

# Devis Decet

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| Contact Information | LEAP<br>Bocconi University<br>Via Röntgen n. 1<br>Milan 20136 (ITALY)  | <a href="mailto:devis.decet@unibocconi.it">devis.decet@unibocconi.it</a><br><a href="https://devisdecet.com">https://devisdecet.com</a><br>Citizenship: Italian |
| Fields              | Primary: Development Economics, Environmental Economics<br>Secondary: Political Economy, Public Economics  |   |
| Employment          | Bocconi University, Postdoctoral Researcher<br>Laboratory for Effective Anti-poverty Policies (LEAP)   | 2025-   |
| Education           | Ph.D. Economics, Northwestern University   | 2025  |
|                     | - M.A. Economics, 2020   |   |
|                     | M.A. Economics, University of Bologna  | 2018  |
|                     | - Visiting student (BESAP program), UC Berkeley, 2018  |   |
|                     | B.A. Economics and Management, University of Trento  | 2016  |
|                     | - Visiting student (Erasmus program), University of León, 2014   |   |
| Working papers      | <b>"Organizing Fiscal Capacity"</b><br><i>World Bank 1st Conference on Public Institutions Best Paper Award</i><br>This paper investigates how the spatial organization of a tax authority shapes fiscal capacity. I study a reform of the Brazilian tax authority that closed one-fourth of its local offices tasked with tax enforcement, and consolidated tax agents and decision-making power in fewer, larger offices. Leveraging regional variation in the reform and geographically disaggregated data on tax collection and local office organization, I find that consolidation increased tax revenues by 3.3%. The increase was largest where the reform allowed for more efficient utilization of enforcement and managerial resources. However, the reform led to a divergence in tax revenues within consolidated regions, particularly in peripheral areas farther from their new office and with weaker third-party reporting. My findings suggest that consolidation can lead to efficiency gains but also to amplified geographic inequality in tax enforcement.  |   |
|                     | <b>"Water Wars"</b> with Andrea Marcucci<br>We study the relationship between access to water resources and local violence in Africa. Due to limited irrigation, rural communities rely on rainfall, rivers, and lakes for their economic needs. Rainfall scarcity can make access to water from rivers and lakes more valuable, thereby generating conflicts. We explore this hypothesis by integrating granular data on the river network with high-resolution data on rainfall and violent conflict events in Africa from 1997 to 2021. We find that reduced rainfall in a location leads to more conflict in neighboring areas that are water-rich and located upstream along the river network. These are the sites that exert more control over the river flow. The effect is more pronounced in regions experiencing a long-term decline in water presence. Consistent with the proposed mechanism, conflicts concentrate in areas with higher returns to water access, as proxied by the presence of agricultural production. Additionally, the impact is more pronounced in regions with unequal water distribution among ethnic groups, highlighting how cooperation |   |

costs are an important friction preventing peaceful sharing of water resources. In terms of policy responses, we find that the effects tend to be mitigated in countries with stronger democratic institutions, better rule of law, higher state capacity and less corruption.

**“Child Labour, Human Capital and Beliefs”** with Kaman Lyu

*Public Policy Research Network 4th Graduate Workshop Best Paper Award*

In contexts where child labour is pervasive, household decisions about allocating children’s time between school and work involve a trade-off: current returns from child labour versus future returns from education. This paper tests for the existence of a third factor: future returns from child labour, as parents view farm work as an investment in agricultural skills. We provide evidence on each component of this trade-off in the context of rural Ghana by leveraging four waves of survey data on 5,000 households, exogenous shocks to agricultural productivity, and a vignette survey design to elicit parental beliefs.

**Selected Work in Progress**

**“State Capacity and Environmental Protection”** with Marie-Louise Décamps

**“Conflict and Environmental Degradation in the Congo Basin”** with Marie-Louise Décamps and Ameet Morjaria

**Fellowships, Grants & Awards**

|  |            |
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| Dissertation Fellowship, Northwestern University | 2024-2025  |
| University Fellowship, Northwestern University   | 2023-2024  |
| GPRL Travel Grant, Northwestern University       | 2022       |
| Marco Fanno Scholarship, Unicredit Foundation    | 2018       |
| BESAP scholarship, University of Bologna         | 2017       |
| Erasmus Scholarship, European Union              | 2014, 2017 |
| Merit Award, University of Trento                | 2016       |

**Presentations**

2025: World Bank Public Institutions Conference, Bocconi LEAP, Analysis Group, UC Berkeley Goldman, Cornerstone Research, PACDEV Los Angeles, Marco Fanno Alumni Conference Torino, Workshop Public Administration Hohenheim, NEUDC Tufts  
2024 and before: Novafrica Lisbon, Northwestern Development Seminar, DEVPEC Stanford, EGI Bari

**Relevant Past Position**

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|---|-----------|
| Research Assistant, Ameet Morjaria, Northwestern University, USA                      | 2023      |
| Research Assistant, GPRL, Northwestern University, Winneba, Ghana                     | 2022      |
| Research Assistant, Seema Jayachandran, Northwestern University, USA                  | 2021-2022 |
| Research Fellow, University of Bologna, Italy   | 2018-2019 |
| Research Assistant, Matteo Cervellati and Paolo Masella, University of Bologna, Italy | 2018      |

**Teaching Experience**

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|---|-----------|
| Teaching Assistant, Northwestern University         | 2020-2024 |
| Statistical Decision Analysis, Executive MBA (6X)   |           |
| Global Initiatives in Management: China-Africa, MBA |           |
| Economic Development in Africa, U                   |           |
| Introduction to Econometrics, U                     |           |
| Teaching Assistant, University of Bologna           | 2018-2019 |
| Statistics, MA                                      |           |
| Applied Econometrics, MA                            |           |
| Economic Growth, MA                                 |           |

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| <b>Professional Activities</b> | CEGA Fellow PhD Peer Mentor, Northwestern University   | 2023   |
|                                | Applied Microeconomics Lunch seminar organizer, Northwestern University  | 2021-2022  |
|                                | Northwestern Graduate Mentorship Program Mentor  | 2020-2023  |
| <b>Languages</b>               | English (fluent), Italian (native), Spanish (fluent)   |  |
| <b>Programming</b>             | R (advanced), Stata (advanced), Python (intermediate)  |  |
| <b>References</b>              | Professor Christopher Udry<br>Department of Economics<br>Northwestern University<br>2211 Campus Drive<br>Evanston, IL 60208<br><a href="mailto:christopher.udry@northwestern.edu">christopher.udry@northwestern.edu</a>    | Professor Seema Jayachandran<br>Department of Economics<br>Princeton University<br>126 Julis Romo Rabinowitz Building<br>Princeton, NJ 08544<br><a href="mailto:jayachandran@princeton.edu">jayachandran@princeton.edu</a>       |
|                                | Professor Nancy Qian<br>Kellogg School of Management<br>Northwestern University<br>2211 Campus Drive<br>Evanston, IL 60208<br><a href="mailto:nancy.qian@kellogg.northwestern.edu">nancy.qian@kellogg.northwestern.edu</a> | Professor Edoardo Teso<br>Kellogg School of Management<br>Northwestern University<br>2211 Campus Drive<br>Evanston, IL 60208<br><a href="mailto:edoardo.teso@kellogg.northwestern.edu">edoardo.teso@kellogg.northwestern.edu</a> |
|                                | Professor Silvia Vannutelli<br>Department of Economics<br>Northwestern University<br>2211 Campus Drive<br>Evanston, IL 60208<br><a href="mailto:silvia.vannutelli@northwestern.edu">silvia.vannutelli@northwestern.edu</a> |  |
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