

Sabbatical Report for Professor Florence Bouvet, Spring 2020

I was granted a Sabbatical leave in the Spring 2020 semester. This report summarizes the progress I made on several research projects while I was on leave. Despite the disruptive environment induced by the pandemic and having to home-school three young children, I was able to complete three research projects and to continue working on a fourth one. As a result of new collaboration opportunities that arose after I submitted my leave proposals, the projects I worked on over the last eight months differ slightly from those I initially intended to complete.

The first paper entitled “Do Voters in New Democracies Care About Income Inequality? The Role of Media Freedom and Education” is a new collaboration with my colleague at SSU, Dr. Puspa Amri. We built on our common interest in political economy and my expertise in economic voting, to investigate the relevance of income inequality in economic voting in new democracies. Using a large N study of national legislative elections in 37 developing and democratizing countries from 1992 to 2016, this paper tests: (i) whether an increase in income inequality is negatively associated with the vote share for the incumbent party, (ii) whether the level of media freedom, which enhances information availability, affects the extent of economic voting in new democracies, and (iii) whether the impact of media freedom on economic voting is contingent on the population’s educational level. Overall, we find evidence that increasing income inequality is negatively related to the vote share for the incumbent. While more income inequality significantly reduces the vote share for incumbent party, this effect is statistically significant only among more educated voters in countries with greater media freedom.

Earlier this year (March 1, 2020), I presented this paper at the Eastern Economic Association (EEA) Annual conference in Boston. The paper was well received by the audience. We revised the paper based on the comments we received and, in May 2020 we submitted the manuscript to *Electoral Studies*, a leading academic journal in political science and economic voting literature (see appendix A). We have been informed in June that the paper was currently under review.

The second paper I have worked on this year is the result of an invitation I received in April 2019 to contribute to a special issue of the *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*. Given my previous research on the European Integration and its impact on income inequality, the editors of this special issue wanted me to work on the impact of the Euro and the single market on inequalities within Europe (see appendix B for a timeline for this paper). To that end, I have written a paper entitled “Estimating the Impact of the Economic and Monetary Union on National Income Inequality: A Synthetic Counterfactual Analysis”. In that project, I use a rather new econometric technique called the synthetic control method to I estimate what would have happened to income inequality in euro-area countries, had these countries not switched to the single currency. I also presented this paper at the EEA conference in Boston. In April 2020, I participated in a virtual meeting with the editors and other contributors to the special issue, and based on comments I received from two referees, I revised the manuscript over the summer. Next week I am scheduled to submit a second draft of the manuscript. The special issue is scheduled to be published in January 2021.

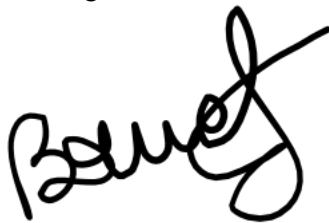
Building on the previous paper’s methodology, last year I started to collaborate with Dr. Jason Jones from Furman University on an international finance paper. In this paper entitled “Currency devaluation as a source of growth in Africa: a synthetic control approach”, we examine the impact of the 1994 CFA-franc devaluation on the economies of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC). Using the synthetic counterfactual methodology, GDP levels in these countries are compared to levels had the currency not been devalued by 50% against the French Franc that year. With the exception of the Republic of Congo, which was embroiled in civil strife, GDP rises for all the WAEMU and CAEMC countries immediately following the devaluation. However, when compared to the counterfactual, only Mali and Benin experiences levels of GDP significantly above what would have been had there not been a devaluation. The

non-significant results of the devaluation when compared to a counterfactual suggests caution when citing the CFA-franc devaluation in 1994 as a model to justify potential future devaluations of the CFA-franc as a path to greater prosperity. We just submitted this paper to the *Journal of African Economies* (see Appendix C).

Finally, I continued working on another political economy project entitled “Euroscepticism, Income Inequality, and Economic Benchmarking: What has changed since the Great Recession and the sovereign debt crisis?”. Using longitudinal data from the Standard Eurobarometer surveys, I analyze the determinants of Euroscepticism in 15 European countries from 2003 to 2017. Euroscepticism is usually captured by negative attitudes towards one’s country’s membership of the EU and has been modelled as driven by socio-economic background variables and national macroeconomic variables. This paper contributes to the literature on Euroscepticism in three ways. First, I am interested in assessing whether recent rising income inequality has played a role in the deterioration of EU support. Do citizens hold EU accountable for development in income inequality within countries and/or between countries? European integration, by promoting market liberalization and freer trade, is often presented as one of the culprits behind widening income gaps. I also use the longitudinal feature of the dataset to determine whether, similar to the signature of the Maastricht Treaty, the Great Depression and the subsequent sovereign debt crisis induced a shift in euroscepticism and its driving factors. Finally, I examine De Vries (2018)’s benchmark theory and test whether support for the European Union is related to the absolute performance of national economies or to their performance relative to the rest of the European Union (economic benchmarking). I find some evidence that EU citizens determine the level of their support for the EU by benchmarking their countries’ economic performance to EU-wide averages, notably in terms of economic growth and income inequality. Moreover, income inequality becomes a more salient driving factor of euroscepticism after 2008. I am scheduled to present early findings for this project at the American Political Science Association’s virtual conference next month (see Appendix D).

The Sabbatical leave allowed me to complete three research projects I had started in 2019. I am grateful for the opportunity I was given to make significant progress in my research agenda and develop new collaborations.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Florence Bouvet', with a stylized, cursive script.

Florence Bouvet

Appendix

A. Submission confirmation for paper with Dr. Amri to Electoral Studies:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Electoral Studies** <em@editorialmanager.com>

Date: Thursday, June 18, 2020

Subject: Confirming handling editor for submission to Electoral Studies

To: Puspa Delima Amri <puspa.amri@sonoma.edu>

This is an automated message.

Manuscript Number: JELS-D-20-00235

Do Voters in New Democracies Care About Income Inequality? The Role of Media Freedom and Education

Dear Dr. Amri,

The above referenced manuscript will be handled by Professor Oliver Heath .

To track the status of your manuscript, please log into Editorial Manager at <https://www.editorialmanager.com/jelst/>.

Thank you for submitting your work to this journal.

Kind regards,

Electoral Studies

More information and support

You will find information relevant for you as an author on Elsevier's Author Hub: <https://www.elsevier.com/authors>

B. Commissioning Letter from Oxford Review of Economic Policy

OXFORD REVIEW OF ECONOMIC POLICY

Park Central, 40–41 Park End Street, Oxford, OX1 1JD
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Editor: Christopher Allsopp

Managing editor: Cameron Hepburn
Associate editors: Christopher Adam, Abigail Adams, Simon Cowan,
Dieter Helm, Colin Mayer, Ken Mayhew,
Simon Quinn, Alex Teytelboym, David Vines
Production editor: Alison Gomm

28 May 2019

Dear Florence

**Vol. 37 No. 1: Regions
Spring 2021
edited by Ken Mayhew and Frank Cörvers**

We are delighted that you have agreed to contribute to the *Oxford Review of Economic Policy's* forthcoming issue on 'Regions'.

The topic that you have agreed to cover is '**the impact of the Single Market and the Euro**'. Some of the other contributors to the issue and their topics are listed below. Other contributors are likely to be added in the next few weeks. Please contact us directly if you have any questions about the topic of your paper or any of the specific areas you are thinking of covering (ken.mayhew@education.ox.ac.uk)

The issue is due to be published in January 2021, which implies a deadline of 17 April 2020 for first drafts. We will hold an editorial seminar in Oxford shortly after this date to discuss the drafts. There will be the facility for authors to join by telephone conference if travelling to Oxford is difficult.

After the seminar you will receive referee reports and comments to help you produce your final version, which we should like to receive by 21 August 2020.

- by 9 August 2019: a brief outline of your paper
- 17 April 2020: first drafts
- April 2020: editorial seminar in Oxford and drafts sent to referees
- 29 May 2020: referee reports to have been received by authors
- 21 August 2020: second drafts
- January 2021: publication

As you know, the *Oxford Review* derives its reputation from a clear exposition of the existing state of the art, which students, colleagues, and policy-makers alike have found to be very useful. Its thematic nature has allowed issues to be analysed in more depth than is usually the case. Your article should be between 6,000 and 9,000 words long and written in a style that will appeal to an audience of policy-makers and practitioners as well as academics and students. It should, therefore, avoid unnecessary technical language. However, we are seeking contributions at the forefront of economic and policy analysis, so you

should not feel constrained in the scope of the article that you write or the issues that you address. All that we ask is that the exposition is clear and informative. A copy of our Notes for Authors is attached.

The editorial board reserves the right to ask authors to revise the contents of their article, in the light of referees' reports, to meet the *Oxford Review's* requirements. In exceptional circumstances, the editorial board may decide not to include an article in an issue.

We very much look forward to your contribution to this issue. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or the journal's production editor, Alison Gomm.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely

Ken Mayhew and Frank Cörvers
Editors

C. Submission confirmation for paper with Dr. Jones to the Journal of African Economies:

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN ECONOMIES <ONBEHALFOF@MANUSCRIPTCENTRAL.COM> (minutes ago)

to me

11-Aug-2020

Dear Dr. Bouvet,

A manuscript titled Currency devaluation as a source of growth in Africa: a synthetic control approach (JAE-2020-323) has been submitted by Dr. Florence Bouvet to the Journal of African Economies.

You are listed as a co-author for this manuscript. The online peer-review system, ScholarOne Manuscripts, automatically creates a user account for you. Your USER ID and PASSWORD for your account is as follows:

Site URL: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jafeco>

USER ID:

PASSWORD: Clicking the link below will take you directly to the option for setting your permanent password.

When you log in for the first time, you will be asked to complete your full postal address, telephone, and fax number. You will also be asked to select a number of keywords describing your particular area(s) of expertise.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Journal of African Economies Editorial Office
Log in to Remove This Account
- https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jafeco?URL_MASK=d9d98df988614cb89d95710c7e361369

D. APSA conference presentation

Mon, Mar 9
8:26 AM
NOT REPLY@ALLAC

to me

Dear Florence Bouvet,

Congratulations! Your paper proposal has been accepted for the [2020 APSA Annual Meeting](#) in San Francisco from September 10-13, 2020. **Division 37: Public Opinion** has accepted your paper, **Euroskepticism, Income Inequality, and Economic Benchmarking**, and placed it in the following **Created Panel: Exit, Voice, and Dissatisfaction with Democracy in Europe.**

Next step: RSVP by March 20. To RSVP:

- 1) Login to the [submission system](#), using your APSAnet.org login information.
- 2) On the RSVP menu, select the "Confirm or Decline Participation" link.
- 3) For each participation role, you will need to accept or decline. If you have been accepted to more than one role and/or session (paper presenter in a session, session chair, discussant, poster session presenter, etc), you will see a list of items - **for each you need to either confirm or decline**. If you decline a chair or discussant role, you will automatically be removed from the role in the program.
- 4) Click "Accept and Continue."
- 5) Review your work and click "Save." Once your response has been successfully recorded, you will be taken to a confirmation email page, and you will also receive a confirmation email, indicating your response(s).

Please note that participation is limited to (2) roles, with a maximum of (1) paper author role. This allows an individual to have up to (2) non-author presenter appearances (for example, on a roundtable or Author Meets Critic panel), or (1) non-author role and (1) paper author role. Chair and discussant roles are service roles and do not count toward this limit. Please review the [participation rules](#) for more information, including exemptions to the rules.

As a participant, you have three important obligations:

- 1) **RSVP by Friday, March 20, 2020**, using the instructions above.
- 2) Pre-register by **June 11**. Participants who do NOT pre-register by June 11 will be dropped from the program. Registration will open in late March.
- 3) Ensure that all members of your panel or session receive your paper two (2) weeks prior to the conference, with enough time to prepare for the meeting. In accepting to present, you agree to upload your paper to the conference system no later than **August 26**.

We look forward to welcoming you in San Francisco from September 10-13! Please note that due to member feedback, this is the first year in decades that APSA's Annual Meeting will be held off Labor Day weekend. For updated information on the 2020 APSA Annual Meeting, visit the [conference website](#).

Best regards,
APSA