

# Zachary Barnett-Howell

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## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2018 | **Yale University MacMillan Center**  
Postdoctoral associate in Economics and Political Science  
Appointments at the [Yale Research Initiative on Innovation & Scale](#) and the South Asian Studies department

## EDUCATION

- 2018 | **Ph.D. in Applied Economics and Political Science, University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
Subfields: Development Economics, International Relations, Quantitative Methods
- 2009 | **M.A. in History, Bogazici University**
- 2007 | **B.A., University of Washington**  
Majors: Political Science (Honors) and International Studies

## JOB MARKET PAPER

“No Small Potatoes: Agricultural Risk and Investment under Uncertainty”

A primary reason for poor agricultural yields in low-income countries is that farmers underinvest in their crops. Farmers face numerous sources of agricultural risk, and minimize their exposure by reducing their use of inputs, which also lowers their average productivity. I conduct a randomized control trial in Bangladesh to determine whether an alert system that enables farmers to take precautionary measures against crop disease would reduce risk and improve investment in inputs. The intervention works, reducing losses and increasing investment, but only among farmers who verify that they are receiving accurate alerts. These results demonstrate that interventions which allow people to learn about their efficacy are the ones most likely to be effective.

## PUBLICATIONS

“The Benefits and Costs of Social Distancing in Rich and Poor Countries” (with OJ Watson and A. Mushfiq Mobarak) accepted at the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*

Covered in international newspapers including *El Pais*, *Hindustan Times*, *Daily Star*

“Social Networks Analysis in Agricultural Economies.” (with A. Mushfiq Mobarak) forthcoming in *The Oxford Handbook of Agricultural Economics, volume 5*, eds. Chris Barrett and David Just.

## WORKING PAPERS

- “Labor Shocks and Migration in Southern Mali.” (with Jeremy Foltz) *under review*
- “Should I Stay or Should I Go: Microeconomic Determinants of Migration.”  
Featured in the [World Bank Development Impact blog](#)
- “Seasonal shocks and their effects on consumption.” (with Kelsey Jack and A. Mushfiq Mobarak)
- “Policy Determinants of International Migration.”
- “Power Plant Closures and Neighborhood Well-Being.” (with Rachel Frattarola and Cristian Hernandez)

## IN PROGRESS

- “Tracking the spread of COVID-19 in Bangladesh using Symptomatic Data.” (with Caroline Buckee, Steve Luby, Ayesha Mahmud, A. Mushfiq Mobarak) [data collection started]
- “The limitations of technical solutions: water storage, education, and time use.” (with A. Mushfiq Mobarak) [data collection complete]
- “Inducing technology adoption in post-earthquake Nepal.” (with Norihiko Matsuda and Naoki Nishimura) [data collection complete]
- “Responses to insecurity and unexpected shocks.” (with Elaine Denny and Libby Jenke) [laboratory game complete]
- “Approximate Bandit Computation: Using Contextual Bandits to Estimate Recreation Choice.”

## MEDIA WRITING

- 2020 | “[The value of social distancing is not equally distributed.](#)” in VoxEU CEPR
- “[Poor Countries Need to Think Twice About Social Distancing.](#)” in *Foreign Policy*

## TEACHING

- 2018-2021 | *Yale University*:
  - Development Economics ECON 325: Fall and Spring 2018-2019, Spring 2020
  - Development Economics ECON 452: Fall 2020
  - Political Economy of Migration ECON 483: Fall 2019, Spring 2021
  - Senior thesis advisor: Eric Youshao, Elizabeth Dolan, Onyx Brunner

## FIELD RESEARCH

- 2017 | Ethiopia: Addis Ababa, Debre Markos, Bahir Dar (with NSF INFEWS research team)

## F E L L O W S H I P S   A N D   G R A N T S

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| 2020      | Weiss Family Foundation: Monitoring COVID-19 through Pharmacies in Bangladesh, \$75,000  |
| 2017      | BRITE Lab Grant: Debating immigration policy, \$2,500<br>Political Science Summer Initiative Funding, \$2,000<br>Wisconsin Project on International Relations Grant, \$1,000<br>BRITE Lab Grant: optimal stopping time decisions under uncertainty, \$2,000<br>SRGC Travel Research Award: working at RIKEN AIP, \$2,000 |
| 2013–2015 | Academic Year Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship: Kazakh, \$15,000/yr  |
| 2013      | Summer Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship: Kazakh, \$5,000   |

## S E L E C T E D   P R E S E N T A T I O N S

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| 2020 | AAEA: What Matters in Agricultural Economics? (invited) Zoom Conference.   |
| 2019 | Y-RISE Annual Conference. Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.<br>South Asian Studies Council Colloquium at Yale University (invited). New Haven, CT.<br>Student Conference on U.S. Affairs at West Point (invited chair). West Point, NY.<br>Florida International University (invited). Miami, FL.<br>Japanese Development Economics Conference. Tokyo, Japan.<br>MidWest International Economic Development Conference. Madison, WI.<br>Pacific Conference for Development Economics. Los Angeles, CA. |
| 2018 | Stanford Eleventh International Conference on Migration and Development. Palo Alto, CA.<br>Harvard Experimental Political Science Graduate Conference. Cambridge, MA.<br>Oxford Centre for the Study of African Economies Conference. Oxford, UK.  |
| 2017 | Annual Meeting of the Society for Political Methodology. Madison, WI.<br>Population Association of American Annual Conference. Chicago, IL.  |
| 2016 | Agricultural & Applied Economics Association Annual Conference. Boston, MA.  |

## P R O F E S S I O N A L   S E R V I C E

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| 2019 | <i>Organizer.</i> Yale Political and Economic Development Conference |
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## S K I L L S

*Languages:* Turkish, Kazakh, English (native)

*Computing:* R, Python, Stata

## REFERENCES

Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak  
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