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Homepage

CURRENT POSITION

Senior lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Gothenburg 2016-*present*

EDUCATION

Associate professor (Swedish: docent), University of Gothenburg 2016
Ph.D. in Economics, University of Gothenburg 2009
Master, Economics and Political Science, University of Gothenburg 2005

OTHER POSITIONS/AFFILIATIONS

Board member, ASWEDE (Association of Swedish Development Economists) 2013-*present*
Board member of editorial board for Ekonomisk Debatt 2015-2017
Associate Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Economics, University of Gothenburg 2011-2016
Post-doc at the Gothenburg Centre of Globalization and Development 2010-2011
Research Fellow, Dept. of Economics, University of Gothenburg 2009-2010
Visiting Researcher, University of California at Berkeley USA, 2007

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Primary fields: institutional and development economics
Secondary fields: ethnic diversity, political economy of natural disasters and extreme weather events

ONGOING WORK AND RECENT WORKING PAPERS

“Drought and support for the incumbent close to elections” (ongoing)

Abstract:

Using survey data from the Afrobarometer and drought-indicators created using the SPEI, I investigate how weather shocks impact on the stated support for the party of the incumbent president or prime minister, and to what extent the effect depends on proximity to the next election. Preliminary results show that a drought lowers the stated support for the incumbent with about five percentage points. Consistent with the notion that governments increase their efforts to boost their support during campaign periods, proximity to an election is associated with more support for the incumbent. Moreover, the data shows that the effect of a drought on support for the incumbent is more negative if the next election is closer in time. That is, droughts are always bad for support, but the effect multiplies close to election.

“Drought and trust” (ongoing)

Abstract:

Using survey data from the Afrobarometer and drought-indicators created using the SPEI, I investigate how weather shocks impact on trust. I consider four broad dimensions of trust and for each of them discuss what underlying attitudes they capture and how they may be affected by adverse weather shocks. The four trust-dimensions: (1) “Political trust,” which refers to trust in the president or prime minister, the parliament, and the ruling party. (2) “Trust in justice” (closely related to the concept of “Institutional trust”), which refers to trust in the police and the courts of law. (3) “Particularized trust,” which refers to one’s trust in one’s neighbors and relatives. (4) “Generalized Trust,” which refers to trust in people in general (“most people”). Preliminary results show include the following. First, I find negative effects on “Political trust” and “Trust in justice” if there are moderate to severe or extreme droughts, which may signal dissatisfaction with preparations or relief efforts and negative experiences with increased insecurity or repression. Second, there are positive effects on “Particularized trust” and “Generalized trust” if there are moderate droughts, but no effects if the droughts are more severe, which could indicate that more frequent interactions with relatives and neighbors build these forms of trust.

“Schooling, Weather Shocks, and Protest” (2019), mimeo.

Abstract:

Weather shocks have been linked to poor economic growth, violent conflict, and democratic change at the aggregate level, yet little is known about what characterizes the individuals that become more willing to join protest movements if they experience adverse shocks. I study how drought episodes affect the willingness to attend a demonstration or protest march, and the potential moderating role of individual schooling. I link exogenous high-precision data on drought events to georeferenced survey data on African respondents from multiple rounds of the Afrobarometer surveys. I find that ongoing drought events have a non-negligible positive impact on the willingness to participate in protests, and that the effect is considerably stronger for more severe droughts. People with more education react stronger, and there is suggestive evidence that the effect on dissatisfaction with democracy matter more than the effect on poverty. This is not consistent with the view that people that are more vulnerable to shocks, or people that suddenly become poor, will join protest movements during shocks. Instead, it points to the central role for political interest, knowledge, efficacy, and relevant civic skills. A more in-depth understanding of the role of individual resources will improve our understanding of how societies will react to future climate change and the associated increase in frequency and severity of weather shocks.

“Foreign aid and structural transformation: Micro-level evidence from Uganda” (2019), *Department of Economics, University of Gothenburg, Working Papers in Economics 755*. Available online here. Submitted for publication.

Abstract:

History tells us that sustained economic growth, necessary to alleviate poverty in sub-Saharan

Africa, requires growth in the fundamentals, such as infrastructure and human capital, but also structural transformation, i.e., a reallocation of labor from low-productivity to high-productivity sectors. I study whether foreign aid is a factor that helps or hinders structural transformation. I use a dataset on aid projects with precise coordinates from all major donors and match it to panel data with extensive information on labor market activities for a large representative sample of individuals in Uganda. I find consistent evidence that foreign aid reverses the process of structural transformation. More specifically, the local short-term effect of foreign aid is that people in areas with ongoing aid projects work more in agriculture and less in non-agricultural sectors. There are no significant effects on wages or household expenditures for people in the agricultural sector, but the effects on people in non-agricultural sectors are negative.

“Gold mining and education: a long-run resource curse in Africa?” (2017) (with Thushyanthan Baskaran and Arne Bigsten) *Department of Economics, University of Gothenburg, Working Papers in Economics 666*. Available online here. Submitted for publication.

Abstract:

We provide micro-level evidence on an important channel through which mineral resources may adversely affect development in the long-run: lower educational attainment. Combining Afrobarometer survey data with geocoded data on the discovery and shutdown dates of gold mines, we show that respondents who had a gold mine within their district when they were in adolescence have significantly lower educational attainment. These results are robust to the omission of individual countries, different definitions of adulthood, the use of alternative data from the Development and Health Surveys (DHS), and buffer-based approaches to define neighborhood. Regarding mechanisms, we conclude that the educational costs of mines are likely due to households making myopic educational decisions when employment in gold mining is an alternative. We explore and rule out competing mechanism such as endogenous migration, a lower provision of public goods by the government, and a higher propensity for violent conflicts in gold mining districts.

“Do the land-poor gain from agricultural investments? Empirical evidence from Zambia using panel data” (2015) (with Sven Tengstam) *Department of Economics, University of Gothenburg, Working Papers in Economics 624*. Available online here. Submitted for publication.

Abstract:

In the context of the global land rush, some portray large-scale land acquisitions as a potent threat to the livelihoods of already marginalized rural farming households in Africa. In order to avoid the potential pitfall of studying a particular project that may well have atypical effects, this paper systematically investigates the impact on commercial farm wage incomes for rural smallholder households of all pledged investments in the agricultural sector in Zambia between 1994 and 2007. The results suggest that agricultural investments are associated with a robust moderate positive effect, but only for households with a relative shortage of land.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal articles

“Regional development and national identity in sub-Saharan Africa” (2017) (with Thushyanthan Baskaran and Arne Bigsten), *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 45(3): 622-643. Available online here.

“Government Impartiality and Sustained Growth in sub-Saharan Africa” (2016) (with Thushyanthan Baskaran and Arne Bigsten), *World Development*, 83: 54-69. Available online here.

“Ethno-regional favouritism in Sub-Saharan Africa” (2015) (with Ann-Sofie Isaksson), *Kyklos*, 68: 143-52. Available online here.

“Tax innovations and public revenues in sub-Saharan Africa” (2015) (with Thushyanthan Baskaran and Arne Bigsten), *Journal of Development Studies*, 51(6): 689-706. Available online here.

“Roots of Ethnic Diversity” (2012) (with Ola Olsson), *Journal of Economic Growth*, 17(2):71-102. Available online here.

“Nationalism and Government Effectiveness” (2011) (with Gustav Hansson) *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 39 (3): 431-451. Available online here.

“Social Capital vs Institutions in the Growth Process” (2009) (with Ola Olsson and David Yanagizawa) *European Journal of Political Economy*, 25(1):1-14. Available online here.

Chapters in books

“Democratization in the Aftermath of Natural Disasters” (2013) in *Globalisation and Development: Rethinking Interventions and Governance* (ed A. Bigsten). Ch.3, p.23-42. Abingdon: Routledge. Available online here.

“Nya Zeeland” (2009) in *Reform: förändring och tröghet i välfärdsstaterna* (eds. P. Santesson-Wilson and G.Ó Erlingsson), Stockholm: Norstedts.

Books

“Essays on Conflict, Institutions, and Ethnic Diversity” (2009) Doctoral Thesis, University of Gothenburg.

REPORTS

“Reformer i Nya Zeeland 1984-93: Fallstudie inom Projektet Politisk Förändring”(2007). Report written for The Ratio Institute.

EDITORIALS

“Målen för det svenska biståndet måste ses över” *Ekonomisk Debatt* 1/2016. Available online here.

REFEREE WORK

American Political Science Review, Conflict Management and Peace Science, Economic Enquiry, Economics, Empirical Economics, Environment, Development and Sustainability, European Journal of Political Economy, Fiscal Studies, International Tax and Public Finance, Journal of African Economies, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Development Studies, Journal of Economic Growth, Journal of the European Economic Association, Kyklos, Oxford Economic Papers, Public Choice, World Development.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

SEK 8.0 million for 4-year project (2016–2020) “Climate change and the prospects for economic growth: How extreme weather events affect regime stability” from the Swedish Research Council, Project No 2016-02119. With Martin Sjöstedt, Aksel Sundström, and Sverker Jagers.

SEK 3.5 million for 3-year project (2013–2015) “Land Grabbing or Agricultural Investments: the Two Sides of the Coin” from Swedish Research Council /Sida/SAREC. (Extended to 2017 due to parental leave.) With Sven Tengstam.

SEK 2.4 million for 3-year project (2011–2013) “Fiscal Capacity and democracy in developing countries” from SIDA / Uforsk. (Extended to 2016 due to parental leave.) With Arne Bigsten and Thushyanthan Baskaran.

Participated in application leading to the establishment of Gothenburg Center of Globalization and Development. University of Gothenburg (2009).

USD 25.000 from The Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation (2009). Osher Ph.D. Student Fellowship.

SEK 800.000 for 2-year research project (2007–2008) “When Will Africa Take Off?” from SIDA/Sarec, SWE-2006-450. With Arne Bigsten, Ann-Sofie Isaksson, Annika Lindskog, and Sven Tengstam.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Ph.D. level: Econometrics I, Institutional Economics and Long-Run development, and Macro I

Master level: International Administration and Global Governance (IAGG)/ Global Studies: Research Methods, Quality of Government Course, and Theoretical and Historical Perspectives on Global Governance

Bachelor, Intermediate, and/or Introductory level: Applied Economics and Trade, Development Economics, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, and Trade Theory and Development Economics

COURSE RESPONSIBILITY AND PLANNING

Master level: IAGG/ Global Studies: Research Methods, and Theoretical and Historical Perspectives on Global Governance

Intermediate level: Macroeconomics

Introductory level: Macroeconomics