

BENJAMIN A. OLKEN

MIT Department of Economics
The Morris and Sophie Chang Building
50 Memorial Drive Room E52-542
Cambridge MA 02142

email: bolken@mit.edu
website: web.mit.edu/bolken
phone: (617) 253-6833

DATE OF BIRTH: April 1975

CITIZENSHIP: United States

EDUCATION

DATE	DEGREE	INSTITUTION
2004	Ph.D. Economics	Harvard University
1997	B.A. <i>summa cum laude</i> Mathematics; Ethics, Politics and Economics	Yale University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2012 – Professor of Economics, MIT Department of Economics
Director, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)
2008 – 2012 Associate Professor with Tenure, MIT Department of Economics
2005 – 2008 Junior Fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows

VISITING POSITIONS

2015 – Guest Investigator, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
2015 – 2016 Visiting Professor of Economics, Harvard Department of Economics
2010 – 2011 Visiting Associate Professor of Economics, University of Chicago Booth School
2005 – 2008 Visiting Scholar, MIT Department of Economics and Jameel Poverty Action Lab

NON-ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2019 – Co-Director, Development Economics Program, National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)
2012 – Co-Scientific Director, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab Southeast Asia
2014 – Board of Directors Member and Fellow, Bureau for Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD)
2016 – Research Affiliate, International Growth Centre (IGC)
2011 – Research Fellow, Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)
2010 – Co-Chair, Political Economy and Governance, and Member of Board of Directors Executive Committee, Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)
2009 – Research Associate, National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)
2017 – 2018 Development Economics Advisory Committee Member, National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)
2010 – 2014 Fellow, Bureau for Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD)
2005 – 2010 Affiliate, Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)
2006 – 2010 Affiliate, Bureau for Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD)
2006 – 2011 Research Affiliate, Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)
2005 – 2009 Faculty Research Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)

2001 – 2008 Consultant, The World Bank, Jakarta Office
1998 – 1999 Business Analyst, McKinsey and Company, New York

FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS

2017 PEGNet Best Practice Award
2015 Keynote Address, LACEA
2014 Best Advisor, Graduate Economics Association, MIT
2005 – 2008 Junior Fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows
2005 Review of Economic Studies Tour (Declined)
2004 – 2005 Health and Aging Post-Doctoral Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research
2003 – 2004 Justice, Welfare, and Economics Fellowship, Harvard University
2001 – 2002 Social Science Research Council Fellowship in Applied Economics
1998 – 2003 National Science Foundation Graduate Student Fellowship
1997 – 1998 Henry Luce Scholar, The Castle Group, Jakarta

EDITORIAL POSITIONS

2016 – Co-Editor, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics
2013 – 2016 Board of Reviewing Editors, Science
2012 – Associate Editor, Review of Economics and Statistics
2010 – Associate Editor, Journal of Development Economics

PUBLICATIONS

Forthcoming “The Development Effects of the Extractive Colonial Economy: The Dutch Cultivation System in Java.” (with Melissa Dell). Review of Economic Studies, forthcoming.

“Private Outsourcing and Competition: Subsidized Food Distribution in Indonesia” (with Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, Jordan Kyle, and Sudarno Sumarto). Journal of Political Economy, forthcoming.

“Firm Growth and Corruption: Empirical Evidence from Vietnam” (with Jie Bai, Seema Jayachandran, and Edmund Malesky). Economic Journal, forthcoming.

“Does Elite Capture Matter? Local Elites and Targeted Welfare Programs in Indonesia” (with Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, Ririn Purnamasari, and Matthew Wai-Poi). AEA Papers & Proceedings, forthcoming May 2019.

2019 “Making Moves Matter: Experimental Evidence on Incentivizing Bureaucrats through Performance-Based Transfers.” (with Adnan Khan and Asim Khwaja). American Economic Review 109 (1), January 2019, pp. 237-270.

2018 “Universal Basic Incomes vs. Targeted Transfers: Anti-Poverty Programs in Developing Countries.” (with Rema Hanna). Journal of Economic Perspectives 32 (4), Fall 2018, pp 201-226.

“Tangible Information and Citizen Empowerment: Identification Cards and Food Subsidy Programs in Indonesia” (with Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, Jordan Kyle, and Sudarno Sumarto). Journal of Political Economy 126 (2), April 2018, pp. 451-491.

- 2017 “Debunking the Stereotype of the Lazy Welfare Recipient: Evidence from Cash Transfer Programs Worldwide.” (with Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, and Gabriel Kreindler). World Bank Research Observer 31 (1), August 2017, pp 155-184.
- “Citywide effects of high-occupancy vehicle restrictions: Evidence from “three-in-one” in Jakarta.” (with Rema Hanna and Gabriel Kreindler). Science vol 357 (6346), 7 July 2017, pp. 89-93.
- “The Personnel Economics of the State.” (with Frederico Finan and Rohini Pande). in Handbook of Field Experiments, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo (eds), North Holland.
- 2016 “Hassles versus Prices,” Science, vol 353, issue 6302, 26 August 2016 (Perspectives Section), pp. 864-865.
- “Can Electronic Procurement Improve Infrastructure Provision? Evidence from Public Works in India and Indonesia.” (with Sean Lewis-Faupel, Yusuf Neggars, and Rohini Pande). American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, vol 8, issue 3, August 2016, pp 258-283.
- “Network Structure and the Aggregation of Information: Theory and Evidence from Indonesia” (with Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, Arun Chandrasekhar, and Rema Hanna). American Economic Review, vol 6, issue 7, July 2016, pp. 1663-1704.
- “Self-Targeting: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia.” (with Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, Matthew Wai-Poi, and Ririn Purnamasari). Journal of Political Economy, vol 124, issue 2, April 2016, pp 371-427.
- “Tax Farming Redux: Experimental Evidence on Performance Pay for Tax Collectors” (with Adnan Khan and Asim Khwaja). Quarterly Journal of Economics, volume 131, issue 1, February 2016, pp 219-271.
- 2015 “Promises and Perils of Pre-Analysis Plans.” Journal of Economic Perspectives, volume 29, issue 3, Summer 2015, pp 61-80.
- 2014 “Should Aid Reward Performance? Evidence from a field experiment on health and education in Indonesia.” (with Junko Onishi and Susan Wong). American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, vol 6, issue 4, October 2014, pp. 1-34.
- “What Do We Learn from the Weather? The New Climate-Economy Literature” (with Benjamin F. Jones and Melissa Dell). Journal of Economic Literature, vol 52, issue 3, September 2014, pp 740-798.
- “The Missing ‘Missing Middle’” (with Chang-Tai Hsieh). Journal of Economic Perspectives, vol 28, issue 3, Summer 2014, pp. 89-108.
- 2012 “The Political Economy of Deforestation in the Tropics” (with Robin Burgess, Matthew Hansen, Peter Potapov, and Stefanie Sieber). Quarterly Journal of Economics, vol 127, issue 4, November 2012, pp. 1707-1754.

- “Temperature Shocks and Economic Growth: Evidence from the Last Half Century” (with Melissa Dell and Benjamin F. Jones) American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics, vol. 4, issue 3, July 2012, pp. 66-95.
- “Corruption in Developing Countries” (with Rohini Pande). Annual Review of Economics, vol 4, July 2012, pp 479-505.
- “Targeting the Poor: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia” (with Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, and Julia Tobias). American Economic Review, vol 104, issue 2, June 2012, pp. 1206-1240.
- 2011 “Informal Taxation” (with Monica Singhal), American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, vol. 3, issue 4, October 2011, pp. 1-28
- 2010 “Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia” American Political Science Review, vol. 104, issue 2, May 2010, pp. 243-267
- “Climate Shocks and Exports” (with Benjamin F. Jones) American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings, vol. 100, issue 2, May 2010, pp. 454-459
- 2009 “Do TV and Radio Destroy Social Capital? Evidence from Indonesian Villages” American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, vol. 1, issue 4, October 2009, pp. 1-35
- “Corruption Perceptions vs. Corruption Reality” Journal of Public Economics, vol. 93, issue 7, August 2009, pp. 950-964
- “Hit or Miss? The Effect of Assassinations on Institutional Change and War” (with Benjamin F. Jones) American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics, vol. 1, issue 2, July 2009, pp. 55-87
- “The Simple Economics of Extortion: Evidence from Trucking in Aceh” (with Patrick Barron) Journal of Political Economy, vol. 117, issue 3, June 2009, pp. 417-452
- “Temperature and Income: Reconciling New Cross-Sectional and Panel Estimates” (with Melissa Dell and Benjamin F. Jones) American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings, vol. 99, issue 2, May 2009, pp. 198-204
- “A Biological Model of Unions” (with Michael Kremer) American Economic Journal – Applied Economics, vol. 1, issue 2, April 2009, pp. 150-175
- 2008 “The Anatomy of Start-Stop Growth” (with Benjamin F. Jones) Review of Economics and Statistics, vol. 90, issue 3, August 2008, pp. 582-587
- 2007 “Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia” Journal of Political Economy, vol. 115, issue 2, April 2007, pp. 200-249
- 2006 “Corruption and the Costs of Redistribution: Micro Evidence from Indonesia” Journal of Public Economics, vol. 90, issue 4-5, May 2006, pp. 853-870

- 2005 “Do Leaders Matter? National Leadership and Growth since World War II” (with Benjamin F. Jones) Quarterly Journal of Economics, vol. 120, issue 3, August 2005, pp. 835-864
- “Revealed Community Equivalence Scales” Journal of Public Economics, vol. 89, issue 2-3, February 2005, pp. 545-566

WORKING PAPERS

- 2018 “When Celebrities Speak: A Nationwide Twitter Experiment Promoting Vaccination in Indonesia.” (with Vivi Alatas, Arun Chandrasekhar, Markus Mobius, and Cindy Paladines). December 2018.
- “The (lack of) Distortionary Effects of Proxy-Means Tests: Results from a Nationwide Experiment in Indonesia.” (with Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, and Sudarno Sumarto). December 2018. NBER Working Paper #25362.
- “Wilderness Conservation and the Reach of the State: Evidence from National Borders in the Amazon.” (with Robin Burgess and Francisco Costa). NBER Working Paper #24861. July 2018.
- “Cumulative Impacts of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs: Experimental Evidence from Indonesia.” (with Nur Cahyadi, Rema Hanna, Rizal Adi Prima, Elan Satriawan, and Ekki Syamsulhakim). NBER Working Paper #24670. May 2018

Updated January 2019