

# Essays on forest conservation policies, weather and school attendance

Laura Villalobos-Fiatt

One of the most pressing environmental challenges for the 21st Century is the loss of biodiversity and land degradation. In recognition of the importance of the environmental services provided by the forests, countries have devoted non-negligible resources to implement policies aimed at protecting the natural resources within their borders. The first two chapters of this thesis are devoted to studying the effectiveness, and unintended or side effects of two very popular forest conservation policies: protected areas and forest certification.

A second major challenge for our society is adaptation to climate change. Recent empirical evidence indicates sizable economic losses of higher-than-normal temperatures. However, the direct effect of weather variation on human capital is still largely unknown, and not accounted for in the models that estimate the social cost of carbon. The third chapter of this thesis studies how weather can have a direct and instantaneous effect on individual decisions that could harm human capital acquisition. In particular, both higher temperatures and precipitation decrease school attendance, a key input in the learning process.



**LAURA VILLALOBOS-FIATT** holds a MSc in Environmental Economics from the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) and a BSc in Economics from the University of Costa Rica.

ISBN 978-91-88199-17-1 (PRINTED)  
 ISBN 978-91-88199-18-8 (PDF)  
 ISSN 1651-4289 (PRINTED)  
 ISSN 1651-4297 (ONLINE)



**DEPARTMENT  
 OF ECONOMICS**



**UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG**  
 SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW