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Contact

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Graduate Studies

Ph.D., Economics, Harvard University — 2014 – 2020 (expected)

References:

Professor Melissa Dell
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Professor Nathan Nunn
Harvard University
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Professor Vincent Pons
Harvard Business School
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Professor Gautam Rao
Harvard University
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Undergraduate Studies

B.S., Economics and Mathematics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) — 2013

Thesis: *Migrant Households During Economic Crisis: Evidence from Mexico and the 2007 – 2008 Financial Crisis*

Teaching and Research Fields

Primary field: Development economics, political economy
Secondary field: Applied microeconomics

Research Papers

"When Do Politicians Appeal Broadly? The Economic Consequences of Electoral Rules in Brazil" (Job Market Paper)

Electoral rules determine how voters' preferences are aggregated and translated into political representation, and their design can lead to the election of representatives who represent broader or

narrower constituencies. This project examines how single- and two-round elections in Brazil affect municipal mayoral races using a regression discontinuity design. Two-round elections use two rounds of voting to elect a winner, ensuring that the eventual winner must obtain at least 50% of the vote. Theoretically, this may provide incentives for candidates to secure a broader base of support. Consistent with this, I show that in two-round systems, candidates represent a more geographically diverse group of voters, more resources are allocated to public schools, and there is less variance in resources allocated to public schools across the municipality. I find evidence suggesting that these effects are driven by strategic responses of candidates, rather than differential entry of candidates into races. The findings suggest that two-round systems can lead candidates to secure broader voter bases and subsequently exhibit less political favoritism when implementing policy.

Research Papers in Progress

"Uncovering Household Self-Targeting with Machine Learning"

I investigate the extent to which households in Colombia manipulate their eligibility for a social program. Eligibility is determined by a poverty score that is calculated from answers to a household survey, the formula for which was released four years after the start of the program. Because proxy-means testing systems can potentially predict household poverty poorly, households have incentives to manipulate their eligibility. I find that, as in Camacho and Conover (2011), there is a significant discontinuity at the eligibility cutoff and that one method households use to manipulate their eligibility is by having their poverty score overwritten. I then use machine-learning techniques to predict households' actual poverty level. I find that households who manipulate their score are more likely to be poor than households with the same score and more likely to be poorly predicted by the government's poverty score. These findings suggest that not all proxy-means testing systems predict household poverty well and when they do not, households self-target by manipulating their eligibility.

"*The Gendered Impact of Anti-Sweatshop Activism in Indonesia"*

In the 1990's, international activists launched an anti-sweatshop movement in order to improve working conditions and worker pay in overseas factories operated by Nike, Adidas, and Reebok. This project quantifies the effect of the anti-sweatshop movement on empowerment of female textile workers in Indonesia. I use a differences-in-difference design, by comparing differences among female textile workers before and after 1995-1996 in sub-districts with textile factories operated by targeted firms and in sub-districts with textile factories operated by other firms. Preliminary results indicate that women do not marry later nor have fewer children. However, women report using contraception at higher rates. These results suggest that worker reforms in industries with predominantly female labor forces can generate small improvements in female autonomy and empowerment.

Teaching Experience

The Political Economy of Development (Econ 2392), Melissa Dell	Spring 2019
The Behavioral Economics of Poverty and Development (Econ 980), Gautam Rao	Spring 2017, 2019
A Libertarian Perspective on Economic and Social Policy (Econ 1017), Jeffrey Miron	Fall 2018
Development Economics (Econ 2390), Michael Kremer	Fall 2016, 2017
The Historical Origins of Middle Eastern Development (Econ 980), Eric Chaney	Spring 2017
Introduction to Econometrics (Econ 1123), James Stock	Fall 2016

Relevant Positions

Research Assistant for Gautam Rao (Harvard)	2015-2016
Research Assistant for Gautam Rao (Harvard) and Rohini Pande (Harvard Kennedy School), Evidence for Poverty Design	Summer 2015
Research Assistant for Dave Donaldson (MIT)	2013-2014
Assessment Assistant, MIT D-Lab Scale-Ups	2013
Intern, Morgan Stanley	Summer 2012
High Yield Research Intern, Fidelity Management and Research Company	Summer 2011

Fellowships and Awards

Harvard Dissertation Completion Fellowship	2019
Economic History Association Exploratory Travel and Data Grant	2017
Harvard Warburg Fund Research Grant	2016
Harvard Warburg Fund Research Grant (with Tzachi Raz)	2015
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program	2014

Professional Activities

Referee for *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*

Invited presentations:

NEUDC (Northwestern University)	2019

Other

Programming Skills: Python, Java, R, Matlab, Stata, ArcGIS
Languages: English (native), Mandarin Chinese (intermediate), French (intermediate)
Citizenship: United States