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Fields of Concentration:
Development Economics (Primary Field)
Labor Economics (Secondary Field)

Desired Teaching:
Development Economics
Labor Economics
Health Economics

Comprehensive Examinations Completed:
2012 (Oral): Development Economics; Labor Economics
2011(Written): Macroeconomic Theory; Microeconomics Theory

Dissertation Title: Essays in Applied Microeconomics

Committee:
Professor Costas Meghir (Chair)
Professor Christopher Udry
Professor James Levinsohn

Expected Completion Date: May 2016

Degrees:
Ph.D., Economics, Yale University, 2016 (expected)
M.Phil., Economics, Yale University, 2013
M.A., Economics, Yale University, 2012
M.Soc.Sci, Economics, University of Cape Town, 2011
B.Soc.Sci (Hons) Economics and Politics, University of Cape Town, 2009

Fellowships, Honors and Awards:

Yale Graduate School Fellowship, 2010-2016
Economics Department Fellowship, 2010-2014
Kauffmann Dissertation Fellowship, 2014
Rhodes Scholarship (South Africa at large), 2009

Teaching Experience (Teaching Assistant):

Economics of Health and Healthcare (Instructor: Amanda Kowalski), Fall 2012, Spring 2014, Spring 2015

Development Economics (Instructor: Nancy Qian), Spring 2013

Introduction to Microeconomics – Masters in International Relations (Instructors: James Levinsohn and Michael Moore), Fall 2013

Introduction to Microeconomics (Instructor: Steve Berry), Fall 2014

Research and Work Experience:

Research Assistant to Professor James Levinsohn, Yale University, Fall 2013 – Spring 2015
Research Assistant to Assistant Professor Daniel Keniston, Yale University, Spring 2013

Publications:

"Measuring Institutions: Indicators of Political and Property Rights in Malawi" with Johannes Fedderke, *Social Indicators Research*, Springer, 106(3), May 2012

Working Papers:

"Occupation Choice and Education Investment: Unintended Effects of Microcredit", (November 2015), *Job Market Paper*

"Individual Migration and Household Income" with James Levinsohn and Murray Leibbrandt, October 2015

Works In Progress:

"Learning by Doing and Learning in School: Relative Returns to Skill in Entrepreneurship", September 2015

"Welfare Queens and Work Requirements: Attitudes to Welfare Policy in the Post-AFDC Era", October 2015

Seminar and Conference Presentations:

"The effects of alleviating credit constraints on occupational and educational choices", in *Improving productivity in developing countries: identifying bottlenecks and obstacles to productive investments and technology adoption*, Institute for Fiscal Studies, July 2015

Referee Service:

Journal of Development Economics; Social Indicators Research

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Dissertation Abstract

Chapter 1: Occupation Choice and Education Investment: Unintended Effects of Microcredit [Job Market Paper]

This paper examines how occupation changes due to microcredit can alter the education investment decisions of households. I develop and estimate a model of joint occupation and education choice by heterogeneous households in an environment with dual, interacting frictions in the credit and labor markets. The model is estimated using indirect inference and data from a national credit initiative in Thailand, the Million Baht Village Fund. I find that educational investment decreases among a sub-set of households that enter self-employment following the change in the credit program. Lower educational attainment decreases expected earnings of children in these households and may represent a welfare transfer from children to parents.

Recent evidence from randomized control trials indicates that microcredit has negligible effects on many important development outcomes. This is surprising because the existence of credit constraints for poor households in developing countries is well established. Relieving these constraints should improve welfare but few statistically significant effects, positive or negative, have been found. My paper addresses this puzzle in two ways. First, my model explicitly defines mechanisms through which household heterogeneity can result in insignificant aggregate effects despite large effects in sub-populations. Second, it examines the possibility of second order consequences of microcredit that operate through the occupation choice channel. In the model,

households differ unobservably in productivity and talent for education; these differences imply that responses to microcredit will vary by household type. Households face frictions in both the credit and labor markets. The latter depresses wages and encourages self-employment and, for entrepreneurial households, creates a preference for family labor. Microcredit eases credit constraints but does not alter the labor market friction directly. It affects education investment directly by easing liquidity constraints. Indirect effects arise from households switching occupations due to changes in the relative returns to self-employment. The relative returns to skilled and unskilled labor in each occupation also change through general equilibrium wage effects and increased capital investment in micro-enterprises. Which of these effects dominates will depend on a household's productivity, talent for education, and wealth. In the aggregate, effects may be modest due to opposite effects for different household types.

I use data that spans the implementation of the Thai Million Baht Village Fund. This policy is equivalent to an expansion of microcredit; the Fund offers very small loans with low interest rates. I treat it as a structural break in the credit environment. The model is estimated on pre-program data and tested on post-program data, which provides out-of-sample validation. I find that poor, high productivity households that enter self-employment following the credit change are likely to withdraw their adolescents from school and employ them, regardless of education talent, due to changes in the net cost of capital, which spills over to the demand for labor within the household business. By contrast, poor households with high education talent and low productivity increase educational investment due to income and liquidity effects.

Chapter 2: Individual Migration and Household Income (with Murray Leibbrant and James Levinsohn)

This paper estimates returns to internal migration in South Africa, generating the first such estimates for any African country. The paper makes three contributions to the migration literature. First, we develop a framework for analyzing individual migration in an environment with income-pooling within the household and in which migrants join pre-existing households at their destination, affecting non-migrants by their arrivals and departures. To do this, we consider both household per capita and individual income. Second, we demonstrate the importance of migration for non-labor market participants, who would be omitted by examining only individual incomes. Third, our results highlight the importance of controlling for the macroeconomic environment in which returns to migration are measured. We obtain non-experimental measures of the effects of migration, equivalent to treatment-on-the-treated estimates, with propensity score matching on detailed pre-migration variables, including income. Using household per capita income, migrants between 2008 and 2010 experience significant income gains of 28%; gains between 2010 and 2012 are 38%. Estimates using individual income are far smaller and not generally significant. This suggests that much of the gain from migration is due to joining a wealthier household, not from entering a better labor market. Households that send, or send and receive, migrants benefit consistently over both periods, with income gains around 20% per capita, while households that only receive migrants are no better and possibly worse off.

Chapter 3: Welfare Queens and Work Requirements: Attitudes to Welfare Policy in the Post-AFDC Era

I examine the effects of exposure to welfare recipients of different races on attitudes towards welfare spending, using variation created by the 1996 US welfare reform. Welfare programs are designed to appeal to voter preferences as well as meet policymakers' goals. Thus the determinants of voter attitudes to such spending matter from a policy perspective. They also demonstrate the mechanisms through which individuals form group loyalties and how these beliefs affect precautionary behavior and feelings of reciprocity. Pre-1996 data show that geographic exposure to welfare recipients of different races is a significant determinant of attitudes to welfare spending (Luttmer, 2001). I demonstrate that this is no longer the case after 1996. I use variation in welfare eligibility rules across states, created after control of welfare policy was devolved to states in 1996, to show that the new rules reflect average population preferences within each state, suggesting that policies are based on voter preferences, not effectiveness or elite preference. States with lower initial satisfaction with welfare spending impose stricter requirements on recipients and following the reform, there are fewer significant differences in average attitude to welfare spending across states. This hypothesis is supported by results from difference-in-difference analyses on changes in attitudes in contiguous counties in different states. Initially, contiguous counties have no significant differences in preferences about welfare spending. After the reform, individuals in counties whose preferences are closer to average preferences within their state are significantly more satisfied with welfare policy than those within contiguous counties whose preferences deviate more strongly from their state average.