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**DOCTORAL STUDIES** Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)  
PhD, Economics, Expected completion June 2020  
DISSERTATION: "Essays on Long-Run Development"

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

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**PRIOR EDUCATION** Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)  
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**FIELDS** Primary Fields: Development, Political Economy  
Secondary Field: Economic History

<b>TEACHING EXPERIENCE</b>	<p>Political Economy (Grad 14.773) <span style="float: right;">Spring 2019</span></p> <p>Teaching Assistant, MIT for Professors Daron Acemoglu, Abhijit Banerjee</p> <p>Econometrics (Undergrad 14.32) <span style="float: right;">Spring 2019</span></p> <p>Teaching Assistant, MIT for Professor Brigham Frandsen</p> <p>Intro to Microeconomics (MBA 15.024) <span style="float: right;">Summer 2017</span></p> <p>Teaching Assistant, MIT for Professor Tavneet Suri</p> <p>Intro to Microeconomics (Undergrad 14.01) <span style="float: right;">Spring 2017</span></p> <p>Section Leader, MIT for Professor Jeffrey Harris</p> <p>Political Economy (Undergrad 14.75) <span style="float: right;">Fall 2016</span></p> <p>Teaching Assistant, MIT for Professor Benjamin Olken</p>
<b>RELEVANT POSITIONS</b>	<p>Research Assistant, Brookings Institution <span style="float: right;">2012-2013</span></p> <p>Research Assistant, Professor Dave Donaldson <span style="float: right;">2011-2012</span></p>
<b>FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS</b>	<p><b>Fellowships</b></p> <p>National Science Foundation, Graduate Research Fellow <span style="float: right;">2014-2019</span></p> <p>MIT Presidential Fellow <span style="float: right;">2014-2019</span></p> <p><b>Awards</b></p> <p>MIT Undergraduate Economic Association Best Teaching Assistant <span style="float: right;">2019</span></p> <p>Putnam Mathematics Competition, Honorable Mention <span style="float: right;">2009</span></p>
<b>PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>	<p>Referee, <i>American Economic Review</i>; <i>American Economic Review: Insights</i></p>
<b>PUBLICATIONS</b>	<p><b>“Evolving Comparative Advantage and the Impact of Climate Change in Agricultural Markets: Evidence from 1.7 Million Fields around the World”</b>  <i>Journal of Political Economy</i>, February 2016.          (With Arnaud Costinot and Dave Donaldson)</p>

A large agronomic literature models the implications of climate change for a variety of crops and locations around the world. The goal of the present paper is to quantify the macro-level consequences of these micro-level shocks. Using an extremely rich micro-level data set that contains information about the productivity—both before and after climate change—of each of 10 crops for each of 1.7 million fields covering the surface of the earth, we find that the impact of climate change on these agricultural markets would amount to a 0.26 percent reduction in global GDP when trade and production patterns are allowed to adjust. Since the value of output in our 10 crops is equal to 1.8 percent of world GDP, this corresponds to about one-sixth of total crop value.

**RESEARCH  
PAPERS****“Land Concentration and Long-Run Development:  
Evidence from the Frontier United States” (Job Market Paper)**

Worldwide, land ownership is concentrated in the hands of relatively few people. This paper studies the impacts of land concentration on the long-run development of communities founded in the frontier United States using quasi-random variation in land allocation policies. I collect a large database of modern property tax valuations and show that land concentration had persistent effects over a span of 150 years, lowering investment by 23%, overall property value by 4.4%, and population by 8%. I argue that landlords' use of sharecropping raised the costs of investment, a static inefficiency that persisted due to transaction costs in land markets. I find little evidence for other explanations, including elite capture of political systems. I use my empirical estimates to evaluate counterfactual policies, applying recent advances in combinatorial optimization to show that an optimal property rights allocation would have increased my sample's agricultural land values by \$28 billion (4.8%) in 2017.

**“When Coercive Economies Fail:  
The Political Economy of the US South After the Boll Weevil”  
(with James Feigenbaum and Soumyajit Mazmuder)**

How do coercive societies respond to negative economic shocks? We explore this question in the early 20th century United States South. Since before the nation's founding, cotton cultivation formed the politics and institutions in the South, including the development of slavery, the lack of democratic institutions, and intergroup relations between whites and blacks. We leverage the natural experiment generated by the boll weevil infestation from 1892-1922, which disrupted cotton production in the region. Panel difference-in-differences results provide evidence that Southern society became less violent and repressive in response to this shock with fewer lynchings and less Confederate monument construction. Cross-sectional results exploiting spatial variation in the infestation and historical cotton specialization show that affected counties had less KKK activity, higher non-white voter registration, and were less likely to experience contentious politics in the form of protests during the 1960s. To assess mechanisms, we show that the reductions in coercion were responses to African American out-migration. Even in a context of coercive and antidemocratic institutions, ordinary people can retain political power through the ability to “vote with their feet.”

**RESEARCH IN  
PROGRESS****“Tiebout and the Long-run Effects of Local State Capacity”**

At least since Tiebout (1956), economists have been interested in how public goods shape people's location decisions and vice versa. A number of empirical studies have provided evidence that people move in response to public goods, but we know less about how such dynamics shape development in the long run. This paper studies the impact of historical public goods on migration and development on the American frontier. I develop an estimation technique which leverages (a) the formula-based reservation of lands for funding local government (b) the randomness of land quality

within very small geographic areas. Areas whose reserved lands happen to be of higher quality than their immediate neighbors receive more public goods in historical times. Surprisingly, higher levels of these public goods lead to lower population today with a standard deviation increase in reserve land quality lowering it by about 28%. I show that most of this decrease is linked to lower levels of town formation and argue that increased levels of rural schools lowered settlers' desire to move to cities.

### **“Group Size and Governmental Performance”**

Whether and how a polity's size affects its functioning is a central question in political economy. I propose to study this question in the context of Pakistan's 1959 Basic Democracies Order. The order established local governments in the form of village councils and a system specifying which villages could be combined into a single polity. In particular, councils were formed by combining pre-specified groups of villages whose total population needed to fall between a certain minimum and maximum. I aim to use a regression discontinuity (RD) design based on these thresholds to find quasi-random variation in whether villages are grouped together into larger, potentially more diverse polities. I will then consider the impacts of increased polity size on electoral, governmental, and developmental outcomes such as elections, revenue collection, public goods provision, and education.