

# 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, Northwestern University M.A. Economics, University of Bologna Visiting student (Besap program), UC Berkeley B.A. Economics and Management, University of Trento Visiting student (Erasmus program), University of León	2025 2020 2018 2018 2016 2014
Working papers	<p><b>"Organizing Fiscal Capacity"</b> <i>World Bank 1st Conference on Public Institutions Best Paper Award</i></p> <p>This paper studies how the allocation of tax agents across the national territory affects fiscal capacity. I evaluate a reform of the Brazilian tax authority that consolidated half of the existing local tax offices. Leveraging regional variation in the reform and newly collected data, I employ a matched difference-in-differences strategy to document how areas served by consolidated offices experience an increase in tax revenues. The reform also led to a divergence in tax enforcement between the core and the periphery of consolidated regions. These results are explained by a trade-off between improved targeting of high-revenue potential areas and increased distance between tax offices and the areas they oversee. These findings suggest that concentrating tax agents in fewer, larger offices increases overall revenues but exacerbates regional inequality in tax enforcement.</p> <p><b>"Water Wars"</b> with Andrea Marcucci</p> <p>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

**“Deforestation in the Congo Basin”** with Marie-Louise Décamps and Ameet Morjaria

**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, 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	

**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: Novafrafrica Lisbon, Northwestern Development Seminar, DEVPEC Stanford, EGI Bari

**Professional Activities**

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>
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