

Steve Berggreen

PERSONAL

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Department of Economics
Tycho Brahes väg 1
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EDUCATION

London School of Economics, London, United Kingdom May 2023 - ongoing
Visiting Research Student
Hosts: Olmo Silva, Noam Yuchtman

Lund University, Lund, Sweden 2019-2024 (expected)
PhD in Economics
Supervisors: Therese Nilsson, Gunes Gokmen

University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden 2016
M.Sc. in Economics (with distinction) and Malmsten Award recipient

LTH Faculty of Engineering, Lund University, Lund, Sweden 2012
M.Sc. in Water Resources Engineering

ENSEEIHT (Grande École), Toulouse, France 2009-2010
M.Sc. coursework in Hydraulics and Fluid Mechanics as an Erasmus scholar

LTH Faculty of Engineering, Lund University, Lund, Sweden 2009
B.Sc. Civil Engineering

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Development Economics, Climate Change Adaptation, Cultural Economics, Economic History

JOB MARKET PAPER

[The Curse of Bad Geography: Stagnant Water, Diseases, and Children's Human Capital](#) (with Linn Mattisson)

Waterborne diseases lead to over 6 billion diarrheal episodes per year, with most of the burden on children in low-income countries. We employ hydrological engineering principles to construct a novel measure of stagnant water, crucial to the spread of these diseases. Using a difference-in-differences approach, we estimate the causal effect of stagnant water on the health and cognitive skills of Tanzanian children. A 10 percentage point increase in stagnant water increases local diarrhea incidence rates among children by 30%. Our results also show an immediate reduction in the cognitive abilities of affected children, measured by standardised test scores. The effects on health and cognition are exacerbated by high temperatures and population density, but are completely mitigated by access to safe water and sanitation. We find that two degrees Celsius of global warming could triple the burden of waterborne diseases, and that disease awareness in high-risk locations remains low, which could motivate targeted information campaigns. Our results show how stagnant water exposure in areas with inadequate water and sanitation may result in millions of children failing to reach their cognitive potential.

WORKING PAPERS

[Traditional Norms and Parental Investment in Human Capital](#) (with Gunes Gokmen)

This paper studies the cultural roots of parental behavior concerning children's human capital. We examine the effect of traditional kinship norms on parental investment in human capital, with a focus on two predominant forms of kinship norms in developing countries –matrilineal and patrilineal

systems. We use novel survey data from Tanzania to capture detailed parental investment behavior, including time and attention devoted to children’s learning. Using a fuzzy spatial regression discontinuity design, we find that matrilineal parents invest less in their children’s human capital. For instance, they are less likely to check their children’s homework or discuss their performance with teachers. In turn, matrilineal children have poorer cognitive skills, captured by standardized test scores on numeracy and literacy. Assessment of various mechanisms suggests that spousal conflict and cooperation, family instability, and labor market conditions play a part. Lastly, we evaluate the effect of a nation-building reform intended to undo ethnic norms. We show that this policy did not effectively counteract the influence of traditional norms.

Slave Trade, Ancestral Slavery, and Mistrust in Africa (with Gunes Gokmen)

The legacy of the slave trade has had a detrimental long-term impact on African development, notably by engendering a culture of mistrust. In this paper, we revisit this line of inquiry by examining the complementarity between ancestral slavery norms and the European slave trade. We find that the slave trade contributed to a culture of mistrust only in societies with ancestral slavery. Instead, in societies where ancestral slavery was absent, the slave trade did not lead to lower trust. This finding is consistent with the mechanism that those accustomed to slavery within their own societies may have been more inclined to sell out their own to meet the increased demand from the European slave trade. We use several alternative strategies and falsification tests to show that the baseline correlations are not spurious. This study enhances our understanding of the persistence of historical factors, by shedding further light on how the slow evolution of cultural norms (shaped by ancestral slavery) may interact with exposure to a historical shock (the Atlantic slave trade), ultimately influencing contemporary attitudes.

Climate Uncertainty and Financial Coping Strategies of Farmers

How does climate uncertainty affect consumption smoothing strategies among poor rural households? This paper investigates how recent exposure to climate uncertainty affects savings behavior as well as the demand, awareness, and uptake of insurance products. It introduces a novel measure of climate uncertainty more relevant for poor farming households relying on rainfed agriculture: *climate unpredictability*, which is the average year-to-year change between dry and wet conditions. Using household finance survey data from Tanzania and a difference-in-differences strategy, I find that households exposed to climate uncertainty in the recent past prepare for future shocks mainly by increasing their savings. I find that the effect is driven only by farming households, that it only affects savings for emergency reasons and not other types of savings, and is determined by exposure to climate unpredictability in the past five years. I find no effects on insurance uptake, demand, or awareness, despite the large welfare gains that would result from increased insurance coverage among this group of households. Instead, I find that households who have faced unexpected climate shocks in the recent past are more likely to partake in semi-formal cooperatives, which effectively substitute for formal insurance services.

POLICY PAPERS

Traditionella Normer och Föräldrars Investering i Humankapital, Ekonomisk Debatt, 2023 (with Jan Bietenbeck and Gunes Gokmen) – *one of six papers selected into the papers & proceedings of the Swedish National Conference in Economics 2022*

WORK IN PROGRESS *Urbanization and economic development: Evidence from the diffusion of dynamites* (with Akib Khan)

Free Labor and Market Activity in Early Medieval Britain: Evidence from Viking invasions

GRANTS, MERITS, AND AWARDS

2023: Stiftelsen för främjande av ekonomisk forskning (conference grant), SEK 7,500 (€750)

2022: The Hedelius Scholarship for postgraduate studies at foreign universities, SEK 300,000 (€30,000)

2022: Presentation of *Traditional Norms and Parental Investment in Human Capital* at the Swedish National Conference in Economics selected into its Papers and Proceedings *Ekonomisk Debatt* (top 6 papers)

2016: Malmsten Award for Best M.Sc. Thesis in Economics (*Flood risk and market property valuation when insurance is free*), 10,000 SEK (€1000)

2015: Admitted into PhD-level coursework at University of Gothenburg based on academic performance (top 3 students in cohort)

2009: Erasmus scholarship for visiting M.Sc. studies at ENSEEIHT, Toulouse, 40,000 kr (€4,000)

INVITED TALKS

Upcoming: Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen (November 16). ENS Lyon, France (December 14).

2023: Development Economics Research Group, Copenhagen University. IFS/STICERD (LSE)/UCL Development Work-in Progress Seminar, IFS. Economics of the Energy and Environment Seminar, Department of Economics, LSE.

2022: Young Leaders Programme Personal Finance workshop, sponsored by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

Upcoming: Southern Economic Association 93rd Annual Meeting, New Orleans (November 18-20); CESifo Economics of Children workshop, LMU Munich (November 23-24); Brown Bag seminar (x2), Lund University.

2023: NEUDC 2023, Harvard University; EALE, Prague; EEA, Barcelona; CSAE, Oxford; 3rd Arne Ryde workshop on Culture, Institutions and Development, Lund University; Essen Health Conference, University of Duisburg-Essen; Nordic Conference in Development, Gothenburg; EUDN PhD workshop, Stockholm; DEM Workshop on Ageing, Culture and Comparative Development, University of Luxembourg; Economic Geography PhD seminar, LSE; SWELL seminar series in Water Economics (online); Copenhagen Education Network Workshop, Lund University.

2022: Swedish Conference in Economics, Stockholm School of Economics; IAST workshop in Political Economy, Toulouse School of Economics; ASWEDE 7th Annual Conference, Stockholm; 2nd Arne Ryde workshop on Culture, Institutions and Development, Lund University; Brown Bag seminar (x2), Lund University.

2021: Arne Ryde workshop on Culture, Institutions and Development, Lund University; Copenhagen Education Network Workshop, Lund University; Scandinavian PhD Workshop in Economics of Education (online).

GRADUATE SCHOOLS

2022: Toulouse Summer School in Quantitative Social Sciences, Toulouse School of Economics, France.

2022: ASREC Graduate Student Workshop in the Economics of Religion, IRES, Chapman University, United States.

TEACHING AND SUPERVISION

2022/2023: Foundations of Finance (TA), Financial Economics (x2, TA)

2021/2022: Foundations of Finance (TA), Financial Economics (x3, TA), Microeconomic Theory with Applications (TA)

2020/2021: Financial Economics (x2, TA), Microeconomic Theory with Applications (TA)

2019/2020: Macroeconomic Theory and Economic Policy (TA)

2019: Thesis supervisor of Lisa Olsson (MSc in Water Resources Engineering)

2011: Water and Wastewater Technology (TA)

PROFESSIONAL
ACTIVITIES

2023: Co-organized *the 3rd Arne Ryde workshop on Culture, Institutions and Development* (with Gunes Gokmen).

2023: Co-launched the *PhD lunch seminar series in Economics* at Lund University.

2023/2024: Member of the EDR (Student Union for PhD students) Election Committee

2022/2023: Representative of the EDR (Student Union for PhD students) in the Faculty Research Committee.

2022: Co-organized *the 2nd Arne Ryde workshop on Culture, Institutions and Development* (with Gunes Gokmen).

2022: PhD representative to the Head of Department election committee.

2021/2022: PhD representative to the Department Board.

2019: Co-organized *the ASREC Europe conference* (with Gunes Gokmen).

PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE

DHI (Danish Hydraulic Institute) 2016-2019

Applied research in urban hydrology, consultancy work, and technical instruction (full-time)

SMHI (Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute) 2014-2016

Applied research in hydrology and climate change (full-time).

WSP Group 2011-2014

Consultancy work and project management in urban hydrology and planning (full-time).

COMPUTER SKILLS Python, Stata, R, ArcGIS, QGIS, L^AT_EX, MS Office

LANGUAGES Swedish (fluent), English (fluent), French (intermediate), Farsi (intermediate)

ACADEMIC
REFERENCES

Therese Nilsson

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Research Institute of Industrial Economics (IFN)
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Gunes Gokmen

Department of Economics, Lund University
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