

## PETER DEFFEBACH

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## EDUCATION

PhD, Economics, Boston University, Boston, MA

Expected 2025

Dissertation title: Labor Market Churn, Development, and Quits: Evidence from Urban Ghana

Main advisor: David Lagakos

Dissertation Committee: David Lagakos, Yuhei Miyauchi, and Masao Fukui

AB, Economics, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

2017

## FIELDS OF INTEREST

Macroeconomics of Development, Urban Economics, Labor Economics

## PUBLICATIONS

Elwyn Davies, Peter Deffebach, Leonardo Iacovone, and David McKenzie. Training microentrepreneurs over zoom: Experimental evidence from Mexico. *Journal of Development Economics*, 167, 2024. URL <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2023.103244>

## WORKING PAPERS

Subsistence Wage Employment: Labor Market Dynamics in Urban Ghana (Job Market Paper)

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

Economic Development and the Spatial Distribution of Income in Cities, with David Lagakos, Yuhei Miyauchi, and Eiji Yamada

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

International Growth Centre (IGC) Small Research Grant (£20,000)

2022

Structural Change and Economic Growth (STEG) Small Research Grant (£15,000)

2023

International Growth Centre (IGC) Full Research Grant (£44,000)

2023

## REFEREEING

Journal of Development Economics

Review of Economic Dynamics

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Introduction to Mathematical and Computational Economics (Graduate), Department of Economics, Boston University

2021, 2022

## LANGUAGES

English (native), Spanish (fluent)

## COMPUTER SKILLS

Julia, R, Stata, GIS, Matlab, Python

## **CITIZENSHIP**

USA

## **REFERENCES**

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**Quits in a Low-Income Urban Labor Market: Evidence from Ghana** (Job Market Paper)

The share of workers in wage employment is low in developing countries. Recent research argues high exit rates out of wage employment, rather than low entry rates, drive low levels of wage work overall. To shed light on the causes of elevated exit rates in low-income labor markets, I conduct a panel survey of job-seekers and a complementary survey of firms in Accra, Ghana. I document three new facts. First, exits are dominated by quits in Ghana while layoffs play a negligible role, in strong contrast to the USA where layoffs dominate and quits are infrequent. Second, workers in Ghana experience income gains after quits, also in strong contrast with the USA, where workers experience substantial income losses following quits. Third, I show quits are most common among job-seekers experiencing a temporary loss in non-wage income at baseline, but by endline have re-gained access to a source of income flows. To quantify the contribution of changing non-wage income in driving exit out of the wage sector, I build a general equilibrium model of job search in which workers face uncertain non-wage income. In the model, workers accept low-quality jobs when non-wage income is low, and quit them when non-wage income improves. When calibrated to match the experience of jobseekers in both the USA and Ghana, my model attributes 25% of the difference in exit rates to differences in the volatility of non-labor income. I conclude in Ghana, wage work is used to cope with risk in the non-wage sector.

**Economic Development and the Spatial Distribution of Income in Cities** with David Lagakos, Yuhei Miyauchi, Eiji Yamada

We draw on new granular data from cities around the world to study how the spatial distribution of income within cities varies with development. We document that in less-developed countries, average incomes of urban residents decline monotonically in distance to the city center, whereas income-distance gradients are flat or increasing in developed economies. We also show that urban neighborhoods with natural amenities – in hills and near rivers – are poorer than average in less-developed countries and richer than average in developed ones. We hypothesize that these patterns arise due to the differences in the provision of residential and transportation infrastructure within cities. Using a quantitative urban model, we show that observed differences in residential and transportation infrastructure help explain a significant fraction of how the spatial income distribution within cities varies with income per capita.