

Simon Halphen Boserup

Contact information

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Personal data

Date of birth: May 8, 1982. Danish citizen.
Civil status: Married, three children (ages 3, 8, and 10).
Languages: Danish (native), English (fluent) and French (good).

Employment

Assistant Professor, Dep. of Economics, University of Copenhagen, 2017–present

Postdoc., Dep. of Economics, University of Copenhagen, 2013–2017

Scientific assistant (“videnskabelig assistent”), Dep. of Economics, University of Copenhagen, Dec 2012–Sep 2013

Research assistant, Center for Political Studies (CEPOS), 2005–2006

Teaching assistant in Theoretical Statistics 2, University of Copenhagen, 2005

Affiliations

Center for Economic Behavior and Inequality (CEBI), Center of Excellence funded by the Danish National Research Foundation

Economic Policy Research Unit (EPRU)

Education

PhD in Economics, University of Copenhagen, 2013

Visiting student researcher, UC Berkeley, 2011

M.Sc. in Economics (cand.polit.), University of Copenhagen, 2010

B.Sc. in Economics, University of Copenhagen, 2007 (GPA in top 0.5% at Econ study program)

Honors

Postdoctoral research grant, 2013 (Danish Council for Independent Research, Social Sciences, DFF – 1329-00046)

Awarded the Euroclear Scholarship (2010) for graduate studies at UC Berkeley in the spring of 2011.

Nominated for best graduate seminar paper in Economics at Univ. of Copenhagen, spring 2008.

Research interests

Public economics, intergenerational and distributional economics.

Research presentations

2017: Rockwool Foundation's Research Unit

2016: IFN (Stockholm); SFI

2015: Workshop in Family Economics (Copenhagen); EPRN conference

2014: EPRN conference, University of Copenhagen; KORA; Centre for Stratification Research, University of Copenhagen; Columbia University

2013: PhD defence; seminar at University of Copenhagen; Economic Policy Research Network conference

2011: Seminar at UC Berkeley; seminar at University of Copenhagen; presentation at DGPE workshop in Copenhagen

2010: Presentation at SKAT (Danish tax authorities); seminar at University of Copenhagen

2009: Seminar at University of Copenhagen; presentation at DGPE workshop in Ebeltoft

Broader dissemination to the public (in Danish)

Interviews on the effects of inheritance taxation, May-June 2018: Det Røde Felt, Radio 24syv; Berlingske (national newspaper); Mandag Morgen (media outlet); Bias (web news); .

DR2 Detektor (TV: April; written media: April, August): expert on inequality and taxation in fact-checking program in Danish national broadcasting company, 2017.

DR2 Detektor (TV: October, December): expert in fact-checking program in Danish national television, 2016.

“Danish evidence on wealth inequality in childhood”. VOX column at CEPR's Policy Portal, November 4, 2016. ([link](#))

“Bequests and wealth inequality: Evidence from Denmark.” VOX column at CEPR's Policy Portal, March 11, 2016. ([link](#))

“Passer Pikettys formueanalyse på Danmark?” (lecture for high-school students enrolled in the Academy for Youth Talents, in Danish: “Akademiet for Talentfulde Unge”), September 2015.

“Ny forskning: Pikettys formueanalyse passer ikke på Danmark”. Interview in Danish newspaper Information, June 20, 2014.

Refereeing activities

Journal of Public Economics (2013–); National Tax Journal (2013–); Journal of Human Resources (2014–); Journal of Applied Econometrics (2016–); Fiscal Studies (2016–); Scandinavian Journal of Economics (2017–); Journal of Economic Psychology (2017–).

Citations

On published and unpublished work: total citations 101, *h*-index 4.

On published work: total citations 37, *h*-index 2.

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Publication list

1. “Born with a silver spoon? Danish evidence on wealth inequality in childhood” (with Wojciech Kopczuk and Claus Thustrup Kreiner). *The Economic Journal*, 128(612), F514–F544.

Abstract:

This paper studies wealth inequality in childhood using Danish wealth records from three decades. While teenagers have some earnings, we estimate that transfers account for at least 50 percent of wealth at age 18, and much more so for the rich children. Inheritance from grandparents does not appear quantitatively important, but we do find evidence that children receive inter vivos transfers. While wealth holdings are small in childhood, they have strong predictive power for future wealth in adulthood. Asset holdings at age 18 are more informative than parental wealth in predicting wealth of children many years later when they are in their 40s. Hence, childhood wealth reveals significant heterogeneity in the intergenerational transmission of wealth, which is not simply captured by parental wealth alone. We investigate why this is the case and rule out that childhood wealth in itself can accumulate enough to explain later wealth inequality. Our evidence indicates that childhood wealth is a proxy for a broad set of circumstances related to intergenerational transmission and future wealth accumulation, including savings/investment behavior and additional transfers.

Selected for a VOX column at CEPR’s Policy Portal:
<http://voxeu.org/article/wealth-inequality-childhood>

2. “The Role of Bequests in Shaping Wealth Inequality: Evidence from Danish Wealth Records” (with Wojciech Kopczuk and Claus Thustrup Kreiner). *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 106(5): 656-61, 2016.

Abstract:

Using Danish administrative data, we estimate the impact of bequests on the level and inequality of wealth. We employ an event study design where we follow the distribution of wealth over time of people who are 45-50 years old, and divide them into treatment group and control group depending on whether a parent dies or not. Bequests account for 26 percent of the average post-bequest wealth 1-3 years after parental death and significantly affect wealth throughout the distribution. We find that bequests increase measures of absolute wealth inequality (variance), but reduce relative inequality (top wealth shares). Following the receipt of bequests, variance of the distribution censored at the top/bottom 1% increases by 33 percent, but the top 1% share declines by 6 percentage points from an initial level of 31 percent and the top 10% share declines by 10 percentage points from a base of around 81 percent.

Selected for a VOX column at CEPR’s Policy Portal:
<http://voxeu.org/article/bequests-and-wealth-inequality-evidence-denmark>

3. “Essays on Tax Evasion and Enforcement and Intergenerational Wealth Mobility”. PhD dissertation. Department of Economics, University of Copenhagen, 2013.

Working papers

1. “Intergenerational wealth formation over the life-cycle: Evidence from Danish wealth records 1984-2013” (with Wojciech Kopczuk and Claus Thustrup Kreiner). February 2016.

Abstract:

This paper provides novel insights on intergenerational wealth mobility and its relationship to *lifetime economic resources* using thirty years of wealth records for the Danish population. Non-parametric evidence reveals an almost linear relationship between wealth ranks of children and parents, except at the very top of the distribution where the association is stronger. The slope of the graph—the rank correlation—is 0.27 when both parents and children are in mid-life (age 45-50). We find a U-shaped pattern when looking at the rank correlation as a function of child age with a correlation of 0.35 when children move into adulthood (age 20), going down to 0.17 in the mid-twenties and then moving gradually up again to 0.27 in the forties. After death of parents, the correlation lies in the range 0.35-0.40. We provide a simple theoretical framework to understand intergenerational wealth mobility over the life-cycle. The theory explains the life-cycle pattern in measured wealth mobility through life-cycle patterns of transfers and earnings: wealthy parents make inter vivo transfers early in childrens’ life, their children have low income in the twenties when investing in human capital, but a high permanent income and, finally, they receive large bequests. The U-shaped pattern requires that inter vivos transfers are quantitatively important and the increase in correlation at the receipt of bequests reveals the quantitative importance of bequests. Our main interest is in the correlation across generations in lifetime resources, which according to the theory may be captured by appropriately estimating intergenerational correlation in wealth. Our preferred estimate of the intergenerational correlation in lifetime resources is 0.25, which is significantly higher than the correlation of permanent incomes equal to 0.20.

Previous version entitled: “Stability and persistence of intergenerational wealth formation: Evidence from Danish wealth records of three generations”. Originally a chapter in my PhD dissertation entitled: “Intergenerational wealth mobility: Evidence from danish wealth records of three generations”.

2. “Tax Evasion, Information Reporting, and the Regressive Bias Prediction” (with Jori Veng Pinje). October 2016.

Abstract:

Models of rational tax evasion and optimal enforcement invariably predict a regressive bias in the effective tax system, which reduces redistribution in the economy. Using Danish administrative data, we show that a calibrated structural model of this type replicates moments and correlations of tax evasion and audit probabilities once we account for information reporting in the tax compliance game. When conditioning on information reporting, we find that both reduced-form evidence and simulations exhibit the predicted regressive bias. However, in the overall economy, this bias is negated by the tax agency’s use of information reports and revenue-maximizing disposition of audit resources.