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FIELDS:

Development and Population Economics with a focus on Subjective Well-Being

EDUCATION:

Ph.D. in Economics

University of Southern California, 2014

Advisor: Richard A. Easterlin

(Job Market Paper: Internal Migration and Life Satisfaction: Well-Being Paths of Young Adult Migrants)

M.A. in Economics

University of Southern California, 2010

B.S. in Economics

Universidad de las Americas - Puebla, 2007, Summa Cum Laude

PUBLISHED PAPERS:

“Oil Prices and Life Satisfaction: Asymmetries between Oil Exporting and Oil Importing Countries” with Jeffrey B. Nugent (2013), *Applied Economics*, 45(33): 4603-4628.

“Life Satisfaction in Latin America: a Size-of-Place Analysis” (2012), *Journal of Development Studies*, 48(7): 983-999. (Single-authored)

“China's Life Satisfaction, 1990-2010” with Richard A. Easterlin, Robson Morgan, and Fei Wang (2012), *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(25): 9775-9780.

“The happiness-income paradox revisited” with Richard A. Easterlin, L. Angelescu-McVey, O. Sawangfa, and J.S. Zweig (2010), *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(52): 22463-22468.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

“Internal Migration and Life Satisfaction: Well-Being Paths of Young Adult Migrants” (Job Market Paper)

“Explaining well-being over the life cycle: A look at life transitions during young adulthood”

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS:

Merit Fellowship

University of Southern California, 2008-2013

Departmental Dissertation Fellowship

Economics Department, University of Southern California, Fall 2013

Competitive Awards:

Selected for RAND Summer Institute, Summer 2013

Selected for Graduate Summer Dissertation Workshop, WEAI, Summer 2013

Selected for IZA European Summer School in Labor Economics, Spring 2012

Research Affiliate

IZA - Institute for the Study of Labor, 2012 - present

Summer Fellowship

Economics Department, University of Southern California, Summer 2013

Dean's List

Universidad de las Americas - Puebla, 2003-2007

RESEARCH AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Research Assistant

for Richard A. Easterlin, University of Southern California, 2009-2013

Teaching Assistant

for Principles of Microeconomics (BA), University of Southern California, Spring 2009 and Fall 2008

Invited guest lecturer

for Economic Development (MA), Pro-Seminar in Human Behavior (MA), and for Economics of Happiness (BA), University of Southern California, 2010-2013

Research Assistant

for Mariano Rojas, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales - Mexico, 2007-2008

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

“Internal Migration and Life Satisfaction: Well Being Paths of Young Adult Migrants”

Western Economic Association International, July 2013

International Society for Quality of Life Studies, November 2012

IZA European Summer School in Labor Economics, April 2012

Western Economic Association International, June 2011

“Explaining well-being over the life cycle: A look at life transitions during young adulthood”

Western Economic Association International, July 2013

“The effects of oil prices on political attitudes”

Western Economic Association International, July 2013

“Oil Prices and Life Satisfaction: Asymmetries between Oil Exporting and Oil Importing Countries”

Western Economic Association International, July 2012

“Life Satisfaction in Latin America: a Size-of-Place Analysis”

Pacific Coast Council of Latin American Studies, November 2010

Western Economic Association International, June 2010

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

American Economic Association (AEA)

Western Economic Association of America (WEAI)

Population Association of America (PAA)

International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS)

Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP)

SKILLS:

Languages (other than English):

Polish: fluent, written and spoken

Spanish: fluent, written and spoken

Statistical Software Analysis:

STATA - advanced skills managing and analyzing large datasets

MATLAB - intermediate skills managing and analyzing data

REFERENCES:

Richard A. Easterlin, University of Southern California

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Jeffrey B. Nugent, University of Southern California

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John A. Strauss, University of Southern California

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ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS:

PUBLISHED PAPERS:

“Oil Prices and Life Satisfaction: Asymmetries between Oil Exporting and Oil Importing Countries”

Although there is a general consensus on the importance of oil prices for objective measures of economic well-being, almost no research has been carried out to analyze the effects of oil prices on subjective well-being differences among countries. Using the World Values Survey, we help fill this gap by studying the effects of oil prices on life satisfaction for two groups of countries, oil importers and oil exporters. Some previous studies have shown negative effects of oil prices on the subjective well-being of the United States. However, because the US is exceptionally high in terms of dependence on automobiles and in gasoline consumption per capita, this finding may not be representative of other oil importing countries. Still, it turns out that the US is typical – our results show that, in fact, oil prices have strong negative effects on life satisfaction in a sample of over 40 oil importing countries. By contrast, in oil exporting countries for which there have been virtually no previous quantitative studies, we find strong positive effects on life satisfaction. Hence, our results reveal quite strong asymmetries between oil importers and oil exporters in the effects of oil prices on life satisfaction.

“Life Satisfaction in Latin America: a Size-of-Place Analysis”

In Latin America, countries can be divided into two groups: those where people in villages and small towns are happier than people in middle sized cities, and those where they are less happy. Four possible reasons for these patterns are explored: levels of economic development, social values, public social spending, and presence of indigenous population. In regressions on happiness of each explanatory factor separately, development and public social spending (especially on health, housing, and social security) are the most important factors explaining the different size-of-place patterns. In a joint regression, public social spending turns out to be the main explanation of the different happiness patterns – countries with higher levels of social spending have higher life satisfaction in villages and small towns than in middle sized cities.

“China's Life Satisfaction, 1990-2010”

Despite its unprecedented growth in output per capita in the last two decades, China has essentially followed the life satisfaction trajectory of the central and eastern European transition countries a U-shaped swing and a nil or declining trend. There is no evidence of an increase in life satisfaction of the magnitude that might have been expected to result from the fourfold improvement in the level of per capita consumption that has occurred. As in the European countries, in China the trend and U-shaped pattern appear to be related to a pronounced rise in unemployment followed by a mild decline, and an accompanying dissolution of the social safety net along with growing income inequality. The burden of worsening life satisfaction in China has fallen chiefly on the lowest socioeconomic groups. An initially highly egalitarian distribution of life satisfaction has been replaced by an increasingly unequal one, with decreasing life satisfaction among persons in the bottom third of the income distribution and increasing life satisfaction among those in the top third.

“The happiness-income paradox revisited”

Over the long-term – usually a period of 12 years or more - happiness does not increase as a country's income rises. Until now the evidence for this was limited to developed countries. This article presents evidence that the long term nil relationship between happiness and income holds also for a number of developing countries, for the eastern European countries transitioning from socialism to capitalism, and for an even wider sample of developed countries than previously studied. It also finds that in the short-term in all three groups of countries, happiness and income go together, i.e., happiness tends to fall in economic contractions and rise in expansions. Recent critiques of the paradox, claiming the time series relationship between happiness and income is positive, are the result either of a statistical artifact or a confusion of the short-term relationship with the long-term one.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

“Internal Migration and Life Satisfaction: Well-Being Paths of Young Adult Migrants”

Is migration accompanied by an increase in life satisfaction? Do changes in life satisfaction differ depending on the migrant's reason to move? These questions are addressed using longitudinal data from the Swedish Young Adult Panel Study. Comparing migrants to non-migrants, I find that internal migration is accompanied by a short to medium term increase in life satisfaction for those who move for work (work migrants), and those who move for other reasons (non-work migrants). However, only work migrants display a long term life satisfaction improvement. For work migrants, migration is accompanied by an improvement in occupational status which sets them on a high achieving track and continues to positively influence well-being after six to ten years. For non-work migrants, an increase in satisfaction with housing accompanies the increase in overall life satisfaction. The positive association of housing improvements with life satisfaction, however, gradually decreases in the years following the move.

“Explaining well-being over the life cycle: A look at life transitions during young adulthood”

Early adulthood is a time of important life transitions. How do these transitions affect well-being, and to what degree can they account for the life satisfaction path followed during young adulthood? To answer these questions, longitudinal data from the Swedish Young Adult Panel Study are used. Four age intervals covering ages 22 through 40 are constructed. The well-being changes and the main transitions undergone during each age interval are examined. Life satisfaction at ages 22 to 40 follows a slight inverse U-shape peaking around age 30/32 and declining thereafter. Young adults ages 22 through 30/32 are observed to be going mainly through partnership formation, the school-to-work transition, and the early years of parenting. After age 30 parenting continues as an important life transition, and is joined by an increase in partnership dissolution. These transitions alone are found to account for the inverse U-shape followed by overall life satisfaction.