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Undergraduate Studies

B.A., Computing and Information Science, Queen's University, Canada 1999
B.A.H., Economics, Queen's University, Canada 2000

Graduate Studies

Ph. D., Harvard University, 2001 to present
Thesis Title: "Specialization Patterns and the Dynamics of Growth"
Expected Completion Date: June 2007

Thesis Committee and References:

Professor Robert J. Barro
Littauer Center 218, Harvard University
rbarro@harvard.edu

Professor Dani Rodrik
Littauer-212, Harvard University
dani_rodrik@harvard.edu

Professor Ricardo Hausmann
Rubenstein-414, Harvard University
ricardo_hausmann@harvard.edu

Research Fields

Primary fields: Macroeconomics, International Trade, Development
Secondary field: Public Finance

Teaching Fellow Experience

2005 – 2006	International Development (Undergraduate), Senior Thesis Tutorial
Spring 2004	Development and Growth (Undergraduate), Professor Xavier Sala-i-Martin
Spring 2003	Macroeconomics (Ph.D.), Professors Robert Barro and David Laibson - Awarded Graduate Instruction Prize
Spring 2002	Macroeconomics and Politics (Undergraduate), Professor Robert Barro

Previous Employment

2002 – 2006	Research Assistant for Professor Robert Barro
1999	Bain & Company Inc., Associate Consultant Intern
1998	Canadian Pension Administration Systems Inc., Analyst

Professional Activities

Referee: *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *Japan and the World Economy*

Honors and Scholarships

2002-2006	Bradley Foundation Fellow
2001-2006	Doctoral Fellowship, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
2003	Dillon Fellowship, Harvard University

Job Market Paper

"Introduction of New Goods, Convergence and Growth"

Using detailed trade data, I document the following new fact about development: there is rapid, widespread unconditional convergence in unit values across countries, a common proxy for quality. Countries that begin a period with a greater distance to the unit values of advanced economies such as the OECD raise both their unit values and per capita income faster unconditionally. This pattern is consistent with divergence in per capita income overall, because countries at the same level of development differ greatly in how much distance they have to catch up. Among poor economies, the laggards are those producing in sectors where the frontier is not very far ahead so there is little potential for growth through catch-up, while the more successful economies are in sectors with the frontier much further ahead so the impact from convergence is bigger. A simple model illustrates how entry into new products is a crucial determinant of a country's average distance to the frontier. Consistent with this idea, I show that export diversification exerts a strong positive influence on the average distance developing countries have to the frontier.

Submitted and Published Papers

"What You Export Matters" with Ricardo Hausmann and Dani Rodrik
Journal of Economic Growth (revised and resubmitted)

When local cost discovery generates knowledge spillovers, specialization patterns become partly indeterminate and the mix of goods that a country produces may have important implications for economic growth. We demonstrate this proposition formally and adduce some empirical support for it. We construct an index of the "income level of a country's exports," document its properties, and show that it predicts subsequent economic growth.

"Winners and Losers in Commodity Lottery" with Chris Blattman and Jeffrey G. Williamson
Journal of Development Economics (forthcoming)

Most countries in the periphery specialized in the export of just a handful of primary products for most of their history. Some of these commodities have been more volatile than others, and those with more volatile prices have grown much more slowly relative to the industrial leaders and to other primary product exporters. This fact helps explain the growth puzzle noted by Easterly, Kremer, Pritchett and Summers more than a decade ago: that the contending fundamental determinants of growth – institutions, geography and culture – exhibit far more persistence than do the growth rates they are supposed to explain. Using a new panel database for 35 countries, this paper estimates the impact of terms of trade volatility and secular change on country performance between 1870 and 1939. Volatility was much more important for growth than was secular change and accounts for a substantial degree of the divergence in incomes within the sample of small, commodity-dependent 'Periphery' nations as well as underperformance of the Periphery as a whole relative to such nations as the US and Western Europe, or 'Core'. One channel of impact seems to be the adverse effect of volatility on foreign investment.

Research in Progress

Quality-Differentiation and Entry into New Goods
Growth Episodes in Manufacturing Output Across Countries
Cross-Country Patterns of Religious Conversion: Theory and Evidence with Robert J. Barro