KILIAN KAMKAR

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EDUCATION

University of Cambridge, St Edmund's College 10/2021 - Present
PhD in Economics

Main advisor: Tiago Cavalcanti
Primary Fields: Macro-Development & Environmental Economics
Research visits: FGV São Paulo (2024/25), Oxford (January 2023)

University of Oxford, St Hilda's College 09/2018 - 09/2020
Master of Philosophy in Economics

University of London, Royal Holloway College 09/2016 – 09/2017
Master of Science in Economics

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin 10/2012 – 08/2016
Bachelor of Science in Economics

JOB MARKET PAPER

"Deforestation without Development? Trade, Land Use, and Technology Investments"
with Fernando Chertman

Abstract: We study how foreign demand for agricultural exports shapes technology adoption within the agricultural sector. Whereas modernization requires costly investment in capital and technology that primarily benefits crop cultivation, farmers may raise output instead by clearing forests to expand pasture. We study this choice during the commodity boom in Brazil, combining confidential records on the near universe of cross-bank electronic transfers with satellite imagery to observe land use and input purchases at the farm level. Using a shift-share shock, we find that foreign demand for agricultural exports causes farmers in the Amazon to reallocate land from capital-intensive soybean toward land-intensive pasture, reducing their purchases of machinery and technology as pasture replaces forest. We show that this response emerges optimally from the asymmetric use of land and technology across agricultural activities, since abundant land can cause farmers to specialize in pasture, reducing the area under crop cultivation needed to justify technology investments. We then embed this mechanism into a general equilibrium model with heterogeneous farmers, endogenous technology adoption, and credit frictions that hold adoption below its efficient level and show that a perfectly enforced no-deforestation tax of around US$700 per hectare can raise the welfare gains from trade by more than 75 percent.

WORKING PAPERS

"Differential Land Efficiency and the Environmental Consequences of Agricultural Productivity Growth" - Revise & Resubmit, Journal of Development Economics
with Tiago Cavalcanti

Abstract: Does improving agricultural productivity spare forests or accelerate their demise? We offer a new perspective on this debate by emphasizing the relative agricultural suitability of forest versus available vacant land for conversion. We develop a parsimonious framework in which land differs in agricultural efficiency across alternative expansion margins, showing that productivity gains translate into deforestation only when forests constitute the most cost-effective source of additional effective land. We test this prediction using a quasi-experimental design based on Tanzania's National Agricultural Input Voucher Scheme (NAIVS), which promoted modern seed and fertilizer adoption. Combining high-resolution satellite data on forest loss with spatial data on soil nitrogen to proxy relative suitability, we find that the program increased deforestation only in villages where vacant land was substantially less productive than forest land. Our results highlight the central role of land quality heterogeneity in shaping the environmental consequences of agricultural productivity growth, offer a complementary explanation for land-sparing versus expansionary outcomes, and point to a role for directed agricultural innovation in mitigating deforestation without constraining productivity growth.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Could Credit and Property Rights Save the Amazon Forest?
with Tiago Cavalcanti, Daniel Da Mata & Rafael Araujo

Hegemon, What Hegemon? The Elusive Spillovers of British and American Monetary Policies until WWII
with Paul Bouscasse, Jason Lennard & James Cloyne

Firm Expansion, Supply Chains, and Regional Integration
with Mathis Y. Momm & Fernando Chertman

PRESENTATIONS

AMES Asian Meeting of the Econometric Society, Hong Kong (2026); GDE-EDEG German Development Economics Conference, Kiel (2026); EAYE Annual Meeting, Bilbao (2026); RCEA Conference, Madrid (2026); EAYE Annual Meeting, Paris (2024); Y-RISE Yale Research Initiative on Innovation and Scale, Grand Cayman (2023); Banco Central do Brasil, São Paulo (2023); SED Society for Economic Dynamics, Cartagena (2023); BSE Summer Forum, Barcelona (presented by co-author, 2023); CIREQ PhD Symposium (2023); University of Cambridge (2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Fellow, University of Cambridge — 10/2022 - 06/2023

- Macroeconomics (Undergraduate)
- Econometrics Software Classes (Undergraduate and Graduate)
- Dissertation Workshop (Graduate)

Lecture, FGV São Paulo — 8/2024

- Spatial Data in Applied Economic Research (Graduate)

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Keynes Fund PhD Awards — 05/2026
University of Cambridge

CERF PhD Scholarship — 03/2022
Cambridge Endowment for Research in Finance

STEG Small Research Grant 03/2022
Structural Transformation and Economic Growth (STEG)

Richard Kahn Trust Award 2022/24
Faculty of Economics Trust Fund

Tutorial Award 03/2022
St Edmund's College

MSc Student Prize for best graduate at the Department of Economics 12/2018
Royal Holloway College, University of London

EXPERIENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

World Bank Group 01/2024 - 06/2026
Short-Term Consultant, DECRG: Macroeconomics & Growth

University of Cambridge, Faculty of Economics 03/2022 – 03/2023
Research Assistant for Professor Christopher Rauh

University of Oxford, Department of Economics 06/2020 – 10/2020
Research Assistant for Professor Michael McMahon 06/2019 – 10/2019

Siemens Ltd. China, Shanghai 04/2014 – 06/2014
Internship, Department: Infrastructure & Cities

REFEREE

Ecological Economics

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

PhD Representative 11/2022 - 11/2023
Faculty of Economics, University of Cambridge

Econometrics Games 2023 (Team Captain) 04/2023
University of Amsterdam

Social Secretary & Admiral of the Fleet 09/2018 - 06/2020
Middle Common Room (MCR) Executive Committee
St Hilda's College, University of Oxford

COMPUTER LITERACY

Matlab: advanced Stata: advanced Python: advanced Julia beginner

LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY

German: native speaker English: fluent Portuguese: basic

REFERENCES

Prof. Tiago Cavalcanti
University of Cambridge, Trinity College
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Prof. Christopher Rauh
Barcelona School of Economics & University of Cambridge
✉ cr542@cam.ac.uk