

Felix Forster

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EDUCATION

PhD in Economics, University of Warwick	(exp.) 2021
MRes in Economics (<i>distinction</i>), University of Warwick	2017
MSc in Economics (<i>merit</i>), London School of Economics	2013
BS in Mathematics (<i>summa cum laude</i>), Lafayette College	2009
BA in Economics & Business (<i>summa cum laude</i>), Lafayette College	2009

RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary: Development Economics
Secondary: Industrial Organization, Environmental Economics

WORKING PAPERS

“Managing Trade in Clunkers: Evidence from Uganda” with Dorothy Nakyambadde
(Job Market Paper)

“Indirect Network Effects and Vehicle Choice in LICs” with Dorothy Nakyambadde

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

“Trade Liberalization and Market Concentration: Evidence from Myanmar” with Amit Khandelwal, Rocco Macchiavello and Matthieu Teachout

PUBLICATIONS (PRE-PHD)

“The Evolution of Groupwise Poverty in Madagascar, 1999–2005” with David Stifel and Christopher Barrett, *Journal of African Economies*, 19(4): 559-604, 2010.

“The Role of Non-Coordinated Effects in the Assessment of Minority Shareholdings” with Frank Maier-Rigaud and Ulrich Schwalbe, *ZWeR - Journal of Competition Law*, 14(3): 246-257, 2016.

RESEARCH GRANTS

Economic Development and Institutions (EDI) with Rocco Macchiavello, Amit Khandelwal, Arthur Blouin and Matthieu Teachout, £99,084	2018 – 2020
International Growth Centre (IGC), “Strains on Trade: Frictions and Policy in the Ugandan Vehicle Sector” with Dorothy Nakyambadde, £19,960	2018 – 2019
International Growth Centre (IGC), £1,700	2018
ESRC Midlands DTP Overseas Fieldwork Grant, £5,251	2018

FELLOWSHIPS, HONOURS AND AWARDS

ESRC Scholarship (PhD), University of Warwick	2017 – 2021
Economics Departmental Scholarship (MRes), University of Warwick	2015 – 2017

Royal Economic Society Easter School, University of Essex	2017
Lafayette College	
Oechsle Scholarship (Academic Scholarship)	2005 – 2009
Sigma Xi Honors Society (Scientific Research)	2009
Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society (General)	2008
Pi Mu Epsilon Honors Society (Mathematics)	2008
Omicron Delta Epsilon Honors Society (Economics)	2008

PRESENTATIONS

CSAE Conference (cancelled); Econometric Society Winter Meetings (upcoming); EEA Congress; NEUDC (upcoming); University of Warwick	2020
University of Warwick	2019
University of Warwick	2018

EMPLOYMENT AND RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for Professor Rocco Macchiavello, LSE	2016 – 2017
Research Assistant for Professor Sascha Becker, University of Warwick	2015
NERA Economic Consulting, Consultant, London / Berlin	2013 – 2015
NERA Economic Consulting, Analyst, New York / Washington, DC	2009 – 2012

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

EC961: Introductory Mathematics and Statistics (postgraduate), University of Warwick	2017 – 2019
EC204: Economics 2 – Microeconomics (undergraduate), University of Warwick	2019

SERVICE

Organizer, PhD Induction Peer Advice Panel, University of Warwick	2019 – 2020
Organizer, Micro Theory Reading Group, University of Warwick	2016 – 2017

IT SKILLS: ArcGIS, MS Office, Python, R, Stata, SAS

LANGUAGES: English (fluent), German (native), French (basic)

CITIZENSHIP: German, British

REFERENCES

Professor Mirko Draca, Department of Economics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom • Phone: +44 (0) 24 765 23472 • E-Mail: m.draca@warwick.ac.uk

Professor Clément Imbert, Department of Economics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom • Phone: +44 (0) 24 765 73463 • E-Mail: c.imbert@warwick.ac.uk

Professor Rocco Macchiavello, Department of Management, London School of Economics, London, WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom • Phone: +44 (0) 20 7852 3536 • E-Mail: r.macchiavello@lse.ac.uk

Professor Mike Waterson, Department of Economics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom • Phone: +44 (0) 24 765 23427 • E-Mail: michael.waterson@warwick.ac.uk

ABSTRACTS

“Managing Trade in Clunkers: Evidence from Uganda” with Dorothy Nakyambadde
(Job Market Paper)

Many low-income countries rely on age-based import restrictions to curb local pollution from motor vehicles. Yet the impact of these policies, unlike that of emission regulations in richer economies, is not well understood. In this paper, we investigate one such import restriction – a progressive tariff levied on passenger vehicles – in the context of Uganda. Leveraging exempted goods vehicles as a natural counterfactual group in a difference-in-differences framework, we estimate the effect of a 15-30 percentage point increase in the levy in 2015 on imports and first-time registrations. In order to distinguish the direct impact of the levy from substitution between vehicle age groups, we structurally estimate the market for newly imported vehicles and decompose the overall effect using counterfactual simulation. We find that the levy increase resulted in a 34 percent reduction of targeted vehicle imports, but that first-time registrations remain unaffected as end users increasingly purchase old inventory from traders. In addition, we find that the magnitude of the consumer response is decreasing in vehicle age and evidence of substitution towards older vehicles due to the levy. These findings point to highly progressive tariffs or outright bans, ideally complemented by domestic regulation, for effective policy aimed at curbing vehicle emissions.

“Indirect Network Effects and Vehicle Choice in LICs” with Dorothy Nakyambadde

Motor vehicles imported by low-income countries are typically obsolete in rich economies and are associated with higher pollution and lower productivity than their newer counterparts. In this paper, we study the extent to which indirect network effects – the dependence of demand on the existing domestic vehicle stock via the availability of spare parts and repair services – contributes to this prominence of old vehicles in Uganda. Leveraging rich data from administrative records, an especially conducted spare-parts trader survey, and online platforms, we estimate a structural model of vehicle demand that accounts for the availability of spare parts and repair services, which, in turn, is a function of the existing vehicle stock. We identify parameters in the context of the indirect network effect using standard instruments from the discrete-choice literature and introduce a new measure of spare parts intercompatibility to distinguish the impact of repair-related network effects from general peer effects. The estimation reveals spare part availability as an important product characteristic and counterfactual simulations highlight the indirect network effect’s contribution to the prominence of older vehicles.

“Import Liberalization and Political Connections: Evidence from Myanmar” with Amit Khandelwal, Rocco Macchiavello, and Matthieu Teachout

Political connections in low and middle-income countries have value for firms, which suggests that they distort competition and undermine market efficiency. In this paper, we study the role of political connections among importers in Myanmar to assess the extent to which they reduce gains from trade. We leverage administrative data on company board membership and the universe of imports to analyse how the removal of import license requirements differentially affects sector growth depending on the presence of politically connected firms. We find that de-licensing did not impact growth in sectors with many politically connected firms, while it accelerated growth in other sectors. The latter occurred almost exclusively via entry of non-connected firms. We further provide evidence that this is due to both “natural” sector-specific entry barriers and institutional arrangements protecting connected firms. Connected firms tend to import products that are subject to scale economies, which may prevent smaller firms from competing effectively. A subset of sectors liberalized *de jure* but not *de facto* are more likely to be sectors where connected firms are present and where economies of scale are less important, pointing towards limited implementation of the de-licensing in favour of connected firms.