

Jonathan Lehne

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Research Topics

Political Economy; Development Economics; Economic History

References

Oliver Vanden Eynde Ekaterina Zhuravskaya Jacob Shapiro

Education

2015 – Present	PhD in Economics Paris School of Economics / Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne Advisor: Oliver Vanden Eynde Thesis Committee: Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, Margherita Comola
Spring 2018	Visiting PhD student at Stanford University
2014 – 2015	Master of Economics, “Analysis and Policy in Economics” (APE) Paris School of Economics
2010-2011	MSc Economics (Research) London School of Economics
2008-2009	MSc Development Studies London School of Economics
2004-2007	BA (Hons) Economics and Management University of Oxford

Professional Experience

2011-2014	Macroeconomic Research Analyst Office of the Chief Economist, Research Department European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
2011	Research Intern Office of the Chief Economist, Research Department European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
2008 and 2009	Junior Fellow Researcher European Stability Initiative

Research

Publications:

“Building Connections: Political Corruption and Road Construction in India”, joint with Jacob Shapiro and Oliver Vanden Eynde, *Journal of Development Economics* (2018), Vol. 131.

Politically-driven corruption is a pervasive challenge for development, but evidence of its welfare effects are scarce. Using data from a major rural road construction programme in India we document political influence in a 2 setting where politicians have no official role in contracting decisions. Exploiting close elections to identify the causal effect of coming to power, we show that the share of contractors whose name matches that of the winning politician increases by 83% (from 4% to 7%) in the term after a close election compared to the term before. Regression discontinuity estimates at the road level show that political interference raises the cost of road construction and increases the likelihood that roads go missing.

Work in progress:

“Administering Voter Suppression? Evidence from 140 million voters’ registrations in India”

Elections are complex administrative exercises. Free and fair elections require free and fair administrators. This project tests for strategic manipulation in the electoral roll of Uttar Pradesh, the largest state of India. By constructing an individual-level panel dataset with over 140 million voters, I am able to track the appearance and disappearance of voters on the roll from year to year. Using a regression discontinuity design, I estimate whether voters are disproportionately more likely to be removed from the roll in precincts which voted against the incumbent. While politicians would have a clear incentive to engage in such voter suppression, the electoral roll is controlled by ostensibly neutral bureaucrats. Detailed data on the bureaucrats responsible for electoral registration (at the district, constituency, and precinct level) allows me to test whether politicians reassign bureaucrats in order to strategically influence the composition of the electorate.

“An Opium Curse? The long-run consequences of narcotics cultivation in British India”

The long run consequences of colonial rule depended on the institutions introduced by the colonisers and the economic activities they promoted. This paper analyses the effects of opium production under British rule on current economic development in India. I employ a border discontinuity design which interacts fine-grained local variation in environmental suitability for poppy cultivation with administrative boundaries that demarcated opium-growing areas. I find that greater suitability for opium is associated with lower literacy and a lower rate of public good provision within opium-growing districts but has no effect in bordering areas where opium cultivation was prohibited. Placebo tests using suitability for other crops show no such discontinuity. Colonial administrative data allows me to test potential mechanisms for the persistent negative effect of opium production. Greater opium cultivation is associated with less per capita public spending on health and education by the British administration, a lower number of schools, and a greater concentration of police officers. These results suggest that colonial officials in opium growing districts concentrated on administering and policing the extraction of monopsony rents, while investing less in the wider local economy.

“Bidding for Roads”, joint with Jacob Shapiro and Oliver Vanden Eynde

In many countries, public procurement is both a large component of government expenditure and a significant source of corruption. For this project we have collected detailed, bid-level data on tenders for over 20,000 road construction projects in 6 states as part of India’s major rural-road construction scheme. We match these data on the technical and financial evaluation of bids to separate administrative records on completed roads. We aim to analyse how the institutional design of the procurement process affects the levels of competition and corruption in the allocation of contracts, and how these relate to the quality of infrastructure provided.

Non-academic publications:

“Income convergence at risk”, joint with Jeromin Zettelmeyer, *EBRD Transition Report 2013*, Chapter 1.

“Macroeconomic developments and outlook”, *EBRD Transition Report 2013*

“Transition region in the shadows of the eurozone crisis”, joint with Franto Ricka, *EBRD Transition Report 2012*, Chapter 2.

Awards, scholarships and grants

2017 LABEX OSE

2015 IGC State Effectiveness “Bidding for Roads”

2015-2018 PhD Scholarship, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne

2009 Prize for best overall performance in MSc in Development Studies, LSE

2009 Excellent Dissertation Prize LSE

Presentations

SIOE conference 2019, Stockholm

German Economic Association Development Economics and Policy 2019, Berlin

Warwick economics PhD conference 2019, Warwick

Spring Meeting of Young Economists 2019, Brussels

NCID Research Workshop on Development Economics 2019, Madrid

NEUDC 2018, Cornell

Oxford Development Economics Workshop 2018, Oxford

CEPREMAP India China Conference 2018, Paris

Quality of Governance Conference 2018, Stanford

Political Economy of Democracy and Dictatorship 2018, Muenster

Indian Political Economy Workshop 2016, Brussels

CEPREMAP India China Conference 2016, Paris

India Research Group Conference 2015, Paris

Bank of Finland Institute for Economies in Transition, Helsinki

Refereeing

Journal of Development Economics

Teaching

2018/19 Teaching assistant, Paris School of Economics
Econometrics 2

2018/19 Teaching assistant, Sciences Po
Global Economic Governance

Languages

English (fluent)

German (fluent)

French (intermediate)

Arabic (basic)

Software

Stata

QGIS

MATLAB

Python