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Education

PhD in Applied Economics, The Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania 2016-2021
Thesis: Essays on the Political Economy of Development

References:

Santosh Anagol (chair)
Associate Professor
Business Economics and Public Policy
Wharton School of Business
anagol@wharton.upenn.edu

Guy Grossman
Professor
Political Science
University of Pennsylvania
ggros@sas.upenn.edu

Arthur van Benthem
Associate Professor
Business Economics and Public Policy
Wharton School of Business
arthurv@wharton.upenn.edu

Nina Harari
Assistant Professor
Real Estate
Wharton School of Business
harari@sas.upenn.edu

MPA/ID, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University 2014-2016

BA in International Relations, Stanford University 2008-2012

Teaching and research fields

Primary: development economics, political economy

Secondary: international trade and investment, environmental economics, applied microeconomics, formal political theory.

Teaching experience

BEPP 250: Managerial Economics, Professor Eduardo Azevedo Fall 2018

Professional experience

Visiting Fellow, Myanmar Development Institute, Government of Myanmar 2017
Research Assistant, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania 2016-2020
Research Assistant, Center for International Development, Harvard University 2015-2016
Consultant, Poverty Global Practice, Myanmar Country Office, The World Bank Group 2015-2016
Research Associate, BRAC Uganda 2012-2014

Peer-reviewed publications

Grossman, G., S. Kim, J. Rexer and H. Thirumurthy. 2020. "Political partisanship influences behavioral responses to governors' recommendations for COVID-19 prevention in the United States." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117 (39) 24144-24153.

Job market paper

“The local advantage: Corruption, organized crime, and indigenization in the Nigerian oil sector”

Abstract: Despite advantages in technology and human capital, multinational firms may operate less effectively than their local competitors in markets plagued by corruption and conflict. I study the effects of divestment to local firms in the context of a two-decade indigenization drive in Nigeria’s turbulent oil sector, during which the share of local production grew substantially. Local takeover considerably increases oilfield output and reduces the share of non-producing assets. Local firms increase output by mitigating conflict risk: oil theft, maritime piracy, and violence by criminal-militant groups all fall following local takeover. However, since local firms have lower operating standards, divestment leads to increased operational oil spills and gas flaring, magnifying the environmental externalities of oil production. A simple bargaining model illustrates that organized crime operates a protection racket; local firms’ lower bargaining costs allow them to buy protection more cheaply, explaining their superior output performance despite lower technical efficiency. I find evidence that connections to high-level politicians and the security forces drive local firms’ advantage in reducing criminal activity.

Working papers

“The brides of Boko Haram: Economic shocks, marriage practices, and insurgency in Nigeria.”
Revise and Resubmit at *The Economic Journal*

Abstract: Unmarried young men may cause social unrest. This paper documents that imbalances in the marriage market lead to greater civil conflict. Marriage markets in rural Nigeria are characterized by bride-price – pre-marital payments from the groom to the family of the bride – and polygamy. These customs diminish marriage prospects for young men, causing them to join violent insurgencies. Using an instrumental variables strategy, I find that marriage inequality increases civil conflict in Nigeria’s Boko Haram insurgency. To generate exogenous supply shocks to the marriage market, I exploit the fact that young women delay marriage in response to favorable pre-marital economic conditions, which increases marriage inequality only in polygamous villages. The same shocks that increase marriage inequality and extremist violence also reduce female marriage hazard, lead women to marry richer husbands, generate higher average marriage expenditures, and increase violence against women. The results shed light on the marriage market as an important but neglected driver of violent extremism.

“Delta Boys: Bargaining, war, and black market oil in Nigeria” (with Even C. Hvinden)

Abstract: We study how a ruling elite facing conflict over natural resources allocates rents to rebel groups and how the structure of the elite’s settlement with rebels affects post-conflict resource theft. Using original data on the locations, alliances, black market activities, and attacks of militant commanders in the Niger Delta conflict, we find that a peace deal led to large declines in violent attacks on the oil sector, but also sustained growth in the black market for stolen oil. We use a model of dynamic bargaining under imperfect information and limited commitment to explain why inefficient conflict and oil theft persist in equilibrium. The model predicts that the government may optimally allow theft of resources by strong rebels in locations with low opportunity costs of black market activity. We test and find support for these propositions in the data. Our analysis highlights how the industrial organization of black markets and military dynamics jointly shape incentives for participants in resource conflicts.

Works in progress

The welfare effects of zoning reform: Evidence from Sao Paulo (with Santosh Anagol and Fernando Ferreira)

Drug cartels and international financial regulation: Evidence from Mexico

Mining concessions and ethnic politics in Myanmar (with Even C. Hvinden)

Honors and awards

Amy Morse Prize, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania	2017
George James Doctoral Fellowship, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania	2016
Dubin Emerging Leaders Fellowship, Harvard University	2015
International Public Service Fellowship, Stanford University	2012
Stanford in Government Fellowship, Stanford University	2011

Grants

Private Enterprise Development in Low Income Countries (PEDL) Exploratory Research Grant, Centre for Economic Policy Research (47,900 USD)	2020
University of Pennsylvania Kleinman Center for Energy Policy Grant (9,400 USD)	2018
Wharton School of Business Amy Morse Grant (2,500 USD)	2017
World Bank Gender Innovation Lab Grant (500,000 USD)	2013

Seminar, workshop, and conference presentations

Center for Study of African Economies (CSAE) Conference, Oxford*; Economics Department Seminar, BI Norwegian Business School*; Weekly Seminar, Peace Research Institute Oslo*; BEPP graduate student seminar, Wharton; Pacific Development Conference (PACDEV), UC Berkeley; Development and Political Economics Conference (DEVPEC), UC Berkeley; Northeast Workshop in Empirical Political Science (NEWEPS), NYU; Young Economists Symposium (YES), UPenn

*Postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic

Empirical Studies of Conflict (ESOC) annual meeting, UCSD; Midwest International Economic Development Conference (MWIEDC), University of Wisconsin-Madison; Pacific Development Conference (PACDEV), USC; Development and Political Economics Conference (DEVPEC), Stanford, Penn Development Research Initiative (PDRI) workshop, UPenn	2019
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Business Economics and Public Policy graduate student seminar, Wharton	2018
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