

# Devis Decet

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Fields	Primary: Development Economics, Political Economy Secondary: Environmental Economics, Public Economics	
Employment	Bocconi University, Postdoctoral Researcher Laboratory for Effective Anti-poverty Policies (LEAP)	2025-
Education	Ph.D. Economics, Northwestern University - M.A. Economics, 2020 M.A. Economics, University of Bologna - Visiting student (BESAP program), UC Berkeley, 2018 B.A. Economics and Management, University of Trento - Visiting student (Erasmus program), University of León, 2014	2025   2018  2016
Working papers	<p><b>"Organizing Fiscal Capacity"</b> <i>World Bank 1st Conference on Public Institutions Best Paper Award</i> This paper shows that the spatial organization of a tax authority shapes fiscal capacity. I study a large-scale reform of the Brazilian tax administration that concentrated tax agents and decision-making power in fewer local offices, resulting in a more consolidated structure. Using a matched difference-in-differences design and novel disaggregated data, I find that consolidation increased tax revenues by 3.3%. The gains were largest where the reform allowed more efficient utilization of enforcement and managerial resources. The reform also led to divergence in tax enforcement between the core and periphery of consolidated regions. This divergence is more pronounced in peripheral areas located farther from their new office and with weaker third-party reporting, suggesting that distance acts as a friction for tax enforcement, especially where gathering local information is more important.</p> <p><b>"Water Wars"</b> with Andrea Marcucci 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</p>	

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**

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

2024 and before: Novafrica Lisbon, Northwestern Development Seminar, DEVPEC Stanford, EGI Bari

**Relevant Past Position**

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**

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	

<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 Department of Economics Northwestern University 2211 Campus Drive Evanston, IL 60208 <a href="mailto:christopher.udry@northwestern.edu">christopher.udry@northwestern.edu</a>	Professor Seema Jayachandran Department of Economics Princeton University 126 Julis Romo Rabinowitz Building Princeton, NJ 08544 <a href="mailto:jayachandran@princeton.edu">jayachandran@princeton.edu</a>
	Professor Nancy Qian Kellogg School of Management Northwestern University 2211 Campus Drive Evanston, IL 60208 <a href="mailto:nancy.qian@kellogg.northwestern.edu">nancy.qian@kellogg.northwestern.edu</a>	Professor Edoardo Teso Kellogg School of Management Northwestern University 2211 Campus Drive Evanston, IL 60208 <a href="mailto:edoardo.teso@kellogg.northwestern.edu">edoardo.teso@kellogg.northwestern.edu</a>
	Professor Silvia Vannutelli Department of Economics Northwestern University 2211 Campus Drive Evanston, IL 60208 <a href="mailto:silvia.vannutelli@northwestern.edu">silvia.vannutelli@northwestern.edu</a>	
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