPIA

The first essay investigates patterns of agro-biodiversity and finds that small-farming households in a semi-commercialized area of Ethiopia do not use diversity for risk management. The second essay analyses the institutional design of an informal seed sharing network in Oromo communities of West Hararghe. The third paper will look at the effects of wheat rust as a severe production shock on crop choice and varietal diversity in the Eastern highlands of Ethiopia using a unique panel data set.

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VICTORIA SCHREITTER

FOOD PRICE SHOCKS AND HOUSEHOLD BEHAVIOUR IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

In my doctoral research I study how food price shocks affect household behaviour in developing countries. In developing countries many households are both producers and consumers of food, suggesting not only that their welfare is likely to be quite sensitive to food price changes, but also that the impact of these price changes depends on their net consumption status and available coping strategies. I use theoretical and empirical methods to analyse different types of impacts, such as changes in consumption and asset holdings.

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DANIELA SCUR

THE KEY CAUSES AND CRUCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF FIRM OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL STRUCTURES

My thesis is an applied empirical thesis looking at the ownership structure of firms – particularly separation of ownership and control – and firm outcomes such as performance, differing internal organisational structures and labour market effects. I will look at developing countries and contrast results with OECD countries. My first three chapters deal with firm ownership structures and patterns at the micro level, that is, looking at the causes and effects using data on individual firms. My fourth chapter takes a step back and looks outside the individual firm and into regional effects of structural patterns – that is, how these patterns affect not only the individual firm but other surrounding firms and the regional labour market as well.

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ANISHA SHARMA

ESSAYS ON THE ALLOCATION OF CAPITAL IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

My thesis will explore the extent of misallocation of capital across different sectors in a large developing country, Indonesia. The first chapter examines labour market transitions across formal and informal sectors over a period of 10 years. The second chapter considers reductions in human capital investment as a response to an aggregate economic shock by exploiting regional variation in degree of severity of the 1998 East Asian financial crisis. The third chapter will examine the determinants of productivity and employment generation in Indonesian firms in the last two decades.

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HANNAH UCKAT

ESSAYS ON FIRMS AND DEVELOPMENT

My current research focuses on the factors that impede firm performance and growth in developing and emerging economies, in particular infrastructure and financing constraints. I further investigate how these constraints interact and the impact of public policies that try to address them. My broad aim is to understand what may be required for the private sector to contribute to sustained increases in standards of living.

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SÉBASTIEN E. J. WALKER

ESSAYS IN DEVELOPMENT MACROECONOMICS

Sébastien Walker is writing a doctoral thesis concerned with the macroeconomics of low-income countries, and notably countries of the East African Community (EAC), under the supervision of Professor Christopher S. Adam. The first of three chapters is concerned with the bank-lending channel (BLC) of monetary policy transmission in EAC countries; it draws evidence from a panel data set to support the hypothesis that a BLC operates in the five EAC countries taken as a group. The second chapter develops a Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE) model in which farmers face an external finance premium (EFP) when borrowing to purchase fertilizer. This EFP, combined with shocks from volatile rainfall, results in a financial accelerator, whereby financial frictions magnify weather induced economic downturns by increasing the cost of external funds. The third chapter aims to assess the consequences for monetary policy of the rapid development of mobile money in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

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NATHANIEL (NAT) WARE

IMPEDEMENTS TO DEVELOPMENT: THEORETICAL ADVANCES IN UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

Low-income populations face both financial risks, due to their uncertain income levels, and social risks, due to the uncertain consequences of development interventions that affect them. This theoretical applied development microeconomics research seeks to deepen our understanding of the four key development challenges, namely: (1) the challenge of protecting individuals from negative shocks; (2) the challenge of enabling individuals to capitalize on opportunities (such as accumulating human capital); (3) the challenge of achieving optimal social risk-taking by financiers of development interventions; and (4) the challenge of understanding the ways in which expectations affect development outcomes, and incorporating this into measures of poverty and social welfare.

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FROM FOREIGN AID TO DOMESTIC DEBT: ESSAYS ON GOVERNMENT FINANCING IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

SYED ALI ABBAS

The first essay in this thesis (Twin deficits and free lunches: Macroeconomic outcomes in anticipation of foreign aid) concerns itself with situations in which private agents anticipate a future windfall (free lunch) that will help service the debt resulting from a present fiscal expansion (implemented via a temporary tax cut). Such expectations of a windfall can arise in the context of natural resource discoveries or, more interestingly, due to perceptions by agents in ‘too important to fail’ countries that it will be bailed out through higher foreign aid or debt relief. We employ an overlapping generations model featuring credit constraints to study the real effects of such free lunch expectations in a small open economy, drawing contrasts with the standard tax and money finance closure rules. The model is solved analytically and shows that anticipated aid is equivalent to current aid when agents have perfect foresight, so that a temporary tax cut is seen as permanent. Accordingly, agents raise their consumption and indebtedness (at the expense of future generations) by an amount that is an increasing function of their ‘impatience’ (subjective rates of time preference plus probability of death). A worsening of the current account obtains (twin deficits) across a range of plausible closure rules, including those featuring money finance. The introduction of credit constrained households does not alter the basic result in the case of full aid finance, but does matter for mixed tax-aid regimes, in more complex settings where agent expectations and donor promises on aid diverge, and when governments face borrowing constraints so that the timing of aid delivery matters.

The second essay (The role of domestic debt in economic growth: An empirical investigation for developing economies) focuses on the remaining source of government financing, i.e. domestic debt, and the role it can play in mobilizing private savings, facilitating credit intermediation in higher risk settings (i.e. serving a ‘collateral’ function on bank balance sheets), developing financial markets, and supporting economic growth in general. To investigate this question empirically, we set up a new domestic debt database covering about 100 developing economies, going back three decades to 1975; explore Granger causality links between domestic debt and key macroeconomic and institutional variables; and estimate the growth impact of domestic debt using panel regressions, allowing for non-linear effects. Domestic debt, as a share of GDP, is found to exert a significant positive impact on economic growth, with potential channels including domestic savings mobilization, provision of risk-insurance on banks’ balance sheets, and greater institutional accountability of the state to its citizens. Although this result countervails more established arguments against domestic debt (i.e. that it leads to crowding out and banks to become lazy), there is some evidence that above a ratio of 35 percent of bank deposits, domestic debt does begin to undermine economic growth. The growth payoff also depends on debt quality, with higher payoffs observed for positive interest-rate bearing marketable debt issued to nonbank sectors.

The third and final essay (‘Why do banks in developing economies hold domestic government securities?’) explores demand-side determinants of domestic debt, by focusing on commercial bank holdings of government paper, discriminating carefully between voluntary factors (such as mean-variance portfolio optimization) and statutory ones (cash reserve and capital adequacy requirements). The analysis is made possible by the construction of a dataset on government and private returns (real and nominal) for almost 600 banks from 70 emerging and low-income economies, spanning...
the (pre-Basel II) period 1995-2005. A battery of structural cross-section regressions indicates that banks’ portfolio decisions are at least as significantly influenced by mean-variance considerations as regulatory factors: the actual portfolio share of government securities (λ) responds intuitively, and sizably, to variations in the moments of the distributions for government and private returns as well as in the minimum-variance portfolio share (λ*). Higher cash reserve requirements tilt portfolios away from government securities toward riskier private lending, while higher capital adequacy requirements work the other way. The association between actual portfolios and the identified determinants is noticeably weaker at lower ends of the λ distribution, suggesting the domination of non-CAPM (capital asset pricing model) factors in those contexts.

BARRIERS TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF PEACE: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF POST-CONFLICT VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA

PATRICK BARRON

What causes post-conflict violence to occur in some places emerging from large-scale extended violent conflict and not in others? Why do episodes of post-conflict violence take different forms? And what causes episodic violence to escalate into larger, renewed, long-lasting, deadly violence? This thesis contributes answers to these questions by examining the experience of Indonesia.

Six provinces saw civil war or large-scale inter-communal unrest around the turn of the century. In each case, war ended. Yet levels, forms, and destructive impacts of post-conflict violence vary significantly across areas. The Indonesian cases are used to build a parsimonious theory of the sources of spatial and temporal variance in post-conflict violence.

Multiple methods are employed. A new dataset—the National Violence Monitoring System—containing over 158,000 coded incidents, maps extended and post-conflict violence across areas and over time. Six districts in three provinces are then studied in depth. Comparative analysis of districts and provinces—drawing on over 300 field interviews—identifies the determinants of variations in post-conflict violence levels and forms.

Post-conflict violence is not directly or deterministically produced by poverty, weak state institutions, or fractured social relations, the foci of much of the literature. To understand why post-conflict violence occurs, or does not, and why it takes the forms it does, we need to focus on the political economy of violence: the ways in which, and the reasons why, violence is used by different actors to shape decisions on the allocation of power and resources.

To this end, a novel actor-centred explanation is developed. The thesis locates post-conflict violence in the incentives of three groups—local elites, local violence specialists, and central state elites—to use violence instrumentally for purposes of accumulation. Violence occurs when members of these groups support its use.

The extent to which individuals within each group support violence is largely dictated by the expected benefits that violence affords vis-à-vis non-violent action. Groups see violence as beneficial where it proves to be a successful way to capture a greater share of power or resources. Where a signal is sent that violence ‘pays’ and where the costs of using violence are low—where the use of violence does not lead to death, injury, or arrest— incentives to use it are strengthened. Where there are few
peaceful channels for accumulation of wealth, and/or power, groups have heightened motivations to use violence as part of the political and economic game. Conversely, where the use of violence is not expected to be beneficial, is costly, or where peaceful means for getting ahead exist, violence is less likely to be used.

Different combinations of support for, or resistance to, violence from each group determine the forms post-conflict violence will take, as different kinds of violence require the involvement of different actors. Smaller-scale episodes occur where local violence specialists see benefits in using violence. Escalation to larger episodic violence, such as riots or group clashes, requires the support of local elites. Absent such support, post-conflict areas will be peaceful or see only smaller-scale episodic violence. Escalation to extended violent conflict only occurs where elements of the central state elite support or allow such escalation. In the absence of this, violence remains episodic.

ESSAYS IN LABOUR ECONOMICS: THAILAND’S LABOUR MARKET ADJUSTMENT DURING THE STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

LA-BHUS FAH JIRASAVETAKUL

In this thesis, I examine the importance of human capital for economic development in Thailand during the period of high economic growth and structural transformation (1985-2000), using labour force survey data. My thesis consists of six chapters, including the introduction and conclusion chapters. The second chapter provides background on the relevant literature on Thailand and data for the following three chapters of the thesis. The three main chapters adopt distinct modelling frameworks, and attempt to estimate the effects of education, as a measure of human capital, on three major outcomes in the Thai labour market, namely (i) earnings; (ii) sector of employment; and (iii) earnings inequality. I address the endogeneity problem of education using an education policy shift—the change in the compulsory schooling law—that produces exogenous variation in education.

Chapter 3 investigates how education increases earnings and the probability of finding a job in the non-agricultural sector. As the education policy shift influences educational attainment in a discontinuous way, a regression discontinuity (RD) framework is adopted to identify the average returns to education and the effect of education on the sector of employment. It is important to emphasise that the RD technique constrains the effects of education on the two outcomes to be linear and to be applicable only to sub-populations. My results confirm significant effects of education on both earnings and the sectoral sorting process. In addition, there are heterogeneous effects of education by gender.

The fourth chapter is an extension of the previous chapter. I allow the returns to education to be heterogeneous across education levels and sectors of employment, while attempting to estimate the returns for the entire population. I use a control function (CF) approach and a double selection correction to estimate the sectoral earnings process, while jointly accounting for the choice of education and the selection into sectors and paid employment. I find that the returns to education are non-linear and higher in the non-agricultural sector especially for medium and highly educated workers. This suggests that human capital plays a crucial role in facilitating a structural transformation towards the non-agricultural sector.

In the final chapter, I study how the increased primary education completion rate affects earnings inequality. While there exists a burgeoning literature on the average returns to education, less attention
has been devoted to estimating the effects of education on the distribution of earnings. I identify the effects of primary education completion on earnings at different points of the distribution, and thus earnings inequality, using a recently developed approach, called regression discontinuity distributional treatment effects. My results suggest that the increased primary education completion rate reduces earnings inequality as the returns to primary education are larger for the poor than the rich.

THE DETERMINANTS OF INCOMES AND INEQUALITY: EVIDENCE FROM POOR AND RICH COUNTRIES

CHRISTOPH LAKNER

My thesis consists of four separate chapters which address different aspects of inequality and income determination. The first three chapters are country-level studies which examine (1) how incomes are shaped by spatial price differences; (2) the factor income composition; and (3) enterprise size. The final chapter analyses how income inequality has changed at the global level.

The first chapter investigates the implications of regional price differences for earnings differentials and inequality in Germany. I combine a district-level price index with administrative earnings data from social security records. Prices have a strong equalising effect on district average wages in West Germany, but a weaker effect in East Germany and at the national level. The change in overall inequality as a result of regional price differences is small (although significant in many cases), because inequality is mostly explained by differences within rather than between districts.

The second chapter is motivated by the rapid increase in top income shares in the United States since the 1980s. Using data derived from tax filings, I show that this pattern is very similar after controlling for changes in tax unit size. Over the same period as top income shares increased, the composition of these incomes changed dramatically, with the labour share rising. Using a non-parametric copula framework, I show that incomes from labour and capital have become more closely associated at the top. This association is asymmetric such that top wage earners are more likely to also receive high capital incomes, compared with top capital income recipients receiving high wages.

In the third chapter, I investigate the positive cross-sectional relationship between enterprise size and earnings using panel data from Ghana. I find evidence for a significant firm size effect in matched firm-worker data and a labour force panel, even after controlling for individual fixed effects. The size effect in self-employment is stronger in the cross-section, but it is driven by individual time-invariant characteristics.

The final chapter (co-authored with Branko Milanovic) studies the global interpersonal income distribution using a newly constructed and improved database of national household surveys between 1988 and 2008. The chapter finds that the global Gini remains high and approximately unchanged at around 0.7. However, this hides a substantial change in the global distribution from a twin-peaked distribution in 1988 into a single-peaked one in 2008. Furthermore, the regional composition of the global distribution changed, as China graduated from the bottom ranks. As a result of the growth in Asia, the poorest quantiles of the global distribution are now largely from sub-Saharan Africa. By exploiting the panel dimension of the dataset, the analysis shows which decile-groups within countries have benefitted most over this 20-year period. In addition, the chapter presents a preliminary assessment of how estimates of global inequality are affected by the likely underreporting of top incomes in surveys.
ESSAYS ON DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

OSWALDO MOLINA

This thesis is a collection of essays on the relevance of property right reforms on the wellbeing of poor households in developing countries; specifically titling programmes in urban Peru.

The first essay, coauthored with Måns Söderbom, explores the impact of property titling programmes on housing investments. A rich literature documents the effect of land ownership on investments in agriculture, and in impoverished rural areas. However, scant research is available regarding the impact that these programmes have in the urban context (Field, 2005 and Galiani and Schargrodsky, 2010, are the exception in the Latin American case). Likewise, there is limited evidence on the dynamic and composition of housing investment.

The availability of a unique dataset permits us to trace households’ investment behaviour. This allows us to investigate if tenure security induces households to make sizeable investments, the evolution of this effect over time, and whether heterogeneous expectations about future tenure security matter for the estimated impact. Contrary to the results found by Field (2005), the analysis conducted in this chapter finds that property titling programmes also affect long-term household investment. Nevertheless, the response on this type of investment may take several years to become effective; which may explain the difference with the results obtained by Field (2005).

The second essay explores the additional processes that need to be implemented in order to ensure the success of property rights reforms in urban areas. The existing empirical literature on property rights reform has overlooked the relevance of ensuring the formal registration of the subsequent plot transactions conducted by property owners. Formal registration of such transactions is indispensable if the benefits derived from the titling reform are to be maintained over time. In other words, the absence of a registry represents a loss of formality that consequently would lead the property rights reform to fail. In this chapter, we analyse the determinants of property registration once a plot transaction has occurred, and how changes in the registry procedures can dissuade households from registering their property.

Finally, the third essay investigates the effect that titling programmes can have on individuals’ risk preferences and their formation. Risk preferences are essential in economic decision-making. As a potential source of substantial insecurity in slum dwellers’ lives, tenure insecurity could substantially affect their willingness to take risks. The evidence from this chapter shows that tilted dwellers reported lower risk aversion than their counterparts. Furthermore, slum dwellers that were exposed to tenure security in their youth were more likely to report lower risk aversion than older individuals with titles. These results are robust to placebo tests.

REFERENCES


ESSAYS ON HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

ABHIJEET SINGH

This thesis consists of a short introduction and three self-contained analytical chapters. Chapter 1 (Singh, 2014) focuses on the question of learning gaps and divergence in achievement across countries. I use unique child-level panel data from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam with identical tests administered across countries to children at 5, 8, 12 and 15 years of age to ask at what ages do gaps between different populations emerge, how they increase or decline over time, and what the proximate determinants of this divergence are. I document that learning gaps between the four countries are already evident at the age of 5 years and grow throughout the age trajectory of children, preserving country ranks over the age range studied. At primary school age, the divergence between Vietnam and the other countries is largely accounted for by substantially greater learning gains per year of schooling; these results are corroborated by instrumental variable estimates using discontinuities in grade completion arising between children born in adjacent months due to country-specific enrolment guidelines.

Chapter 2 (Singh, forthcoming) focuses on within-country learning differences, specifically those between private and government school students in India. I present the first value-added models of learning production in private and government schools in this context, using unique panel data from Andhra Pradesh state. I examine the heterogeneity in private school value-added across different subjects, urban and rural areas, medium of instruction, and across age groups. Further, I also estimate private school effects on children’s self-efficacy and agency. I find modest or insignificant causal effects of attending private schools in most test domains other than English and on children’s academic self-concept and agency. Results on comparable test domains and age groups correspond closely with, and further extend, estimates from a parallel experimental evaluation.

Chapter 3 (Singh, Park, and Dercon, 2014) uses panel data from the state of Andhra Pradesh in India to estimate the impact of the introduction of a national midday meal programme on the nutritional status of primary school students (measured using weight-for-age and height-for-age z-scores with reference to international standards), and investigates whether the programme ameliorated the deterioration of health in young children caused by a severe drought. The programme was targeted at all students enrolled in government primary schools. We use a non-linearity in the relationship between age and the probability of enrollment, induced by a change in the calendar year of birth, to correct for self-selection into the programme. Children born in December 2001 are much more likely to be enrolled than children born in January 2002 due to a ‘rule of thumb’ regarding the age at enrolment. Our preferred instrumental variable (IV) results, which rely on the assumption that children born in these adjacent months do not systematically differ in nutritional status, indicate that the programme acted as a safety net for children, providing large and significant health gains for children whose families suffered from drought.

REFERENCES


LOCAL IMPACTS OF NATURAL RESOURCE BOOMS AND BUSTS

GERHARD TOEWS

My thesis consists of five stand-alone chapters empirically evaluating questions relating to the life cycle of natural resource extraction. I use three different datasets to shed light on the local impacts of natural resource booms and busts.

In chapters 1 to 3 I use the household budget survey of Kazakhstan in combination with a dataset I collected on the location of oil and gas fields to explore the impacts of the oil boom on the local population by linking the two spatially. In the first chapter, I explore the distributional effects of the oil boom and show that average income increased whereas income inequality and unemployment decreased due to the links between the oil and gas sector and the local labour markets. In the second chapter, I study how the increase in average income was perceived by the local population and find that households’ satisfaction with income decreased. I argue that this was driven by locals’ inflated expectations that exceeded the increase in income. In the third chapter, I study how the boom affected households’ expenditure and show that the likelihood that households pay tuition fees for tertiary education increased following an increase in expected returns to tertiary education.

Chapter 4 explores the long-term impacts of a negative labour demand shock during the coal mine closures in the UK. To do this, I construct a new dataset containing the location of all active coal mines since 1981 and link it to the UK census. I do not find any evidence for an increase in unemployment in the affected districts. This is because individuals are willing to migrate to equalize employment opportunities, exit the labour force or find a job in other industries. On the aggregated level I find evidence for the first two channels, but not the latter. Disaggregating the data by gender, however, suggests that males laid off during mine closures persistently crowded out female workers in manufacturing.

In chapter 5, I study the determinants of drilling costs and their impact on the real price of oil using a new global data set on the number of exploration wells drilled and costs of drilling. To do this, I propose a structural model of the upstream sector in the oil and gas industry. The model allows us to decompose the variation in the reduced form errors of the estimated VAR into three structural shocks, and estimate the dynamic responses of the variables in the system to these shocks. I confirm that the upstream sector of the oil and gas industry is subject to increasing costs, but do not find that the real oil price is permanently affected by shocks to costs of drilling.
Politicians, Patrons, and the People: Influences on Targeted Government Redistribution in Pakistan

Kate Vyborny

Powerful individuals often influence the delivery of government services for their own purposes. Officials may prefer inherently to direct assistance to their own relatives and social contacts (nepotistic preferences). Alternatively, they may use government services strategically in exchange for favours (patronage) or to gain voter support (clientelism). Most existing literature examines these three phenomena separately, or does not distinguish the motivations for politicians’ influence on distribution. Causal identification has also been a problem in the empirical literature.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I develop a theoretical model of interaction between three levels of actors: politicians, local patrons, and households. The model allows for politicians and patrons to influence government services for nepotistic, clientelistic, and patronage purposes. In chapters 2-4, I test the predictions of the model using two novel household survey datasets I collected along with my collaborators in rural Punjab, Pakistan.

Chapter 2 tests the theoretical predictions for the interaction of politicians, patrons and voters. Chapters 3 and 4 provide quasi-experimental evidence on the causal effect of links with politicians on assistance. I find evidence that politicians exert dramatic influence on the targeting of government assistance in this setting. Consistent with the theoretical model, the most assistance goes to a small ‘inner circle’ of their closest contacts. Politicians assist this ‘inner circle’ based on their inherent preferences, regardless of electoral pressure.

When politicians face electoral pressure, they also deliver assistance to a wider group, in particular members of the same clan. In contrast, local patrons do not appear to have significant independent influence over the targeting of the government assistance programmes I study, but they do provide other types of assistance to households. Their behaviour is more consistent with the idea that they are motivated by inherent preferences for assisting their contacts. The results have implications for the interpretation of empirical literature on nepotism, clientelism, and patronage. They can also inform the policies of donor agencies and civil society organizations which aim to engage or pressure governments to reduce corruption and improve public spending.
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