

PLINIO DIAS BICALHO

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2026 (expected)

Dissertation Title: *Essays on tax competition and minority governments*

Main advisor: David Lagakos

Dissertation Committee: David Lagakos, Benjamin Marx, Natalia Ramondo

B.S., Applied Mathematics (*Cum Laude*), University of California, San Diego, CA, 2020

B.A., Economics (*Cum Laude*), University of California, San Diego, CA, 2020

FIELDS OF INTEREST

International Trade, Public Finance, Political Economy, Macroeconomics

WORKING PAPERS

[“Quantifying the Macroeconomic Effects of Tax Competition,”](#) September 2025. Job Market paper.

[“The Costs of Running a Minority Government,”](#) September 2025.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Divided Governments” (with Benjamin Marx, Vincent Pons, and Vincet Rollet)

“Mercosur, Special Economic Zones, and Trade Policy” (with Juan Ignacio Jacoubian)

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

[Rosenstein-Rodan Prize](#), Boston University, Fall 2025

Best Second Year Paper Award, Boston University, Fall 2022

[Seymour Harris Award](#), UCSD, Spring 2020

Highest distinction in economics, UCSD, Spring 2020

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research assistant, Prof. Tarek Hassan, Boston University, 2021-2022

Research assistant, Prof. Sam Bazzi, Boston University, 2021

Research assistant, Prof. Claudio Labanca, Monash University, 2018-2020

Research assistant, Prof. Alejandro Nakab, UCSD, 2019

Research assistant, Prof. Marc Muendler, UCSD, 2018

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Econometric Analysis, Department of Economics, Boston University, Spring 2024

Teaching Fellow, Principles of Macroeconomics, Department of Economics, Boston

University, Summer 2022, Summer 2023, Summer 2024

Teaching Fellow, Intermediate Macroeconomics I, Department of Economics, Boston

University, Fall 2024

Teaching Fellow, Intermediate Econometrics I, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2022, Spring 2023

LANGUAGES

Fluent in English, Portuguese, and Spanish

COMPUTER SKILLS: Python, R, STATA, MATLAB, LaTeX

CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS: Brazil/F1

REFERENCES

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PLINIO DIAS BICALHO

Quantifying the Macroeconomic Effects of Tax Competition (Job Market Paper)

Social welfare and economic development can be undermined by a heterogeneous corporate tax system. This paper studies the role of tax competition among state governments in reducing overall public goods provision. To this end, I develop a multi-region general equilibrium model with endogenous state taxes, public expenditures, and firm location choices. The model is estimated using novel state-level data on sector-specific tax exemptions in Brazil. Under my most conservative estimates, tax competition reduces public goods provision by 18 percent relative to a centralized tax regime. While some Brazilian states succeed in raising their private income levels during the fiscal war, I find no aggregate gains in income as a result of tax competition.

The Costs of Buying a Majority Government

Executive branch representatives must garner support from elected legislative officials to govern. Building a legislative majority is an important step in most executive mandates, but the process may impose significant costs on society. Using a regression discontinuity design, I show that Brazilian municipalities where mayors hold relatively few seats in the municipal chamber hire substantially more non-tenured civil servants. RD estimates indicate that nontenured civil servants are minority-mayors hire (53.7 percent), spend (70.7 percent), and rely more on non-tenured civil servants as a labor supply source (40.9 percent). This increase in hiring is not limited to top government posts but extends to positions filled by both skilled and unskilled workers. Teacher and school principal surveys show that these additional hires are often inexperienced and perform worse on indicators of job quality. Heterogeneous causal estimates further show that the effects on bureaucratic turnover decline monotonically with the number of seats held by the winning mayor in the municipal chamber.