FIELDS OF CONCENTRATION

Primary: Development Economics  Applied Econometrics
Secondary: Political Economy  Labor Economics

PREVIOUS EDUCATION

University of California – Berkeley  Ph.D. Agricultural and Resource Economics  2018 (Expected)
University of California – Berkeley  M.S. Agricultural and Resource Economics  2013
McGill University  B.Com Economics  2008

WORKING PAPERS

Can More Information Lead to More Voter Polarization? Experimental Evidence from Turkey
Coverage by the World Bank and the International Growth Centre

Abstract: Many claim that increased availability of information via both old and new media drives political polarization, possibly undermining democratic institutions. However, rigorous evidence on this topic remains limited. I address this gap by conducting two experiments during a recent Turkish referendum that was on an important institutional change to weaken constraints on the executive. First, I designed a randomized door-to-door campaign. In this campaign, the opposition party gave uniform information on poor economic performance and increased terrorist activity under the incumbents leadership to more than 130,000 voters. I show that voters, despite receiving the same signal, diverged further in their vote choice on aggregate, leading to a significant increase in political polarization. The result is consistent with a model where polarization in vote choice is driven by differences in reaction to a common signal and not self-segregation to different information sources, as others have assumed. The opposition failed to increase its vote share in this campaign, on aggregate, because it lacked the necessary data to target the subset of constituents that interpreted the information campaign in their favor. In a second experiment with politicians, I confirm that the opposition had inadequate data on voters relative to the incumbent based on an analysis of roughly one million of their tweets. The evidence from both experiments, taken together, suggests that the incumbent party can exploit its access to higher quality data on voters to maintain power and advance a policy that weakens democratic checks and balances.

Economic & Non-Economic Factors in Violence: Evidence from Organized Crime, Suicides & Climate in Mexico
with Marshall Burke, Felipe Gonzalez, Solomon Hsiang, and Edward Miguel

Abstract: Organized intergroup violence is almost universally modeled as a calculated act motivated by economic factors. In contrast, it is generally assumed that non-economic factors, such as an individuals emotional state, play a role in many types of interpersonal violence, such as crimes of passion. We ask whether economic or non-economic factors better explain the well-established relationship between temperature and violence in a unique context where intergroup killings by drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs) and normal interpersonal homicides are separately documented. A constellation of evidence, including the limited influence of a cash transfer program as well as comparison with both non-violent DTO crime and suicides, indicate that economic factors only partially explain the observed relationship between temperature and violence. We argue that noneconomic psychological and physiological factors that are affected by temperature, modeled here as a taste for violence, likely play an important role in causing both interpersonal and intergroup violence.

Effect of High Ambient Temperature on Suicide Rates in the United States and Mexico
with Marshall Burke, Felipe Gonzalez, Patrick Baylis, Sam Heft-Neal, Sanjay Basu, and Sol Hsiang (submitted)
WORK IN PROGRESS

The Impacts of Drought Tolerance on Local Labor Markets in India
with Manzoor H. Dar, Kyle Emerick, Elisabeth Sadoulet, and Alain de Janvry (draft coming soon, slides available)

Abstract: We use a randomized experiment with a new agricultural technology to study village labor markets in rural India. We first introduced a new drought-tolerant seed variety in a random set of villages and then tracked labor market outcomes over three years. Technological change is shown to benefit workers by increasing labor demand and therefore increasing agricultural employment. However, these effects are short lived because the new seed variety is found to be unprofitable for farmers. By the third year of the experiment we find positive treatment effects on non-agricultural employment — suggesting that non-agricultural work provides a buffer for workers displaced by disappearing farm jobs.

The Interaction of Formal and Informal Insurance: Experimental Evidence from Ghana (Paper in progress)

Abstract: This study aims to understand the implications of offering formal mechanisms to indemnify aggregate risk on informal insurance mechanisms already in place. Using publicly available data from a randomized control trial conducted in northern Ghana, I investigate whether the introduction of a rainfall indexed insurance product to smallholder farmers crowds out informal risk sharing mechanisms, as measured by private transfers. The predictions are motivated by a risk sharing model with dynamic limited commitment: (i) either the take-up of rainfall-indexed insurance enables risk sharing networks to more effectively smooth consumption and mitigate idiosyncratic risk or (ii) the increased value of autarky reduces the extent of risk sharing. The overall finding is that private transfers are crowded out by the take-up of insurance; depending on the specification, the value of transfers given decrease by 38 to 100%. In addition, the take-up of insurance leads to a decrease in the probability of a transfer being given by 8 to 16%. A pay-out from the insurer generally has no effect on the value of transfers given, but decreases the probability of giving a transfer by 14%.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2012-Present National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship
2016 Mellon Research Grant and Stevens Scholar Program (Center for Middle Eastern Studies, UC Berkeley)
2016 JPAL Governance Initiative Exploratory Research Grant (MIT)
2015 Al-Falah Program Grant (Center for Middle Eastern Studies, UC Berkeley)
2015 National Science Foundation and USAID Grant
2013 BRAC-CEGA Travel Grant (with Fiona Burlig)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2014-2017 Graduate Student Researcher, UC Berkeley, Professor Elisabeth Sadoulet
2013-2014 Graduate Student Researcher, UC Berkeley, Professor Edward Miguel
2010-2012 Research Assistant, Economic Growth Center (EGC), Yale University, Professors Chris Udry and Mark Rosenzweig
2010 Research Fellow, Center for International Development, Harvard University, Professor Rohini Pande
2008-2009 Research Associate, Center for Microfinance, Chennai and Thanjavur, India, Professors Rohini Pande and Erica Field

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2015 UC Berkeley, Graduate Student Instructor, Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ARE) 213: Applied Econometrics (Ph.D. level)
Fall 2014 UC Berkeley, Graduate Student Instructor, Dept. of Economics and Environmental Economics and Policy (ECON) C171: Economics of Development (Undergraduate level)
Fall 2006 McGill University, Teaching Assistant, Faculty of Management (MGCR) 271: Business Statistics (Undergraduate Level)
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2014 Consultant for Meltem Aran, Development Analytics
   –Led a training on impact evaluation methods in agriculture to Ministerial Delegates from over 10 African countries in Johannesburg, South Africa

PRESENTATIONS

2018 NYU-CESS Experimental Political Science Conference (NYU); Populism’s New Wave: Comparative and Historical Perspectives (UCLA); Political Economy of Undemocratic Politics, Western Political Science Association; PacDev (scheduled)
2017 Development Economics Seminar (UC Berkeley); Agricultural and Resource Economics Seminar (UC Berkeley); Political Economy Research Lunch (UC Berkeley); Berkeley Conference on Political Economy and Governance Poster Session (UC Berkeley); Development Economics Seminar (University of San Francisco); North East Universities Development Consortium (Tufts University)
2015 PacDev (UC San Diego)

SKILLS AND PROFICIENCIES

– Software: Stata, R, \LaTeX, Python (Intermediate), ArcGIS
– Languages: English (native), Turkish (fluent), Spanish (Basic)
– Citizenship: USA and Turkey

VOLUNTEERING AND MENTORING

2015-Present Leadership Board for Women in Economics at Berkeley
   – Mentorship and Research Seminars
2015-2016 Tutor Leader and Substitute Teacher in Math at the Prison University Project
2014 Peer Mentor for BRAC-CEGA Visiting Fellow

REFERENCES

Jeremy Magruder, \texttt{jmagruder@berkeley.edu} 510 643-8742  Elisabeth Sadoulet, \texttt{esadoulet@berkeley.edu} 510 642-7225
Frederico Finan, \texttt{ffinan@berkeley.edu} 510 642-7284  Edward Miguel, \texttt{emiguel@berkeley.edu} 510 642-4361