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CURRENT POSITIONS

University of Stirling Management School

Lecturer (Assistant Professor)

January 2018 – Present

Global Labor Organization

Research Fellow

April 2019 – Present

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Applied Microeconomics, with particular application to labour, political economy, development and historical economics, historical income inequality.

EDUCATION

PhD, Economics

University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

January 2012 – 2017

THESIS – What do Mexican Unions do?

Supervisors: Professor Barry Reilly and Dr. Paolo Masella

Committee: Professor Richard Dickens and Professor Phillip Murphy

PUBLICATIONS

Published

With M Powell, KE Pickett and RG Wilkinson

“Income inequality and Crime: A Review of the time-series evidence,” *Social Criminology* 1(1) 2013.
DOI: 10.4172/2375-4435.1000103

with I Gazeley, A Newell, K Reynolds and R Searle

“The Poor and the Poorest, Fifty years on: evidence from British Household Expenditure Surveys of the 1950s and 1960s” *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society : Series A Statistics in Society*. 2016. DOI: 10.1111/rssa.12202

Single Authored

“Are there gains to be made from joining a union? Evidence from Mexico” *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. 2019. DOI: 10.1111/bjir.12463

WORK IN PROGRESS

with EM Egger and C Poggi

“Welfare and The Depth Of Informality: Evidence from Five African Countries,” UNU-WIDER Working Paper 2021/25

Abstract

This study explores the relationship between household poverty and depth of informality by proposing a new measure of informality at the household level. It is defined as the share of activities (hours worked or income earned) without social insurance for wage workers in the household. We apply cross-sectional regressions to five urban sub-Saharan African countries, showing that a household head informality dummy obscures a non-linear relationship between the depth of household informality and welfare outcomes. In some countries, a small share of income from formal jobs is associated with at least the same welfare as a fully formal portfolio. By assessing transitions between household portfolios with panel data for urban Nigeria, we also show that most welfare differences

are explained by selection and that movements in and out of formality cannot sufficiently change welfare trajectories. The results call for better inclusion of informal profiles to social insurance programmes. **Key words:** informality, measurement, poverty, social protection, sub-Saharan Africa
JEL classification: H55, I31, J46, J88

[PDF HERE](#)

Under review at Journal of Population Economics.

with M Moro and A Schwarz

“The Effect of Pollution on Labour Supply. Evidence from Mexico.”

Abstract

This paper studies the effects of air pollution on labour supply by merging time-stamped information on hours worked by millions of people living in Mexico City with detailed pollution data over the period 2005 to 2017. When pollution exceeds particular thresholds Mexico City activates the “Environmental Contingency Program” tiers to a Pre-contingency or a more severe Contingency level. We exploit these thresholds and adopt a regression discontinuity design to document a reduction in the hours worked when a (pre)contingency is called. We then study how daily working hours evolve around a (pre)contingency and shows how labour supply responds before and after its activation. Further, we supplement this evidence with information of pollution from measurement stations across the city. We link this data with a labour force survey that is representative survey at city level. We find no evidence of contemporaneous effects of pollution on labour supply at moderate levels, however, there are dramatic reductions at high levels of pollution.

with W Sas

“Institutions in the fast lane? Strike Petitions and the Electoral cycle in Mexico”

Abstract

This paper exploits Mexican administrative data on all strike threats between 1991–2012, a period of political institutional change. This paper asks: Are strike threats partially caused by the political cycle? We develop a political economy model of union influence and find that when electoral institutions become more democratic, and political parties can count to a lesser extent on a guaranteed support base, the importance of relying in the unions to win elections will increase. We validate these findings using municipal electoral data, where we employ a sharp regression discontinuity approach, and find a causal effect from close elections of right- and left-wing mayors on strike threats two years after an election. Narrow electoral victories of the right-wing (left-) party increase the number of strike threats by 1.056 (1.456) per 10,000 of the municipal population two years after the election. This finding is robust to alternate specifications. We suggest that threats may be misused for campaigning in upcoming elections. To test this hypothesis a differences-in-differences model is employed to estimate changes in electoral turnout in narrow win municipalities. We find that electoral turnout is stimulated by strike threats, in the ontext of tight electoral rules surrounding campaigning, these findings may be interpreted confirmation of illegal campaigning. **JEL CLASSIFICATION:** C23, D72, J52, P48. [PDF HERE](#)

Single authored

“Striking a Deal? Strike threats and the business cycle in Mexico”

Abstract

It is well documented that unions have effects on wages and non-wage benefits, these gains are obtained through collective bargaining. The theoretical literature motivates these gains as the products of successful bargains achieved using the threat of a strike as the bargaining signal. This paper provides a novel exploration of the bargaining signalling mechanism between unions and employers by exploiting administrative data on all strike threats in Mexico in the private sector 1991-2012. I explore the relationship between strike threats and the business cycle for a 20 year period and confirm their role in wage bargaining for workers.

“What have Mexican unions done to wages over the last decade?”

Abstract

Unions in Mexico have a long history of being co-opted by the state, given this historic discrepancy

in behaviour, this paper seeks to analyse the effect of unions in the labour market. In the spirit of Freeman and Meddoff (1984), I ask: What do Mexican unions do to wages? This paper provides new evidence on the union wage gap over the last decade. The empirical work exploits the Mexican labour force survey survey. The analysis is divided into two parts: In the first, the magnitude of the union wage gap is investigated using the well known Oaxaca–Blinder decomposition. The potential issue of union selection is addressed through the application of a Lee (1978) endogenous switching model. Further estimates of the Union wage mark-up are obtained by exploiting the panel nature of the ENOE survey, to obtain an individual fixed-effects regression. I then give a synthesis of all of these competing estimates. In the final part of the analysis, I ask: ‘Did unions wield a ‘sword-of-justice’ across the wage distribution over the last decade?’ This is explored through the application of a variance decomposition and the use of quantile regression models.

with A Newell

“Joining the dots and fitting curves: A practitioner’s guide to estimating income inequality using group data”

Abstract

One of the challenges of working with historical data relate to the passage of time. Often, the micro-data of surveys no longer survives. This paper is a guide on how to estimate income inequality from tabulated results that may survive in reports. We consider various data structures and propose parametric estimation methods which overcome the lack of individual returns. Microsimulations using the 1953-54 UK MoL Survey (Gazeley et al., 2015) and the 1853 Survey of Belgian workers (Dupéctiaux, 1855), for which individual level data exist, are employed to demonstrate the performance of these methods once the data have been collapsed into groups on modern stratified data and snowball samples, respectively.

with I Gazeley, A Newell, K Reynolds and R Holmes

“Escaping from Hunger before WW1: Nutrition & Living Standard in Western Europe & USA in the the late nineteenth century,” IZA Discussion Paper 11037

Abstract

We estimate calories available to workers’ households in the USA, Belgium, Britain, France and Germany in 1890/1. We employ data from the United States Commissioner of Labor survey (see Haines, 1979) of workers in key export industries. We estimate that households in the USA, on average, had about five hundred daily calories per equivalent adult more than their French and German counterparts, with Belgian and British workers closer to the USA levels. We ask if that energy bonus gave the US workers more energy for work, and we conclude that, if stature is taken into account, workers in the US and UK probably had roughly the same level energy available for work, whereas the German and French workers most likely had significantly less. Finally we ask economic migration leads to taller children. To answer that we estimate the influence of children on calorie availability among ethnically British workers in the USA and, separately, among British workers in Britain. We find that US-based British households are at least as generous in terms of the provision of calories to their children as their Britain-based counterparts. Other things equal, this means that US-based British children would grow taller.

JEL Classification: J11, J61, N30

Keywords: living standards, nutrition, international comparisons, migration

[PDF HERE](#)

“Inequality among European working households 1890–1960,” IZA Discussion Paper 11355

Abstract

In this article we map, for the first time, the time-path of the size distribution of income among working class households in Western Europe, 1890-1960. To do this we exploit data extracted from a large number of newly digitised household expenditure surveys. Many are not representative of the population, or even of their target-subpopulation, as methods of social investigation were initially primitive, though rapidly evolving over this period. We overcome the consequent problem of comparability by exploiting our knowledge of the methods used by early social investigators to es-

timate of the scale of known biases. For some we have the original household data, but in most cases we have tables by income group. One by-product of this work is an evaluation of the range of estimation methods for distributional statistics from these historical tables of grouped data. Our central finding is that inequality among working households does not follow the general downward trend in inequality for the early part of the century found in labour share and top income studies. Contrary to Kuznets' prediction, our evidence suggests that on average income inequality among European working households remained stable for three generations from the late nineteenth century onwards.

JEL Classification: N33, N34, O15

Keywords: inequality, working households, Europe, 20th century

[PDF here](#)

with I Gazeley, A Newell, and K Reynolds

“What Really Happened to British Inequality in the Early 20th Century? Evidence from National Household Expenditure Surveys 1890–1961,” IZA Discussion Paper 11071

Abstract

We estimate income/expenditure inequality in Britain, exploiting five household surveys, spanning the years 1890 to 1961, some of which we recovered and digitised. After adjusting for differences in scope and sampling, we find little change in inequality among worker households over the period and that the three decades after World War 2 were probably the low point of survey-based inequality measures in the eight decades since the late 1930s. Our findings are consistent with the evidence from wage censuses on the overall variance of earnings, which only falls marginally over the period. We argue this relative steadiness was the result of opposing proximate forces, one being the decline in manual skill differentials due largely to changing wage-setting institutions. On the other side was growth in the employment share of non-manuals, with their higher skill and wage variance. We also argue that two demographic factors also played their parts. The sharp decline in fertility in the early part of the century reduced inequality, while the emergence of pensioner households in the 1950s tended to increase inequality in the lower end of the distribution. Lastly, our work suggests a substantial downward revision in the estimated size of the fall in inequality through World War Two. We find a fall of between one and two Gini percentage points between 1937/8 and 1953/4, compared with the often-quoted Blue Book estimate of almost seven Gini percentage points.

JEL Classification: D31, J31, N14

Keywords: United Kingdom, inequality, wage differentials

[PDF HERE](#)

Under Review at Oxford Bulletin of Economics & Statistics

“Nutrition in Interwar Britain: A Possible Resolution of the Healthy or Hungry 1930s Debate?”
IZA Discussion Paper 11158

Abstract

This paper re-examines energy and nutritional available to British working-class households in the 1930s using the individual household expenditure and consumption data derived from the 1937/8 Ministry of Labour household expenditure survey and the 1938/9 individual dietary data collected by the Rowett Research Institute. We conclude that for working households, energy and nutritional availability improved significantly compared with current estimates of availability before the First World War. For unemployed headed households, and female headed households in employment, the situation was much worse with energy and nutritional availability at similar levels to households that would be described as destitute at the turn of the Twentieth Century. Finally, we examine the impact of state interventions to improve diet and nutrition and conclude that these made a difference, but other than the case of calcium, they did not represent a decisive intervention, as many households in receipt of free school meals and milk did not have sufficient nutrients available in their diets to meet modern dietary standards.

JEL Classification: I30, N34

Keywords: Nutrition, 1930s, Britain, working class

[PDF of old version here](#)

Accepted Economic History Review as: “How hungry were the poor in late 1930s Britain?”

with I Gazeley, C Lanata Briones, A Newell, K Reynolds and R Holmes

“Latin American Household Budget Surveys 1913-1970 and What They Tell Us about Economic

Inequality among Households,” IZA Discussion Paper 11430

Abstract

The article reports an analysis of the findings of a search for household budget surveys for Latin America for the period from the earliest surveys to the late 1960s. Over one hundred studies were located. References to these surveys are available at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/globalincomeinequality/>. In Appendix 1 we offer a synopsis of the history, context and contents of all the surveys, including those that did not contain useable data. We discuss the comparability of each country’s surveys in turn, offering a table for each country with indicator of size, scope and other features. Our final work is to model the progress of inequality, as reflected in Gini coefficients, 90/10 and 50/10 percentile ratios in the region. We find that the bulk of the measured rise is inequality from the 1930s to the 1960s is due to changing survey methods and objectives, in particular the expansion of the scope of the surveys from a narrow focus on urban manual worker-headed households to a later broad focus on the population. Finally, we predict the pattern of inequality over time that might have been found had the earlier surveys been unrestricted in terms of target population and randomly sampled. We find a modest increase from the early years to the 1960s in Gini inequality.

JEL Classification: N36, O15

Keywords: inequality, working households, Latin America, 20th century

[PDF here](#)

Non-Academic Publications

“Violent Crime,” The Equality Trust Research Digest 01:2011

“Income inequality: Trends and measures,” The Equality Trust Research Digest 02:2011

Permanent Working Papers

“The Mexican wage curve 2000–2003: A Quantile Approach,” 2012, Working Paper WPS34-2012, University of Sussex.

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Visiting Fellow in Historical Economics, Department of Economics, University of Sussex September 2017 – August 2020

Research Fellow in Historical Economics, Department of Economics, University of Sussex August 2013 – August 2017

Graduate Teaching Assistant & Associate Tutor, Department of Economics, University of Sussex January 2012 – August 2017

Associate Tutor, Department of Economics, University of Sussex October – November 2010

Research Fellow, The Equality Trust November 2010 – December 2011

ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

2020 Presenter - UNU-WIDER Transforming Informal Work and Livelihoods Workshop, Zoom.

2020 Discussant SGPE Residential Conference, Crieff, Scotland.

2019 Discussant SGPE Residential Conference, Crieff, Scotland.

2019 Scottish Economic Society, Perth, Scotland.

2018 Scottish Economic Society, Perth, Scotland.

2018 Royal Economic Society, University of Sussex, Brighton, England.

2018 European Social Science History Conference, Queen’s University, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

2017 4th WINIR Conference on “Institutions and Open Societies”, Utrecht University, Netherlands, *accepted, unable to attend*

- 2017 4th DIAL Conference on Development Economics, Dauphine Université Paris, Paris, France, *accepted, unable to attend*
- 2017 21st Annual Conference of the Society for Institutional & Organizational Economics, Columbia Business School, New York, USA, *accepted, unable to attend*
- 2017 International Economics Association XVIII World Congress, Mexico City, Mexico.
- 2017 Research Group on Development Economics Conference, German Economic Association, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany, *scheduled*
- 2017 Research Institute for Development, Growth and Economics (RIDGE)/ LACEA-PEG – Political Economy Forum, PUC-Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2017 Leeds Workshop on the Economics and Management of workplace democracy, employee participation and emerging organisational models – Leeds Festival of Economics, Democracy and the Workplace, Leeds University Business School, UK *Accepted, unable to attend*
- 2017 RES PhD Meetings, Westminster Business School, London, UK
- 2016 Speaker, 41 Simposio de la Asociación Española de Economía-Spanish Economic Association (SAEe), Universidad UPV-EHU, Bilbao, Spain
- 2016 Speaker, XXI LACEA Annual Meeting, Medellín, Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
- 2016 Speaker, Jobs and Development Conference (Jobs and Development Network), World Bank, Washington DC, USA
- 2015 Invited Speaker, XX LACEA Annual Meeting, Universidad Privada de Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, Bolivia
- 2015 Speaker, PhD Conference, University of Sussex, UK
- 2014 Speaker, PhD Conference, University of Sussex, UK

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

PhD Convenor, Economics Division, University of Stirling Management School 2019–Present
BA (Hons) Economics Programme Co-Director 2020–Present
Dissertation Supervisor ECNU48E AY 2018/19, 2019/20
Member of Steering Committee for University of Stirling Learning Analytics Working Group
Dissertation Supervisor for ECNP98 & ECNP99 AY 2017/2018.
Scottish Graduate School of Social Sciences Pathway Representative for Economics @ Stirling.
Co-taught executive education on Causal Inference for Economics Futures.

TEACHING

Currently:

2018–Present **Using Economic Data (Econometrics and Causal Inference) ECNU3ED** SMS, University of Stirling
(3rd year UG module & Module Leader)

2018–Present **Dissertation in Economics (Advanced Econometrics) ECNU48E** SMS, University of Stirling
(4th year UG module & Module Leader)

Previously at Sussex (2010-2017)

Tutor: UG Econometrics, UG Applied Micro course –Applied Economic Topics
Lecturer & Module Leader: PG Introduction to \LaTeX ; Stata for Researchers, Economics Dissertation, Workshop for Economics Dissertations.
Module Leader & Lecturer – UG Statistics Project

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2008 Junior Research Associate, University of Sussex
2010 Chancellor's International Scholarship, University of Sussex
2012 Graduate Teaching Assistance Scholarship, University of Sussex.
2012 –2016 CONACyT Mexico Scholarship.
2015 PhD Student of the Year. BMEc annual awards. University of Sussex.

COMPUTING SKILLS

Experienced in Stata, Gretl, R statistical packages; Microsoft Office, LibreOffice, \LaTeX ; Ruby and Python programming languages; Proficient on GNU/Linux, OS X, Windows operating systems.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Spanish Native.

English Native.

French IB Diploma
Higher Level, grade 6.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Latin American & Caribbean Economic Association
Royal Economic Society
Scottish Economic Association
Fellow of Higher Education Academy