

ARIEL AKERMAN

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2025
Dissertation Title: *Essays on the Macroeconomics of Development*
Dissertation Committee: David Lagakos, Martin Fiszbein, and Robert Margo
- M.S., Economics, São Paulo School of Economics – Getulio Vargas Foundation, São Paulo, Brazil, April 2019
Dissertation Title: *US Geopolitical Goals and IMF Conditionality*
Advisors: Leonardo Weller and João Paulo Pessoa
- B.S., Economics, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, 2016
Monograph: *The Conference of Inflation and Development of 1963*
Honorable mention prize, School of Economics, Business and Accounting of the University of São Paulo
Advisor: Ana Maria Bianchi

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Macroeconomics, Development Economics, Economic History

PUBLICATIONS

- “The West’s Teeth: IMF Conditionality During the Cold War,” (joint with Leonardo Weller and João Paulo Pessoa) *The World Economy*, (2022) 45:2034-2051

WORKING PAPERS

- “Deforestation and the Demographic Transition: Lessons from Brazil,” September 2024. Job Market paper
- “The Effects of Zoning Reform on Formal and Informal Housing,” (with Zhongyi Tang), May 2024

WORK IN PROGRESS

- “Agricultural Research and the Development of the Brazilian Agriculture” (joint with Jacob Moscona, Heitor Pellegrina, Karthik Sastry, and Aidan Toner-Rodgers)
- “Mapping Population in Colonial America” (joint with Martin Fiszbein)
- “Guns, Rails, and Letters: Territorial Expansion and Nation Building in the U. S.” (joint with Sam Bazzi, Chelsea Carter, Martin Fiszbein, and Mesay Gebresilasse)
- “The Green Revolution Impacts on Brazilian Agriculture: Structural Transformation and Development”
- “Mining Income and Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa” (joint with Enrico di Gregorio and Myrto Oikonomou)

PRESENTATIONS

- Northeast Universities Development Consortium, Boston, November 2024 (expected)
- Green Line Macro Meeting, Boston University, October 2024 (expected)
- 6th Brazilian Economic History Workshop, São Paulo, Brazil, August 2019

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Outstanding Teaching Fellow, Department of Economics, Boston University, 2020-2021
Master's scholarship, São Paulo School of Economics – Getulio Vargas Foundation, 2017-2019
Master's scholarship, Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível, 2017-2019
Scientific Initiation, Research Support Foundation of São Paulo, Brazil, 2015-2016

WORK EXPERIENCE

Intern, International Monetary Fund, Washington DC (Summer 2024)
Under the supervision of Myrto Oikonomou, Africa Department
Research Assistant, Boston University, Boston, MA
To Martin Fiszbein (2022-2024, Summer 2021) and David Lagakos (2021-2022)
Research Assistant, Getulio Vargas Foundation, São Paulo, Brazil
To João Paulo Pessoa (2019), Leonardo Weller and Ali Coskun Tuncer (2017-2019), Daniel da Mata (2018-2019), and Tiago Cavalcanti (2018)

REFeree EXPERIENCE

Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Development Economics, Estudos Econômicos

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Fellow, International Economics, Boston University, Fall 2023 and Fall 2024
Teaching Fellow, Intermediate Macroeconomics, Boston University, Fall 2023 and Fall 2024
Teacher, Brazilian Economy, Preparatory Course Cursinho Simples, Brazil, 2022-2024
Teaching Fellow, Introduction to Microeconomics, Boston University, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021
Teaching Assistant, Brazil's Economic Formation, São Paulo School of Economics, 2018
Teaching Assistant, Brazil's Institutions, São Paulo School of Economics, 2018
Teaching Assistant, Econometrics, São Paulo School of Economics, 2018
Teaching Assistant, Master's Macroeconomics, São Paulo School of Economics, 2018

LANGUAGES

Portuguese (native), English (fluent), French (fluent), Spanish (intermediate)

COMPUTER SKILLS: R, Matlab, GIS, Stata

CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS: Citizen of Brazil and Poland

REFERENCES

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Professor Robert Margo
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Deforestation and the Demographic Transition: Lessons from Brazil (Job Market Paper)

The premise of this paper is that the population slowdown in Brazil was a major factor preventing the deepening of deforestation in the Amazon. I construct a novel dataset covering deforestation, population, and agricultural outcomes in every municipality in Brazil over the last 60 years. I then use an instrumental variable strategy to estimate that a birth rate decline of five children per thousand leads to around 10 percent less deforestation after twenty years. Using these and other findings, I estimate a dynamic spatial general equilibrium model with agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, population growth, and deforestation. The model predicts that if Brazil's population growth slowdown had started two decades later, around 13 percent more of the Amazon would be deforested today.

The Effects of Zoning Reform on Formal and Informal Housing (With Zhongyi Tang)

More than 1 billion people worldwide inhabit slums or informal settlements, characterized by inadequate access to public infrastructure. Although slums offer affordable housing options near employment opportunities, their residents often face the risk of displacement due to urban development initiatives and land use policy changes. This paper examines the impacts of a zoning reform in São Paulo, Brazil, on formal and informal housing. To evaluate these impacts, we compile an extensive dataset covering the years 1996-2016, tracking slum evolution, zoning changes, public housing constructions, detailed formal housing records from property tax, and socioeconomic variables at the neighborhood level. Our identification strategy combines propensity score matching and difference-in-differences design. We find that the reform led to an increase in formal housing supply, a decrease in slum prevalence, and an uptick in public housing development. Neighborhoods affected by the reform show some evidence of higher income and education attainment, indicating gentrification.