

ERIC MELANDER

Updated: October 2021

Department of Economics
University of Namur
Rempart de la Vierge 8
B-5000 Namur
Belgium
Email: eric.melander@unamur.be
Website: ericmelander.com

CURRENT POSITION

2019 – present *Post-Doctoral Researcher in Economics*, University of Namur
2019 – present *Research Associate*, CAGE, University of Warwick

EDUCATION

2015 – 2019 *Ph.D. Economics*, University of Warwick
Thesis: *Democracy Manifest: Essays in Historical Political Economy*
Supervisor: Sascha O. Becker
Examiners: James Fenske (Warwick), Erik Hornung (Cologne)
2013 – 2015 *M.Res. Economics, with Distinction*, University of Warwick
2010 – 2013 *B.Sc. Economics and Economic History, First Class Honours*, University of Warwick

RESEARCH

Job market paper **Welfare Cuts and Crime: Evidence from the New Poor Law**
with Martina Miotto
revise and resubmit at *The Economic Journal*
CAGE Working Paper No. 548

Working papers **Transportation Technology, Individual Mobility and Social Mobilisation**
CAGE Working Paper No. 471

Wars, Taxation and Representation: Evidence from Five Centuries of German History
with Sascha O. Becker, Andreas Ferrara and Luigi Pascoli
CEPR Discussion Paper No. 15601

Creating ‘Us and Them’: Racial Propaganda and Right-Wing Voting in Interwar Sweden

Work in progress **Brexit and the Blitz: Conflict, Collective Memory and Euroscepticism**

Voting Power and the Press: Evidence from US Newspapers
with Julia Cagé, Guilhem Cassan and James M. Snyder

Other work **Book Review: *Race and the Undeserving Poor*** by Robbie Shilliam
Economic History Review, 72(2), 2019

INVITED SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

2021 University of Bayreuth – ZEW Mannheim (scheduled)

2020 University of York – LICOS, KU Leuven – University of Antwerp – Centre Emile Bernheim, Université Libre de Bruxelles

2019 Birkbeck College, University of London – University of Potsdam – University of Gothenburg – University of Rome, Tor Vergata – University of Namur – UC Louvain

2018 London School of Economics Graduate Seminar in Economic History

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

- 2021 Frontier Research in Economic and Social History Meeting, virtual – International Workshop on the Political Economy of Democracy and Dictatorship, virtual – European Social Science History Conference, virtual – Big Data in Economic History Conference, virtual – Workshop on the Political Economy of Wars and Political Transitions, virtual – Transatlantic Workshop on the Economics of Crime, virtual (scheduled) – Conference of the Scandinavian Society for Economic and Social History, Gothenburg (scheduled) – Economic History Association Annual Meeting, Tucson (scheduled)
- 2020 DeFiPP Workshop, virtual (×2) – Annual Meeting of the Danish Society for Economic and Social History, virtual – ASREC 24H, virtual
- 2019 Baltic Connections Conference in Social Science History, Helsinki – Economic History Society Annual Conference, Queen’s University Belfast – Spring Meeting of Young Economists, Brussels – RES Annual Conference, Warwick – EOS Workshop, Antwerp – Geodata in Economics Workshop, Hamburg – European Economic Association Annual Congress, Manchester – European Historical Economics Society Congress, Paris – Meeting of the Scandinavian Society for Economic and Social History, Uppsala – DeFiPP Workshop, Namur – HEDG Mini-Workshop, Southern Denmark
- 2018 Leicester Ph.D. Conference, Leicester – RES Symposium of Junior Researchers, Sussex – CAGE AMES Seminar, Warwick – Warwick Ph.D. Conference, Warwick (poster) – Annual Workshop on Growth, History and Development, Southern Denmark – ASREC Europe Conference, Luxembourg – EBE Summer Meeting, Munich – World Economic History Congress, Boston – Sound Economic History Workshop, Gothenburg – Workshop on Urban, Regional and International Economics, Southern Denmark – Oxford-Warwick-LSE Economic History Workshop, Warwick – Workshop on Political Economy, ifo Dresden – Workshop on Interwar Economic History, London School of Economics – CREA Workshop on Culture and Comparative Development, Luxembourg – RES Ph.D. Meeting, Westminster Business School
- 2017 CAGE Research Day, Warwick – Spring Meeting of Young Economists, Halle/Saale – Young Economists’ Meeting, Brno – CAGE-EHES-IAS Summer School, Warwick – ASREC Europe Conference, Bologna – Annual Meeting of the Danish Society for Economic and Social History, Copenhagen Business School

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2019 – present **Lecturer**, University of Namur
EDEV331 Development and Institutions, postgraduate
- 2019 – present **Tutor**, University of Namur
EDEV350 Personal Project, postgraduate
- 2015 – 2019 **Teaching Assistant**, University of Warwick
EC123 Mathematical Techniques B, undergraduate
EC124 Statistical Techniques B, undergraduate

OTHER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2014 – 2016 **Research assistant** for Sascha O. Becker and Luigi Pascali, University of Warwick
- 2014 **Researcher**, ifo Centre for the Economics of Education and Innovation, University of Munich

GRANTS, AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2021 University of Namur Covid Impact Support Grant (€9500)
- 2019 Warwick Departmental Applied Research Grant (£1030, with Martina Miotto)
- 2019 Economic History Association Exploratory Travel and Data Grant (\$2400, with Martina Miotto)
- 2019 Royal Economic Society Small Academic Expense Grant (£450)
- 2018 – 2019 Departmental studentship
- 2017 Best Paper Award – Young Economists’ Meeting (Brno)
- 2015 – 2018 CAGE ESRC DTC studentship
- 2013 – 2015 M.Res. departmental studentship
- 2012 Greenlite Prize for best performance in Economics and Economic History

REFEREEING

Journals *World Development*
Conferences Spring Meeting of Young Economists – Warwick Ph.D. Conference

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

2020 – present DeFiPP workshop co-organiser
2016 – 2019 CAGE AMES seminar series co-organiser
2015 – 2017 Warwick Ph.D. Conference co-organiser
2013 – 2014 M.Res. student-staff liaison representative

SKILLS

Languages English (fluent), Swedish (native), German (fluent), French (basic)
IT Office, L^AT_EX, Stata, ArcGIS, Python

REFERENCES

Sascha O. Becker
Professor of Economics
Monash University
sascha.becker@monash.edu

James Fenske
Professor of Economics
University of Warwick
j.fenske@warwick.ac.uk

Bishnupriya Gupta
Professor of Economics
University of Warwick
b.gupta@warwick.ac.uk

Luigi Pascali
Associate Professor of Economics
Universitat Pompeu Fabra
luigi.pascali@upf.edu

Guilhem Cassan
Associate Professor of Economics
University of Namur
guilhem.cassan@unamur.be

Welfare Cuts and Crime: Evidence from the New Poor Law (Job Market Paper)

with Martina Miotto

revise and resubmit at *The Economic Journal*

The New Poor Law reform of 1834 induced dramatic and heterogeneous reductions in welfare spending across English and Welsh counties. Using the reform in a difference-in-differences instrumental variables strategy, we document a robust negative relationship between the generosity of welfare provision and criminal activity. Results are driven by non-violent property crimes and are stronger during months of seasonal agricultural unemployment, indicating that a combination of welfare cuts and precarious work opportunities lowered the opportunity cost of crime for economically vulnerable individuals. We use data on county police forces and individual-level criminal records to rule out alternative mechanisms related to changes in policing and sentencing.

Transportation Technology, Individual Mobility and Social Mobilisation

Between 1881 and 1910, Swedish society underwent two transformative developments: the large-scale roll-out of a national railway network and the nascence of grassroots social movements which came to dominate economic, social and political spheres well into the twentieth century. Using exogenous variation in railway access arising from initial plans for the network, I show that as localities became better-connected, they were more likely to host a local movement and saw more rapid membership growth and a greater number of distinct organisations. The mobility of individuals is a key mechanism: results are driven by passenger arrivals into connected localities, not freight arrivals. I implement a market access framework to show that, by reducing least-cost distances between localities, railways intensified the influence exerted by neighbouring concentrations of membership, thereby enabling social movement spread. Subsequently – in Sweden’s first election with universal male suffrage in 1911 – localities with greater social movement mobilisation exhibited higher turnout and Social Democrat vote shares.

Wars, Taxation and Representation: Evidence from Five Centuries of German History

with Sascha O. Becker, Andreas Ferrara and Luigi Pascali

We provide causal evidence for the role of conflicts in the development of representative institutions in Europe. Using novel data on the universe of German cities between 1290 and 1710, we show that involvement in wars resulted in city councils that were larger, had a higher probability of being elected by citizens, and a higher probability of guild representation. Additionally, conflicts led to a substantial long-term increase in local fiscal and spending capacity. This effect persisted well after the end of the conflicts: temporary war taxes were transformed into permanent sophisticated systems of taxation, while public spending was re-directed from military to civilian spending. We use the gender of the firstborn child of the best-connected local noble to instrument for conflict: a firstborn daughter increases the likelihood of conflict relative to a firstborn son.

Creating ‘Us and Them’: Racial Propaganda and Right-Wing Voting in Interwar Sweden

I explore the political impact of the *State Institute for Race Biology* in interwar Sweden. Results of an anthropometric classification of the Swedish population according to pseudo-scientific notions of “Nordic purity” were disseminated in a propagandistic text. I find that, following the publication, districts deemed particularly “pure” exhibited relatively higher vote shares for right-wing parties catering to race-biological ideas. Insularity (low levels of immigration) and information (good access to libraries and newspaper media) are important moderators of this effect. Race-biological ideas appear to have been absorbed locally via direct correspondence with the *Institute*. My findings indicate that propaganda campaigns can shape political preferences, particularly when such campaigns make salient and speak directly to identity.