MIT Economics

VINCENT ROLLET

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DOCTORAL STUDIES	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) PhD, Economics, Expected completion June 2026 DISSERTATION: "Essays in Urban Economics"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor Dave Donaldson
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Professor Vincent Pons
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PRIOR EDUCATION	École Polytechnique B.S. in Mathematics and Physics, M.S. in Economics	2020
CITIZENSHIP	French	**GENDER:** Male
LANGUAGES	English (Proficient), French (Native), German (Intermediate), Italian (Beginner)	
FIELDS	Primary Fields: Urban Economics, International Trade, Political Economics Secondary Fields: Industrial Organization	
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Public Economics I (14.471, MIT) Teaching Assistant to Nathaniel Hendren, James Poterba, and Ivan Werning	2026

	International Economics II (14.582, MIT) Teaching Assistant to David Atkin, Arnaud Costinot, and Dave Donaldson	2023/25/26
	Principles of Microeconomics (14.01, MIT) Teaching Assistant to Jonathan Gruber	2022
	Introduction to Economics (ECO361, École Polytechnique) Teaching Assistant to Olivier Gossner and Jean-Baptiste Michau	2020

RELEVANT POSITIONS	Research Assistant for Daron Acemoglu	2020-2021
	Research Assistant for Vincent Pons	2019
	Research Assistant for Pierre Boyer	2018
	Analyst at the French Development Agency	2018

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

Jerry A. Hausman Dissertation Fellowship (2023-2024)

C. Lowell Harriss Dissertation Fellowship, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (2023)

George and Obie Shultz Fund (2022-2025)

Pathways to Research and Doctoral Careers (PREDOC) Award (2022)

Roger Altman Family MIT Fellowship (2021)

Heising-Simons MIT Presidential Fellowship (2020)

École Polytechnique Research Internship Prize (2019)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee for: American Economic Review · Quarterly Journal of Economics · Journal of the European Economic Association · Economic Journal · Journal of Urban Economics · Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization

Invited presentations and conferences:
2025: Harvard · MIT · European UEA Meeting · PSE · CREST-École Polytechnique · UEA Summer School · NBER Summer Institute (Urban Economics/Real Estate) · North American UEA Meeting
2020-2024: Sciences Po · Harvard · CREST-École Polytechnique · Boston University · SIOE · MIT · NEUDC · CURE

Co-president, MIT Graduate Economics Association (2023-2024)

MIT Economics Mental Health & Peer Support Group (2021-2024)

PUBLICATIONS

Electoral Turnovers (with Benjamin Marx and Vincent Pons), *The Review of Economic Studies,* 2025.

In most national elections, voters face a key choice between continuity and change. Electoral turnovers occur when the incumbent candidate or party fails to win reelection. To understand how turnovers affect national outcomes, we study all presidential and parliamentary elections held globally between 1946

and 2018. We document the prevalence of turnovers over time and estimate their effects on economic performance, human development, and the quality of democracy. Using a close-elections regression discontinuity design across countries, we show that turnovers improve several measures of country performance. To explain these positive effects, we explore how electoral turnovers affect leader characteristics, shape policy decisions, reduce perceived corruption, and foster accountability.

RESEARCH PAPERS

Zoning and the Dynamics of Urban Redevelopment (Job Market Paper)
Best Student Paper at the 2025 European UEA Meeting

Cities increasingly grow through redevelopment—tearing down old buildings to make way for new ones.   This paper studies this process and how it is influenced by zoning, which regulates the size and uses of new buildings, using New York City as a case study. I build the first parcel-level panel of a city's buildings, zoning, and floorspace prices. This data allows me to estimate a new dynamic spatial equilibrium model of floorspace supply and demand. I validate the model using quasi-experimental variation from recent zoning reforms and apply it to evaluate the effects of relaxing regulation on construction and affordability. While zoning strongly constrains city growth, the effects of relaxing regulation take decades to materialize and are limited in inexpensive or densely built areas. This is due to the large fixed costs of redevelopment, which rise sharply with the size of existing buildings. These costs generate considerable persistence in city structure and substantially lower the expected gains from relaxing zoning. Furthermore, due to migration, the affordability benefits of zoning reform largely accrue to households outside the rezoned neighborhoods.

Ambient Density and Urban Crime: Evidence from Smartphone Data
(with Raphaël Lafrogne-Joussier)
Honorable Mention at the 2023 European UEA Meeting

Ambient density—the number of people in a given area at a given time—is believed to be an important determinant of urban safety. Testing this hypothesis has been hindered by the difficulty of measuring the movements of ordinary citizens, which we overcome by using smartphone data. We find that increasing the ambient density in a neighborhood raises the number of crimes reported there but lowers victimization rates. The beneficial effects of density are strongest in neighborhoods with more social capital, and low- to medium-density levels. Finally, we show how the rise of remote work may affect crime rates across the city.

Measuring Winners and Losers from Increasing Housing Supply
(with Laura Weiwu)

Local governments often restrict the construction of new housing through zoning and permitting hurdles. This resistance suggests that increasing the housing stock in an area may harm some of its existing residents.

Understanding these losses is key to facilitating new housing construction. In this paper, we measure who gains and who loses from a local increase in the housing supply, and why. We build a model of household location choices over time, allowing us to measure the effect of construction on amenities, prices, and local taxes. To estimate this model, we gathered detailed data describing individual housing units, households and their migration patterns, local public finances, and zoning regulations.

Quantifying Aggregate Impacts in the Presence of Spillovers
(with Dave Donaldson and Federico Huneeus)

A much-lamented threat to the validity of standard policy evaluation tools is the presence of spillovers between treated and untreated groups. Economic interactions across units of analysis—due to the flow of goods, factors, and payments to and from the government, for instance—result in bias in standard estimates of objects of interest such as the average treatment effect or the total effect of a program. In this paper, we develop a suite of approaches that can enable researchers to use theory and data about economic flows and distortions in order to overcome this bias. We apply this methodology to estimate the effects of a large earthquake that struck Chile in 2010.

The Lifecycle of Protests in the Digital Age
(with Pierre Boyer, Germain Gauthier, Yves Le Yaouanq, and Benoit Schmutz-Bloch)

We propose a theory of how social media affects the likelihood, size, intensity, and duration of protest movements. Social media reveals the potential for mobilization and the proportion of radicals among protesters. Thus, while it may spark mass protests, it also increases the risk of violence and subsequent loss of public support. We illustrate this phenomenon with the 2018 French Yellow Vests uprising, whose early success and popularity were abruptly undermined by street violence. Online mobilization initially helped organize large, peaceful protests, but these protests triggered a second wave of more radical online activity that ultimately crowded out moderate protesters.

The Global Incumbency Advantage
(with Raphaël Descamps, Benjamin Marx, and Vincent Pons)

This paper provides causal estimates of the incumbency advantage at the national level. Leveraging a close-elections regression discontinuity design and data from all national elections worldwide since 1945, we measure the extent to which an election victory increases winners' probability of staying in power beyond the term they were elected for. On average, incumbents benefit from an incumbency advantage, but these effects are short-lived and differ markedly across contexts: they are very large in Western Europe, North America and Africa, but muted or even reversed in Latin America, Asia and Oceania. In established democracies, the incumbency advantage reflects a boost in the

subsequent electoral performance of election winners. In less democratic regimes, it stems from institutional manipulation of elections' timing and results. These patterns echo incumbency advantage estimates at the local level, which we comprehensively survey in a meta-analysis.

DATA RESOURCES

National Elections Database
(with Benjamin Marx and Vincent Pons)

The National Elections Database provides information on the results of presidential and parliamentary elections conducted worldwide since 1789. The dataset covers 6,309 national elections (1,409 presidential elections and 4,900 parliamentary elections) held between 1789 and 2023 across 212 countries and independent territories. The dataset aims to achieve the broadest possible time and spatial coverage by compiling information from various sources.

BOOKS (IN FRENCH)

Introduction aux Sciences Économiques (with Olivier Gossner and Jean-Baptiste Michau), *Éditions Economica*, 2024
   An introduction to economics textbook

La Théorie des Jeux, *Pandore*, 2020
   A primer in game theory

La Physique Quantique, *Pandore*, 2014
   A primer in quantum physics, over 14,000 copies sold

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Ideology and National Outcomes
(with Jean Lavallée, Benjamin Marx, and Vincent Pons)

We measure the ideological positions of over 8,000 political parties by harmonizing expert surveys and party manifestos, capturing stances on various topics including redistribution and taxation, market regulation, trade, and social values. We link these parties to the results of all presidential and parliamentary elections held worldwide since 1945. Using a close-elections regression discontinuity, we estimate the effect of electing parties with different ideologies on national policy.