



August 2024

## 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 Lisa Bogler via Email ([lisa.bogler@cemis.uni-goettingen.de](mailto:lisa.bogler@cemis.uni-goettingen.de)). You can also make your own proposition.

**For Master thesis requests please contact Prof. Vollmer directly.**

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Topics
<p><b>Social desirability bias</b> <i>Surveys can contain questions on sensitive topics, including on health and health behaviour or values. Answers to sensitive questions can be affected by social desirability bias. List experiments are one method to try to reduce the risk of social desirability bias. On which topics and in which settings has social desirability bias been documented? Does social desirability bias vary between population groups? Are list experiments successful in reducing social desirability bias and under what conditions?</i></p>
<p><b>Improving public service delivery</b> <i>Public service delivery, e.g. the provision of primary education or primary health care, is often suboptimal in low- and middle-income countries. Many researchers and policy makers have focused on improving service delivery in specific sectors. A bachelor thesis can review the literature comparing the effect of different interventions or policies to improve public service delivery. The student can choose to focus on a specific sector and region.</i></p>
<p><b>The link between anaemia and cognition</b> <i>Anaemia is a disease that leads to weakness among adults and is linked with impaired cognitive development among children. The causal impact of anaemia on cognitive outcomes and productivity is less clear. A bachelor thesis would review the literature identifying evidence causally linking anaemia with cognition and/or productivity. Students can choose to focus on particular age groups or outcomes.</i></p>
<p><b>Scaling up</b> <i>While reports from an intervention might indicate positive outcomes, such results do not necessarily guarantee that the intervention would become successful when it is scaled up at a wider scope (either in the same region or transferred elsewhere – in a national or international scale). Based on evidence from the literature, the thesis would identify examples of programs that were successfully scaled up. This could be an intervention in the field of education, health, environment, or any other topic of interest. Based on evidence from the literature, the thesis would discuss the aspect that play critical role in making a program scaling up successful as well as pitfalls and barriers in its path.</i></p>

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

*The bachelor thesis should systematically summarise 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 programmes.*

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 centers 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).*

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).*

Air pollution in developing countries

*The thesis will review existing evidence on air pollution in developing countries, focusing either on (i) the drivers of air pollution (e.g., indoor vs. outdoor; agriculture vs. industry vs. transport), (ii) the effects of air pollution on various socio-economic outcomes, (iii) changes in air pollution patterns during the recent Covid-19 lockdowns in many countries, or (iv) other related research questions (in consultation with the thesis supervisor).*

### Son preference and its implications

*Several countries in East and South Asia, including China, India, and South Korea display a strong cultural preference for sons for a variety of economic, social, and religious reasons. Bachelor theses can be on: (i) What are the causes of son preference in different settings? (ii) How does son preference manifest? Are there differences in how son preference is manifested in different settings (iii) What are the implications of son preference? and (iv) What are some gaps in the literature that studies son preference? Students can choose one or more questions among these questions, further refine these questions and/or choose a particular context or country for their thesis.*

### Gender differences in unpaid care work and leisure

*Gender differences in time spent on unpaid care work (i.e., activities such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, collecting water, wood, and fuel, and taking care of children and the elderly) is ubiquitous despite large heterogeneity in the extent of burden borne by women. Bachelor theses can be on: (i) Trends in gender differences in unpaid care work and leisure across the world or in a particular country, (ii) What policies have been effective in reducing gender differences in unpaid care work (students can decide to work on a particular policy of interest such as maternity leave/paternity leave/childcare services etc., (iii) Any other topic within this broad area of research that they identify.*

### Family planning: determinants and barriers

*There are different types of contraception, but not all are available or preferred by individuals, and not all appropriate for every situation. What are the determinants of contraceptive use and contraceptive method mix in developed and developing countries? And what are some barriers to achieving high contraceptive prevalence rate and a balanced method mix?*

### The origins of gender gaps in STEM education and careers

*Women are underrepresented in STEM fields and are less likely to study STEM disciplines and choose STEM based careers. What are the origins of gender gaps in STEM education and careers? Some candidates studied in the literature are gender differences in risk aversion, competitive behaviors, and gender socialization which begins in childhood.*

### Mobility and female empowerment

*Gaining mobility, specifically access to a bicycle, may impact women in different ways. While it may be empowering by increasing access to education or health facilities, it may also come with additional burden. A bachelor thesis could review the evidence on the link between mobility and female empowerment.*

### 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 agriculture 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.*