

THOMAS PEARSON

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2022 (expected)
Dissertation Title: *Essays on Migration and Immigration Policy*
Main advisor: Samuel Bazzi

M.A., Political Economy, Boston University, Boston, MA, 2019

B.S., Mathematics (*Highest Distinction*), Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, 2013

B.A., Economics (*Highest Distinction*), Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, 2013

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor Economics, Development Economics

WORKING PAPERS

[“U.S. Immigration Enforcement and Mexican Labor Markets”](#) September 2021. Job Market paper.

[“Immigration Policy and Crime Reporting: Evidence from Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals”](#) May 2021.

[“The Other Great Migration: White Southern Migrants and Right-wing Politics in the U.S.”](#) (joint with Samuel Bazzi, Andreas Ferrara, Martin Fiszbein, and Patrick Testa) September 2021.

[“How Useful is CPI Price Data for Spatial Price Adjustment in Poverty Measurement? A Case from Africa”](#) (joint with Xiaomeng Chen, Rose Mungai, Shohei Nakamura, Ayago Esmubancha Wambile, and Nobu Yoshida) June 2021.

WORK IN PROGRESS

[“Migration and the Geography of Racism in the United States”](#) (joint with Samuel Bazzi, Andreas Ferrara, Martin Fiszbein, and Patrick Testa)

PRESENTATIONS

Development Reading Group, Boston University, September 2021

Young Economists Symposium, August 2021

IZA Annual Migration Meeting, May 2021

Development and Political Economics SF Bay Area PhD Student Conference (DEVPEC), April 2021

Western Economic Association International Virtual Conference, March 2021

Urban Economics Association, October 2019

Migration and Mobility Workshop, University of Glasgow, June 2019

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Early Stage Urban Research Award, Boston University Initiative on Cities, 2021
Trustee Grant, Russell Sage Foundation, 2021
Rosenstein-Rodan Prize for the Best Graduate Student Paper on Development Economics, Boston University, 2021
Abdala Fieldwork Grant, Institute of Economic Development, Boston University, 2020
Teaching Fellow of the Year, Economics Department, Boston University, 2019
Graduate Student Fellowship, Boston University, 2016-2021
Phi Beta Kappa, Indiana University, 2013

WORK EXPERIENCE

Boston University Department of Economics, Boston, MA
Research Assistant to Samuel Bazzi and Martin Fiszbein, AY 2021-2022
Research Assistant to James Feigenbaum, Spring 2020
Boston University Wheelock School of Education, Boston, MA
Research Assistant to Marcus Winters, Fall 2019
World Bank Group, Washington DC
Short-term Consultant, Poverty and Equity, February-November 2019
Peace Corps Nicaragua, Matagalpa, Nicaragua
Educator, 2014-2016
Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indianapolis, IN
Research Associate, 2013-2014

REFEREE EXPERIENCE

Journal of Development Studies

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Intermediate Microeconomics, Department of Economics, Boston University, Summer 2019 and 2020
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Microeconomic Analysis, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2017, Fall 2018, Spring 2019
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Macroeconomic Analysis, Department of Economics, Boston University, Spring 2018

LANGUAGES

English (native), Spanish (fluent)

COMPUTER SKILLS: STATA, LaTeX, R

CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS: USA

REFERENCES

Associate Professor Samuel Bazzi
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University of California,
San Diego
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Department of Economics
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THOMAS PEARSON

U.S. Immigration Enforcement and Mexican Labor Markets (Job Market Paper)

Decades of emigration to the United States have brought economic benefits to migrant- sending regions across Mexico while at the same time increasing their exposure to shocks across the border. In this paper, I study how increased U.S. deportations affect Mexican labor markets using Secure Communities (SC), a policy which expanded local immigration enforcement. I show that in the short run, exposure to SC deportations increases return migration and decreases monthly earnings for individuals with less than a high school degree. SC deportations also increase net outflows within Mexico and emigration to the U.S., a potential mechanism for why earnings mostly rebound after five years. The negative short run effects are not driven by falls in remittance income or increases in crime as SC deportations increase both the share of households receiving remittances and the total amount received and they do not affect homicide rates. The results instead point to increased labor market competition as a result of return migration. Lastly, I show that the negative short run effects of this labor supply shock are larger in localities with less integrated factor markets and worse access to the financial sector. These results motivate taking into account the destination's level of development when studying the labor market effects of migration flows.

Immigration Policy, Crime Reporting, and Victimization: Evidence from Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

This paper studies how immigration status affects crime reporting and victimization. I focus on the effects of eligibility for Deferred Action for Early Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a policy that temporarily protects youth from deportation and provides work authorization. I use a difference-in-differences design and compare likely undocumented immigrants around the policy's age eligibility cut-off over time. For victims of crimes, I find that being eligible for DACA increased their likelihood of reporting the crime to the police by 47.4 percentage points (p.p.). I also find that DACA eligibility decreased the victimization rate by 3.7 p.p., driven mostly by a decrease in the incidence of property crimes. This evidence indicates that increased reporting propensities deter victimization.

Migration and the Geography of Racism

This project sheds new light on the origins of racist institutions and ideologies across the U.S. We investigate how white migration from the postbellum Confederacy changed the trajectory of racial norms elsewhere in the country at a time of westward expansion and frontier settlement. With the upheaval after the Civil War came significant pressure-both economic and cultural-on many white Southerners to seek out new lives elsewhere. For many, the westward-moving frontier provided unique opportunities. Through a novel combination of historical data, we connect these migrants' experiences with slaveholding and Confederate army service to the short- and long-run prevalence of racism outside the South. We provide a unique look at the role of migrants in the early days of law enforcement and criminal justice. Our study provides some of the first evidence of how migration shaped the diffusion of racist norms and practices at a critical juncture of American history.