

# PETER DEFFEBACH

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## EDUCATION

PhD, Economics, Boston University, Boston, MA Expected 2025  
Dissertation title: Labor Market Churn, Development, and Quits: Evidence from Urban Ghana  
Main advisor: David Lagakos  
Dissertation Committee: David Lagakos, Yuhei Miyuchi, and Masao Fukui  
AB, Economics, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 2017

## FIELDS OF INTEREST

Macroeconomics of Development, Urban Economics, Labor Economics

## PUBLICATIONS

Elwyn Davies, Peter Deffebach, Leonardo Iacovone, and David McKenzie. Training microentrepreneurs over zoom: Experimental evidence from Mexico. *Journal of Development Economics*, 167, 2024. URL <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2023.103244>

## WORKING PAPERS

### WORKS IN PROGRESS

Quits in a Low-Income Urban Labor Market: Evidence from Ghana (Job Market Paper)  
Economic Development and the Spatial Distribution of Income in Cities, with David Lagakos, Yuhei Miyuchi, and Eiji Yamada

## PRESENTATIONS

### FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

International Growth Centre (IGC) Small Research Grant (£20,000) 2022  
Structural Change and Economic Growth (STEG) Small Research Grant (£15,000) 2023  
International Growth Centre (IGC) Full Research Grant (£44,000) 2023

## REFEREEING

Journal of Development Economics  
Review of Economic Dynamics

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Introduction to Mathematical and Computational Economics (Graduate),  
Department of Economics, Boston University 2021, 2022

## LANGUAGES

English (native), Spanish (fluent)

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

Julia, R, Stata, GIS, Matlab, Python

**CITIZENSHIP**

USA

**REFERENCES**

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**Quits in a Low-Income Urban Labor Market: Evidence from Ghana** (Job Market Paper)

Why are rates of wage employment so low in poor countries? I conduct a panel survey of job-seekers and a survey of firms in urban Ghana to explore labor market dynamics in depth. I document entry rates into employment are equal between the US and Ghana, but high exit rates mean Ghanaian job-seekers are only half as successful at finding wage work in the long run. In Ghana, I find exits are dominated by quits, while layoffs play a negligible role, in strong contrast with the USA, where layoffs dominate, and quits are infrequent. I examine, and reject, informational frictions as a key driver of high quit rates and show self-employment at most a moderate role. I show quits are most common among individuals who at Baseline are temporarily without flows of non-wage income. To quantify the contribution of changing non-wage income in driving quitting behavior, I build model of job search in which workers face uncertain non-wage income and accept and quit jobs to cope with temporary losses in income. I conclude 20 percent of the difference in exit rates between the USA and Ghana can be attributed to this mechanism.

**Economic Development and the Spatial Distribution of Income in Cities** with David Lagos, Yuhei Miyauchi, Eiji Yamada

We draw on new granular data from cities around the world to study how the spatial distribution of income within cities varies with development. We document that in less-developed countries, average incomes of urban residents decline monotonically in distance to the city center, whereas income-distance gradients are flat or increasing in developed economies. We also show that urban neighborhoods with natural amenities – in hills and near rivers – are poorer than average in less-developed countries and richer than average in developed ones. We hypothesize that these patterns arise due to the differences in the provision of residential and transportation infrastructure within cities. Using a quantitative urban model, we show that observed differences in residential and transportation infrastructure help explain a significant fraction of how the spatial income distribution within cities varies with income per capita.