

GEDEON J. LIM

270 Bay State Rd, Room 314

Boston University, Department of Economics

Boston MA 02215 USA

Cell: (617) 949-1882

Email: gedeonl@bu.edu

Website: <https://sites.google.com/a/bu.edu/gedeonlim>

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Student, Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, 2020 (expected)

Dissertation Title: *Essays on Development Economics*

Dissertation Committee: Samuel Bazzi, Dilip Mookherjee and Robert A. Margo

B.Soc.Sci. Economics, *First Class Honors*, National University of Singapore, Singapore 2014

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Development Economics, Political Economy, Economic History

WORKING PAPERS

"Why Pay the Chief? Land Rents and Political Selection in Indonesia (Job Market Paper)"

WORK IN PROGRESS

"The Effects of Long-Run Ethnic Segregation in Southeast Asia"

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

Society for Institutional & Organizational Economics (SIOE), MIT. Cambridge, MA 2020 (virtual)

Equality Development and Globalization Studies, Northwestern. Evanston, IL 2020 (virtual)

IEA World Congress. Bali, Indonesia 2020*

17th Midwest International Economic Development Conference. Purdue, IL 2020 (virtual)

CSAE Conference 2020: Economic Development in Africa. Oxford, UK 2020 (virtual)

PacDev: Pacific Conference for Development Economics. Berkeley, CA 2020 (virtual)

Northeast Universities Development Conference. Evanston, IL 2019

Economic History Association Meeting, Poster Session. Atlanta, GA 2019

Southeast Asia Research Group N.A. Meeting. Vancouver, Canada 2019

17th Nordic Conference on Development Economics. Helsinki, Finland 2018

Summer School in Development Economics. Prato, Italy 2017

* Postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19

GRANTS

Manuel Abdala Gift Grant Spring 2019

Boston University Initiative on Cities, Seed Funding Fall 2018

Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship (Short-Term) Fall 2018

Economics Department Summer Research Grant Summer 2018

Global Development Policy Center, Summer in the Field Summer 2018

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for S. Bazzi, Boston University, 2015-2019

Visiting Researcher, AKATIGA, Indonesia, 2018

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Visiting Junior Researcher, SMERU Research Institute, Indonesia	Summer 2015, 2016
Research Assistant for R. Arunachalam & A. Shenoy, University of Michigan, MI	Summer 2013
Communications & Research Intern, Centre for Microfinance, India	Summer 2012
Non-Commissioned Officer, Singapore Armed Forces, Singapore	2009-2011

LANGUAGES:

English (native), Mandarin Chinese (native), Bahasa Indonesia (intermediate)

COMPUTER SKILLS: ArcGIS, Stata

CITIZENSHIP: Singapore/F1

REFERENCES

Professor Samuel Bazzi
(Chair)
Department of Economics
Boston University
Phone: (617) 353-6150
Email: sbazzi@bu.edu

Professor Dilip Mookherjee
Department of Economics
Boston University
Phone: (617) 353-4392
Email: dilipm@bu.edu

Professor Robert A. Margo
Department of Economics
Boston University
Phone: (617) 353-6819
Email: margora@bu.edu

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Why Pay the Chief? Land Rents & Political Selection in Indonesia (Job Market Paper)

Much of modern development efforts are channeled through traditional local governance. Yet, despite their importance as politician-bureaucrats, local leaders are rarely paid a living wage. This paper studies the effect of awarding chiefs cultivation rights over village rice land, a stable revenue generating asset, during their term of office. I use a fuzzy spatial regression discontinuity design to exploit a historical natural experiment in Java where in the nineteenth century a homogeneous region was split, and in one part chiefs were awarded cultivation rights but not in the other. To measure political outcomes, I collect original data from the field tracing the modern electoral history of 931 chiefs in 193 villages. Higher land rents cause positive chief performance and economic development. Chiefs raise more funds and construct more public goods such that areas under their control are richer and more developed even today. I find evidence consistent with historically positive political selection as a key mechanism. Higher rents attracted better quality chiefs in the past. These chiefs were so effective at educational provision that the entire village today remains more educated. As a result, despite higher land rents attracting a higher quality pool of candidates today, neither candidates nor chiefs today are more selected compared to the average villager. Instead, positive development outcomes today are shaped by the selection of chiefs whose interests are aligned away from supra-village elite interests. Overall, my findings provide evidence that paying local leaders from a stable source of local revenue can be good for economic development.

The Effects of Long-Run Ethnic Segregation in Southeast Asia [Pilot Completed]

Despite its salience, the extent to which identity politics is shaped by (the lack of) inter-group contact is not well-understood. A crucial problem is that individuals usually have a choice over where they live, and, by extension, whom they interact with. In this project, I answer this question by studying a large-scale British colonial resettlement program that created 550 mono-ethnic villages; nearly all of which still exist today. The plausibly exogenous placement of these villages offers me persistent cross-village variation in inter-group contact, and I use this variation to study the effects of inter-group contact on contemporary voting behavior. To understand how differences in inter-group contact shape voting behavior, I've secured funding to conduct a large-scale retrospective survey at the household-level. The final survey will measure actual inter-group contact rates, attitudes and proxies for national identity.