

Overview: I work on questions in political economy, economic development, and international economics, with an emphasis on economic history. My research has been concerned with a diverse set of topics including Native American and indigenous economic development, 19th century U.S. history, legacies of colonialism and slavery, criminal justice, public-sector pensions, and voter polarization.

Native American and Indigenous Economic Development: In “Forced Coexistence and Economic Development” (Dippel 2014, *Econometrica*), I investigate how Native American bands were shoe-horned into shared reservations in the second half of the 19th century. I geocode ancestral maps of tribal territories and overlay them with maps of historical mining rushes to create exogenous variation in how reservations were formed. This variation is interacted with measures of tribes’ ancestral cultural norms of shared governance. Reservations that were formed out of bands that had no ancestral norms of shared governance are characterized by “forced coexistence,” which is found to still significantly affect reservation-level incomes today. In fact, this effect has gotten stronger since the federal government granted more local autonomy to reservations in recent decades. In “Property Rights without Transfer Rights: A Study of Indian Land Allotment” (Dippel, Frye, Leonard, 2020, *under review*), we geo-coded the entirety of Indian land allotments, made by the federal government to Native American households between 1887–1934. We track land use on these allotments today and compare parcels on which Native American land owners were given full unconstrained property rights to neighboring “trust-parcels” on which the federal government restricted owners’ rights to alienate their land. We postulate that land that cannot be alienated also cannot be collateralized with a bank, and estimate the economic cost of this paternalistic limitation on Native American land owners’ property rights. Land allotment was part of a broader policy aimed at the cultural assimilation of Native Americans during the so-called *Assimilation Era*. Under NSF Grant #2017946 (“Native American Households during the Assimilation Era”), Dustin Frye and I are collecting a broad range of Native American records from this era, including the rolls of Indian boarding schools. Part of this grant also involves collecting a set of special censuses enumerated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1900 to 1930 and linking them to the U.S. Population Census to learn more about Native American family structures. The first paper to come out of this project is titled “The Effect of Land Allotment on Native American Households during the Assimilation Era” (Dippel and Frye, 2020, working paper). In this paper, we study the incentives of Native American households who received land allotments between 1887–1934. Land allotment was a unique program of cultural assimilation: Native American households could receive land that was worth about twenty times their per capita incomes at the time, but only if they proved themselves sufficiently “competent” (=culturally assimilated) to the local Bureau of Indian Affairs agents. They could signal this by church-going, by farming and by sending their children to school. To study the dynamic responses of households to allotment, we developed a methodology that successfully assigns a reservation (=tribe) to over ninety percent of the Native American population in each Census wave from 1900–1940. In “Uniform Commercial Code and Economic Development: Evidence from Native American Reservations,” Dippel, Feir, Leonard, Roark, 2021, *AER Papers and Proceedings*), we study the consequences of a modernization of commercial legal regimes that reservations have adopted in recent years.

Outside businesses often do not trust tribal courts or do not understand the by-laws that apply to commercial transactions on individual reservations. As a result, business activity that could occur on reservations (and contribute to their tax base), often occurs just-off reservations instead, a pattern akin to that observed in urban ghettos. We study what happens to economic activity on and around reservations when tribes adopt transparent commercial codes that are integrated with their states' codes, using night-lights satellite imagery to obtain finely grained measures of economic activity. We find that modernized commercial code pulls economic activity into the reservation from the off-reservation areas, but also increases the aggregate net economic activity of the sum of the two. Related to this, Donna Feir, Bryan Leonard and I are also engaged in a project with the Federal Reserve's Center for Indian Country Development (CIDC) to kick-start a regular survey about the ease of doing business on reservations.

19th Century U.S. History: In early 1861, most of Washington D.C. favored a policy of appeasing slave-holders and compromising the U.S.' institutions to return the South back to the Union. Instead, the country went to war, and as a result all slaves had been emancipated by 1865. One striking aspect of the Civil War was that both armies were almost entirely made up of volunteers. In "Leadership in Social Movements: the Forty-Eighters in the Civil War" (Dippel and Hebllich 2019, accepted at *American Economic Review*), we ask whether it was grassroots civic leaders that motivated men to volunteer to risk their lives. We take advantage of a natural experiment: political leaders from Europe's 1848 liberal revolutions were expelled to the U.S. where they reinvented themselves as anti-slavery campaigners. We find economically and statistically large effects of these 'Forty-Eighters' on enlistment for the Union Army. These leaders also had long-lasting effects on local attitudes: for example, towns where they settled were more likely to form a local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) fifty years later. In "O Captain! My Captain! Leadership and Team Cohesion in the Union Army", (Dippel and Ferrara, 2020, working paper), we use weekly data on battles, deaths, and desertions in the entire Union Army to investigate the effect of leadership during the war. We find that leadership mattered most to group cohesion at the level of the 100-men company; i.e. at the group size that most reflects our evolutionarily determined span of what we consider our "primary group." Company leaders who were older, more courageous and less socially distant from the common soldiers inspired the most loyalty and cohesion. In "The Educated American in the Age of Mass Migration: School Decentralization and Preference Heterogeneity" (Dippel and Ottinger, 2020, working paper), we investigate the puzzling fact that the United States became the world leader in literacy and basic education at precisely the time that mass immigration created a substantially more diverse population, which existing economic theory would suggest might undermine the provision of public schooling. We postulate that this fact was due to the U.S.' uniquely decentralized approach to education, which allowed increasing heterogeneity in preferences over education to manifest in a proliferation of smaller and more manifold school districts. We test our hypothesis in newly collected data on school districts, whose number proliferated to over 200,000 by 1900 (compared to 15,000 today).

Colonial Institutions: Colonial origins have been an important part of the intellectual history of applied research on institutions and economic development for over two decades. My work in this area has focused on colonial records of the British Empire. In "Outside Options, Coercion,

and Wages: Removing the Sugar Coating,” [Dippel, Greif and Trefler, 2020](#), *Economic Journal*), we study the many forms of systemic racism that were used in Caribbean labor markets to suppress newly freed workers’ outside options in agricultural labor markets after the emancipation of slaves in 1836. We exploit geographic variation across the islands in peasants’ ability to leave formal employment and set up as small-hold farmers in the hinterlands, and show that the coercive plantation system came under severe strain in places where freedmen’s outside options were high, but was able to continue to thrive in places where it was low. In “Elite Identity and Political Accountability: A Tale of Ten Islands,” [Carvalho and Dippel, 2020](#), *Economic Journal*) we study the emergence of non-White local elites on Caribbean islands after the emancipation of slaves created a newly enfranchised citizenry of freed slaves. We study the effect of political accountability on the cohesion of the mixed elite and its policy choices. Based on this work, I also contributed two chapters to the (non-refereed) volume “Nurturing Institutions for a Resilient Caribbean” edited by the *Inter-American Development Bank* ([Dippel, and Dippel and Khadan, 2019](#)). Extending the scope beyond the Caribbean, in “Managing the Empire” ([Dippel, Hoffman and Xu, 2020](#), work in progress), we coded up the entire mid- and top-level of administrators for all colonies in the British Empire, from the inception of *Her Majesty’s Colonial Service* (HMCS) in the early 1860s to its dismantling in 1954. With these data we aim to answer long-standing questions about “the motives of the British Empire,” in particular whether HMCS rewarded colonial administrators for fostering local development (e.g. schooling, infrastructure, and sanitation), or primarily for maximizing revenues and commodity exports to London.

Criminal Justice: My work in this area has looked at the relationship between prisons and court sentencing, at elected judges, and at jurisdictional gaps. In “Do Private Prisons Affect Criminal Sentencing?” ([Poyker and Dippel 2020](#), *under review*), we combine court sentencing data with a novel panel dataset on all U.S. private prisons since their emergence in the 1980s. We use a state-border county-pair design to analyze the effect of private prisons’ opening and closing in a state on judicial sentencing in its courts. We find a small but robust effect of private prisons on sentence length and no effect on the likelihood of being convicted. We find no racial bias in this effect. In “How Common are Judicial Electoral Cycles in Criminal Sentencing?” ([Dippel and Poyker, 2020](#), *under review*), we use newly collected sentencing data from ten states and document that electoral cycles in judicial sentencing (sentences getting harsher closer to elections) are less common than previously thought. We show that sentencing cycles occur as a response to electoral competition in judicial elections, but that many states have relatively uncompetitive judicial elections and therefore no pronounced sentencing cycles. We recently obtained California’s sentencing data from the California DOJ and are developing a county-level difference-in-difference estimation strategy that estimates the effect of a 2011 SCOTUS decision that imposed an expansion of prison capacity on the state of California. Preliminary results suggest that sentence lengths increased significantly with this expansion of incarceration capacity, suggesting judges strongly internalize prison conditions in their interpretation of the law. In a new project, Adam Crepelle and I investigate the effect of “jurisdictional gaps” on crime on Native American reservations. Many reservations have overlapping jurisdictions between tribal police, the sheriff’s department and the FBI and this overlap has the counter-effect of resulting in severe under-policing by all three agencies, particularly when it comes to

major crimes like rape and murder, and especially when the crime involved non-Indians and tribal members. Creppelle and I investigate the consequences of “Operation Rolling Thunder” a DOI program that coordinates the different law enforcement agencies on a handful of reservations to overcome these problems.

Public Sector Pensions: In “Political Parties Do Matter in U.S. Cities ... For Their Unfunded Pensions” (Dippel 2020, *revision resubmitted at AEJ Applied*), I use an RDD around close mayoral elections to investigate whether there are partisan differences in pension generosity. I find that there are, unlike previous research that finds no partisan differences for a wide range of other municipal fiscal outcomes. I rationalize this contrast by arguing that pension funding is harder for voters to observe than other fiscal outcomes because pension obligations do not directly appear in cities’ budgets, despite being legally binding promises about the future. In “Shocking Debt Illusion” (Dippel and Sauers, 2020, *in progress*), we coded up around 400 instances of adjustments to plans’ actuarially assumed returns. These adjustments constitute the biggest shocks to plans’ official funding levels, and we investigate whether these negative shocks to municipal funding levels get capitalized into house prices as theory would predict because they have to be covered by higher future taxes.

Voting Behavior: “Instrumental Variables and Causal Mechanisms: Unpacking the Effect of Trade on Workers and Voters” (Dippel, Gold, Heblich, and Pinto, 2020, *conditionally accepted, Economic Journal*) estimates the effect of trade shocks on voting behavior, and the extent to which this effect is mediated by the labor market adjustments to trade. We provide an econometric framework that allows for the estimation of a ‘mediation analysis’ in IV settings: specifically, it allows to estimate what portion of the effect of trade shocks (i.e. a treatment T) on voting (i.e. a final outcome Y) works through its effect on labor markets (i.e. an intermediate outcome M). We show that labor market adjustments explain the *entire* response of voters to trade shocks. This is an important empirical finding because it provides a well-identified causal estimate to policy makers trying to design the correct responses to the recent surge in support for political populism. The novel econometric theory that underpins this application is articulated in “Mediation Analysis in IV Settings with a Single Instrument” (Dippel, Gold, Heblich, Pinto, 2019b, *conditionally accepted at Journal of Econometrics*). An accessible guide for practical application is provided in “ivmediate” (Dippel, Ferrara, and Heblich, 2020, *Stata Journal*). Moving from voting in elections to voting in committees, “Foreign Aid and Voting in International Organizations” (Dippel, 2015, JPubE), studies twenty years of voting behavior by member countries inside the *International Whaling Commission*. This organization has a unique empirical setting in that it has two clearly designated rival lobbies, i.e. Japan and the UK, which use promises of foreign aid (or the threat of withholding it) to compete over the votes of smaller member nations. I find that both sides use the carrot and the stick of foreign aid to influence the votes of smaller countries. Relatedly, “Groseclose and Snyder in Finite Legislatures” (Dippel, 2012, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*), develops a simple theoretical model that generates sharp predictions on vote buying in small committees or legislatures.