

GEDEON J. LIM

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EDUCATION

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

Dissertation Title: *Essays on Development Economics*

Main Advisor: Samuel Bazzi

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 on Identity Politics in Malaysia"

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

17th Midwest International Economic Development Conference. Purdue, IL	2020 (scheduled)
CSAE Conference 2020: Economic Development in Africa. Oxford, UK	2020
PacDev: Pacific Conference for Development Economics. Berkeley, CA	2020
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

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-Present
Visiting Researcher, AKATIGA, Indonesia,	2018
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

GEDEON J. LIM

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

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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 on Identity Politics in Malaysia [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.