

September 2026

Topics for Bachelor Theses at the Chair of Prof. Vollmer

The list below gives topic ideas for bachelor theses. The thesis can be written in German or English. Bachelor theses are typically a literature review of the theoretical and empirical research on the topic.

In case you are interested in writing your thesis on one of the proposed topics please contact Dr. Ida Monfared via Email (ida.gohardoustmonfared@uni-goettingen.de). You can also make your own proposition.

For Master thesis requests please contact Prof. Vollmer directly.

(sebastian.vollmer@wiwi.uni-goettingen.de)

Topics
Can markets protect diets from climate change? The role of market access and trade Local agricultural production is increasingly exposed to climate shocks, but households do not necessarily depend on locally produced food. Markets and trade can allow food to flow from surplus to deficit regions and may therefore protect consumers from local production shocks. This thesis examines whether better market access and trade integration make food consumption more resilient to climate variability. Particular attention is given to remote versus well-connected regions and to differences between staple and nutrient-dense foods. The thesis could review existing evidence and empirically relate measures of market accessibility to food prices, food availability, or climate exposure.
Are ultra-processed foods becoming the food of the poor? Ultra-processed food consumption is increasing rapidly in many low- and middle-income countries. This thesis investigates how consumption varies across the income distribution and whether ultra-processed foods shift from being predominantly consumed by richer households to becoming increasingly important among poorer households as countries develop. Potential mechanisms include relative prices, convenience, supermarket penetration, advertising, urbanization, and changing employment patterns. The thesis could combine a review of the emerging literature with household expenditure data from selected countries to examine socioeconomic gradients in processed-food consumption and how these gradients have changed over time.

Can we predict hunger from space? Satellite data and the future of food-security measurement

Traditional household surveys provide detailed measures of poverty and food insecurity but are expensive and often become available only long after data collection. Satellite imagery provides frequently updated information on vegetation, rainfall, agricultural production, infrastructure, and economic activity. This thesis examines whether satellite data can reliably predict food insecurity and poverty. It reviews recent applications of remote sensing and machine learning and compares their advantages and limitations with household surveys. Particular attention is given to whether such approaches can identify rapid deterioration in living conditions following droughts, floods, conflict, or other shocks.

Scaling up

While reports from an intervention might indicate positive outcomes, such results do not necessarily guarantee the program success if it is scaled up (either in the same region or transferred elsewhere / in a national or international level). Based on evidence from the literature, the thesis would present examples from programs that were successfully scaled up. This could be an intervention in the field of energy, education, health, environment, or any other topic of interest. The thesis should also discuss the aspect that played critical role in success of scaling up the program as well as pitfalls and barriers in its path.

Functionality of and policies to improve the Integrated Child Development Scheme

The Indian ICDS is the world's largest social welfare programme targeting young children and their mothers. With centres in almost every village across India, it is a powerful programme to improve the nutritional and health status of financially poor families. However, its impact is often limited by inadequate service delivery. Since its set up, many studies have evaluated aspects of the ICDS and initiatives have tried to improve its service delivery. A bachelor thesis can review the literature on functionality of the different services as well as initiatives to improve it.

Social unrest and economic deprivation

Instances of social unrest are often attributed to economic deprivation. However, instances of social unrest and mass uprising are relatively rare compared to the extent of deprivation. Which factors influence the individual decision to 'riot' and the evolution of a mass movement? A bachelor thesis can look at a specific aspect of this wider topic, with a focus on historic incidents.

Distributive justice and fairness in non-monetary domains

The debate on just distribution of wealth is old, extensive, and ongoing. Yet, how these debates can be argued in non-monetary domains such as education and health? Furthermore, how they can be argued in the global scale in terms of e.g., rights and access to raw resources (such as fossil fuel and minerals) in one hand, and dividing the burden of global issues such as Pandemic and Climate Change in the other? How about intergenerational fairness or countries' own responsibility (e.g., polluter pays)? Free to

tailor their related research question, students can use theoretical and/or empirical evidence to answer their proposed question within a clearly defined framework.

Making agriculture resilient to climate change: Evidence from developing countries

The thesis will investigate technologies and practices that can help farmers in developing countries adapt to changing weather and environmental conditions. A focus may be placed either on (i) reviewing technologies that have been evaluated in previous research and the respective methods used, (ii) summarizing promising approaches recently suggested in the literature for which rigorous evidence is still lacking, (iii) discussing the circumstances under which different technologies appear to be most suitable, or (iv) other related research questions (in consultation with the thesis supervisor).

Effects of climate change on child labour in developing countries

According to recent ILO estimates, one in ten children worldwide is engaged in work. While public attention often focuses on child labour in export industries such as carpet weaving and sports equipment, the vast majority of working children are employed in the agricultural sector. Many studies argue that climate change has significant effects on agricultural productivity, particularly in low-income countries. However, the implications of these changes for child labour remain ambiguous. On one hand, these changes will affect the trade-off poor parents face between sending their children to school and letting them work. On the other hand, climate-induced changes in environmental conditions may drive the adoption of new farming practices and technologies. The direction of this technological change is critical. If climate change leads to increased use of labour-intensive technologies (e.g., application of fertilizers and pesticides), the demand for child labour may rise. Conversely, if it accelerates the diffusion of labour-saving technologies (e.g., tractors and advanced irrigation systems), it may reduce the reliance on child labour in agriculture. The thesis will review the literature on the interplay between climate change, agricultural productivity and technology adoption, and then discuss the associated implications for child labour. A focus may be placed on (i) empirical evidence, (ii) theoretical models, or (iii) a combination of both (in consultation with the thesis supervisor).

Agriculture and climate change: The case of zero tillage and early sowing in subsistence farming

The thesis will conduct a structured literature review of studies on zero tillage and early sowing, two approaches that have been argued to help farmers in adapting to changing weather and environmental conditions. A focus may be placed either on (i) reviewing evidence from advanced economies with well-developed agricultural sectors, (ii) reviewing evidence from low-income countries and subsistence farmers, (iii) discussing the circumstances under which these two technologies are most suitable (and when not), or (iv) other related research questions (in consultation with the thesis supervisor).

Iron supplementation for the treatment of iron deficiency: The state-of-the-art knowledge

The bachelor thesis should systematically summaries evidence on the effectiveness of iron supplementation for the treatment of iron deficiency. It should consider metabolic channels as well as implementation of iron supplementation programs.

Mobility and development

Mobility, in particular having access to suitable means of transportation, influences access to markets, health facilities, education, and allows for social and political participation. Yet, access to transportation and hence mobility, is unequally distributed. A bachelor thesis would review the empirical evidence on the distribution of mobility and mobility patterns with a focus on the Global South as well as on the link between mobility and development on the individual level.

Failures to agriculture technology adoption

One reason for low agricultural productivity in developing countries is the limited adoption of productive technologies. The thesis can explore one of the following questions: (i) Are there gender differences in agricultural technology adoption? (ii) How important are social networks for adoption? (iii) Do economic and social preferences matter? (iv) What role do market failures play in technology adoption? (v) Can religion act as a driver or barrier to adoption? Students are encouraged to focus on a specific technology, such as irrigation, or set a regional focus, e.g., West Africa. Additionally, students are welcome to suggest another question related to the topic.

Agriculture and growth

The agricultural sector is fundamental to economic development, particularly in low-income countries where it often represents the largest share of employment and GDP. But how exactly does agricultural impact economic growth? This thesis will review the economic literature on this topic and focuses on one of the following questions: (i) How has the perspective on agriculture's role in growth evolved over time? (ii) How is the agricultural sector modelled in economic theory? (iii) Is agriculture a lagging and backward sector in terms of driving growth? (iv) Other related questions.

Effective sensitization campaigns

Sensitization campaigns are used to spread information and to encourage behaviour change. For example, community health workers may inform communities about best practices of feeding newborns through door-to-door visits; radio spots may be played to encourage building and use of toilets; groups may perform songs or plays on market days to advertise a new health programme. A bachelor thesis would review the literature on the relative effectiveness of different sensitization strategies in reaching target populations and in leading to behaviour change.

Mapping Jati-level inequality in India: Identifying the most marginalised and affluent subgroups within SC, ST, and OBC Categories

The goal is two-fold - first to identify jatis within the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) groups in each state who are most well-off, and which are least well-off (in terms of income, education and health). Secondly, this

review will explore how existing studies have identified intra-group variation in caste categories (SC, ST, OBC) across Indian states.

Barriers to meaningful sustainability

There are a range of models who advocate for sustainable growth (e.g., doughnut economics proposed by Kath Raworth). However, these models often have a local view of individual countries, while in a globalized economy, interactions between countries should count for their overall impact. With a critical view of such models and using evidence from literature, the thesis would draw examples from industries such as food, fashion, technology, cars, energy, etc., to argue that how there is a need for deeper change and global effort in this path.

The microeconomics of extreme heat

This topic explores the microeconomic impacts of extreme heat due to climate change, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries. It examines how heat stress influences a wide range of outcomes such as productivity, labour markets, health, education, economic decision-making, or domestic violence. The thesis can also consider looking at possible mitigation policies or interventions - such as building design, cooling technologies, labour protection measures, or behavioural adaptations - within the broader field of economics, including development, labour, environmental, or behavioural economics.

Livelihoods at the water's edge: Socioeconomic dynamics around Pulicat Lake, South India

What is the role of market access in farmers' livelihoods? What are the determinants of optimism/pessimism in fishing and agriculture? Are diversified incomes associated with varied diets? How does urbanisation and proximity to roads affect diets? Explore such questions in a unique setting of Pulicat Lake, a brackish water lagoon at the border of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. At this lake, fishers and farmers make their living whilst the nearby special economic zone, heavy industries, and even India's primary space port make their presence felt. The team at LEAD IFMR and Krea University invite you to work with their data to develop your bachelor's thesis.

Effects of health insurance on farming households

Health insurance is far from universal, especially among farming households in low- and middle-income countries. Lack of health insurance, however, restricts access to healthcare services. What happens if farming households get access to health insurance? What influences take-up of health insurance? And if farming households do register for health insurance, how does this impact their healthcare utilisation, their productivity, and other outcomes? A bachelor thesis would review the empirical evidence on these questions.

Education and women's employment

Women's educational attainment has increased substantially in many low- and middle-income countries, yet these improvements have not always been accompanied by comparable increases in women's employment. This thesis would examine the

relationship between education and women's labour-market outcomes and explore why higher educational attainment may translate into employment in some contexts but not in others. Potential mechanisms include marriage and fertility, childcare responsibilities, social norms, occupational opportunities, and differences between rural and urban labour markets. Students may focus on a particular country or region, compare different groups of women, or examine how the education-employment relationship has changed over time. The thesis could combine a review of the existing literature with an empirical analysis using available household or labour-force survey data.

Educational inequality

Who is being left behind as access to education expands? Does greater educational access reduce inequality, or can it simply shift inequality from years of schooling to school quality, learning, field of study, or access to higher education? How do emerging forces such as digitalisation, migration, climate shocks, changing labour-market opportunities, or the expansion of private education reshape existing educational gaps?

This thesis would explore a specific dimension of educational inequality in a developing-country context. Possible questions include whether educational expansion has benefited disadvantaged groups equally, whether inequalities have shifted across generations, how strongly educational opportunities depend on place of residence or family background, or whether new forms of inequality emerge as education systems expand. Students may focus on a particular country, region, population group, or educational transition. Depending on the research question, the thesis could combine the existing literature with an empirical analysis using publicly available household, labour-force, census, or international education data.