

Land and Credit: A Study of the Political Economy of Banking in the United States in the Early 20th Century

RAGHURAM G. RAJAN and RODNEY RAMCHARAN*

ABSTRACT

We find that, in the early 20th century, counties in the United States where the agricultural elite had disproportionately large land holdings had significantly fewer banks per capita, even correcting for state-level effects. Moreover, credit appears to have been costlier, and access to it more limited, in these counties. The evidence suggests that elites may restrict financial development in order to limit access to finance, and they may be able to do so even in countries with well-developed political institutions.

A RECENT LITERATURE EMPHASIZES the political economy underpinnings of economic underdevelopment. It notes that powerful constituencies, which arise, for example, from the pattern of land holdings in a country, can drive the development of economic institutions, and growth more generally (see, e.g., Engermann and Sokoloff (2002)). Banks are clearly important economic institutions. While historians have argued that political forces have shaped banking systems (see, e.g., Haber (2005a)), there has been little systematic examination of the evidence. In this paper, we examine more systematically whether the constituencies or interest groups that emerge in a country as a result of the distribution of land holdings—often the earliest and most important form of wealth—can shape the development of the banking system.¹

The precise channel through which constituencies or interest groups operate is also a matter of some debate. Some (see, e.g., Acemoglu, Johnson, and

*Rajan is at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business and Ramcharan is at the International Monetary Fund. We thank Lakshmi Aiyar, Stijn Claessens, Shawn Cole, Oded Galor, Adair Morse, Mark Rosenzweig, and Jeremy Stein as well as participants in seminars at the IMF, the NBER Political Economy, Corporate Finance, and Growth Workshops, MIT, Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, the WFA Meetings, and Yale University for comments. Rajan benefited from grants from the Stigler Center for the Study of the State and the Economy, from the Initiative on Global Markets, and from the National Science Foundation.

¹ On the importance of war for finance (and vice versa), see, for example, Brewer (1989) and Peach (1941); on the origins of finance in political development, see, for example, North and Weingast (1989); on the legal origins of finance, see LaPorta et al. (1998) and Levine (2005); and on the role of constituencies or interest groups, see, for example, Benmelech and Moskowitz (2007), Claessens and Perotti (2007), Haber and Perotti (2007), Haber (2005a,b), Morck, Wolfenzon, and Yeung (2006), Pagano and Volpin (2005), Perotti and Volpin (2007), Perotti and Von Thadden (2006), Rajan and Zingales (2003a, b), and Sylla (2005).

Robinson (2005) argue that the mediating channel is political institutions, as elite interest groups create coercive political institutions that give them the power to hold back the development of economic institutions, and hence economic growth. Others (see, e.g., Engerman and Sokoloff (2003), Rajan and Zingales (2003a, chapter 6) or Rajan (2009)) argue that a divided society may be sufficient to hold back the development of economic institutions, even if political institutions are broadly egalitarian.

One way to make progress on both questions (whether landed interest groups affect financial development and whether this can happen even in broadly democratic societies) is to examine patterns within broad political units such as countries or states, where political institutions are held relatively constant. To this end, we explore how the structure of banking across counties in the United States in the early part of the 20th century was driven by the distribution of land within the county. We focus on banks because they were, and in many areas still are, the most important source of local finance, and thus are important economic institutions. Similarly, we focus on the distribution of land because it represents the distribution of agricultural wealth and interests at a time when agriculture was still a key sector in the U.S. economy.

Why Did Landlords Restrict Credit?

Clearly, large landowners may have had the money and power to influence county politics even in a flourishing democracy. But why would they want to restrict access to credit for others, especially small farmers and tenants, by limiting the spread of banks? The contemporary literature suggests a number of reasons. First, large landowners generated loanable surpluses. Formal credit institutions could be competition for their business of lending to tenants and small farmers.

Second, tenants and small farmers needed credit to buy supplies from the local store. By limiting credit from alternative sources—for instance, by keeping banks out—the local merchant could lock the farmer in and charge exorbitant prices. Indeed, such lock-in was formalized in a “crop-lien” loan, whereby the merchant required that, in return for an advance of goods, the contracting farmer would

sign over, as a guarantee that the account would be paid, his “entire crop of cotton, cotton-seed, fodder, peas, and potatoes.” His personal property, chattels, and real estate, if he had any, might also be included in the mortgage, and in case he should find it impossible to pay his entire indebtedness out of the proceeds of the season’s crop, he was legally obligated to continue trading with the merchant who held the lien until the account should be settled in full. . . . The farmer . . . must pay whatever prices the merchant chose to ask. He must market his crop through the merchant he owed until the debt was satisfied, and only then had he any right to determine the time and method of its disposal (Hicks (1931, pp. 43–44)). . .

Initially, there was a conflict of interest between large landlords and the local merchant because they both had an interest in tenant farmers. But, “as time went on, the two classes tended more and more to become one.” Landlords were drawn into the store business by “the desirability of supplying their tenants,” while “storekeepers frequently became landowners by taking over the farms of those who were indebted to them or by direct purchase at the prevailing low price” (Hicks (1931, p. 32)).²

Among landlords, large landowners had an incentive to “accommodate” their own tenants, as doing so gave them greater control over tenants. By contrast, small and medium farmers did not have surpluses to lend out, and one detailed study of Texas concludes that “on the whole, they [owners of small and medium farms] would rather the tenant would get his money in his own way” (Haney (1914, pp. 55–56)).

For the rich landlord, there were other benefits to limiting access to credit than simply extracting rents from the less-well-off when they purchased goods. The landlord could benefit, for instance, by being able to buy land cheaply when small farmers were hit by adversity or by having privileged access to loans in the midst of a prolonged drought. He could prevent unskilled workers from obtaining the funds needed to educate themselves and expand their own employment opportunities, thus ensuring a reserve army of workers for field work (see Galor, Moav, and Vollrath (2009)). He might also prevent the emergence of alternative centers of economic power and status by limiting their access to finance (Chapman (1934)).

Along these lines, Calomiris and Ramirez (2004) argue that unit banking laws (i.e., laws preventing in-state banks from opening multiple branches, and out-of-state banks from entering the state) provided large farmers with insurance during periods of agricultural distress. Specifically, national banks or state banks with branches could foreclose more easily on loans, and transfer capital to less distressed areas. By preventing such reallocation, unit banking laws provided borrowers with insurance. Of course, wealthier farmers would benefit more from keeping capital locally, and Calomiris and Ramirez indeed find more restrictions in states with greater farm wealth.

How Did Landlords Maintain Their Hold?

If indeed, there were profit opportunities to be made in lending to small and tenant farmers, why did banks and other formal credit institutions not enter this business? Some argue that the supply of formal bank credit was artificially constrained through state-level legislation. For instance, legislation like North Carolina’s Landlord Lien Law, which gave landlords an automatic crop lien (a first claim against the crop) against any advances extended to tenants working their land, strongly reinforced the system of “debt peonage”

² Haney (1914, p. 54) writes that in most parts of central Texas, “over 90 percent of those tenants who owe the store are also indebted to their landlords for larger or smaller advances.”

(the system whereby tenants were trapped in a cycle of debt to their landlords; Ransom and Odell (1986, p.13)). Intuitively, if landlords had a senior claim against the tenant's crop regardless of when their claim was contracted, no one else would be willing to lend to the tenant, fearing their claim would be diluted by existing or prospective landlord claims.

Landlords could also assert power independently of state-level legislation. The merging of the roles of landlord and merchant provided these individuals with considerable local power, and historical narratives observe that these individuals often used their control of the local judiciary and political system, as well as their monopoly over local commerce to deter bank entry and ward off other threats to the status quo (Goodwyn (1978), Van Woodward (1951), Weiner (1975)). For example, to the extent that the sheriff enforced some claims more willingly than others, and to the extent that large landowners used their power to direct business to some banks and not others, local powers could alter the profitability of banking.

Finally, there is some evidence that when the small farmers did secure political power, they tried to create alternative sources of credit, suggesting that they chafed under credit constraints and the associated limitation on the channels through which they could purchase and sell products. In North Dakota, for example, after winning the 1916 gubernatorial race with the help of small farmers, the Populist Party created the United States' first state-owned bank, the Bank of North Dakota. The bank's charter (Bank of North Dakota (1920) begins:

Nor is it strange that under these conditions private interests sometimes take advantage of the needs of the people to keep down the prices of farm products, and exorbitantly to advance the prices of the things the farmers had to buy and the rates of interest for farm loans... the only permanent remedy lay in state ownership and control of market and credit facilities.

Alternative Motives and Views

It is not obvious that landlords only had incentives to suppress formal credit. First, instead of focusing on preserving his share of a small local pie by limiting bank competition and credit access, and thus squeezing the small farmer and tenants, the large landowner might have been better off increasing the size of the local pie, even if his share was diminished. For instance, greater access to formal finance would draw more potential buyers into the land market, allowing the value of his own land to appreciate. Whether stronger landlord interests lead to a more constrained financial sector and less financial access is an empirical question, which we attempt to answer. Second, a concentrated distribution of wealth can, in some theoretical models such as Greenwood and Jovanovic (1990), result in greater intermediation—the wealthy can pay the fixed costs of starting up banks. Third, a finding of a correlation between

measures of the strength of landlord interests and limitations on access to formal finance need not imply the former caused the latter. We therefore have to pay attention to issues of causation.

Findings

We find that, in the early 20th century, counties in which the agricultural elite had disproportionately large land holdings had significantly fewer banks per capita, even correcting for state-level effects. Moreover, credit appears to have been costlier, and access to it more limited, in these counties. The evidence thus suggests that elites may restrict financial development in order to limit access to finance, and they may be able to do so even in countries with well-developed political institutions.

While our focus is on financial development, the paper has broader implications. A recent trend in the literature on the underdevelopment of nations has been to attribute such outcomes to the historically weak political institutions (see, e.g., the literature emanating from North (1990) and North and Weingast (1989)). While U.S. political institutions in the 1920s were far from perfect, they were also far from the coercive political structures that are typically held responsible for persistent underdevelopment. Yet, even in the United States, we find large variations in the development of growth-facilitating economic institutions, such as banks, across areas with different constituencies but under the same meta-political structures. The significant, and potentially adverse, influence of powerful constituencies' intent on preserving their privileged position, even in such environments, suggests that fixing political institutions alone cannot be a panacea for the problem of underdevelopment.

We are, of course, not the first to address these issues of access to finance and monopoly power in the United States. Indeed, for a while, there was a heated debate among economists over whether differentials in interest rates across regions in the United States around the turn of the 19th century were evidence of monopoly power based on legal restrictions on entry (see, e.g., Davis (1965) and the responses in Binder and Brown (1991), Eichengreen (1984), James (1976), and Sylla (1975)), or whether the variation in interest rates was due to differences in risk. We believe that these questions deserve to be revisited, not only because they shed light on the process of financial and economic development (which is of contemporary interest to many developing countries), but also because we have access to richer and more detailed data than did these past studies (we have data at the county level rather than at the region or state level).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In Section I, we lay out the basic test. In Section II, we derive more detailed predictions on whether large land owners exerted influence to suppress access to credit, while, in Section III, we examine actual access to credit in counties with concentrated land holdings. We conclude in Section IV.

I. Landed Interests and County-Level Bank Structure: The Basic Test

What could be a proxy for the strength of landed interests and their desire to limit access to finance? In any argument where there is a group of larger farmers who “exploit,” there has to be another group of small farmers or tenants who are explicitly “exploited” (as in the debt peonage hypothesis) or are implicitly “exploited” (for instance, if they contribute savings to the local pool but do not get loans in a downturn because their access to finance is deliberately left underdeveloped, as in Calomiris and Ramirez (2004)). One measure of the relative strength of these two constituencies is the Gini coefficient of land farmed, which measures the degree of inequality of land holdings. If land holdings are very unequal, large landowners could have both the ability and the incentive to limit access to finance, while if land holdings are relatively equal (whether uniformly large or small), no one group is likely to have the power or the interest to alter others’ access.³

Our measure of the concentration of land holdings is based on the distribution of farm sizes, as in Ramcharan (2010). The data were collected by the U.S. Census Bureau at the county level for each of the decennial census years 1890 to 1930. A farm is defined as “all the land which is farmed by one person, either by his own labor alone or with the assistance of members of his household or hired hands” (p. 2). Note that a tenant is also a farmer by this definition. We have information on the number of farms falling within particular acreage categories or bins, ranging from below 3 acres up to 1,000 acres. Assuming the midpoint of each bin is the average size of farms in that bin, we construct the Gini coefficient to summarize the farm acreage data (see the Appendix for a precise formula and definitions). The Gini coefficient is a measure of concentration that lies between zero and one, with higher values indicating that farms at both ends of the size distribution account for a greater proportion of total agricultural land—that is, the holding of agricultural land is unequally distributed.

In the 1920s, the average Gini coefficient of a county is 0.43, the 99th percentile county is 0.69, the 1st percentile county is 0.2, and the standard deviation is 0.10 (see Table I for summary statistics). The correlation between the Gini coefficient for a county and the share of agricultural land in small farms (below 20 acres) is positive, as is the correlation with the share of large farms (above 175 acres). The correlation between the Gini coefficient and the share of medium-sized farms (between 20 and 175 acres) is negative. Thus, as we would expect, counties with high Gini coefficients tend to have more land in both small as well as large farms. Interestingly, as a result of the greater weight in small farms, counties with Gini coefficients above the median have smaller farms on average than counties with Gini coefficients below median.

³ This presupposes, of course, that those without land either do not have the basic minimum surplus to be worth squeezing (such as field hands) or live in towns, far from the clutches of the landlords. We show that a greater fraction of activity in manufacturing (a measure of nonland activity) does diminish the effect of land concentration on financial development and access.

Table I
Summary Statistics

This table presents summary statistics for the county-level variables. Distances are in kilometers.

| | Circa 1920 | | Circa 1930 | |
|--|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Land Gini | 0.43 | 0.10 | 0.43 | 0.10 |
| All banks, number per 100 square km | 0.08 | 0.51 | 0.07 | 0.40 |
| All banks, number per 1,000 inhabitants | 0.48 | 0.04 | 0.37 | 0.26 |
| State banks, as fraction of all banks | 0.71 | 0.25 | 0.69 | 0.27 |
| County area (logs) | 7.38 | 0.98 | 7.38 | 0.98 |
| National banks, number per 1,000 inhabitants | 0.11 | 0.13 | 0.09 | 0.10 |
| Total population (logs) | 9.76 | 1.03 | 9.81 | 1.05 |
| Urban population | 19.01 | 24.83 | 21.30 | 25.73 |
| Population density | 61.13 | 902.56 | 67.75 | 836.09 |
| Black population, as a fraction of total population | 0.12 | 0.19 | 0.11 | 0.18 |
| 5–17 year olds, as a fraction of total population | 0.30 | 0.04 | 0.30 | 0.04 |
| Per capita value added in manufacturing, 1920 (logs) | 3.61 | 1.46 | – | – |
| Per capita value of crops, in 1920 (logs) | 5.16 | 1.10 | – | – |
| Value of fruits, as a share of total crop value | 4.35 | 9.74 | 5.40 | 11.97 |
| Value of cereals, as a share of total agriculture value added | 42.23 | 25.06 | 35.80 | 26.34 |
| Value of vegetables, as a share of total agriculture value added | 11.53 | 13.60 | 10.09 | 14.12 |
| Crop values per farm population, 1930 | – | – | 3981.91 | 4751.81 |
| Distance from Mississippi | 1,032,163.00 | 808,239.30 | 1032,163.00 | 808,239.30 |
| Distance from Atlantic | 1,884,416.00 | 1,418,925.00 | 1,884,416.00 | 1,418,925.00 |
| Distance from Great Lakes | 1,347,100.00 | 926,554.80 | 1,347,100.00 | 926,554.80 |
| Distance from Pacific | 3,686,264.00 | 1,415,177.00 | 3,686,264.00 | 1,415,177.00 |
| Annual average rainfall (inches) | 36.41 | 13.68 | 36.41 | 13.68 |

(continued)

Table II—*Continued*

| | Circa 1920 | | Circa 1930 | |
|---|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Proportion of owner-occupied homes | 0.528 | 0.140 | 0.509 | 0.134 |
| Average farm size (logs) | 5.019 | 0.9403 | 5.009 | 0.975 |
| Number of farms (logs) | 7.333 | 1.005 | 7.302 | 0.977 |
| Percent of acreage reporting crop failures | — | — | 1.270 | 1.602 |
| Share of the value of manufacturing output to the value of manufacturing and agriculture output | 0.392 | 0.306 | 0.502 | 0.311 |
| Fraction of tenant farmers | 0.335 | 0.196 | 0.375 | 0.209 |
| Fraction of sharecroppers | 0.159 | 0.114 | — | — |
| Fraction of cash tenants | 0.073 | 0.076 | — | — |
| Average interest rate | — | — | 6.480 | 0.683 |
| Fraction of indebted farms | — | — | 0.498 | 0.151 |
| Average mortgage debt, as a percent of farm values | — | — | 37.378 | 8.08 |
| Average mortgage debt, as a percent of state bank deposits | — | — | 1.298 | 2.916 |
| Total deposits of suspended state banks, 1931–1936, as a share of state bank deposits in 1930 | — | — | 28.051 | 33.151 |

Sources and definitions are provided in the Appendix.

We now examine county-level data on land inequality from 1890 to 1930 to help assess the impact of the concentration of agricultural land on the various indicators of banking structure. Our hypothesis is that, correcting for state effects, the greater the power of local landed interests, as proxied for by the degree of land concentration in a county, the greater their ability to shape the structure of banking in the county.

A. Banking Density and Concentration

One measure of bank structure is to simply count the number of banks in a county, normalized by the number of people in or by the area of the county. Bank density at the county level is an informative measure of access to finance as well as of bank market structure during this period (Evanoff (1988)). Distance was an important factor in economic activity at this time; as federal involvement in road construction had not yet begun, road transport networks were relatively primitive, and automobile use was still limited (Baum-Snow (2007), Ramcharan (2009)). Moreover, during this period, policy debates on the availability of credit often revolved around the geographic proximity of banks, as access to financial services was more restricted in counties with limited banking density (Cartinhour and Westerfield (1980)).⁴

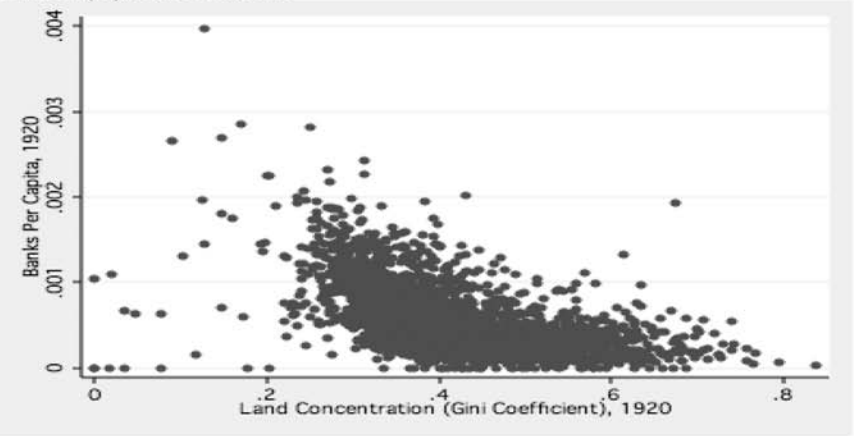
The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) provides county-level data on the number of state and nationally chartered banks in the county, as of 1920. We begin by examining the relationship between the density of banks in a county and the concentration of land holdings. Figure 1 suggests a negative relationship between bank density and land concentration both in the full sample of counties in the data—about 3,000—and when restricting the sample to counties located in either the northern or southern regions of the United States.

This negative relationship between banks per capita in 1920 and land concentration can be formally established through an OLS regression controlling for aggregate state-level factors using state indicators. We can also control for county-level geographic characteristics including the log of county area and its distance from various waterways. Waterways were centers of economic activity as well as transportation (and if freshwater, of irrigation). For instance, waterways such as the Great Lakes in the upper Midwest and the Atlantic Ocean along the east coast helped spur industrialization and demand for financial services in those regions (Pred (1966)). Including these variables helps control for other determinants of a county's prosperity and the kind of economic activity it might undertake.

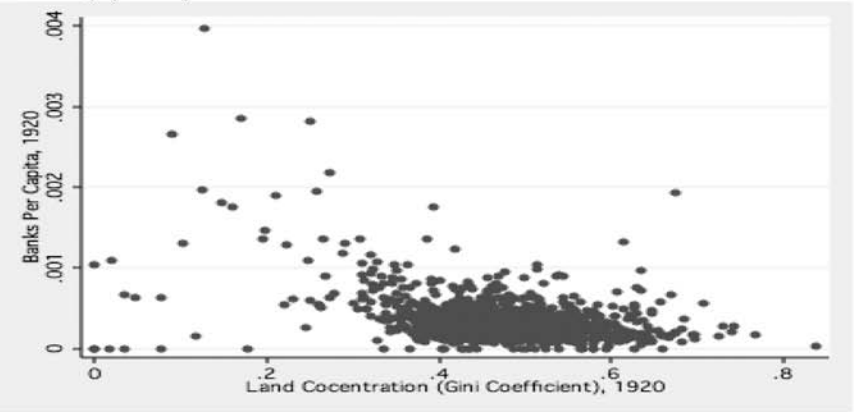
The coefficient estimate of land concentration in the OLS regression (see the Internet Appendix, available online at <http://www.afajof.org/supplement.asp>) is

⁴ Like the United States during the sample period, bank density remains an important measure of access to financial services in many developing countries today because of their limited transport networks. In these countries, density significantly predicts credit usage by firms and households (Beck, Demirgüç-Kunt, and Martinez Peria (2007)).

Panel (A) All Counties



Panel (B) Only Southern Counties



Panel (C) Only Northern Counties

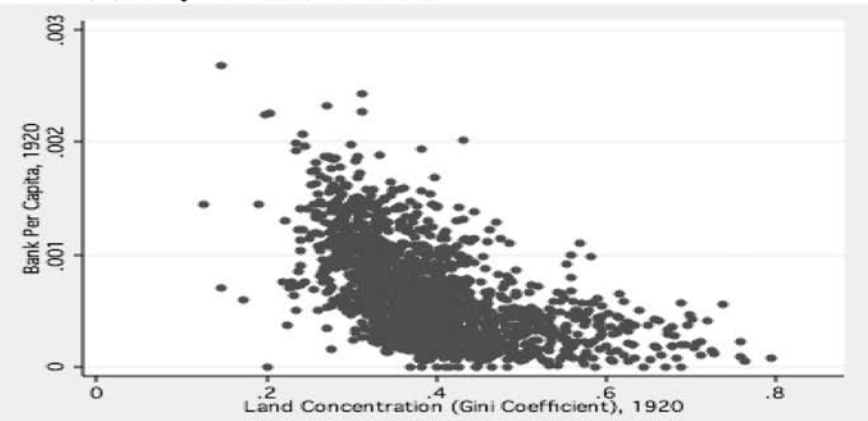


Figure 1. Land concentration (Gini coefficient) and banks per capita, 1920.

negative and strongly statistically significant (at the 1% level). A one-standard-deviation increase in land inequality is associated with a decline in the per capita number of banks circa 1920 of 0.31 of its standard deviation. The precision and magnitude of the correlation in the 1930 cross-section is similar. When we pool both cross-sections and include county fixed effects, which helps absorb the effects of geography, soil types, location, and any other potentially relevant unobserved time-invariant county characteristics that might be linearly correlated with land concentration, we get estimates about 30% larger than the 1920 OLS results.

Before making too much of this, we should recognize that there are potential biases in the estimated coefficient. Well-known theoretical arguments predict that economic inequality can itself be shaped by credit availability and other forms of asset market incompleteness (Aghion and Bolton (1997), Banerjee and Newman (1991), Galor and Zeira (1993)), making reverse causality a likely feature of the data. More banks, for example, might mean more credit availability, allowing more people to buy farms and reducing concentration. However, the biases could go in either direction. More competition among banks may mean weaker relationships between banks and farmers, which could lead to greater foreclosures of marginal farmers in times of distress, and hence greater land concentration (see Calomiris and Ramirez (2004) or Petersen and Rajan (1995)). If this effect is present, our OLS estimate would understate the true effect of concentration on banks per capita. The larger coefficient estimate for land concentration in the county fixed effects estimation suggests that this direction is plausible. To better correct for such reverse causality, we turn to instrumental variables.

B. Land Concentration Again

Clearly, a large number of factors have historically determined how land in a particular county is distributed (see Gates (1973) or Hicks (1931)). These include the historical settlement patterns (western frontier or eastern seaboard), the nature of settlers (immigrants from overseas or settlers from previously settled areas in the country), the role of the government (including land grants to railroads and universities), and the role of past events like the Civil War, financial crises, and droughts.

A large literature in agricultural economics suggests that land concentration in the United States is also related to weather patterns (Ackerman and Harris (1946), Gardner (2002), Heady (1952), Tomich, Kilby, and Johnston (1995)). The underlying logic rests on the idea that, given the technologies of the period, crops suited for plantation agriculture such as sugarcane, tobacco, fruit, and nuts thrived in warmer counties with regular and heavy rainfall. Some of these crops—such as sugarcane—required processing soon after harvesting. The need for significant capital investments in the mill, as well as the possibility of hold-up of farmers by the mill owner, meant that joint ownership of the land and the mill was more efficient, with economies of scale

stemming from the mill carrying over to the land and warranting a large plantation.⁵

Furthermore, because of the seasonality of work on plantations, it would be reasonable for workers to rent small plots where they could grow other crops such as vegetables. Thus, large farms that focused on plantation-style agriculture would also often be surrounded by smaller, tenant farms, naturally leading to a high Gini coefficient. By contrast, grain—wheat and barley—which are better suited to more temperate climates, exhibited fewer economies of scale, and were associated with more moderate-sized and equitable land holdings.

The key aspect of weather driving crop choice is rainfall. Flue cured or Virginia tobacco, for example, requires rainfall between 23 and 31 inches per annum, while Nebraska wheat usually thrives in regions that receive between 14 and 21 inches of rain per annum (Seitz (1948), Myers (1940)). Even within states, more arid counties—the Piedmont region of central Virginia, for example—may have had a more equitable distribution of farm sizes because of their suitability for grain production.⁶ Engerman and Sokoloff (2002) employ a similar argument to explain the role of geographic endowments in shaping historic cross-country differences in land inequality across North and South America. And, using U.S. Census data as early as 1860, Vollrath (2006) provides evidence consistent with the role of geographic endowments in shaping land inequality across a sample of U.S. counties.

In sum, our instrument for land concentration is average rainfall (though later in the paper, we use other instruments such as the variance of rainfall in robustness checks), and the mediating channel is the kind of crops that the prevailing pattern of rainfall facilitates. In Table II, we present correlations between our measure of land concentration and the fraction of area covered by different crops in the county, average annual rainfall, as well as other indicators of climatic conditions (pooling data from 1920 and 1930). As Table II shows, there is a significant positive correlation of 0.35 between average rainfall and land concentration. The higher the average rainfall, the less the share of basic cereals, other grains and seeds, and hay and forage like sorghum in the crops grown in a county. Indeed, these were typically crops grown in the Midwest and other areas with relatively little rainfall.

By contrast, fruit and nuts, which were typically grown in both plantations and small tenant plots in Florida, parts of Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, as well as California and the upper Midwest, are found more in counties with higher rainfall, as are vegetables. Consistent with the discussion

⁵ In some countries, of course, cooperatives in sugar farming and production have led to joint ownership of land and mill without large amounts of land being held by a single owner. Why cooperatives have more limited presence in the United States is a question that is beyond this paper.

⁶ Interestingly, cotton was not one of the crops that required plantation-style agriculture—even though substantial labor was needed to harvest the crop quickly soon after the bolls opened to avoid cotton spoiling from dust or rain once the crop was harvested, it could be processed in due course; Thus, labor rather than capital was essential to cotton production, and, following the emancipation of the slaves, small farms became more dominant in cotton.

Table II
Pairwise Correlations
This table presents the pairwise correlations between land concentration, crop shares, and rainfall.

| | Land Concentration | Basic Cereals | Grains and Seeds | Hay and Forage | Fruits and Nuts | Vegetables | Average Annual Rainfall | Standard Deviation of Rainfall | Average Temperature |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Land concentration | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Basic cereals | -0.446** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Grains and seeds | -0.048* | -0.024 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Hay and forage | -0.175* | -0.159** | -0.023 | 1 | | | | | |
| Fruits and nuts | 0.341** | -0.284** | -0.049** | -0.016 | 1 | | | | |
| Vegetables | 0.299** | -0.377** | -0.028** | 0.063* | 0.163** | 1 | | | |
| Average annual rainfall | 0.346** | -0.212** | -0.167** | -0.461** | 0.042** | 0.118** | | | |
| Standard deviation of rainfall | 0.360** | -0.171* | -0.059** | 0.332** | 0.148** | 0.135** | 1 | | |
| Average temperature | 0.436** | -0.223* | -0.009 | 0.617** | 0.082** | -0.065** | 0.498** | 0.532** | 1 |

**denotes significance at the 5% level or higher.
Unless otherwise noted, all crop shares are expressed as shares of land farmed within the county.

above, the share of county production in basic cereals, other grains and seeds, and hay and forage land is significantly negatively correlated with land concentration, while the share in fruit and nuts, as well as vegetables, is positively correlated with land concentration.⁷

The detailed acreage data in the Agricultural Census of 1910 provides additional corroboration. For instance, the share of farm acreage devoted to sugarcane—a capital-intensive plantation crop—is positively correlated with both land concentration in 1910 and historic rainfall patterns.⁸

Of course, to be a reasonable instrument, rainfall should not directly drive the demand for (or, less likely, the supply of) banking services, other than through land concentration. If rainier areas are more productive, for example, then it is likely that farmers would be richer, and demand more banking services. This would imply that rainier areas have more banks (given the supply curve), and thus attenuate any negative effect we would expect to see between instrumented land concentration and banking (thus biasing the tests against the hypothesis).

As the first row of Table III suggests, agricultural land in counties with above-median rainfall were somewhat more productive, producing \$15.95 per acre in 1920 versus \$15.11 per acre for counties with below-median rainfall. The difference in productivity widens in 1930 (\$9.61 vs. \$7.35 per acre), after a period of falling agricultural prices. By contrast, we find that counties with higher-than-median rainfall had smaller average farm size. Given that these counties also had higher Gini coefficients (0.46 vs. 0.37), this would suggest they had a few really large farms and many small farms, as argued earlier. Finally, note that the percentage of crops that failed in any of the counties in 1930 was below 1%, suggesting that higher average historical rainfall was not necessarily correlated with significantly lower crop failures—the crops planted seemed to vary appropriately with rainfall patterns.⁹

So, taken together, do these data suggest that counties with higher rainfall were composed of borrowers that would have less need for credit or less creditworthiness to obtain it, or do they suggest the opposite? On the one hand, the land was somewhat more productive, and crop failures in 1930, though low across the board, were slightly lower in rainier counties. This does not suggest significantly lower need or lower creditworthiness. On the other hand, farm sizes were generally smaller. However, the evidence from studies on farm loan defaults in the 1930s does not suggest that defaults were correlated with size

⁷ Note also that warmer areas were less likely to specialize in cereals, and had higher levels of land concentration. There is also a positive correlation between the standard deviation of rainfall and land concentration, and we subsequently use some of these correlations to gauge the robustness of our identification strategy.

⁸ For the farm acreage devoted to cane sugar, the correlation coefficients are 0.098 and 0.066 for land concentration and rainfall, respectively. These correlations are significant at the 5% level, and are robust to the inclusion of the state dummies.

⁹ This is not to say that drought and crop failures were not a cause for farm distress in the interwar period, but rather that data from the farm experience in 1930 do not suggest that areas with higher rainfall were more prone to distress.

Table III
Rainfall, Land Concentration, and Economic Outcomes

This table presents the median values of economic outcomes for the sample of counties above and below the median value of rainfall and land concentration.

| Median Values for the Cell | Rainfall Average 1920 | | | Land Concentration 1920 | | | Rainfall Average 1930 | | | Land Concentration 1930 | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| | Above Median | Below Median | | Above Median | Below Median | | Above Median | Below Median | | Above Median | Below Median | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Value of produce per acre (\$) | 15.95 | 15.11 | | 13.43** | 17.04** | | 9.61** | 7.35** | | 8.77 | 8.55 | |
| Percent of crops that failed in 1930 | . | . | | . | . | | 0.70** | 0.85** | | 0.69** | 0.88** | |
| Average farm size (acres) | 88** | 191** | | 96** | 145** | | 84** | 192** | | 94** | 147** | |
| Share of manufacturing in county | 0.37** | 0.25** | | 0.39** | 0.24** | | 0.50** | 0.43** | | 0.51** | 0.42** | |
| Fraction of housing in county that is owner occupied | 0.50** | 0.58** | | 0.49** | 0.59** | | 0.49 | 0.55 | | 0.48** | 0.56** | |
| Value of land per acre | 34.34** | 46.20** | | 32.59** | 48.99** | | 24.46** | 32.42** | | 24.84** | 30.84** | |
| Number of banks per 10,000 people | 2.71** | 6.23** | | 2.78** | 5.91** | | 1.87** | 3.96** | | 1.90** | 3.99** | |
| Deposits per bank | . | . | | . | . | | 392.73 | 400.60 | | 420.92** | 380.28** | |

**denotes medians are significantly different at the 5% level or higher across the subsamples.

(see, e.g., Jones and Durand (1954) and the studies cited therein). The rationale for this somewhat surprising finding is that those who held small pieces of land typically supplemented their income through other work—for instance, on plantations or in towns (Jones and Durand (1954, p. 175)). So, it is not a priori obvious that counties with greater rainfall had borrowers who had lower need for banking services, especially credit, or were less creditworthy.

If we look at two other proxies for economic activity in Table III, it is again not obvious that counties with higher rainfall were less creditworthy. First, the share of value added by manufacturing in the county turns out to be somewhat higher in counties with above-median rainfall in 1920 (37% vs. 25%), though the difference narrows in 1930 (50% vs. 43%). This would make farms in counties with higher-than-median rainfall more creditworthy because of access to nonfarm work. By contrast, the share of owner-occupied housing is lower in counties with higher-than-median rainfall in 1920 (50% vs. 58%), with the difference narrowing again in 1930 (49% vs. 55%). While this is consistent with less creditworthy households in counties with greater rainfall, it is also consistent with lower access to credit in these counties. Indeed, despite having higher productivity of land in counties with above-median rainfall, the median value of an acre of land is significantly lower in such counties (see Table III)—a difference that could be driven by the differential availability of credit. Finally, when we examine banks per capita, the difference is quite extraordinary. There are twice as many banks per capita in counties with below-median rainfall than in counties with above-median rainfall, both in 1920 and 1930. Interestingly, the average size of banks, as measured by bank deposits per bank, does not differ much (if anything, banks are slightly smaller in counties with above-median rainfall), suggesting that the lower number of banks in counties with higher-than-median rainfall is not because they are larger banks.

In sum, rainfall appears to drive land concentration by affecting the distribution of farm sizes, but does not obviously affect the demand for credit, other than through its effect on concentration and perhaps credit. It is a plausible instrument, certainly exogenous, but also likely to satisfy the exclusion criterion. However, it would be useful in our tests to correct for some of the obvious explanatory variables identified above to ensure that they do not drive any of our results (though we also have to be careful that, by including “endogenous” explanatory variables like owner occupancy, we do not absorb some of the explanatory power of land concentration for access to credit).

At the same time, no natural instrument can completely satisfy the exclusion criterion. Rather than abandoning any attempt at examining important historical data, we offer a battery of tests that help build an overall pattern of results rather than rely on one single test that would depend excessively on the plausibility of the instrument.

C. Instrumental Variables Estimates

In the first column of Table IV, we present estimates for a first stage where the dependent variable is land concentration in 1920 and the explanatory

Table IV
Land Concentration and Bank Density, IV Estimates

This table presents the relationship between land concentration and various measures of bank density using instrumental variables.

| Dependent Variable | First Stage | | Second Stage | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | (1) OLS | (2) OLS | (3) IV | (4) IV | (5) IV | (6) IV | (7) IV | (8)S 2SL |
| Average rainfall | 13.90*** (2.46) | Land Concentration 1920 13.00*** (2.28) | Banks per Capita, 1920 — | Banks per Capita, 1920 — | Banks per Capita, 1930 — | Banks per sq km 1930 — | Banks per Capita, 1920 — | Banks per Capita, 1920 — |
| Land concentration | | | —481.041*** (109.728) | —496.036*** (122.248) | —234.706*** (79.323) | —4712.885*** (1222.766) | —78.683*** (34.881) | —465.171*** (101.090) |
| No. Obs. | 2907 | 2907 | 2907 | 2907 | 2934 | 2907 | 2573 | 2907 |
| R ² | 0.0944 | 0.2129 | | | | | | |

All standard errors (in parentheses) are adjusted for spatial correlation. ***, **, and * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels. All specifications include state dummy variables. All coefficients multiplied by 100,000. Columns 1 and 3 include only geophysical controls: land area and distances from Atlantic, Pacific, Mississippi, and Great Lakes (in logs). Columns 2 and 4–8 include both geophysical and demographic controls: illiterate, urban, African-American, and young (ages 7–20) population shares, as well as log of total population. Average rainfall is the instrument in Columns 3–6. Land concentration in 1890 is the instrument in Column 7. Column 8 uses both average rainfall and its standard deviation as instruments. Land concentration is the Gini coefficient of farm sizes within the county.

variables are the mean rainfall in the county computed using data from weather monitoring stations over the period 1900 to 2000, state indicators, and the geographical variables. The coefficient estimate on mean rainfall is positive and statistically significant at the 1% level, consistent with the literature.¹⁰ Using these geophysical controls, the corresponding second-stage instrumental variable (IV) estimates are reported in Table IV, Column 3. The coefficient on instrumented concentration is negative and statistically significant at the 1% level. As with the fixed effects results, the IV coefficient is larger in magnitude than in the OLS regression, suggesting the OLS estimate is biased toward zero. In this case, a one-standard-deviation increase in land concentration reduces the number of banks per capita by about 1.2 standard deviations. To put these estimates in perspective, for a county of average population in the sample, about 31,000 people, a one-standard-deviation increase in land concentration translates into approximately 15 fewer banks, or a 1.5-standard-deviation decrease in the number of banks.

D. Addressing Possible Violations of the Exclusion Restriction Assumption

There is the concern, of course, that land concentration might proxy for some omitted variable that is also correlated with the number of banks per capita. In particular, a poor, low-skilled population, as well as the very young, might not have the ability to farm land independently and might also be an unattractive target market for banks. We should also account for the possibility of discrimination, both in terms of blacks not having access to education and in terms of their being denied access to financial services (see Ransom and Sutch (1972)). Therefore, we include as additional controls the fraction of the county population that is illiterate, the fraction that is young, and the fraction that is black. Moreover, because banking density might be directly affected by the size and spatial distribution of the population, we include the log population, as well as the fraction of the population that is urban (reflecting the degree to which population is unevenly distributed across the county). For instance, the more urban the population, the more the population is concentrated in a few areas and hence the fewer the bank offices needed to service them.

Of course, these demographic controls are arguably less exogenous than the geographic controls we included earlier. Nevertheless, it is heartening that, in

¹⁰ Because of the likely spatial correlation between geographically proximate counties, the correlation in the error term between county i and county j may be proportional to the distance between the two counties. We follow Conley (1999) and Rappaport (1999) and assume a spatial structure to the error covariance matrix. Specifically, for county pairs further than 150 km apart—measured as the distance between the counties' geographic center—we assume independence. Meanwhile, for county pairs less than 150 km apart, we use quadratic weighting: $E(e_i e_j) = [1 - (\frac{\text{distance}_{ij}}{150})^2] \rho_{ij}$, where $\rho_{ij} = e_i e_j$. Since geographic characteristics extend across political boundaries, this weighting applies even for adjacent counties in different states. Simple clustering within states generally yields standard errors between 20% and 30% higher than the distance weighting procedure—and the estimates remain statistically significant at conventional levels.

Column 4 of Table IV, the coefficient estimate on concentration in the IV regression is negative, strongly statistically significant, and indeed a little larger in magnitude with these additional controls than the coefficient estimated in Column 3. The first-stage estimates in Column 2 are also little changed (the full regression estimates are in the Internet Appendix).¹¹ This suggests that concentration does not proxy for these controls. This will be our baseline regression. In what follows, we conduct some additional robustness checks.

In Table IV, Column 5, the dependent variable is banks per capita in 1930, and we estimate the IV regression with the full panoply of geographic and demographic controls. The coefficient estimate on land concentration is again negative and strongly statistically significant. In Table IV, Column 6, the dependent variable is a different measure of bank density, banks per square kilometer in 1920. Again, however, we find the coefficient on instrumented land concentration is negative and strongly statistically significant.¹²

E. Alternative Instruments

Much of the increase in the number of banks occurred after 1890, as federal and state authorities competed to weaken chartering requirements, capital requirements, reserve requirements, and portfolio restrictions in order to attract more banks into their system (White (1982)). The number of state banks grew from 2,534 in 1890 to 14,512 in 1914 while the number of national banks grew from 3,484 to 7,518. Land inequality in 1890 thus pre-dates much of the structural change in banking, and could also be a plausible instrument for land concentration in 1920. We find that, when we replace average rainfall as the instrument in the basic specification in Table IV, Column 4, with land inequality in 1890, the coefficient estimate on instrumented land inequality in 1920 (see Table IV, Column 7) is negative and significant. Predetermination does not, however, imply the instrument satisfies the exclusion restriction, so we do not use this instance further.

An alternative instrument frequently suggested to us is the standard deviation of rainfall, as spatially covariant weather risk might also shape the distribution of farm sizes (Ramcharan (2010)). However, the variation in weather-related agricultural risk can impact local banking structures through a number of different channels, suggesting a potential violation of the exclusion criterion. Nonetheless, to gauge the sensitivity of our results, we add this variable to our instrument set in Column 8. The estimated impact of land concentration on bank density is similar to the previous results, and standard overidentification tests do not detect a violation of the exclusion criterion—the Hansen J-statistic

¹¹ Using a semiparametric estimator, Figure 1 of the Internet Appendix also suggests that the linearity assumption might be appropriate (Yatchew (2003)).

¹² One concern may be that a county with uniformly large farms will have a low Gini coefficient. While this is not inconsistent with the hypothesis being tested (there is no need to repress finance if there are no small farmers/tenants to exploit), it is important to check that this does not drive our results. Therefore, we recalculate the Gini coefficient using only those counties with farm sizes in all bin categories—we are left with about 55% of the sample of counties. The coefficient estimates for the Gini coefficient are qualitatively similar, however, and are available upon request.

is 1.16 (p -value = 0.28). As an alternative to using the standard deviation of rainfall as an instrument, we can include it and other measures of weather risk and local climatic conditions (see Internet Appendix) as control variables in an OLS regression. We also separately add crop and livestock average productivity and variability over the period 1860 to 1910 as additional controls. The OLS estimates are robust and similar across the two specifications, but continue to be smaller than their IV counterparts (the coefficients of the IV estimates are not reported).¹³

Yet another possible instrument is the variability of land elevation within a county (with higher elevations having different crops and different optimal land sizes). When elevation is used as an instrument for concentration in our baseline estimation instead of average rainfall (see the Internet Appendix), the coefficient on concentration is negative and statistically significant. But, when included with average rainfall, standard overidentification tests suggest a violation of the exclusion restriction assumption.

Given that these additional instruments do not add to the analysis, and arguably could violate the exclusion criterion (e.g., elevation could be correlated with the cost of transport), in what follows we will use average annual rainfall as the instrument in our baseline, as this variable is more likely to satisfy conditionally the exclusion criterion.

F. Rainfall as a Proxy for Demand-Side Factors

Given that the negative correlation between land concentration and banks per capita or per area seems fairly robust to time period and choice of instrument, let us turn to a different issue—could the instrument, rainfall, proxy for factors that reflect the demand for finance? One way to address this is to include explanatory variables that proxy for demand and see whether these diminish the coefficient estimate on land concentration.

The problem, of course, is that proxies for demand could also reflect the supply of finance, which is the channel we are interested in. For instance, we would think that counties with more owner-occupied housing are likely to be richer and have greater effective demand for financial services (it is well established in the literature that the rich have more serviceable demand for financial services than the poor). However, the availability of credit is also likely to make it easier for households to buy rather than rent. Thus, the fraction of owner-occupied housing is also likely to be a proxy for credit supply. Similarly, one could criticize almost any economic proxy for demand.

Nevertheless, we are on stronger ground if we find that the inclusion of reasonable proxies for demand does not alter the estimated coefficient on

¹³ In addition to the core distance from waterways measures, the full range of weather and geophysical controls includes the annual average number of frost days—days when the temperature dips below freezing—and growing degree days in the county, as well as the historic standard deviation of these variables; we also include both the mean elevation in the county, and the topographic variability of the terrain. Please see Table 2 for definitions and sources.

instrumented land concentration significantly. We identify a number of economic variables in Table III that vary substantially between counties with high rainfall and counties with low rainfall. Perhaps smaller farms are not creditworthy or perhaps, if there are a few large farms, only a few bank outlets are needed to service them. We include both the log average size of farms and the log number of farms in the county in the baseline regression. The coefficient on land concentration is qualitatively similar. Our results are robust to including the share of owner-occupied housing, land productivity, and the value of land per acre in turn—see the Internet Appendix.

G. Land Concentration Working through Other Channels

It may be the case that it is not land concentration, but rather the presence of farms of a certain size, that drives the availability of banking services. Therefore, we include in the baseline regression the share of land area under operation by farms in each size bin. These land shares have the potential to mechanically absorb much of the explanatory power of the Gini coefficient for land concentration. Indeed, the coefficient on concentration declines in magnitude by about 45%, but remains significant at the 1% level (see the Internet Appendix). So, the distribution, rather than only the share of land in each size bin, matters.

It could be argued that different kinds of crops imply different demands for financing. We include in the baseline regression the value of each type of crop grown in the county, expressed as a share of total crop values in the county. The coefficient on land concentration is qualitatively the same (see the Internet Appendix).

The significant coefficient on concentration could be driven by the peculiar political and agricultural legacy of the Southern states compared to the upper Midwestern agricultural states. When we estimate a coefficient on concentration separately for the Southern and upper Midwestern agricultural states (states in the U.S. Census East North Central and West North Central region) in our baseline regression, they are both negative and statistically significant (see the Internet Appendix).

In addition to finance, the landed elite may have sought control over other local policies, including the suppression of public goods such as education (Gallor et al. (2008) and Ramcharan (2010)). And, rather than reflecting the direct influence of land concentration on local banking structures, these results might indirectly reflect the success of these groups in limiting human capital investment, and, thus, the demand for finance. The baseline specification already controls for illiteracy, but we also include the per capita education expenditures in the county. This variable is available only for 1930, and we run our baseline specification using banks per capita in 1930 as the dependent variable. The coefficient on land concentration remains qualitatively similar to the baseline (see the Internet Appendix).

The set of possible alternative explanations one could advance for the negative correlation between land concentration and banks per capita is well-nigh

unlimited. Therefore, having addressed some important concerns, we now turn to check in other ways whether this correlation might represent the influence of landed interests on access to finance. To the extent that these other checks bear out, any alternative explanation has to pass a stiffer test—it has to explain not just the correlation between land concentration and banks per capita but also these other correlations.

II. The Influence of Landed Interests

In this section, we turn to more direct evidence on whether landed interests were influential in determining banking structure. Specifically, were landed interests more inclined to assert their influence when the ostensible incentive to do so was higher? What if the channel through which they could control finance was suppressed? Were landed interests more favorable to the financiers they could control than to those they could not control? And, were landed interests more assertive when their overall ability to exert influence was higher?

A. Tenancy

Many of the arguments about the incentives of large land owners to limit access to finance revolve around tenancy. Land owners could negotiate lucrative sharecropping contracts with cash-strapped tenants or sell goods at a high price where access to credit was limited. Also, because large farmers were usually owners while small farmers were tenants, in counties with high levels of tenancy a higher concentration in land holdings would likely reflect a more skewed distribution of economic and political power than in counties with low levels of tenancy. Thus, landed interests would have both a greater interest and ability to limit finance in counties with greater tenancy.

To test this conjecture, in Column 1 of Table V, we include the interaction between the fraction of farms in the county operated by tenants and land concentration in the baseline regression, controlling directly for the impact of tenancy using both linear and quadratic terms. The interaction between land concentration and the share of tenant farms in the county is negative and significant at the 1% level. For a county at the 25th percentile level of tenancy in the sample, a one-standard-deviation increase in inequality is associated with about a 1.1-standard-deviation decline in banking density. But for a county at the 50th percentile of tenancy, the impact is roughly 26% larger. Interestingly, the direct correlation of tenancy is positive and significant. Evaluated around the median levels of concentration and tenancy, a standard deviation increase in tenancy is associated with a 0.05-standard-deviation increase in the number of banks per capita. This is consistent with the view that tenants had a greater demand for finance and, absent the influence of landed interests, would have attracted more banks per capita.

Banks per Capita and Factors That Change the Incentives and the Economic Power of the Landed
This table presents results on the factors that shape the relationship between land concentration and bank structures.

| Regression | (1) All Tenants | (2) Sharecroppers | (3) Cash Tenants | (4) Crop Lien Laws | (5) Crop Lien Laws | (6) Manufacturing Share |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Dependent Variable | Banks per Capita, 1920 (IV) | Banks per Capita, 1920 (IV) | Banks per Capita, 1920 (IV) | Banks per Capita, 1920 | Banks per Capita, 1930 | Banks per Capita, 1920 (IV) |
| Explanatory variables | | | | | | |
| Land concentration | -318.27* (149.49) | -298.50* (114.92) | -484.30*** (110.75) | -541.28 (583.37) | -164.33** (81.72) | -645.84*** (198.61) |
| Land concentration * tenants share | -789.83** (322.40) | -805.58*** (241.97) | 324.07 (307.12) | - | - | - |
| Tenants share | 442.18** (153.72) | 408.16*** (119.52) | -48.25 (143.26) | - | - | - |
| Tenants share, squared | -167.98*** (51.24) | -181.61** (72.57) | -119.02 (99.66) | - | - | - |
| Land concentration * Texas | - | - | - | -557.30 (867.02) | 223.26* (119.80) | - |
| Land concentration * manufacturing | - | - | - | - | - | 359.12** (130.04) |
| Manufacturing | - | - | - | - | - | -137.74** (55.52) |
| Manufacturing, squared | - | - | - | - | - | -23.60* (13.20) |
| No. Obs. | 2,908 | 2,908 | 2,908 | 1,289 | 1,308 | 2,745 |

All standard errors (in parentheses) are adjusted for spatial correlation.
***, **, and * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels. All specifications include a county's distance from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Great Lakes; the Mississippi River (in logs); county area; population; illiterate, urban, African-American, and young (ages 7–20) population shares; as well as state dummies. Columns 4 and 5 use only counties in southern and border states. Manufacturing share (Column 6) is the fraction of manufacturing value added relative to value added in manufacturing and agriculture. All coefficients are multiplied by 100,000. Land concentration is the Gini coefficient of farm sizes within the county. Tenants' share is the fraction of farms within a county operated by tenant farmers. Sharecroppers and Cash tenants are the fraction of farms operated by tenants using a sharecropping and cash contract, respectively. Definitions and sources can be found in the Appendix.

B. Sharecropping and Cash Tenants

It is useful to distinguish between sharecroppers and cash tenants. Sharecroppers had so little ready cash that they contracted to pay a share of their output as rent. By contrast, cash tenants could pay rent up front, and therefore had less need for credit.

There is suggestive evidence that landlords squeezed sharecroppers because the latter needed credit. The implicit interest rates on sharecropping contracts were often as high as 150%, with nearly half of share tenants borrowing approximately 100% of their expected income from their share of the crop (Brogan (2001)). Thus, because the profitability to the landlord of sharecropping depended on the underdevelopment of the financial system, landed interests would have been more likely to oppose wider credit access in counties where sharecropping was more common.

Unlike sharecroppers, cash tenants owned their harvest, paying landlords a fixed cash rent up front. These tenants were typically better off since they were either able to self-finance the rent for land as well as the cost of farming, or had prearranged sources of financing.

In Column 2, we include the interaction between the fraction of farms operated by sharecroppers and land concentration, as well as the fraction of sharecroppers and the fraction of sharecroppers squared. In Column 3, we do the same for the fraction of cash tenants. In Column 2, for a county at the 25th percentile level of sharecropping in the sample, a one-standard-deviation increase in inequality is associated with about a 0.89-standard-deviation decline in banking density, whereas for a county at the 50th percentile of sharecropping, the impact is about 15% larger. Interestingly, the direct effect of sharecropping measured at its mean is positive, suggesting that counties with greater sharecropping have, *ceteris paribus*, more demand for finance and more banks per capita, but the effect of land concentration is to reduce the presence of banks, especially in counties with more sharecroppers.

In contrast to sharecroppers, the interaction term between concentration and the fraction of farms operated by cash tenants is positive, small, and not statistically different from zero. For a county at the 25th percentile level of cash tenancy in the sample, a one-standard-deviation increase in land inequality is associated with about a 1.20-standard-deviation decline in banking density. For a county at the 50th percentile of cash tenancy, the magnitude of the effect is about 3% smaller.

In sum, the negative relationship between land concentration and banks per capita seems most pronounced in counties where there was likely to be the greatest demand for credit, and hence the greatest incentive for landed interests to control it.

C. Crop Lien Legislation

We have seen that crop lien laws were one of the principal tools that the landed elite allegedly used to restrict credit from banks and limit their business

(Ransom and Sutch (2001), Van Woodward (1951)). These laws made the landlords' claims on tenants superior to other creditors, effectively preventing others from lending to tenant farmers. Although such laws were deeply unpopular among small farmers, the landed elite used their political influence with legislatures throughout the South to enact them.

For a period, Texas was an important exception. In part, because of different electoral rules that briefly allowed small farmers to elect a Populist governor, Texas was the only Southern state that actually passed legislation restricting the maximum liens that landlords could claim.¹⁴ The legislation, passed in 1915, also limited the shares that landlords could negotiate in a sharecropping contract—one-third of the cotton crop and one-fourth of the grain (Graves (1940)). The Texas Supreme Court—appointed mainly by the landlord-dominated legislature—eventually declared the law unconstitutional in 1929. Nevertheless, for a time, Texas's crop lien legislation imposed a less onerous barrier to bank entry in rural areas, implying that the impact of land concentration on banking density in Texan counties would have been weaker compared to counties in other Southern states during our sample period.

In Column 4 of Table V, we restrict the baseline specification in 1920 to Southern counties, but allow the impact of land concentration on banking density to differ for Texan counties. The estimates are generally imprecise, and, in 1920, five years after the law, the impact of land concentration on per capita banks, if anything, is more negative in Texan counties. However, 15 years after the initial passage of the Texan legislation, the impact of concentration on per capita banks is significantly more muted in Texan counties compared to other Southern counties in the 1930 cross-section (Column 5). Indeed, the coefficient estimate on land concentration in Texas is essentially zero. We should note, however, that, while the point estimates are consistent with historical narratives, this evidence should be interpreted with caution, as the standard errors remain large.

D. Relative Power of Landed Interests

Landed interests are likely to have had more influence on the structure of banking if they were a dominant economic power in the county. But this was a period when the manufacturing sector, an important consumer of financial services, was growing. It is reasonable to think that, in counties where the economic power of the agricultural sector was offset by the power of the manufacturing sector, the effect of land concentration on bank structure would be weaker.

¹⁴ The Populist Movement in the United States is often thought to have begun in Texas with the founding of the Grand State Farmers' Alliance in the 1890s. By 1905, the state passed the Terrell Act, which created a direct primary system, allowing voters rather than party elites to select the gubernatorial nominee in a direct election. This created a wave of populism and reforms, of which the 1915 law is an example. However, the legislature was still dominated by the landed elite, and they eventually impeached the Governor three years after the passage of the 1915 legislation (Newton and Gambrell (1935)).

One measure of relative economic power is the ratio of the value of manufacturing output to the value of manufacturing and agriculture output. In Table V, Column 6, we include the interaction between manufacturing share and land concentration in our baseline regression, taking care to include manufacturing share and its square directly.

The estimates suggest that, as the strength of manufacturing interests in a county increase, the adverse impact of land concentration on the per capita number of banks falls. The point estimates in Column 6 suggest that, for a county at the 25th percentile level of manufacturing share in the sample, a one-standard-deviation increase in land inequality is associated with about a 1.40-standard-deviation decline in banking density. For a county at the 50th percentile of manufacturing share, the impact is about 14% smaller. Note that it is hard to argue that this reflects a greater demand for banking services in counties with more manufacturing share because we control for the direct effects of manufacturing (through both linear and squared terms). Indeed, the direct effect is negative, consistent with the fact that agriculture was undergoing a boom until the early 1920s, and may have been a greater source of demand for banking services than manufacturing.

E. Distance from State Capital

During this period, state governors appointed state bank commissioners, and politics often shaped chartering and regulatory decisions (Mitchener (2005)).¹⁵ To the extent that state power was important, one might expect at this time—when physical distance mattered greatly—that powerful landowners in counties that were physically closer to the state capital might have had greater influence on bank structure than landowners who were further away. When we include the interaction between land concentration and the distance of the county from the state capital, we find a positive and significant coefficient estimate. So, concentration mattered more if the county was near the state capital. In contrast, the Comptroller of Currency in Washington DC chartered and regulated national banks using a system of national bank examiners. Perhaps as a result, distance from the state capital does not alter the influence of land concentration on national bank density (see the Internet Appendix).

Of course, one might wonder why the national banks did not occupy the space vacated by state banks. The landed elite in a county would have been much more viscerally opposed to national banks (over whose policies they had little control) than over state banks. Although land concentration is negatively correlated with both types of banks, the impact is especially large on national banks (see the Internet Appendix). So, while the landed elite in a county could not use their influence over state chartering to deter national banks, they

¹⁵ Using previously secret government documents, Vickers (1994) notes, for example, that land developers often overcame chartering obstacles by bringing powerful politicians into banking deals. Land developers then used bank deposits for unsecured personal loans for themselves, politicians, and bank regulators. These loans were rarely repaid.

probably used their local influence—such as their control over law enforcement or over local business—to make activity difficult for national banks.

III. Land Concentration and Access to Credit

Having provided some evidence that political economy may have been responsible for differences in bank structure across counties, let us examine another aspect of the allegations at that time—that there were few banks per capita in counties with concentrated land holdings because landed interests wanted to suppress access to formal sources of credit. A natural question is whether formal credit was actually scarce in such counties.

A. Access to Credit

To address this question, we hand-collect several county-level indicators of local land mortgage loans from the 1930 U.S. Census archives. We have the average interest on farm mortgages held by banks, a proxy for the cost of credit. We also have data on the fraction of indebted farms, and the debt-to-value ratio for farms. Finally, we have the amount of bank mortgage credit, which, when scaled by local state bank deposits, gives us a credit to deposit ratio, a standard measure of local credit activity.¹⁶

Around 50% of farms were indebted in 1930, the average mortgage debt-to-value ratio was around 37%, and the average interest rate in 1930 was 6.48%. The average ratio of mortgage debt to bank deposits across counties was 56%.

Of course, it is possible to argue against each of these variables taken alone as a measure of the supply of credit—they could be a measure of effective demand, as determined both by the need for credit as well as the creditworthiness of the borrower. However, assuming the underlying distribution of creditworthiness is the same across counties, the simultaneous prevalence of lower interest rates and higher credit volumes is more consistent with higher supply than higher demand. And, the simple correlations in Table VI suggest that counties with lower interest rates also had a greater fraction of indebted farms and higher loan-to-value ratios.

To focus further on this aspect, we extract the principal component from our four proxies for access to credit. The first component explains about 41% of the variance in the data, nearly twice as much as the second component. Moreover, it correlates negatively with interest rates and positively with the proxies for credit volume (the share of indebted farms, the debt-to-value ratio, and the mortgage credit-to-deposit ratio); see Table VI. Therefore, we use the first component as a summary measure of local credit supply conditions.

¹⁶ Until the relaxation of the 1864 National Bank Act in 1913, national banks were barred from mortgage loans—that is, loans against land (Sylla (1969)). There is disagreement about the effectiveness of this restriction (Keehn and Smiley (1977)). Nevertheless, rather than mixing state banks and national banks in what follows, we focus only on state banks.

Table VI
Simple Correlations, Credit Variables

This table presents simple pairwise correlations.

| | Mortgage Interest Rate | Mortgage Debt to Farm Values | Fraction of Indebted Farms | Ratio of Mortgage Debt to Banks Deposits | Principal Component |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Mortgage interest rate | 1 | | | | |
| Mortgage debt to farm values | −0.1845* | 1 | | | |
| Fraction of indebted farms | −0.3365* | 0.2977* | 1 | | |
| Ratio of mortgage debt to state bank deposits | 0.0029 | 0.2473* | 0.0975* | 1 | |
| Principal component | −0.6366* | 0.7130* | 0.7663* | 0.3844* | 1 |

*denotes significance at the 5% level or better.

Thus far, we have argued that rainfall determines land concentration, which in turn determines banks per capita. We now take this one step further by saying that banks per capita determines access to credit, that is, the interest rate charged and the volume lent. The system of equations below summarizes our empirical strategy:

$$\text{Measure of access}_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Bank}_i + X_i \beta_1 + \varepsilon_{1i}, \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Bank}_i = \alpha_2 + \alpha_3 \text{Land Concentration}_i + X_i \beta_2 + \varepsilon_{2i}, \quad (2)$$

$$\text{Land Concentration}_i = \alpha_3 + \alpha_4 \text{Rain}_i + X_i \beta_3 + \varepsilon_{3i}. \quad (3)$$

We estimate the impact of local bank structures on the various measures of access in equation (1). These local bank structures are determined by local land concentration (equation (2)), which depends on the mean rainfall in the county (equation (3)). The system is exactly identified, and equation (1) can be estimated using instrumental variables. We include our usual geographic, demographic, and state fixed effects controls in each equation.¹⁷

The IV estimates in Table VII, Panel A, Column 1 suggest an economically large relationship. A one-standard-deviation increase in bank density in 1920 is associated with a 0.38-percentage-point or about 0.66-standard-deviation decrease in the average mortgage interest rate. The coefficient estimates for the effect of bank density on the fraction of indebted farms in Column 2, the mortgage debt-to-value ratio in Column 3, and the mortgage credit-to-deposit ratio in Column 4 are positive, economically large, and, with the exception of Column 3, statistically significant. Finally, the principal component extracted from these series is also positively and significantly related to bank density (Column 5). So, counties with more banks per capita appear to have greater credit availability: lower interest rates, a higher fraction of indebted farms, greater debt-to-value ratios, and a higher mortgage credit-to-deposit ratio.

In the estimates in Table VII, Panel A, we instrument banks per capita directly with average rainfall (because the system is exactly identified, this is equivalent to the three-stage least squares estimate). Alternatively, we could include the Gini coefficient instrumented with rainfall. The estimates for the Gini coefficient are reported in Table VII Panel B, take the expected sign, and, again with the exception of Column 3, are statistically significant. In sum, access to credit appears lower in areas with concentrated land holdings.

¹⁷ In equations (2) and (3), we could use banks per capita in 1930. However, some of the measures of access we have (e.g., mortgage credit to deposits) reflect the cumulative consequences of lending over time. In that case, it might be more appropriate to use banks per capita in 1920. Fortunately, the results do not depend qualitatively on which measure is used, so we use the latter, though results are available for the former from the authors.

Table VII
Credit Access, Banks per Capita, and Land Concentration

| | (1) (IV) | (2) (IV) | (3) (IV) | (4) (IV) | (5) (IV) |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|---|------------------------|
| Panel A: Credit Access and Banks per Capita | | | | | |
| Dependent Variable | Interest Rate | Fraction of Indebted Farms | Mortgage Debt as a Share of Farm Value | Mortgage Debt as a Share of State Bank Deposits | Principal Component |
| State banks per capita | -1,176.7** (412.5) | 1,320.7*** (193.9) | 7,118.4 (5936.7) | 4,459.4*** (1371.2) | 6,553.7*** (1050.2) |
| Observations | 2,902 | 2,904 | 2,902 | 2,698 | 2,697 |
| Panel B: Credit Access and Land Concentration | | | | | |
| Dependent Variable | Interest Rate | Fraction of Indebted Farms | Mortgage Debt as a Share of Farm Value | Mortgage Debt as a Share of State Bank Deposits | Principal Component |
| Land concentration | 5.57** (2.34) | -6.16*** (1.60) | -37.51 (27.51) | -21.13** (8.38) | -31.22*** (7.77) |
| Observations | 2,953 | 2,957 | 2,953 | 2,716 | 2,715 |

Panel A presents results on the relationship between state banks per capita and various measures of credit access. Panel B presents results on the relationship between land concentration and various measures of credit access. ***, **, and * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels. All standard errors are adjusted for spatial correlation. All specifications include a county's distance from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi River (in logs); county area; population; illiterate, urban, African-American, and young (ages 7–20) population shares; as well as state dummies. The “Principal Component” is the common first component extracted from the four measures of credit access. All coefficients are multiplied by 100,000. Land concentration is the Gini coefficient of farm sizes within the county.

B. Default Experience

We have argued that borrowers paid high oligopolistic interest rates and obtained less credit in concentrated counties precisely because bank competition was more limited. But this also suggests that, if banks were prevented in various ways from expanding access to credit, we should find that the pool of actual borrowers from banks was less risky in concentrated counties. The obvious alternative explanation of our findings is that, in concentrated counties, potential borrowers were riskier and less creditworthy, so banks, although competitive, held back from lending. This would suggest that even the loans that banks actually made in concentrated counties should be riskier (as evidenced by the higher competitive interest rate paid by borrowers).

Two pieces of evidence already weigh against this explanation. First, the mortgage credit-to-deposit ratio was lower in more concentrated counties, suggesting that local deposits seemed plentiful relative to the credit that was given—consistent with the notion that credit was constrained by supply rather than constrained by the low quality of potential borrowers. Second, the historical percentage of crop failures in more concentrated counties was somewhat lower, suggesting that, if anything, farming was less risky.

Nevertheless, one way to distinguish the explanation that potential borrowers were deliberately rationed from the explanation that potential borrowers in concentrated counties were of lower quality is to look at the default experience. If borrowers were deliberately rationed, with the lower-quality tenants being most frozen out of the market for formal credit in counties with high land concentration, we should find fewer loan defaults there relative to counties with low concentration. By contrast, if borrowers could not borrow as cheaply or as much because they were riskier, we should find that the default experience is, if anything, worse because the underlying quality of the borrower group is lower in counties with high concentration.

Unfortunately, we do not have data on county-by-county loan default experience. However, we do have data on state bank failures from the FDIC, including the value of deposits in suspended state banks. We can therefore compute the ratio of deposits in suspended state banks in the period 1931 to 1936 (which covers the bulk of bank failures during the Depression—few banks failed after 1934) to the level of deposits in 1930. The failure rate is a noisy proxy for defaults on mortgage loans, for banks could have failed for reasons other than loan losses, such as speculation on securities. Moreover, losses on loans might not translate into bank failures in a continuous way—a bank in one county may have serious losses but may just avoid failure, while a similar bank in another county may lose just a little more and fail. Unfortunately, it is the only data that we have, and, because it is noisy, we will have to take extra care to weed out outliers and influential observations.

Even though our proxy for loan losses is crude, several different estimators suggest that loans in counties with more concentrated land holdings were, if anything, less risky—the ratio of deposits of failed state banks to total deposits was lower in such counties (see the Internet Appendix). This supports the view

that credit from the formal sector in such counties was restricted to those with better underlying creditworthiness. The finding that interest rates were higher in such counties, while access to credit was lower, is thus more consistent with a supply-side constraint—access to credit was limited—than a demand-side explanation—potential borrowers were less creditworthy.

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

The evidence in this paper suggests that the nature of local constituencies had substantial influence over the course of banking development in the United States, even as recently as the early 20th century when the United States was well on its way to becoming the foremost industrial economy in the world.

Not only do we find fewer banks per capita in counties with a more concentrated distribution of farm land, we also find that interest rates were higher for land mortgage loans, while measures of the availability of credit were lower. Finally, we also find that proxies for loan losses were lower in counties that had more concentrated land holdings, suggesting that the greater riskiness of the underlying pool of borrowers cannot explain our results.

While the political economy at the county level can plausibly explain the differential access to credit, we do not have sufficient evidence to suggest that large landowners actively suppressed access to credit. It is possible that, in the counties with concentrated land holdings, large landowners had no incentive to press for financial development, while the absence of a powerful group of mid-sized farmers pushing for financial access, and the political weakness of small and tenant farmers, might have ensured that banking remained underdeveloped. Benign neglect rather than malign intent could explain many, but not all, of our findings. The lessons that one takes away for economic development depend, however, not on intent but on outcomes—intent does not change the fact that constituencies or interest groups shape economic growth.

Note that, throughout our analysis, we focus on the United States and correct for state fixed effects. It is interesting then that we find large effects, even though institutions that are commonly thought of as important for economic growth, such as broad political and legal institutions, are held relatively constant. This is not to suggest that institutions are unimportant (we have nothing to say on that), but rather that large variation in developmental outcomes may stem simply from differences in the distribution of economic wealth and power in a society (see Banerjee and Iyer (2005), Ramcharan (2010), or Rajan (2009), for recent studies). Examining the relative importance of constitutions and constituencies or, equivalently, institutions and interests, is a task for future research.

Appendix: Variables' Definitions and Data Sources

| Variable | Source | Definition |
|---|---|--|
| Land inequality (Gini coefficient) | U.S. Bureau of Census; Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Nos.: 0003, 0007, 0008, 0009, 0014, 0017 | The numbers of farms are distributed across the following size bins: 3–9, 10–19, 20–49, 50–99, 100–174, 175–259, 260–499, 500–999, and 1,000 acres and above. We use the midpoint of each bin to construct the Gini coefficient; farms above 1,000 acres are assumed to be 1,000 acres. The Gini coefficient is given by $1 + 1/n - [2/(m^*n^2)] \sum_{i=1}^n (n-i+1)y_i$, where farms are ranked in ascending order of size, y_i , and n is the total number of farms, while m is the mean farm size (Atkinson, A.B. (1970)). At the state level, we sum the total number of farms in each bin across counties, then compute the Gini coefficient. |
| Number of state and national banks active in each county | Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Data on Banks in the United States, 1920–1936 (ICPSR 07) | |
| Urban population; fraction of black population; fraction of population between 7 and 20 years; county area; county population; value of crops; farm land divided by farm population | U.S. Bureau of Census; ICPSR Nos.: 0003, 0007, 0008, 0009, 0014, 0017 | |
| Distance from Mississippi River, Atlantic, Pacific, and the Great Lakes | Computed using ArcView from each county's centroid | |

(continued)

Appendix: Continued

| Variable | Source | Definition |
|---|--|---|
| Annual mean rainfall | Weather source 10 Woodsom Drive Amesbury MA, 01913 (data compiled from the National Weather Service Cooperative (COOP) Network | The COOP network consists of more than 20,000 sites across the United States, and has monthly precipitation observations for the past 100 years. However, for a station's data to be included in the county-level data, the station needs to have a minimum of 10 years' history and a minimum data density (the ratio of number of actual observations to potential observations) of 90%. If one or more candidate stations meet the above criteria, the stations' data are averaged to produce the county-level observations. If no candidate station exists within the county, the nearest candidate up to 40 miles away in the next county is substituted. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation level of rainfall are computed from the monthly data for all years with available data. |
| Annual standard deviation growing degree days (GDD) | Amesbury MA, 01913 (data compiled from the COOP network). | Computations are similar to rainfall. GDD are derived by taking the average of the daily high and low temperature each day and subtracting the baseline temperature, which for most counties is 10°C. For example, a day with a high of 20°C and a low of 16°C would correspond to eight GDD. |
| Weighted standard deviation of elevation | Weather source Amesbury MA, 01913 (data compiled from the COOP network). | The number of square miles of each county's land area is listed from below 100, 0–100, 100–200 meters and so on; the bins increase in increments of 100 meters up to 5,000 meters. The weighted standard deviation is then computed, with the weight being the share of land area in each elevation category. |

REFERENCES

- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, 2005, Institutions as fundamental determinants of long-run growth, in Philippe Aghion and Steven N. Durlauf, eds. *Handbook of Economic Growth*, Volume 1A (North-Holland Publishing, Amsterdam).
- Ackerman, Joseph, and Marshall Harris, 1946, *Family Farm Policy* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL).
- Aghion, Philippe, and Patrick Bolton, 1997, A theory of trickle-down growth and development, *Review of Economic Studies* 64, 151–172.
- Banerjee, Abhijit, and Lakshmi Iyer, 2005, History, institutions and economic performance: The legacy of colonial land tenure systems in India, *American Economic Review* 95, 1190–1213.
- Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Andrew F. Newman, 1991, Risk-bearing and the theory of income distribution, *Review of Economic Studies* 58, 211–235.
- Bank of North Dakota, 1920, Bank Charter (Bismarck).
- Baum-Snow, Nathaniel, 2007, Did highways cause suburbanization? *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122, 775–805.
- Beck, Thorsten, Asli Demirgüç-Kunt, and Sole Martinez Peria, 2007, Reaching out: Access to and use of banking services across countries, *Journal of Financial Economics* 85, 234–266.
- Benmelech, Efraim, and Toby Moskowitz, 2007, The political economy of financial regulation: Evidence from U.S. state usury laws in the 19th century, NBER Working paper W12851.
- Binder, John J., and David T. Brown, 1991, Bank rates of return and entry restrictions, 1869–1914, *Journal of Economic History* 51, 47–66.
- Brewer, John, 1989, *The Sineews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (Routledge, New York).
- Brogan, Hugh, 2001, *The Penguin History of the United States* (Penguin Books, New York).
- Calomiris, Charles, and Carlos Ramirez, 2004, The political economy of bank entry restrictions: Theory and evidence from the U.S. in the 1920s, Working paper, Columbia University.
- Cartinhour, Gaines T., and Ray B. Westerfield, 1980, *Branch, Group, and Chain Banking* (Ayer Publishing, New York).
- Chapman, John, 1934, *Concentration of Banking: The Changing Structure and Control of Banking in the United States* (Columbia University Press, New York).
- Claessens, Stijn, and Enrico C. Perotti, 2007, Finance and inequality: Channels and evidence, Working paper, International Monetary Fund.
- Conley, Timothy G., 1999, GMM estimation with cross-sectional dependence, *Journal of Econometrics* 92, 1–45.
- Davis, Lance E., 1965, The investment market, 1870–1914: The evolution of a national market, *Journal of Economic History* 25, 355–399.
- Eichengreen, Barry, 1984, Mortgage interest rates in the populist era, *American Economic Review* 74, 995–1015.
- Engerman, Stanley, and Kenneth Sokoloff, 2002, Factor endowments, inequality, and paths of development among new world economies, *Economía* 3, 41–109.
- Engerman, Stanley, and Kenneth Sokoloff, 2003, Institutional and non-institutional explanations of economic differences, NBER Working paper 9989.
- Evanoff, Douglas, 1988, Branch banking and service accessibility, *Journal of Money Credit and Banking* 20, 191–202.
- Galor, Oded, Omer Moav, and Dietrich Vollrath, 2009, Inequality in land ownership, the emergence of human capital promoting institutions, and the Great Divergence, *Review of Economic Studies* 76, 143–179.
- Galor, Oded, and Joseph Zeira, 1993, Income distribution and macroeconomics. *Review of Economic Studies* 60, 35–52.
- Gardner, Bruce, 2002, *American Agriculture in the Twentieth Century: How It Flourished and What It Costs* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA).
- Gates, Paul, 1973, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier: Studies in American Land Policy* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY).
- Goodwyn, Lawrence, 1978, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford University Press, New York).

- Graves, James, 1940, *Agriculture: Crop Sharing Contracts* (U.S. Census, Washington, DC).
- Greenwood, Jeremy and Boyan Jovanovic, 1990, Financial development, growth, and the distribution of income, *Journal of Political Economy* 98, 1076–1107.
- Haber, Stephen, 2005a, Political institutions and financial development: Evidence from the economic histories of Mexico and the United States, Working paper, Stanford University.
- Haber, Stephen, 2005b, Mexico's experiments with bank privatization and liberalization, 1991–2003, *Journal of Banking and Finance* 29, 2325–2353.
- Haber, Stephen, and Enrico Perotti, 2007, The political economy of finance, Working paper, Stanford University.
- Haney, L., 1914, Farm credit conditions in a cotton state, *American Economic Review*, 14, 47–67.
- Heady, Early O., 1952, *Economics of Agricultural Production and Resource Use* (Prentice Hall, New York).
- Hicks, John D., 1931, *Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN).
- James, John A., 1976, Banking market structure, risk, and the pattern of local interest rates in the United States, 1893–1911, *Review of Economics and Statistics* 58, 453–462.
- Jones, Lawrence, and David Durand, 1954, *Mortgage Lending Experience in Agriculture* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ).
- Keehn, Richard, and Gene Smiley, 1977, Mortgage lending by national banks, *Business History Review* 51, 474–491.
- LaPorta, Rafael, Florenico López-de-Silanes, Andrei Shleifer, and Robert Vishny, 1998, Law and finance, *Journal of Political Economy* 106, 1113–1155.
- Levine, Ross, 2005, Law, endowments and property rights, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19, 61–88.
- Mitchener, Kris J., 2005, Bank supervision, regulation, and instability during the Great Depression, *Journal of Economic History* 65, 152–185.
- Morck, Randall, Daniel Wolfenzon, and Bernard Yeung, 2006, Corporate governance, economic entrenchment and growth, *Journal of Economic Literature* 43, 657–722.
- Myers, H. E., 1940, Soil moisture and winter wheat in Kansas, *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science (1903)* 43, 69–73.
- Newton, Lewis, and Herbert Gambrell, 1935, *A Social and Political History of Texas* (Southwest Press, Dallas, TX).
- North, Douglass, 1990, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA).
- North, Douglass, and Barry Weingast, 1989, Constitutions and commitment: The evolution of institutional governing public choice in seventeenth-century England, *Journal of Economic History* 49, 803–832.
- Pagano, Mark, and Paolo Volpin, 2005, The political economy of corporate governance, *American Economic Review* 95, 1005–1030.
- Peach, Nelson W., 1941, *The Security Affiliates of National Banks* (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, MD).
- Perotti, Enrico, and Paolo Volpin, 2007, Politics, investor protection and competition, ECGI Finance Working paper 162/2007.
- Perotti, Enrico, and Ernest L. Von Thadden, 2006, The political economy of corporate control and labor rents, *Journal of Political Economy* 114, 145–174.
- Petersen, Mitchell, and Raghuram Rajan, 1995, The effect of credit market competition on lending relationships, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 110, 407–443.
- Pred, A., 1966, *The Spatial Implication of U.S. Industrial Growth* (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA).
- Rajan, Raghuram G., 2009, Rent preservation and the persistence of underdevelopment, *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 1, 178–218.
- Rajan, Raghuram G., and Luigi Zingales, 2003a, *Saving Capitalism from the Capitalists* (Crown, New York).
- Rajan, Raghuram G., and Luigi Zingales, 2003b, The great reversals: The politics of financial development in the twentieth century, *Journal of Financial Economics* 69, 5–50.

- Ramcharan, Rodney, 2009, Why an economic core: Domestic transport costs, *Journal of Economic Geography* 9, 559–581.
- Ramcharan, Rodney, 2010, Inequality and redistribution: Evidence from U.S. counties and states, 1890–1930, *Review of Economics and Statistics* 92, 729–744.
- Ransom, Roger and Kerry Odell, 1986, Land and credit: Some historical parallels between Mexico and the American South, *Agricultural History*, 60, Special Issue on Linkages between Policy, Research, and Small Farmers Conference (Winter), 4–31.
- Ransom, Roger, and Richard Sutch, 1972, Debt peonage in the cotton South after the Civil War, *Journal of Economic History* 32, 3, 641–669.
- Ransom, Roger, and Richard Sutch, 2001, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK).
- Rappaport, Jordan, 1999, Local growth empirics, Working paper 23, Harvard University.
- Seitz, K. M., 1948, Wheat in the southeastern states, *Economic Geography* 24, 170–173.
- Sylla, Richard, 1969, Federal policy, banking market structure and capital mobilization in the United States, 1863–1913, *Journal of Economic History* 29, 675–686.
- Sylla, Richard, 1975, *The American Capital Market, 1846–1914: A Study of the Effects of Public Policy on Economic Development* (Ayer Publishing, New York).
- Sylla, Richard, 2005, The political economy of early U.S. financial development, Working paper, New York University.
- Tomich, Thomas P., Peter Kilby, and Bruce F. Johnston, 1995, *Transforming Agrarian Economies* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY).
- U.S. Census Bureau: Census of Agriculture: 1929 and 1930. Department of Commerce.
- Van Woodward, Comer, 1951, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA).
- Vickers, Raymond, 1994, Panic in paradise: Florida's banking crash of 1926, Working paper, University of Alabama.
- Vollrath, Dietrich, 2006, Geography and the determinants of land distribution: Evidence from the U.S., Working paper, University of Houston.
- Weiner, Jonathan, 1975, Planter merchant conflict in reconstruction Alabama, *Past and Present* 68, 73–94.
- White, Eugene, 1982, The political economy of banking regulation, 1864–1933, *Journal of Economic History* 42, 33–40.
- Yatchew, Adonis, 2003, *Semiparametric Regression for the Applied Econometrician* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK).