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Citizenship: Australian, F-1 Visa

Fields of Concentration:

Primary: Development Economics
Secondary: Economic History

Comprehensive Examinations Completed:

2020 (Oral): Development Economics, International Trade
2019 (Written): Microeconomics, Macroeconomics

Dissertation Title: *Migration, Networks, and Religious Choice*

Committee:

Professor Mushfiq Mobarak (Chair)
Professor Mark Rosenzweig
Professor Jose-Antonio Espin-Sanchez
Professor Benjamin Polak

Education:

Ph.D., Economics, Yale University, 2025 (expected)
M.Phil., Economics, Yale University, 2020
M.A., Economics, Yale University, 2019
M.Phil., Economics, University of Adelaide, 2018
B.A., Mathematical Sciences, University of Adelaide, 2018
B.A., Economics (Honors), University of Adelaide, 2017

Fellowships, Honors and Awards:

Raymond Powell Teaching Prize, Yale University 2023
MacMillan International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Yale University 2022
Evenson Fund Travel Research Award, Yale University 2021
University Research Medal, Dean's Commendation for Master's Research, University of Adelaide 2018
Research Training Program Scholarship for Master's Research, University of Adelaide 2017-2018

University Medal, University of Adelaide 2016

The John Lorenzo Young Prize for Best Honour's Thesis, University of Adelaide 2016

The School of Economics Prize for Best Honour's Achievement, University of Adelaide 2016

Teaching Experience:

Yale University

Head Teaching Assistant to Prof. Benjamin Polak, Introduction to Game Theory (UG), Spring 2021, Fall 2021-2023

Head Teaching Assistant to Prof. Benjamin Polak, Applications of Game Theory (UG), Spring 2022, 2023

Teaching Assistant to Prof. Ilse Lindenlaub, Intermediate Macroeconomics (UG), Spring 2023

Teaching Assistant to Visiting Prof. Maggie Jones, American Economic History (UG), Spring 2022

Teaching Assistant to Prof. Steven Berry and Prof. Benjamin Polak, Introductory Microeconomics (UG), Fall 2020

University of Adelaide, Teaching Assistant, 2016-2018

Business and Economic Statistics (UG)

Introduction to Mathematical Economics (UG, Advanced)

Principles of Economics (UG)

Economics Honour's Math Preparation Course (UG, Honours)

Working Papers

“Migration, Risk Sharing Networks and Religious Choice” [Job Market Paper]

“Identifying marginal returns to treatment through social networks” with Firmin Doko-Tchatoka, Virginie Masson (2019).

Work in Progress

“Rural-urban migration, household decisions, and structural transformation” with Alvaro Cox, Matthew Schwartzman, Tomas Budi-Ors.

“Competition and Selection in Religious Networks”.

Dissertation Abstract**“Migration, Networks and Religious Choice” [Job Market Paper]**

Over the last half century, affiliation to Pentecostal denominations has grown rapidly, with most of this growth concentrated in developing countries. This paper investigates one economic factor influencing this growth - religious institutions, especially Pentecostal churches, attract members by serving as hosts for economic and social networks. These services are especially valuable to new migrants, so that increases in rural-urban migration induces a corresponding rise in Pentecostal affiliation. At the same time, migration can induce conversion in origin households. Out-migration breaks down village networks so that households turn to religious institutions to substitute for the loss of network services.

I start by estimating the effect of migration on religious affiliation. I construct a panel of migration status and religious affiliation using the ISSER-Northwestern-Yale Long Term Ghana Socioeconomic Panel Survey (GSPS), including a new wave four unit on religion. To address endogeneity concerns, I instrument for migration using a set of shift-share instruments, exploiting variation in prices that affect large destination industries. The instruments measure individual level exposure to shocks in the manufacturing and construction industries, as large urban employers of migrants, and in the gold mining industry, a large rural employer. Using these instruments, I find that rural-urban migration increases affiliation to Pentecostalism.

To investigate the mechanism, I combine results from the GSPS with information from a survey of Pentecostal churches I conducted in Accra. I present evidence that migrants convert for network benefits: Pentecostal churches disproportionately offer network services in the form of monetary and in-kind transfers, and conversion is concentrated among individuals who migrate without existing network connections at the destination.

Repeating the instrument exercise, I find that migration also increases conversion for sending households at the origin. On net, households become less Catholic and more Protestant. Supporting the story that religious institutions act as substitutes for village networks, out-migration leads to lower levels of trust and lower levels of engagement with the village network. Protestant churches, along with Pentecostal churches, provide more transfers than competitor institutions.

Put together, this evidence suggests that the process of development creates demand for new semi-formal network institutions; open in membership, self-financed, and with centralized decision makers. Religious institutions stand to gain from urban migration, growing in size and importance in the absence of alternative sources of social insurance.

References:

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