

University of Paris Dauphine

Office Contact Information

Université Paris Dauphine
Department of Economics (LEDa)
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Languages: Punjabi (native), English
(fluent), Hindi/Urdu (fluent), French
(basic)

Education:

B.S. Economics with distinction (valedictorian), University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
Thesis Title: “Macroeconomic Implications of Terrorism”
Year abroad at LUISS Guido Carli Rome, Italy

M.S. Economics with honors, University of Tilburg, The Netherlands
Thesis Title: “Access to External Finance and Innovation: A Macroeconomic Perspective”

M.S. Public Policy and Development, Paris School of Economics, France
Thesis Title: “Using Geopolitics to identify causal effect of Aid on Growth”

Doctoral Candidate in Economics, University of Paris Dauphine, France
Expected Completion Date: 15th October 2019
Thesis Title: “Essays on Judicial Independence and Development”

References:

Professor Thierry Verdier
Paris School of Economics
+33(0)143136308
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Professor Ekaterina Zhuravskaya
Paris School of Economics
+33(0)180521612
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Professor Thomas Piketty
Paris School of Economics
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Professor Eric Brousseau
University of Paris Dauphine
+33144054697
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Citizenship: Pakistani

Research Fields:

Development Economics, Political Economy

Teaching Experience:

Fall 2018: Statistical Reasoning at Sciences Po (Graduate Level)
Spring 2019: Quantitative Methods at Sciences Po (Graduate Level)

Research Experience:

2015-2016: Researcher at Institute for Research on Development (IRD), Paris, France

Projects at IRD:

1. Construction and compilation of electoral fraud dataset in Africa
2. Construction and compilation of dataset on citizen trust of state institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa

2012-2014: Researcher at Central Planning Bureau, Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs

Projects at CPB:

1. A macroeconomic analysis of the returns to public R&D investments (academic paper)
2. Science funding: international comparisons of science funding systems (policy brief)
3. Innovation and financial access in the subprime crisis (academic paper)

06-09.2010: Summer internship at Research Department, Central Bank of Pakistan (SBP)

Research on terrorism and its impact on the external sector of Pakistan

Awards and Honors:

2019 EDI Grant “Judicial Independence in Pakistan” (\$ 32,000)

2018 Best Paper Award Institutional and Organizational Economics Academy

2017 University of Paris Student Research Award (\$ 2,000)

2017 Foundation Sarah Andrieux Exploratory Research Grant (\$ 1,200)

2016-2019 Doctoral Fellowship University of Paris Dauphine

2015-2016 Paris School of Economics Public Policy and Development Scholarship

2011-2012 Tilburg University Scholarship for Academic Excellence

2008-2011 Utrecht Excellence Scholarship

Job Market Paper:

Judicial Independence and Development: Evidence from Pakistan (IOEA Best Paper Award 2018)

To what extent does the Presidential appointment of judges impact judicial decision making? This paper provides causal evidence that the institution of Presidential appointment exerts considerable influence on judicial decision making in Pakistan. We find that a change in selection procedure of judges from Presidential appointment to appointment by a judicial commission (consisting of peer judges) significantly reduces rulings in favour of the government and that this reduction reflects an improvement in the quality of judicial decisions. Using mandatory retirement age as an instrument for new appointments allows us to estimate the causal effect of the reform. We test for, and provide evidence against, potential threats to identification and alternative explanations to our findings. The analysis of case content reveals that the results are explained by rulings in politically salient cases. We find evidence of selection effects mechanism: judges appointed by the President are more likely to have been politically active prior to their appointment. We also find a positive welfare effect of the reform, with lower expropriation risk leading to increased investment in the construction industry and higher house prices.

Working Papers:

The Dictator, Imam and the Judge: Tracing the impact of Religion on the Courts

How does religion impact the courts? In this paper, we document a substantial impact of religious leaders on judicial decision making in Pakistan. Utilizing a unique dataset on the holy Muslims shrines across Pakistan, we show that districts where historically the shrine density was high, a military coup in 1999 induced a large decline in judicial independence and quality of judicial decisions. We present evidence consistent with the view that increased political power of religious leaders to influence the courts is the key mechanism explaining the results. The analysis of the type of cases driving the results show that more favourable rulings for the government in land expropriation and human rights cases explain these results. We also show a judicial selection reform that changed the appointment procedure to select judges from presidential appointment to selection by a judicial commission consisting of peer judges mitigates the effect of historical shrine density on judicial outcomes.

Sultan Mehmood

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The Political Economy of Foreign Aid and Growth: Theory and Evidence (with Avner Seror)

In this paper, we demonstrate that political incentives are key to understanding the effectiveness of foreign aid. We present a theory that formalizes how foreign aid impacts growth, leader turnover and public employment. We show that when political institutions are weak, foreign aid is misallocated. Nevertheless, foreign aid may also increase the dynamic efficiency of public policies, making the overall effect on aid on growth ambiguous. We present evidence consistent with the predictions of the model where foreign aid decreases leader turnover, increases misallocation - by increasing public employment - while it has a positive and significant effect on economic growth. The identification strategy we propose allows us to provide causal evidence for the predictions of the model.

Conferences:

Annual Conference American Law and Economics Association ALEA 2019, New York, USA
Annual Meeting Midwest Political Science Association MPSA 2019, Chicago, USA
Annual Meeting American Political Science Association APSA 2019, Washington DC, USA
Annual Meeting Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture ASREC 2019, Boston, USA
Annual Conference Royal Economic Society RES 2019, Warwick, UK
Annual Conference Society for Institutional & Organizational Economics SIOE 2019, Stockholm, Sweden
Annual Conference in Public Economics, Journées LAGV 2019, Marseille, France
Annual Asian Meeting of the Econometric Society 2019, Xiamen, China
Annual Conference American Law and Economics Association ALEA 2018, Boston, USA
Annual Meeting Institutional and Organizational Economics Academy, IOEA 2018 Corsica, France (**Best Paper Award 2018**)
Annual Conference Centre for the Studies of African Economies CSAE 2018, Oxford, UK

Invited Seminars/Workshops/Conferences:

World Bank South Asia Development Conference 2019, Washington DC, US
Economic Development and Institutions (EDI) General Conference 2019, Paris, France
Institute for the Study of Religion, Economics and Society (IRES) Workshop 2019, Los Angeles, US
Applied Economics Seminar 2019 Paris School of Economics, Paris, France
CRED Workshop 2019, University of Namur, Namur, Belgium
Graduate Student Workshop 2019, Institute for Study of Religion, Economics and Society, Boston, US
Brownback Seminar 2019 at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan
CREB Seminar 2019 at the Lahore School of Economics, Lahore, Pakistan
Casual Friday Development Seminar 2018, Paris School of Economics, Paris, France

Publications:

Mehmood, S., 2014. Terrorism and the macroeconomy: Evidence from Pakistan. *Defence and Peace Economics*, 25(5), pp. 509-534.

Mehmood, S., (forthcoming). Political Cleavages in Pakistan: Evidence from the Changing Structure of the Electorate. In *Political Cleavages, Party Systems and Social Inequalities: A study of Electoral Democracies 1948-2019*. Edited by Amory Gethin and Thomas Piketty. Harvard University Press.

Policy Writing:

“A cultural phenomenon”. [The International Herald Tribune](#), 2016.

“A discussion on death penalty” [Dawn Pakistan](#), 2015.

“Fallibility of Intuition and the Utility of Models”. [The International Herald Tribune](#), 2014.

“Public Funding of Science: An International Comparison” with Ryanne van Dalen, [CPB Policy Brief](#), 2014.

“The Power of the Situation”, [The International Herald Tribune](#), 2014.

“The roots of terrorism”. [Dawn Pakistan](#), 2013.

Affiliation(s):

Graduate Fellow, Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (2019 to present)

Graduate Fellow, Governance and Regulation Chair, Paris Research University (2016 to present)

Computer Skills:

Stata, Eviews, Python, Latex, MS Office, ArcGIS