**POLS G8412**

**Political Economy of Development**

Department of Political Science

Columbia University

Spring 2013

**Instructor:**

Christopher Blattman

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**Meeting Time**: Tuesdays 4:10pm to 6pm

**Office Hours:** TBA. Sign up online at <http://chrisblattman.com/officehours>

**Course Overview:**

This course is less about teaching you a subject matter and more about training you to do research and advancing your methodological skills. Rather, I will teach this as a course in applied research, using very recent papers in the political economy of development as examples and opportunities for practice. My aim in this course is to get you to the frontier of the field immediately, and thereby teach as best I can research methods, approaches, and pitfalls, and help you generate and develop paper critiques and ideas. We will work through theoretical models, replicate papers, write paper proposals, mine new literatures, craft referee reports, and work through causal inference issues.

**Pre-requisites, and who may take the class:**

This is a course in research methods and practice, designed to help PhD students progress to a dissertation. Unless otherwise cleared by the instructor, the course is open to PhD students only. It assumes you have received the training in quantitative methods (mathematics, formal theory and statistics) of a first year Columbia PhD student in Political Science, Economics or Sustainable Development. Only PhDs with that level of preparation should attend. First year PhD students are welcome, and may find the material challenging, but should be able to perform well. Masters students should take my Political Economy of Development course offered in SIPA, INAF U6164. Interested auditors should see the guidelines below.

**Auditing:**

This is a small, hands-on course that will be of limited help to auditors, and will not work easily with more than a handful of auditors in the room. If demand to audit is low, I will allow political science, sustainable development, and economics PhD students who have advanced to candidacy to audit the course (since they ought to be working on their dissertation rather than doing class assignments). If there is high demand for auditing (as one would expect with inelastic supply) the “price” will rise in terms of my expectations of your contribution and workload. First and second year PhD students should only take this class for credit, or get my permission otherwise.

**Grading:**

Class engagement 10%

Weekly assignments 50%

Semester-long project 40%

*Class engagement (10%):* This will be my wholly subjective assessment of your ability to contribute to discussions that advance the research frontier of the discipline and your classmates. This will be one of your most important skills and contributions as an intellectual. Advancing the frontier of knowledge is not about destroying a paper or idea, dominating the floor with a critique or idea, or waylaying a productive conversation with unrelated new ideas (however clever). It is about promoting an exchange of ideas that lead to better questions and answers, and helping your colleagues advance their work as much as your own. As a colleague once said to me, “I like it when you find problems with my work, but I like it even more when we can talk about solutions.”

*Weekly assignments (50%):* Each week (except the first) I will ask you to complete an assignment, often a long and painful one. Some of these are described below, in the Readings and Assignments section. The assignments are diverse, ranging from referee reports to problem sets to replications to paper proposals. Many will require large amount amounts of time and effort, and will be difficult.

You are encouraged to work together for problem sets, but not to copy another’s work. I will help you form groups for each replication exercise. You are also welcome to collaborate with other students on paper proposals, but my expectations of the quality and quantity of your output will rise accordingly.

*Semester-long project (40%*): At the end of the course you will be expected to produce a compelling and detailed NSF “full project” proposal (i.e. the ones that faculty, not graduate students write), as though you were actually submitting to the NSF.

The only parts of the official NSF proposal you are required to prepare are:

1. Project summary (1-page)
2. Table of contents (1-page)
3. Project description (15-page maximum)
4. References (no page limit)

The above pieces of the proposal should follow NSF “full project” guidelines for length, content and formatting, which I expect you to locate online and follow.

You will be graded by the instructor and by peer review.

Imagine this is a “special call” for proposals in the political economy of development. Your proposal will be judged on “fit” and novelty within the field, and ability to advance the discipline. If you have another research project idea not related to this subfield, then you should not write on that project. I recognize that it would be useful to you to get feedback in this class on that proposal, and save you time, but ultimately this is a course in political economy of development, and you will benefit from having to come up with and develop a new or complementary question. No exceptions.

You will have several opportunities to receive feedback on your ideas for this proposal. You will also formally give feedback to your peers.

March 24: 2-3 page description of NSF proposal idea or ideas, for discussion with instructor and peers

April 28: Draft project description for instructor and peer feedback

May 12: Proposal due

May 17: Referee reports due

### Books and Readings:

“Required” readings are, well, required—you’ll need to show that you’ve read and understand them before class, for discussion. These have an asterisk (\* or \*\*) next to them. Two asterisks means that I expect to cover these in the most depth, so read these most closely, but I expect you to read all of the required papers and articles.

The other readings are merely recommended. Consider reading some of the abstracts and skimming the introductions to these papers (especially Week 4 onwards).

We will spend a considerable amount of time on empirical analysis. If you have not purchased and read the following book, you should do so now. It is not a textbook per se, and I will not teach the material directly, but I will refer to it often in the course as a source of information or guidance:

Angrist, Joshua D., and S. Pischke. 2008. "[Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricists’ Companion](http://www.amazon.com/Mostly-Harmless-Econometrics-Empiricists-Companion/dp/0691120358/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1239394062&sr=8-1)." Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

**Chapter 3** gives a review/overview of regression analysis which I recommend you familiarize yourself with. Other chapters will be assigned as needed.

# Part I: Introduction to theories of economic growth and development

*Note: Throughout, “\*\*” indicates readings we will discuss actively in class. “\*” indicates important supplementary reading which I may cover very briefly in class or consider required background reading for the discussion or assignments.*

## Introduction to growth theory

\*\*Chapters 3 and 4 (including appendices) of Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith (2009). Economic Development. 10 ed. (*on Courseworks*)

\*\*Aghion, Philippe, and Peter Howitt. "[The economics of growth](http://clio.cul.columbia.edu:7018/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=8515141)." (2009). **Introduction; Chapter 1; sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 of Chapter 2; and sections 5.1-5.3 of Chapter 5.**

\*Acemoglu, Daron. *Introduction to modern economic growth*. Princeton University Press, 2008. **Chapter 1.** (*on Courseworks*)

\*Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. "[Growth theory through the lens of development economics](http://economics.mit.edu/files/798)." *Handbook of Economic Growth*1 (2005): 473-552. **Sections 1 and 2.**

\*Angrist & Pischke, Chapter 3.1

[Aghion and Howitt, Section 18.3.1](http://clio.cul.columbia.edu:7018/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=8515141)

James Robinson (2003). Growth Theory Lecture Notes. (*on Courseworks*)

Acemoglu, Daron. *Introduction to modern economic growth*. Princeton University Press, 2008. **Chapters 2 and 3.**

Maddison, Angus. 2001. “[The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective](http://clio.cul.columbia.edu:7018/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=10054098)” OECD.

Durlauf, Steven N., Paul A. Johnson, and Jonathan RW Temple. "[Growth econometrics](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1574068405010087)." *Handbook of economic growth* 1 (2005): 555-677.

Bosworth, Barry, and Susan Margaret Collins. "[The empirics of growth: An update](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/eca/summary/v2003/2003.2bosworth.html)." *Brookings papers on economic activity* 2003.2 (2003): 113-206.

Pritchett, Lant. 1997. "[Divergence, Big Time](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2138181)" Journal of Economic Perspectives 11 (3):3-17.

Mankiw, N. Gregory, David Romer, and David N. Weil. "[A contribution to the empirics of economic growth](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2118477)." *The quarterly journal of economics* 107.2 (1992): 407-437.

Hall, Robert E., and Charles I. Jones. "[Why Do Some Countries Produce So Much More Output Per Worker Than Others?](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2586948)." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114.1 (1999): 83-116.

#### Introduction to development theory: Structural change and poverty traps

***Assignment due before class: Problem set 1***

\*\*Azariadis, Costas, and John Stachurski. "[Poverty traps](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1574068405010051)." *Handbook of economic growth* 1 (2005): 295-384. **Especially Parts 1 to 4, 6 and 7.**

\*\*Banerjee, Abhijit, and Esther Duflo. 2011. [*Poor economics: a radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty*](http://clio.cul.columbia.edu:7018/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=9940438). Public Affairs. **Chapter 1.**

\*\*Krugman, Paul. "[The fall and rise of development economics](http://rrojasdatabank.info/krugman1994.pdf)." *Rethinking the Development Experience: Essays Provoked by the Work of Albert O. Hirschman* (1994): 39-58.

\*Hoff, Karla, and Joseph Stiglitz. "[Modern economic theory and development](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/hoff-stiglitz-frontiersofdevec.pdf)." Frontiers of development economics: The future in perspective (2001): 389-459.

\*Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. "[Growth theory through the lens of development economics](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1574068405010075)." *Handbook of Economic Growth*1 (2005): 473-552. **Sections 3 and 4.**

Aghion and Howitt, Sections 6.1 and 6.3, Chapter 10 (especially 10.2)

Acemoglu, Daron. *Introduction to modern economic growth*. Princeton University Press, 2008. **Introduction to Part VII and** **Chapters 20 and 21.** (*on Courseworks*)

William Easterly (2009) ["Can the West Save Africa?"](http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?index=3&did=1761824791&SrchMode=3&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1325692576&clientId=13766&aid=1) Journal of Economic Literature 47(2). **Especially section 2.**

Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Andrew F. Newman. "[Occupational choice and the process of development](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2138820)." *Journal of political economy* (1993): 274-298.

Hoff, Karla, and Arijit Sen (2011). "[The Kin System as a Poverty Trap?](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=719141)" in Samuel Bowles, Steven N. Durlauf, Karla Hoff (eds.), *Poverty Traps*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.95.

Murphy, Kevin, Andrei Shleifer, and Robert Vishny. (1989). “[Industrialization and the Big Push](http://www.aae.wisc.edu/coxhead/courses/731/PDF/Murphy-Schleifer-Vishny-IndustrializationAndTheBigPush-JPE-1989.pdf)”, Journal of Political Economy, 97(5), 1003-1026.

#### Poverty and market failure: The micro level

***Assignment due before class: Problem set 2***

\*\*De Mel, Suresh, David McKenzie, and Christopher Woodruff. "[Returns to capital in microenterprises: evidence from a field experiment](http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/123/4/1329.short)." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123.4 (2008): 1329-1372.

\*\*Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Rachel Glennerster and Cynthia Kinnan (2010) “[The Miracle of Microfinance: Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation](http://economics.mit.edu/files/5993),” unpublished working paper. [Data](http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/jpal/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml?globalId=hdl:1902.1/11389&studyListingIndex=0_9a58e7e25d9ca74ae19ff8637295).

\*\*Banerjee, Abhijit, and Esther Duflo. 2011. [*Poor economics: a radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty*](http://clio.cul.columbia.edu:7018/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=9940438). Public Affairs. **Chapters 6-9.** (*Free online through Columbia Library*)

\*Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. "[Growth theory through the lens of development economics](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1574068405010075)." *Handbook of Economic Growth*1 (2005): 473-552. **Especially sections 1 to 5.**

\*Angrist & Pischke, Chapter 2

\*Mullainathan S. [Psychology and Development Economics](http://scholar.harvard.edu/mullainathan/publications/psychology-and-development-economics). In: Diamond P, Vartiainen H Yrjö Jahnsson Foundation 50th Anniversary Conference on Economic Institutions and Behavioral Economics. Princeton University Press; 2007.

Dupas, Pascaline, and Jonathan Robinson. “[Savings constraints and microenterprise development: Evidence from a field experiment in Kenya](http://www.nber.org/papers/w14693).” No. w14693. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2009.

Karlan, Dean, Ryan Knight, and Christopher Udry[. *Hoping to win, expected to lose: Theory and lessons on micro enterprise developmen*](http://www.nber.org/papers/w18325)*t*. No. w18325. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2012.

Jakiela, Pamela, and Owen Ozier. "[Does Africa need a rotten kin theorem? experimental evidence from village economies](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2082776)." *Experimental Evidence from Village Economies (June 1, 2012). World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*6085 (2012).

Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Sendhil Mullainathan. "[Limited attention and income distribution](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/29730069)." *The American Economic Review* 98.2 (2008): 489-493.

Banerjee, Abhijit, and Sendhil Mullainathan. [*The shape of temptation: Implications for the economic lives of the poor*](http://www.nber.org/papers/w15973). No. w15973. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2010.

Duflo, Esther, and Michael Kremer. "[Use of randomization in the evaluation of development effectiveness](http://economics.mit.edu/files/2785)." *Evaluating Development Effectiveness* 7 (2005): 205-231.

Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. "[The economic lives of the poor](http://economics.mit.edu/files/530)." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21.1 (2007): 141.

Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. "[What is middle class about the middle classes around the world?](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27648239)." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 22.2 (2008): 3.

Collins, Daryl, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford, and Orlanda Ruthven. *Portfolios of the poor: how the world's poor live on $2 a day*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

Hsieh, Chang-Tai, and Peter J. Klenow. "[Misallocation and manufacturing TFP in China and India](http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/124/4/1403.full.pdf)." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124.4 (2009): 1403-1448.

# Part II: Institutions and Development: Frontiers of Research

## Instrumental institutions

***Assignment due Feb 15: TBA***

\*\*Akee, Randall, Miriam Jorgensen and Uwe Sunde (2012) "Constitutional Change and Economic Growth on American Indian Reservations", unpublished paper. *(Instructor will email)*

\*\*Leonard Wantchekon, Natalija Novta, and Marko Klasnja (2012). “Education and Human Capital Externalities: Evidence from Colonial Benin,” unpublished working paper. *(Instructor will email)*

**\*\***Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. (2005). "[Institutions as a fundamental cause of long-run growth](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1574068405010063)." Handbook of economic growth 1: 385-472.

\*Rohini Pande and Christopher Udry. [Institutions and Development: A View from Below](http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~rpande/papers/institutions_draft.pdf), in the *Proceedings of the 9th World Congress of the Econometric Society*, edited by R. Blundell, W. Newey, and T. Persson, Cambridge University Press, 2005. **Sections 1-3.**

\*Angrist & Pischke, Chapter 4

\*Sovey, Allison J., and Donald P. Green. "[Instrumental variables estimation in political science: a readers’ guide](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00477.x/abstract)." American Journal of Political Science 55.1 (2011): 188-200.

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. (2001). “[Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation](http://weber.ucsd.edu/~dlake/courses/PS204A/documents/AcemogluJohnsonandRobinson.pdf),” American Economic Review, 91 (5), 1369-1401.

Glaeser, Edward L., et al. "[Do institutions cause growth](http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023%2FB%3AJOEG.0000038933.16398.ed?LI=true)?" Journal of Economic Growth 9.3 (2004): 271-303.

David Stasavage (2012). “[Was Weber Right? “City Autonomy, Political Oligarchy, and the Rise of Europe](http://politics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/5395/Stasavage_WasWeberRight.pdf),” unpublished working paper.

Thelen, Kathleen. "[Historical institutionalism in comparative politics](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.369)," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2.1 (1999): 369-404.

Pierson, Paul. "[Increasing returns, path dependence, and the study of politics](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2586011)." *American Political Science Review* (2000): 251-267.

Frye, Timothy. "[In From the Cold: Institutions and Causal Inference in Postcommunist Studies](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-polisci-043010-095817)." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012): 245-263.

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. "[Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution](http://economics.mit.edu/files/4127)." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117.4 (2002): 1231-1294.

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. (2005). "[Institutions as a fundamental cause of long-run growth](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/jr_institutionscause_0.pdf)." Handbook of economic growth 1: 385-472.

Albouy, David. "[The colonial origins of comparative development: an empirical investigation: comment](http://www-personal.umich.edu/~albouy/AJRreinvestigation/AJRrev.pdf)." American Economic Review (2011).

North, D. C., J. J. Wallis, et al. (2006). [A conceptual framework for interpreting recorded human history](http://www.nber.org/papers/w12795), National Bureau of Economic Research. 12795.

Greif, Avner. *Institutions and the path to the modern economy: Lessons from medieval trade*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James Robinson. Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty. Crown Business, 2012.

Gennaioli, Nicolla, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez de Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer,“[Human Capital and Regional Development](http://www.nber.org/papers/w17158),” Quarterly Journal of Economics, 2012, Forthcoming.

Daron Acemoglu, James A. Robinson and Ragnar Torvik (2012) “[Why Do Voters Dismantle Checks and Balances?](http://economics.mit.edu/files/7909)” unpublished working paper.

#### History matters

***Assignment due before class: TBA***

\*\*Hariri, Jacob Gerner. "[The Autocratic Legacy of Early Statehood](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8675832)." American Political Science Review 106.3 (2012).

\*\*Abhijit Banerjee and Lakshmi Iyer, "[History, Institutions and Economic Performance: the Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4132711)." American Economic Review 95, no. 4 (September 2005): 1190-1213.

\*\*Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Elias Papaioannou. “[Pre-colonial Ethnic Institutions and Contemporary African Development.](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B4s_WKe-US99endRYi1hdUJCajg/edit)” Forthcoming in Econometrica

\*Angrist & Pischke, Chapter 3.2, 5.1 and 8.2

\*Daniel Berger, “[Taxes, Institutions and Local Governance: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Colonial Nigeria](https://files.nyu.edu/db1299/public/Nigeria.pdf),” unpublished working paper.

Sovey, Allison J., and Donald P. Green. "[Instrumental variables estimation in political science: a readers’ guide](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00477.x/abstract)." American Journal of Political Science 55.1 (2011): 188-200.

Nathan Nunn and Leonard Wantchekon, “[The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa](http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/nunn/files/Nunn_Wantchekon_AER_2011.pdf)” American Economic Review 101 (December 2011): 3221–3252

Melissa Dell. [The persistent effects of Peru's mining *mita*](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/store/10.3982/ECTA8121/asset/ECTA8121.pdf?v=1&t=hby426v7&s=aab32acfaada5f427b40ed708f49eef8a93078f2). Econometrica, 78(6): 1863-1903, 2010.

Huillery, Elise. "[History matters: The long-term impact of colonial public investments in French West Africa](http://spirepprd.sciences-po.fr/hdl:/2441/10262/resources/huillery-aejapp-2007-0034-manuscript.pdf)." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 1.2 (2009): 176-215.

Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Elias Papaioannou. [*National Institutions and African Development: Evidence from Partitioned Ethnicities*](http://www.nber.org/papers/w18275). No. w18275. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2012.

Marcella Alsan (2012). “[The Effect of the Tse Tse Fly on African Development](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~malsan/tsetse.pdf),” unpublished working paper.

López de Silanes, Florencio. "[Economic consequences of legal origins](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/27646991)." Journal of economic literature (2008).

Nathan Nunn. “[The long-term effects of Africa's slave trades](http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/123/1/139.full.pdf)”. Quarterly Journal of Economics, 123(1): 139-176, 2008

Nathan Nunn. [The importance of history for economic development](http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/nunn/files/Nunn_ARE_2009.pdf). Annu. Rev. Econ , 1, 2009

## Institutions: Evidence from the micro level

***No assignment.***

\*\*Goldstein, Markus, and Christopher Udry. (2008) "[The profits of power: Land rights and agricultural investment in Ghana](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/595561)." Journal of Political Economy 116.6: 981-1022.

\*\*Ann E. Harrison, Justin Yifu Lin, and L. Colin Xu (2013). “[Africa's (Dis)advantage: the Curse of Party Monopoly](http://papers.nber.org/papers/w18683),” NBER Working Paper No. 18683.

\*\*Hornbeck, Richard. "[Barbed wire: Property rights and agricultural development](http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/125/2/767.short)." The Quarterly Journal of Economics 125.2 (2010): 767-810.

\*Rohini Pande and Christopher Udry. [Institutions and Development: A View from Below](http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~rpande/papers/institutions_draft.pdf), in the *Proceedings of the 9th World Congress of the Econometric Society*, edited by R. Blundell, W. Newey, and T. Persson, Cambridge University Press, 2005. **Section 4 to end.**

\*Timothy Besley and Maitreesh Ghatak, “[Property Rights and Economic Development](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1372563).” In Dani Rodrik and Mark Rosenzweig, editors: Handbook of Development Economics, Vol. 5, The Netherlands: North-Holland, 2010, pp. 4525-4595.

\*Angrist & Pischke, Chapter 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2

Fenske, James. [Land tenure and investment incentives: Evidence from West Africa](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2010.05.001" \t "_blank)*,* 2011, *Journal of Development Economic*s.

Stanislav Markus (2012). "[Secure Property as a Bottom-Up Process: Firms, Stakeholders, and Predators in Weak States](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8514008)," *World Politics*, 64 (2) (April 2012): 242-277.

Kathryn Firmin-Sellers (1995). “[The Politics of Property Rights](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2082514),” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89(4), pp. 867-881

Bruce G. Carruthers and Laura Ariovich (2004). “[The Sociology of Property Rights](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/29737683),” *Annual Review of Sociology* , Vol. 30, pp. 23-46

Frye, Timothy. "[Credible commitment and property rights: Evidence from Russia](http://www.columbia.edu/~tmf2/Credible%20Commitment%20and%20Property%20Rights.pdf)." *American Political Science Review* 98 (2004): 453-466.

Frye, Timothy. "[Original sin, good works, and property rights in Russia](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world_politics/v058/58.4frye.html)." *World Politics* 58.04 (2006): 479-504.

Onoma, Ato Kwamena. *The politics of property rights institutions in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Fenske, James. [Does land abundance explain African institutions?](http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/42887/2/FenskeLandAbundanceNov2012.pdf" \t "_blank), Forthcoming, *The Economic Journal.*

Galiani, Sebastian, and Ernesto Schargrodsky. "[Property rights for the poor: Effects of land titling](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0047272710000654)." Journal of Public Economics 94.9 (2010): 700-729.

Jacoby, Hanan G., Guo Li, and Scott Rozelle. "[Hazards of expropriation: tenure insecurity and investment in rural China](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3083257)." The American Economic Review 92.5 (2002): 1420-1447.

Besley, Timothy. "[Property rights and investment incentives: Theory and evidence from Ghana](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2138750)." journal of Political Economy (1995): 903-937.

Libecap, Gary D., and Dean Lueck. "[The Demarcation of Land and the Role of Coordinating Property Institutions](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/660842)." Journal of Political Economy 119.3 (2011): 426-467.

Field, Erica. "[Entitled to work: Urban property rights and labor supply in Peru](http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/122/4/1561.short)."*The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122.4 (2007): 1561-1602.

Field, Erica. "[Property rights and investment in urban slums](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1162/jeea.2005.3.2-3.279/abstract)." Journal of the European Economic Association (2005): 279-290.

## Impacts of development on democratization

***Assignment due before class: TBA***

### Readings

\*\*Friedman, Willa, Michael Kremer, Edward Miguel, Rebecca Thornton. “[Education as Liberation?](http://www.nber.org/papers/w16939)” No. w16939. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2011.

\*\*Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, James Robinson, and Pierre Yared. (2008). “[Income and Democracy](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/jr_income_democracy_pub_0.pdf)”, American Economic Review, 98(3), 808‐842.

\*\*Boix, Carles. "[Democracy, development, and the international system](http://www.princeton.edu/~cboix/apsr-boix-2011.pdf)." American Political Science Review 105.4 (2011): 809-28.

\*Robinson, James A. 2006. “[Economic Development and Democracy](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.polisci.9.092704.171256),” Annual Review of Political Science 9: 503-527. **Especially second (empirical) half.**

\*Angrist & Pischke, Chapter 5.3 and 5.4

\*Beck, Nathaniel, and Jonathan N. Katz. "What to do (and not to do) with time-series cross-section data." American Political Science Review (1995): 634-647.

\*Beck, Neal. 2001. "Time Series Cross Section Data: What Have We Learned in the Past Few Years?" Annual Review of Political Science 4 (1):271-93.

William Easterly (2011). “[Benevolent Autocrats](http://dri.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/20085/DRIWP75.pdf).” unpublished working paper.

Humphreys, Macartan, and Robert H. Bates (2005). “[Political institutions and economic policies: Lessons from Africa](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=306563&jid=JPS&volumeId=35&issueId=03&aid=306562),” British Journal of Political Science 35(3), pp 403-428.

# Part III: Conflict and Development

#### Impacts of conflict on development: Micro (Mar 5)

***Assignment due before class: TBA***

\*\*Voors, Maarten J., et al. "[Violent conflict and behavior: a field experiment in Burundi](http://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/aer.102.2.941)." The American Economic Review 102.2 (2012): 941-964.

\*\*Jha, Saumitra, and Steven Wilkinson. "[Does Combat Experience Foster Organizational Skill? Evidence from Ethnic Cleansing during the Partition of South Asia](https://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8757144&fulltextType=RA&fileId=S000305541200041X)." (2012) American Political Science Review.

\*\*Blattman, Christopher. "[From Violence to Voting: War and political participation in Uganda](http://www.chrisblattman.com/documents/research/2009.V2V.APSR.pdf)." American Political Science Review 103.2 (2009): 231-247.

\*Angrist & Pischke, Chapters 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 7.1

\*Blattman, Christopher. "[Post-conflict Recovery in Africa: The Micro Level](http://chrisblattman.com/documents/research/2011.Micro-levelImpactsOfWar.OxfordEncyclopediaAfrica.pdf)." (2010).

[Timothy Besley and Hannes Mueller. Estimating the Peace Dividend: The impact of violence on house prices in Northern Ireland](http://econ.lse.ac.uk/staff/tbesley/papers/ni.pdf), *American Economic Review* forthcoming.

Paul Staniland. [“States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders.”](http://journals.cambridge.org/repo_A85e3rh6) *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (June 2012), pp. 243-264. Copyright American Political Science Association.

#### Impacts of conflict on development: Macro

***Assignment due before class: 1-2 page description of final assignment (NSF proposal) idea or ideas, for discussion with instructor and peers***

*\*\* and \* readings TBA*

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way (2012). "[Beyond Patronage: Ruling Party Cohesion and Authoritarian Stability](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8783436&fulltextType=RA&fileId=S1537592712002861)." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(4) p. 869-889.

Melissa Dell (2012) “[Insurgency and Long-Run Development: Lessons from the Mexican Revolution](http://economics.mit.edu/files/7776)” unpublished working paper

Besley, Tim and Persson, Torsten. [The Origins of State Capacity: Property Rights, Taxation and Politics](http://econ.lse.ac.uk/staff/tbesley/papers/originsofstatecapacity.pdf), *American Economic Review*, 99(4), 1218-44, 2009.

Weinstein, Jeremy. "[Autonomous Recovery and International Intervention in Comparative Perspective](http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/2731/)." Center for Global Development Working Papers (2005).

Besley, Timothy, and Marta Reynal-Querol. "[The Legacy of Historical Conflict: Evidence from Africa](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2013843)." (2012).

Blattman, Christopher, and Edward Miguel. "[Civil War](http://chrisblattman.com/documents/research/2010.CivilWar.JEL.pdf)." Journal of Economic Literature 48.1 (2010): 3-57. (**particularly** **Section 4: Economic legacies of civil conflict**)

Tilly, Charles (2012). "Coercion, Capital, and European States [1990]." Contemporary Sociological Theory (2012): 251.

Herbst, Jeffrey. *States and power in Africa: comparative lessons in authority and control*. Princeton University Press, 2000.

James A. Robinson (2002). "[States and Power in Africa by Jeffrey I. Herbst: A Review Essay](http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=106&sid=f04d1f5c-ae9a-458a-9daf-3306abed19f8@sessionmgr110&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ==%22%20%5Cl%20%22db=bth&AN=6896032)." Journal of Economic Literature 40(2): 510-519.

Herbst, Jeffrey. "Responding to state failure in Africa." International Security 21.3 (1996): 120-144.

Bates, Robert H., John H. Coatsworth, and Jeffrey G. Williamson. 2007. "[Lost Decades: Post-independence Performance in Latin America and Africa](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=1494924)." The Journal of Economic History.

Tim Besley and Torsten Persson, “[Public Finance and Development](http://www-2.iies.su.se/pop/Research/papers/Draft_111129.pdf)” unpublished chapter.

## Aid and conflict

***Assignment due before class: TBA***

\*\*Benjamin Crost, Joseph Felter and Patrick Johnston (2012). “[Aid Under Fire: Development Projects and Civil Conflict](http://patrickjohnston.info/materials/AUF.pdf),” unpublished working paper.

\*\*Nielsen, Richard A., et al. "[Foreign aid shocks as a cause of violent armed conflict](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00492.x/full)." *American Journal of Political Science* 55.2 (2011): 219-232.

\*\*Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian (2012), “[Aiding Conflict: The Impact of U.S. Food Aid on Civil War](http://www.econ.yale.edu/~nq3/NANCYS_Yale_Website/Research_files/FAidConf_20120122.pdf)” NBER Working Paper w17794.

\*Peter M. Aronow, Allison Sovey Carnegie, and Nikolay Marinov (2012). “[The Effects of Aid on Rights and Governance: Evidence from a Natural Experiment](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2199131),” unpublished working paper.

\*Angrist and Pischke, Chapter 6

\*Imbens, Guido W., and Thomas Lemieux. "[Regression discontinuity designs: A guide to practice](http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/tlemieux/papers/designs.pdf)." *Journal of Econometrics* 142.2 (2008): 615-635.

\*Wilson, Sven E., and Daniel M. Butler. "A lot more to do: The sensitivity of time-series cross-section analyses to simple alternative specifications." Political Analysis 15.2 (2007): 101-123.

Oeindrila Dube and Suresh Naidu (2012) “[Bases, Bullets and Ballots: The Effect of U.S. Military Aid on Political Conflict in Colombia](https://files.nyu.edu/od9/public/papers/Dube_bases_bullets.pdf),” unpublished working paper.

Moss, Todd, Gunilla Pettersson, and Nicolas Van de Walle (2006). "[An aid-institutions paradox? A review essay on aid dependency and state building in sub-Saharan Africa](http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/5646/)." *Center for Global Development working paper* 74.

# Part IV: SOME FRONTIERS IN MICRO-LEVEL political economy of development

#### Democracy and accountability

***Assignment due before class: TBA***

*\*\* and \* readings TBA*

Monica Martinez-Bravo, Gerard Padró-i-Miquel, Nancy Qian and Yang Yao (2012) “[The Effects of Democratization on Public Goods and Redistribution: Evidence from China](http://www.econ.yale.edu/~nq3/NANCYS_Yale_Website/Research_files/Vdem_20120506.pdf)” NBER Working Paper w18101; [Description of the NFS.pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/~nq3/NANCYS_Yale_Website/Research_files/Description%20of%20the%20NFS.pdf); [Description of Survey](http://www.econ.yale.edu/~nq3/NANCYS_Yale_Website/Village_Democracy_Survey.html). Revise and resubmit at the Quarterly Journal of Economics.

Bejamin Olken. "[Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia](http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FPSR%2FPSR104_02%2FS0003055410000079a.pdf&code=81d2d2a3c997c0420e528452fc6608c7)." *American Political Science Review* 104, 2 (2010).

Robin Harding and David Stasavage (2012) "[What Democracy Does (and Doesn't Do) for Basic Services: School Fees, School Inputs, and African Elections](http://politics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/5395/What_Democracy_Does.pdf)."

James D. Fearon, Macartan Humphreys, and Jeremy M. Weinstein (2011), “[Democratic Institutions and Collective Action Capacity: Results from a Field Experiment in Post-Conflict Liberia](http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/FHW_2012.pdf),” unpublished working paper.

Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. "The Experimental Approach to Development Economics." *Annu. Rev. Econ* 1 (2009): 151-78.

Deaton, Angus. "[Instruments, randomization, and learning about development](http://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/jel.48.2.424)." Journal of Economic Literature 48.2 (2010): 424-455.

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Lily Tsai "[Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China](http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FPSR%2FPSR101_02%2FS0003055407070153a.pdf&code=e14489730cb490e45e74d9e8bd98cb77)", American Political Science Review, vol.101, no.2 (May 2007), pp.355-372.

Monica Martinez-Bravo, Gerard Padró-i-Miquel, Nancy Qian and Yang Yao (2011) "[Do Local Elections in Non-Democracies Increase Accountability? Evidence from Rural China](http://personal.lse.ac.uk/padro/MPQY_20110413_finalversion.pdf)" (with [Monica Martinez-Bravo](http://saisforums.org/saisblogs/faculty/mmb/Monica_Martinez-Bravo_Web_Page/Home.html), [Nancy Qian](http://www.econ.yale.edu/faculty1/qian.htm) and Yang Yao). working paper # [16948](http://www.nber.org/papers/w16948)

James D. Fearon, Macartan Humphreys, and Jeremy M. Weinstein (2009), “[Can Development Aid Contribute to Social Cohesion After Civil War? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Post-Conflict Liberia](http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/aer2009.pdf)” American Economic Review

#### Norms and behavior change

***Assignment due before class: TBA***

\*\*Christopher Blattman, Alexandra Hartman and Robert Blair (2013). “Promoting order and property rights under weak rule of law: An experimental study of dispute resolution in Liberia,” unpublished working paper. *(Instructor will email)*

\*\*Paluck, Elizabeth Levy, and Donald P. Green. "[Deference, dissent, and dispute resolution: An experimental intervention using mass media to change norms and behavior in Rwanda](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=6648180)." *American Political Science Review* 103.4 (2009): 622.

\*\*Gine, Xavier & Mansuri, Ghazala, 2011. "[Together we will: experimental evidence on female voting behavior in Pakistan](http://ideas.repec.org/p/wbk/wbrwps/5692.html)," Policy Research Working Paper Series 5692, The World Bank.

\*Beaman, L., et al. "Powerful women: does exposure reduce bias?." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124.4 (2009): 1497-1540.

\*Bertrand M, Mullainathan S, Shafir E. [Behavioral Economics and Marketing in Aid of Decision Making among the Poor](http://scholar.harvard.edu/mullainathan/publications/behavioral-economics-and-marketing-aid-decision-making-among-poor). Journal of Public Policy & Marketing. 2012;Vol. 25(No. 1):pp. 8-23.

\*Saugato Datta and Sendhil Mullainathan (2012). “[Behavioral Design: A New Approach to Development Policy](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/1426679_file_datta_mullainathan_behavioral_design_0.pdf).” CGD Policy Paper 016

\*Hoff, Karla, Mayuresh Kshetramade, and Ernst Fehr. "[Caste and Punishment: the Legacy of Caste Culture in Norm Enforcement](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0297.2011.02476.x/abstract)." *The Economic Journal*121.556 (2011): F449-F475.

"[Social Focal Points](http://web.mit.edu/posner/www/papers/social%20focal%20points,%20Mar%2005.pdf)," (with James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner, and Jeremy Weinstein), unpublished paper.

Adida, Claire L., Laitin, David and Valfort, Marie-Anne, “[Gender, Economic Development and Islam: A Perspective from France](http://ssrn.com/abstract=1903128)” (2012). APSA 2011 Annual Meeting Paper.

Clingingsmith, David, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, and Michael Kremer. "[Estimating the impact of the Hajj: religion and tolerance in Islam's global gathering](http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/124/3/1133.short)." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124.3 (2009): 1133-1170.

Yanagizawa-Drott, David. [Propaganda and conflict: Theory and evidence from the Rwandan genocide](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/dyanagi/Research/RwandaDYD.pdf). Working Paper, Harvard University, 2010.

Paluck, Elizabeth Levy, and Donald P. Green. "[Prejudice reduction: What works? A review and assessment of research and practice](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163607)." *Annual review of psychology* 60 (2009): 339-367.

Elster, Jon. "[Social norms and economic theory](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1942912)." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 3.4 (1989): 99-117.

Fehr, Ernst, and Karla Hoff. "[Introduction: Tastes, Castes and Culture: the Influence of Society on Preferences](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0297.2011.02478.x/full)." *The Economic Journal* 121.556 (2011): F396-F412.

#### Building institutions

***Assignment due before class: TBA***

*\*\* and \* readings TBA*

Abhijit Banerjee, Raghabendra Chattopadhyay, Esther Duflo, Daniel Keniston, Nina Singh (2012) “[Can Institutions be Reformed from Within? Evidence from a Randomized Experiment with the Rajasthan Police](http://www.nber.org/papers/w17912),” unpublished working paper.

Malesky, Edmund, Paul Schuler, and Anh Tran. "[The Adverse Effects of Sunshine: A Field Experiment on Legislative Transparency in an Authoritarian Assembly](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8757141)." *American Political Science Review* 1.1: 1-25.

Pablo Querubin, "[Political Reform and Elite Persistence: Term Limits and Political Dynasties in the Philippines](https://sites.google.com/site/pabloquerubin/research/Querubin_Term_Limits.pdf?attredirects=0)," unpublished working paper

Ferraz, Claudio and Frederico Finan (2010). “Electoral accountability and corruption: Evidence from the audit of local governments,” American Economic Review, 101, 1274-1311.

Benjamin Olken, Junko Onishi and Susan Wong. [Should Aid Reward Performance? Evidence from a Field Experiment on Health and Education in Indonesia,”](http://economics.mit.edu/files/6923). October 2012. Online appendix [**here**](http://economics.mit.edu/files/7592). NBER Working Paper #**[17892](http://www.nber.org/papers/w17892" \o "17892" \t "_blank)**, February 2012.

Ferraz, Claudio and Frederico Finan (2010). “[Motivating Politicians: The Impacts of Monetary Incentives on Quality and Performance](http://emlab.berkeley.edu/~ffinan/Finan_MPoliticians.pdf),” unpublished working paper.

Lorentzen, Peter L., Landry, Pierre F. and Yasuda, John K., “[Transparent Authoritarianism?: An Analysis of Political and Economic Barriers to Greater Government Transparency in China](http://ssrn.com/abstract=1643986),” APSA 2010 Annual Meeting Paper.

de Lara, Yadira Gonzalez, Avner Greif, and Saumitra Jha. "[The administrative foundations of self-enforcing constitutions](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/29730004)." *The American Economic Review* 98.2 (2008): 105-109.

Greif, Avner. "[Contract enforceability and economic institutions in early trade: The Maghribi traders' coalition](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2117532)." *The American economic review* (1993): 525-548.

Leonardo Arriola. "[Capital and Opposition in Africa: Coalition Building in Multiethnic Societies](http://www.indiana.edu/~workshop/colloquia/materials/papers/Arriola_040811.pdf)." *World Politics*, forthcoming.

Thelen, Kathleen. "[Historical institutionalism in comparative politics](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.369)." *Annual review of political science* 2.1 (1999): 369-404.

Levitsky, Steven, and María Victoria Murillo. "[Variation in Institutional Strength](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.091106.121756)." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 115-133.

Helmke, Gretchen, and Steven Levitsky (2004). “[Informal institutions and comparative politics: A research agenda,](http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FPPS%2FPPS2_04%2FS1537592704040472a.pdf&code=053771c7e61aad39329e7a33e0a9df0e)” Perspectives on Politics.

Amos Sawyer (2004). "[Violent conflicts and governance challenges in West Africa: the case of the Mano River basin area](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&pdftype=1&fid=240016&jid=MOA&volumeId=42&issueId=03&aid=240015)." The Journal of Modern African Studies 42(03).

## Topic to be announced

***Assignment due before class: TBA***

*Readings TBA*

# Part V: An assortment of topics we will not have time to cover

## Taxation and Finance

Kasara, Kimuli. "Tax me if you can: Ethnic geography, democracy, and the taxation of agriculture in Africa." *American Political Science Review* 101.1 (2007): 159.

Olken, Benjamin and Monica Singhal. “[Informal Taxation](http://economics.mit.edu/files/6398)” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics  3*(4), pp. 1-28, October 2011.  
Appendices [**here**](http://economics.mit.edu/files/6399). Data and programs [**here**](http://economics.mit.edu/files/6710).

Scheve, Kenneth, and David Stasavage. "Democracy, War, and Wealth: Lessons from Two Centuries of Inheritance Taxation." *American Political Science Review* 1.1 (2011): 1-22.

Roger Gordon and Wei Li, “Tax Structures in Developing Countries: Many Puzzles and a Possible Explanation”

Tim Besley and Torsten Persson, “[Public Finance and Development](http://www-2.iies.su.se/pop/Research/papers/Draft_111129.pdf)” unpublished chapter.

Haber, Stephen, and Enrico Perotti. "[The political economy of finance](http://dare.uva.nl/document/336529)." (2007).

## Endogenous political change

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. "A theory of political transitions." *American Economic Review* (2001): 938-963.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Besley, Timothy, and Torsten Persson. *Pillars of Prosperity: The Political Economics of Development Clusters*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

## Economic shocks and development as a cause of conflict

Hidalgo, F. Daniel, et al. "Economic determinants of land invasions." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 92.3 (2010): 505-523.

Albertus, Michael and Kaplan, Oliver. “[Land Reform as a Counterinsurgency Policy: Evidence from Colombia](http://ssrn.com/abstract=1848129%20or%20http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1848129) (2012). Journal of Conflict Resolution, Forthcoming.

Oendrila Dube and Juan Vargas (2012) “[Commodity Price Shocks and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Colombia](https://files.nyu.edu/od9/public/papers/Dube_commodities_conflict.pdf)” Review of Economic Studies (forthcoming)

Bazzi, Samuel, and Christopher Blattman. "Economic shocks and conflict: the (Absence of?) Evidence from commodity prices." *Center for Global Development Working Paper* 274 (2011).

Mitra and Debraj Ray “[Implications of an Economic Theory of Conflict: Hindu-Muslim Violence in India](http://www.econ.nyu.edu/user/debraj/Papers/hm.pdf)”,revised September 2012.

Carles Boix. 2008. [Economic Roots of Civil Wars and Revolutions in the Contemporary World](http://www.princeton.edu/~cboix/economic-roots-of-violence.pdf). *World Politics*60 (April): 390-437.

Blattman, Christopher, and Edward Miguel. "Civil War." *Journal of Economic Literature* 48.1 (2010): 3-57.

Jackson, Matthew O., and Massimo Morelli. "[The reasons for wars: an updated survey](http://econ.columbia.edu/files/econ/reasons_for_wars.pdf)." *The Handbook on the Political Economy of War* (2011): 34.

## Politics of aid

Michael Faye and Paul Niehaus, “Political Aid Cycles”, American Economic Review 2012, 102(7): 3516–3530

Brollo, Fernanda and Tommaso Nannicini, “Tying Your Enemy's Hands in Close Races: The Politics of Federal Transfers in Brazil,” American Political Science Review 106(4), 2012, pp 742-761

De Mesquita, Bruce Bueno, and Alastair Smith. "[A political economy of aid](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=5467164)." *International Organization* 63.02 (2009): 309-340.

Ahmed, Faisal Z. "[The Perils of Unearned Foreign Income: Aid, Remittances, and Government Survival](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8504665)." *American Political Science Review* 106.1 (2012): 146-165.

## Autocracy and development

Robinson, James A. 2006. Economic Development and Democracy. Annual Review of Political Science 9: 503-527.

Claude Ake, “The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa”

Myerson, Roger B. "[The autocrat's credibility problem and foundations of the constitutional state](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=1720724)." *American Political Science Review* 102.01 (2008): 125-139.

Besley, Timothy and Masayuki Kudamatsu (2007). "[Making Autocracy Work](http://econ.lse.ac.uk/staff/tbesley/papers/maw.pdf)." Unpublished working paper.

Fearon, James D. "[Self-enforcing democracy](http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/126/4/1661.short)." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126.4 (2011): 1661-1708.

William Easterly (2001). “Benevolent Autocrats.” unpublished working paper.

Moss, Todd, Gunilla Pettersson, and Nicolas Van de Walle (2006). "[An aid-institutions paradox? A review essay on aid dependency and state building in sub-Saharan Africa](http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/5646/)." *Center for Global Development working paper* 74.

Michael Bratton and Eric C. C. Chang (2006). “[State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Forwards, Backwards, or Together?](http://cps.sagepub.com/content/39/9/1059.abstract)” *Comparative Political Studies* 39, p.1059

Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle (1997). *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## What can we learn from criminal organizations?

[Benjamin Lessing,  “A Hole At the Center of the State: Prison Gangs and the Limits to Punitive Power.”](https://docs.google.com/open?id=0ByMkTUIx-NceMEpEbi1iR2p1WXc" \t "_blank)  2012.

Skarbek, David. "Governance and prison gangs." *American Political Science Review* 105.4 (2011): 1-15.

Gambetta, Diego. *The Sicilian Mafia: the business of private protection*. Harvard University Press, 1996.

#### Corruption

Olken, Benjamin and Rohini Pande. “[Corruption in Developing Countries](http://economics.mit.edu/files/7589),” *Annual Review of Economics 4*, pp. 479-505, July 2012

Olken, Benjamin A. "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia." *Journal of Political Economy* 115, no. 2 (2007).

Fisman, Ray (2001). “Estimating the Value of Political Connections”, American Economic Review, 91: 1095‐1102.

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Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna and Sendhil Mullainathan (2012), “Corruption,” unpublished working paper.

Fan, C. Simon, Chen Lin, and Daniel Treisman. *Embezzlement Versus Bribery*. No. w16542. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2010.

Wilkinson, Steven I. (2006). “The Politics of Infrastructural Spending in India,” Typescript. University of Chicago

Khwaja, Asim Ijaz. "Can good projects succeed in bad communities?." *Journal of Public Economics* 93.7 (2009): 899-916.

## Ethnic politics and development

Francois, Patrick, Ilia Rainer, and Francesco Trebbi. "How Is Power Shared In Africa?." (2012).

Benn Eifert, Edward Miguel, and Daniel Posner. "[Political Competition and Ethnic Identification in Africa](http://web.mit.edu/posner/www/papers/PCEIA.pdf)," American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 54, No. 2, April 2010, pp. 494-510.

Nahomi Ichino and Noah Nathan. [Crossing the Line: Local Ethnic Geography and Voting in Ghana](http://people.fas.harvard.edu/~nichino/Papers/IchinoNathan_localethnicgeo_20120904.pdf), forthcoming, *American Political Science Review*)

James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner and Jeremy Weinstein [Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?](http://web.mit.edu/posner/www/papers/HHPW.pdf)," American Political Science Review 101, 4 (November 2007), pp. 709-725

Franck, Raphael, and Ilia Rainer. "Does the Leader's Ethnicity Matter? Ethnic Favoritism, Education, and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa." *American Political Science Review* 1.1: 1-32.

Baldwin, Kate, and John D. Huber. "Economic versus cultural differences: Forms of ethnic diversity and public goods provision." *American Political Science Review* 104.4 (2010): 644-662.

## Clientelism

Paul Novosad and Sam Asher (2012), “[Politics and Local Economic Growth: Evidence from India](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~novosad/paul_novosad_jmp.pdf),” unpublished working paper.

Horacio Larreguy (2012). “Monitoring Political Brokers: Evidence from Clientelistic Networks in Mexico,” unpublished working paper.

John D. Huber and Michael M. Ting (2009), “Redistribution, Pork and Elections,” unpublished working paper.

Calvo, Ernesto, and Maria Victoria Murillo. "Who delivers? Partisan clients in the Argentine electoral market." *American Journal of Political Science* 48.4 (2004): 742-757.

Nichter, Simeon. "Vote buying or turnout buying? Machine politics and the secret ballot." *American political science review* 102.01 (2008): 19-31.

Fred Finan and Laura Schechter. Vote-buying and reciprocity. Econometrica, 80(2):863-881, 2012

[Ichino, Nahomi and Noah Nathan. Do Primaries Improve Electoral Performance? Clientelism and Intra-Party Politics in Ghana](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2012.00624.x/abstract) forthcoming, and published online in Early View, *American Journal of Political Science*)

 Leonard Wantchekon, "[Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin](http://www.princeton.edu/~lwantche/Clientelism_and_Voting_Behavior_Wantchekon)", 2003, *World Politics*, Vol. 55, pp.399-422.

Pranab Bardhan and Dilip Mookherjee (2012), “[Political Clientelism and Capture: Theory and Evidence from West Bengal, India](http://emlab.berkeley.edu/users/webfac/bardhan/papers/clientcapaug2012.pdf),” unpublished paper.

Abhijit Banerjee, Donald P. Green, Jeffery McManus, and Rohini Pande (2012) “[Are Poor Voters Indifferent to Whether Elected Leaders are Criminal or Corrupt? A Vignette Experiment in Rural India](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/rpande/papers/UP%20Vignette_2012-10-22_final_wfig1.pdf),” unpublished working paper

Arriola, Leonardo R. "Patronage and political stability in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 42.10 (2009): 1339-1362.

Jordan Gans-Morse, Sebastian Mazzuca and Simeon Nichter. 2012. “[Varieties of Clientelism: Machine Politics During Elections](https://docs.google.com/open?id=0Byk1tLdA_itDWUdmRXh2bGQ1UDA)” unpublished working paper.

Baland, Jean Marie, and James A. Robinson. "The Political Value of Land: Political Reform and Land Prices in Chile." *American Journal of Political Science* (2012).

## Critiques of top-down development

William Easterly. [Planners vs. Searchers in Foreign Aid](http://williameasterly.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/49_easterly_plannersversussearcersinforeignaid_prp.pdf), Asian Development Review, 23, no. 2, (2006): 1-35.

Easterly, W. (2006). The white man's burden: why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good, Penguin Group USA.

James C. Scott. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*.

Scott, J. C. (2009). The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia, Yale Univ Press

James C. Scott. (2012). *Two Cheers for Anarchism*, Preface (p. ix-xxvi)

J. Bradford DeLong. 1999. “[Forests, Trees, and Intellectual Roots...: A review of James Scott’s Seeing Like a State](http://econ161.berkeley.edu/econ_articles/reviews/seeing_like_a_state.html).”

UN Millennium Project, Jeffrey D. Sachs, [Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/MainReportComplete-lowres.pdf), January 2005 (Chapters 1 and 2)

William Easterly. [The Big Push Déjà Vu: A Review of Jeffrey Sachs’s The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time](http://williameasterly.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/44_easterly_thebigpush_prp.pdf), Journal of Economic Literature, 44, no. 1 (March 2006): 289-318.

Ferguson, J. with L. Lohmann (1994). “[The anti-politics machine: 'development' and bureaucratic power in Lesotho](http://www.colorado.edu/geography/class_homepages/geog_3682_f08/Articles/Ferguson%20-%20The%20Anti%20Politics%20Machine.pdf).” *The Ecologist* 24(5).

Paul Seabright. 1999. “[The Aestheticising Vice](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v21/n11/paul-seabright/the-aestheticising-vice),” *London Review of Books* 21(11), p.26-27

Ferguson, J. (1990). The anti-politics machine:" development," depoliticization, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho, Cambridge Univ Press.

# Essential reading for causal inference and empirical research design

Depending on what method you plan to use, you ought to know the promise and pitfalls of each method. Below are general and specific papers and texts, general ones and also ones tailored to a specific approach. Particularly important and useful readings are marked with a \*.

## General treatments

The Angrist and Pischke *Mostly Harmless* book is one of your best starting points.

### Texts

There are many formal textbooks. The essential introductory and advanced econometrics texts, as far as I am concerned, is the following:

Wooldridge, Jeffrey M. Introductory econometrics: A modern approach. South-Western Pub, 2009.

Jeffrey Wooldridge. 2002. Econometric Analysis of Cross-Section and Panel Data. Cambridge: MIT Press (especially, but not only, chapters 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 17, and 18)

The following resources may also prove helpful.

Gerring, John. Social science methodology: a unified framework. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

[Handbook of Econometrics Vol. 1-6](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/handbooks/15734412)

[JEP Symposium on Econometric Tools](http://fsearch-sandbox.jstor.org/browse/08953309/di021427)

Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton, 2012.

### General program evaluation overviews and critiques

\*Imbens, Guido W., and Jeffrey M. Wooldridge. "Recent Developments in the Econometrics of Program Evaluation." Journal of Economic Literature (2009): 5-86.

Imbens, Guido W. "Nonparametric estimation of average treatment effects under exogeneity: A review." Review of Economics and statistics 86.1 (2004): 4-29.

Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. "The Experimental Approach to Development Economics." Annu. Rev. Econ 1 (2009): 151-78.

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. "The Credibility Revolution in Empirical Economics: How Better Research Design is Taking the Con out of Econometrics." The Journal of Economic Perspectives (2010): 3-30.

\*Heckman, James J. "Building Bridges Between Structural and Program Evaluation Approaches to Evaluating Policy." Journal of Economic Literature 48.2 (2010): 356-398.

DiNardo, John, and David S. Lee. "Program evaluation and research designs." Handbook of labor economics 4 (2011): 463-536.

\*Deaton, Angus. "Instruments, randomization, and learning about development." Journal of Economic Literature 48.2 (2010): 424-455.

\*Imbens, Guido W. "Better LATE than nothing: Some comments on Deaton (2009) and Heckman and Urzua (2009)." Journal of Economic Literature 48.2 (2010): 399-423.

\*Joshua D. Angrist and Alan B. Krueger. 1999. "[Empirical Strategies in Labor Economics](http://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~luohm/handbook_ch_23.pdf)." In Handbook of Labor Economics, ed. O. Ashenfelter and D. Card: Elsevier Science.

\*Duflo, Esther, Rachel Glennerster, and Michael Kremer. "Using randomization in development economics research: A toolkit." Handbook of development economics 4 (2007): 3895-3962.

Ravallion, Martin. "Evaluating anti-poverty programs." Handbook of development economics 4 (2007): 3787-3846.

James J. Heckman. 2000. “Causal Parameters and policy analysis in economics: A twentieth century retrospective.” Quarterly Journal of Economics 115:45-97.

Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, “Field Experiments and the Political Economy of Development,” Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci. 2009. 12: 367–78

## Method-specific issues and readings

### Issues in panel and cross-country time series analysis

\*Imbens & Wooldridge, sections 1-4, 5.1-5.4, 5.6, 6.1, 6.2

\*Angrist & Pischke, Sections 1, 2, 3.1, 3.2, and 5.1

\*Beck, Nathaniel, and Jonathan N. Katz. "What to do (and not to do) with time-series cross-section data." American Political Science Review (1995): 634-647.

\*Beck, Neal. 2001. "Time Series Cross Section Data: What Have We Learned in the Past Few Years?" Annual Review of Political Science 4 (1):271-93.

\*Wilson, Sven E., and Daniel M. Butler. "A lot more to do: The sensitivity of time-series cross-section analyses to simple alternative specifications." Political Analysis 15.2 (2007): 101-123.

\*Chapters 1 and 2 of Deaton, Angus. 1997. [The Analysis of Household Surveys: A Microeconometric Approach to Development Policy](http://povlibrary.worldbank.org/library/view/12798/). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press & The World Bank.

Chamberlain, Gary, Griliches Zvi, and D. Intriligator Michael. 1984. "Panel data." In Handbook of Econometrics: Elsevier.

Levine, R., and D. Renelt. 1991. "Cross-country studies of growth and policy: methodological, conceptual, and statistical problems." Policy Research Working Paper Series.

### Difference in differences (and synthetic controls)

\*Angrist & Pischke, Sections 3.3, 3.4, 5.2, 5.3, 8.2

\*Imbens & Wooldridge, Section 6.5

\*Joshua D. Angrist and Alan B. Krueger. 1999. "[Empirical Strategies in Labor Economics](http://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~luohm/handbook_ch_23.pdf)." In Handbook of Labor Economics, ed. O. Ashenfelter and D. Card: Elsevier Science. (*in particular, the “Muriel Boatlift” discussion*)

\*Abadie, Alberto, Alexis Diamond, and Jens Hainmueller. "Synthetic Control Methods for Comparative Case Studies: Estimating the Effect of California's Tobacco Control Program." Journal of the American Statistical Association 105.490 (2010): 493-505.

Conley, Timothy G., and Christopher R. Taber. "Inference with “difference in differences” with a small number of policy changes." The Review of Economics and Statistics 93.1 (2011): 113-125.

Marianne Bertrand, Esther Duflo, and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2004. “How Much Should We Trust Differences-in-Differences Estimates?” Quarterly Journal of Economics (February):249-275.

Stephen Donald and Kevin Lang. 2007. “Inference with Difference-in-Differences and Other Panel Data.” The Review of Economics and Statistics 89 (2):221-233.

### Regression Discontinuity

\*Imbens & Wooldridge, Section 6.4

\*Angrist & Pischke, Section 6

\*Imbens, Guido W., and Thomas Lemieux. "Regression discontinuity designs: A guide to practice." Journal of Econometrics 142.2 (2008): 615-635.

\*Lee, David S., and Thomas Lemieux. "Regression Discontinuity Designs in Economics." Journal of Economic Literature 48 (2010): 281-355.

van der Klaauw, Wilbert 2008. "Regression-Discontinuity Analysis: A Survey of Recent Developments in Economics." Labour 22 (2):219-45.

### Instrumental variables

\*Angrist & Pischke, Section 4

\*Imbens & Wooldridge, Section 6.3

\*Sovey, Allison J., and Donald P. Green. "Instrumental variables estimation in political science: a readers’ guide." American Journal of Political Science 55.1 (2011): 188-200.

\*Murray, M. P. 2006. "Avoiding Invalid Instruments and Coping with Weak Instruments." Journal of Economic Perspectives 20 (4):111-32.

\*Heckman, James J., and Sergio Urzua. "Comparing IV with structural models: What simple IV can and cannot identify." Journal of Econometrics 156.1 (2010): 27-37.

\*Guido Imbens and Joshua Angrist. 1994. “Identification and Estimation of Local Average Treatment Effects.” Econometrica Vol. 62 No. 2 (March):467-475.

Joshua Angrist and Alan Krueger. 2001. “Instrumental Variables and the Search for Identification: From Supply and Demand to Natural Experiments.” Journal of Economic Perspectives Vol. 15 No. 4 (Autumn): 69-85.

Thad Dunning. 2008. Model Specification in Instrumental-Variables Regression. *Political Analysis* 16 (3): 290-302.

Murray, Michael P. 2006. "[The Bad, the Weak, and the Ugly: Avoiding the Pitfalls of Instrumental Variables Estimation](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=843185)." Bates College unpublished working paper.

Larry Bartels. 1991. “Instrumental and “Quasi-Instrumental” Variables.” American Journal of Political Science Vol. 35 No. 3 (August):777-800.

Hahn, J., and J. Hausman. 2003. "Weak Instruments: Diagnosis and Cures in Empirical Econometrics." American Economic Review 93 (2):118-25.

Bound, John, David A. Jaeger, and Regina M. Baker. "Problems with instrumental variables estimation when the correlation between the instruments and the endogenous explanatory variable is weak." Journal of the American statistical association 90.430 (1995): 443-450.

Angrist, Joshua D., Guido W. Imbens, and Donald B. Rubin. "Identification of causal effects using instrumental variables." Journal of the American statistical Association 91.434 (1996): 444-455.

### Matching

\*Imbens & Wooldridge, Sections 5.5, 5.8

\*Angrist & Pischke, Sections 3.3, 3.4

\*Sekhon, Jasjeet S. "Opiates for the matches: Matching methods for causal inference." Annual Review of Political Science 12 (2009): 487-508.

\*Caliendo, Marco, and Sabine Kopeinig. "Some practical guidance for the implementation of propensity score matching." Journal of economic surveys 22.1 (2008): 31-72.

Jasjeet Sekhon. Forthcoming. “The Neyman-Rubin Model of Causal Inference and Estimation via Matching Methods.” In The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Paul Rosenbaum and Donald Rubin. 1983. “The Central Role of the Propensity Score in Observational Studies for Causal Effects.” In Donald Rubin. 2006. Matched Sampling for Causal Effects. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 10.

Donald Rubin and Neal Thomas. 1996. “Matching Using Estimated Propensity Scores: Relating Theory to Practice.” In Donald Rubin. 2006. Matched Sampling for Causal Effects. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 17.

## Other issues

### Measurement and Measurement Error

Griliches, Zvi, Griliches Zvi, and D. Intriligator Michael. 1986. "Economic data issues." In Handbook of Econometrics: Elsevier.

Bound, J., C. Brown, and N. Mathiowetz. 2001. "Measurement Error in Survey Data." Handbooks in Economics 2: 3705-843.

Hyslop, Dean R., and Guido W. Imbens. 2001. "Bias From Classical and Other Forms of Measurement Error." Journal of Business & Economic Statistics 19 (4):475-81.

Bound, J., and Alan B. Krueger. 1991. "The Extent of Measurement Error in Longitudinal Earnings Data: Do Two Wrongs Make a Right?" Journal of Labor Economics 9 (1):1.

### Sensitivity analysis

Guido W. Imbens. 2003). "Sensitivity to Exogeneity Assumptions in Program Evaluation." The American Economic Review 93(2): 126-32.

Joseph Altonji, Todd E. Elder, and Christopher Taber. 2005. “Selection on Observed and Unobserved Variables: Assessing the Effectiveness of Catholic Schools.” Journal of Political Economy Vol. 113:151-184.

Paul Rosenbaum and Donald Rubin. 1983. "Assessing Sensitivity to an Unobserved Binary Covariate in an Observational Study with Binary Outcome." Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series B (Methodological) 45(2): 212-18.

### Attrition

Duncan E. Thomas, Elizabeth Frankenberg, et al. (2001). "Lost but Not Forgotten: Attrition and Follow-up in the Indonesia Family Life Survey." The Journal of Human Resources 36(3): 556-92.

Hirano, Keisuke, Guido W. Imbens, Geert Ridder, and Donald B. Rubin. 2001. "Combining panel data sets with attrition and refreshment samples." Econometrica 69 (6).

### Other causal inference

Popper, Karl. 1953. "[Science: Conjectures and Refutations](http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Courses/popperphil1.pdf)." Lecture given at Peterhouse, Cambridge.

Holland, Paul W. 1986. "Statistics and Causal Inference." Journal of the American Statistical Association 81 (396):945-60.

Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." World Politics 43 (2):169-95.

Lewis, David. 1973. "Causation." The Journal of Philosophy 70 (17):556-67.

Pearl, Judea. "Causal inference in statistics: An overview." Statistics Surveys3 (2009): 96-146.

David Card. 1999. "The Causal Effect of Education on Earnings." In Handbook of Labor Economics, ed. O. A. D. Card. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Rubin, Donald B. 1974. "Estimating Causal Effects of Treatments in Randomized and Nonrandomized Studies." Journal of Educational Psychology 66 (5):688-701.

# How to read and review an academic paper

These comments apply best to empirical papers, but are also applicable to formal theory and qualitative or comparative works. I draw on my own experience plus similar checklists from Alain de Janvry, Elisabeth Sadoulet, and Macartan Humphreys.

### General strategies

You should treat reviews with a great deal of care. A review report for a serious article being considered for a top journal could take you a serious amount of time, such as a day.

Reviews vary in length a great deal. Two to four pages of comments are customary, and longer is reasonable. Reviews shorter than two pages would be acceptable for clear “accept” or clear “reject” cases, though even here it would be surprising if you could not generate detailed comments on even the best papers (or help out the worst ones).

Reviews are courteous and professional. Do not be insulting or devastating. Do not be sarcastic, cruel, mocking, haughty or dismissive. If a paper infuriates or exasperates you, take a deep breath, maybe sleep on your review before submitting, and revise to be polite.

Frame your critiques constructively whenever possible. Even if you are recommending rejection, you do the editors and authors a favor by explaining how they could address the concern in the current work (or, as a last resort, future work).

Be clear about what you see as the central and important issues, and put this material at the beginning. Use sub-points or a later section for points of moderate importance. Cluster small comments and quibbles, or minor corrections you see, as the very end.

Your critiques should be thorough and persuasive. A gut feeling that something is wrong is not enough. You should do the work to figure out whether your instincts are correct or not.

### Questions and topics typically examined

I organize the critique by the questions you can address in a review report:

### Research question and hypothesis

* Is the researcher focused on well-defined questions?
* Are the questions interesting and important?
* Are the propositions falsifiable?
* Has the alternative hypothesis been clearly stated?

### Substantive importance

* How does the paper inform the profession or the subfield more broadly? Did the argument, method or result change how you think about a broadly important question or issue?
* What is the most general application of this finding? Has the author made that case clearly and persuasively?
* If the question and issue is fairly specialized, is a major contribution in this sub field (or sub sub field) sufficiently important?
* Is there real-world importance of the issue?

### Theory/Model

* Is anything about the theory it novel or surprising?
* Is the idea being presented simple and self-evident enough that a formal or detailed treatment of the theory is not required, or could a more formal treatment be useful in the main body or an appendix?
* Is the theory/model clear, insightful, and appropriate?
* Could the theory benefit from being more explicit, developed, or formal?
* Are there clear predictions that can be falsified? Are these predictions “risky” enough? Does the theory generate any prohibitions that can be tested?
* Would an alternative theory/model be more appropriate?
* Could there be alternative models that produce similar predictions—that is, does evidence on the predictions necessarily weigh on the model or explanation?
* Is the theory actually a theory, or a just list of predictions?
* Does it feel like the theory was derived after the results, moved to the front of the paper, and then “tested” with data?
* Is the theory consistent with past literature and findings?
* Are elements that are excluded or simplified plausibly unimportant for the outcomes?
* Is the theory general or specific? Are there more general theories on which this theory could draw or contribute?

### Empirical strategy (from theory to hypotheses and tests)

* Is the empirical strategy related to or derived from the theory?
  + Are predictions simply stated or are they derived logically?
* Is the theory needed to generate the hypotheses?
* Does the theory generate more hypotheses than considered?
* Does the theory suggest heterogeneous effects?
* Have all the relevant predictions and empirical strategies been employed?
  + Does the paper ignore important descriptive analysis in favor of a jump to causal inference?
  + Are there pieces of evidence (patterns, levels, etc) that would support the theoretical approach?
  + Are there assumptions made in the theory that have not been tested or articulated?
* Is the approach inductive, deductive, or an exercise in data mining? Is this the right structure?
* Could the question be addressed with another approach?
* Does the theory suggest heterogeneous effects?

### Data and measures

* Are the data clearly described?
  + Summary statistics
  + Clear statement of sources
* Is the choice of data well-suited to the question and test?
* Could the data sources or collection method be biased?
* Are there any worrying sources of measurement error or missing data?
* Have the authors described the consequences of any data problems for their inferences (e.g. magnitude and direction of bias)
* Are there sample size or power issues?
* Are there better sources of data that you would recommend?
* Are there types of data that should have been reported, or would have been useful or essential in the empirical analysis?

### Measurement

* Do they provide details of the measurement and construction of major variables
* Do the measures capture the objects specified by the theory? Are any proxies reasonable?

### Causal identification and internal validity

* Is the “cause” clear? Is there a cause/treatment/program/fist stage?
* Is the specific method and counterfactual clearly defined? Is it compelling?
* Is the method for doing so clear and compelling? Has statistical inference been confused with causal inference?
* Does the research design identify a very narrow or a very general source of variation?
* Does the analysis conform with the “latest technology” for that particular method?
* Useful trick: ask yourself, “What experiment would someone run to answer this question?”
* Did the author make any assumptions for identification (e.g. of distributions, exogeneity, etc)? Were these assumptions tested and, if not, how would you test them?
* Some specific things to look out for:
  + Is there selection not just in who receives the “treatment”, but in who we observe, or who we measure?
  + Could differencing, or the use of fixed effects, exacerbate any measurement error?
  + Are there concerns of attenuation bias or systematic measurement bias from measurement error?
  + Are there concerns of reverse causality?
  + Are there concerns of omitted variables?
  + If using instruments, have they clearly discussed plausibility of exogeneity, exclusion restrictions and strength?
  + Is matching confused with a solution for unobservable selection?

### Other aspects of empirical analysis

* Are the statistical techniques well suited to the problem at hand? Is the empirical model used consistent with the theory?
* What are the endogenous and exogenous variables? Is it clear?
* Has the paper adequately dealt with concerns about measurement error, simultaneity, omitted variables, selection, and other forms of bias and identification problems?
* Are the results demonstrated to be robust to alternative assumptions? How complete and persuasive are these robustness tests?
* Does the disturbance term have an interpretation, or is it just tacked on?
* Are the observations i.i.d., and if not, have corrections to the standard errors been made?
* What additional tests of the empirical strategy would you suggest for robustness and confidence in the research strategy?
* Are there any dangers in the empirical strategy (e.g. sensitivity to identification assumptions)?
* Can you imagine a better, or alternative, empirical strategy?
* Look at the “not significant” effects: are they substantively large? Do the confidence intervals include very large effects?

### Results

* Are the results presented in an intuitive and clear way? Could this be improved?
* Is substantive significance of results clearly explained and discussed, or is the focus merely on statistical significance?
* Do the results adequately answer the question at hand?
* Are the conclusions convincing? Are appropriate caveats mentioned?
* What variation in the data identifies the elements of the model?
* Are there alternative explanations for the results, and can we test for them? Do the results admit rival interpretations?
* Could the author have taken the analysis further, to look for impact heterogeneity, for causal mechanisms, for effects on other variables, etc?
* Is absence of evidence confused with evidence of absence?

### Scope and external validity

* Can we generalize these results?
* Is the population examined representative of the larger population of interest?
* Has the author specified the scope conditions?
* Are the conditions under which they are examined consistent with the conditions of interest?
* Have casual mechanisms been explored?
* Are there further types of analysis that would illuminate the external validity, or the causal mechanism at work?
* Are there other data or approaches that would complement the current one?
* Do any policy implications really follow from the results?

### General organization

* Has the study been presented in a way that it can be replicated?
* Is the paper laid out logically and follow, to some degree, the scientific method?
* If empirical, are there clear and logically ordered sections for theory, empirical strategy, data, measurement, results, etc.?