

BENJAMIN A. OLKEN

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Date of Birth: April 1975

Education

2004 Ph.D., Economics, Harvard University
1997 B.A. *summa cum laude*, Ethics, Politics, and Economics; Mathematics,
Yale University

Employment

2008 – present Associate Professor of Economics (with tenure),
Department of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2010 – 2011 Visiting Associate Professor of Economics, University of Chicago Booth School
2005 – 2008 Junior Fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows
2004 – 2005 Health and Aging Post-Doctoral Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research
2001 – 2008 Consultant, The World Bank, Jakarta Office
1998 – 1999 Business Analyst, McKinsey and Company, New York
1997 – 1998 Luce Scholar in Economic Policy, The Castle Group, Jakarta

Other Affiliations

2010 – present Co-Chair of Governance Initiative and Member of Board of Directors Executive
Committee, Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)
2010 – present Fellow, Bureau for Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD)
2009 – present Research Associate, National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)
2006 – present Research Affiliate, Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)
2005 – 2010 Member, Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)
2006 – 2010 Affiliate, Bureau for Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD)
2005 – 2009 Faculty Research Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)
2005 – 2008 Visiting Scholar, MIT Department of Economics and Poverty Action Lab

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships

2005 – 2008 Junior Fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows
2005 Review of Economic Studies Tour (declined)
2004 – 2005 Health and Aging Post-Doctoral Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research
2003 – 2004 Justice, Welfare, and Economics Fellowship, Harvard University
2001 – 2002 Social Science Research Council Fellowship in Applied Economics
1998 – 2003 National Science Foundation Graduate Student Fellowship
1997 – 1998 Henry Luce Scholar

Publications

“Targeting the Poor: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia”
(with Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, and Julia Tobias).
American Economic Review, forthcoming 2011.

“Informal Taxation”
(with Monica Singhal) American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, forthcoming 2011.

“Climate Shocks and Exports”
(with Benjamin F. Jones) American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings 100 (2), pp. 454-
459, May 2010.

“Do TV and Radio Destroy Social Capital? Evidence from Indonesian Villages”
American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 1 (4), pp. 1-35, October 2009.

“Corruption Perceptions vs. Corruption Reality”
Journal of Public Economics 93 (7), pp. 950-964, August 2009.

“Hit or Miss? The Effect of Assassinations on Institutional Change and War”
(with Benjamin F. Jones) American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics 1 (2), pp. 55-87,
July 2009.

“The Simple Economics of Extortion: Evidence from Trucking in Aceh”
(with Patrick Barron) Journal of Political Economy 117 (3), pp. 417-452, June 2009.

“Temperature and Income: Reconciling New Cross-Sectional and Panel Estimates”
(with Melissa Dell and Benjamin F. Jones) American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings 99
(2), pp. , 198-204, May 2009.

“A Biological Model of Unions”
(with Michael Kremer) American Economic Journal – Applied Economics 1 (2), pp. 150-175,
April 2009.

“The Anatomy of Start-Stop Growth”
(with Benjamin F. Jones) Review of Economics and Statistics, August 2008.

“Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia”
Journal of Political Economy 115 (2), pp. 200-249, April 2007.

“Corruption and the Costs of Redistribution: Micro Evidence from Indonesia”
Journal of Public Economics 90 (4-5), pp. 853-870, May 2006.

“Do Leaders Matter? National Leadership and Growth since World War II”
(with Benjamin F. Jones) Quarterly Journal of Economics 120 (3), pp. 835-864, August 2005.

“Revealed Community Equivalence Scales”
Journal of Public Economics 89 (2-3), pp. 545-566, February 2005.

Working Papers

“Should Aid Reward Performance? Evidence from a field experiment on health and education in Indonesia”
(with Junko Onishi and Susan Wong). May 2011.

“The Political Economy of Deforestation in the Tropics”
(with Robin Burgess, Matthew Hansen, and Stefanie Sieber). January 2011.

“Temperature Shocks and Economic Growth: Evidence from the Last Half Century”
(with Melissa Dell and Benjamin F. Jones) November 2008. NBER Working Paper 14132.
Revise and resubmit requested, American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics.

Research in Progress

“Wages and Incentives for Tax Inspectors: Evidence from a field experiment in Pakistan”
(with Asim Khwaja and Adnan Kahn)

“Self-targeting: Evidence from a field experiment in Indonesia”
(with Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, and Rema Hanna)

“Identifying the Poor: Social Networks and the Aggregation of Information”
(with Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, Arun G. Chandrasekhar, and Rema Hanna)

“E-Procurement: Evidence from Construction Projects in India and Indonesia ”
(with Abhijit Banerjee and Rohini Pande).

Research Support

2010-2015	“Incentivized Community Block Grants for Health and Education in Indonesia” NIHCD P01 Grant
2011	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

- 2010 – 2012 “Self-targeting: Evidence from a field experiment in Indonesia”
Co-PI with Abhijit Banerjee and Rema Hanna
International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
“Property Tax Experiment in Punjab, Pakistan”
- 2010 – 2012 Co-PI with Adnan Khan and Asim Khwaja
International Growth Centre
“Property Tax Experiment in Punjab, Pakistan”
- 2009 – 2010 Co-PI with Adnan Khan and Asim Khwaja
International Growth Centre
“E-Procurement: Evidence from India and Indonesia”
- 2008 – 2009 Co-PI with Rohini Pande
World Bank Office Jakarta / Royal Netherlands Embassy Trust Funds
“Community-Based Targeting”
- 2007 – 2008 Co-PI with Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, and Rema Hanna
NIH/NICHHD R03 Grant
“Health Policies and Infant Mortality In Indonesia”
- 2007 – 2008 co-PI with Amy Finkelstein
Harvard Asia Center Grant
“Informal Taxation”
- 2006 – 2007 co-PI with Monica Singhal
Harvard Milton Fund
“Economic Growth and Infant Mortality in Indonesia”
- 2005 – 2006 World Bank Office Jakarta / DSF / Royal Netherlands Embassy Trust Fund
“The Simple Economics of Extortion: Evidence from Trucking in Aceh”
- 2005 – 2006 Co-PI with Patrick Barron
World Bank Office Jakarta / DSF Trust Fund
Political Institutions and Local Public Goods”
- 2003 – 2005 World Bank Office Jakarta / DFID Strategic Poverty Trust Fund
“Monitoring Corruption”

Other Professional Activities

Associate Editor, *Journal of Development Economics*