

Onupurba Das

Ph.D. Candidate, Economics

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🌐 [Website](#)

Education

- Dec 2025 (expected) **Ph.D. Economics**, *Department of Resource Economics*, UMass Amherst.
- 2015 – 2017 **M.Sc. Economics**, *Madras School of Economics*, Central University of Tamil Nadu, India.
- 2010 – 2013 **B.A. Economics**, *Madras Christian College*, Madras University, India.

Professional Experience

- 2023 – Present **Quantitative Methodology Consultant**, *Institute of Social Science Research*, UMass Amherst.
- 2023 – 2025 **Econometrics and Data Science Fellow**, *Quantitative & Stata consultant*, Amherst College.
- 2013 – 2014 **Analyst**, *Goldman Sachs*, Bangalore, India.

Research

- 2025 **Political Representation, Forest Cover, and Development in Rural India**, ([Job Market Paper](#)).
This paper examines how political representation for historically marginalized communities shapes local economic activity and environmental stewardship. Leveraging the quasi-random rotation of chairperson reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) across 5,000 village councils in Karnataka, India, over five election cycles (1994–2010), I estimate causal effects on satellite-measured night-time lights and forest cover. SC/ST-led councils see higher local economic activity but lower forest cover, with larger effects under ST leadership. These patterns reveal trade-offs between development and conservation and point to the need for policies that enable marginalized leaders to pursue development without depleting the natural resources their communities depend on.
- 2025 **Women in Local Leadership and Deforestation in Rural India**, with Jamie T. Mullins ([Link](#)).
- 2024 **Temperature, Particulate Matter, and Mental Health in India**, with Jamie T. Mullins & Kavita Sardana ([Link](#)).

Works in Progress

- 2025 **Impact of Pneumonia Type on Mortality, Morbidity, and Resource Use in U.S. Hospitalized Patients: Evidence from the HCUP Database**, with Karen Giuliano, Dian Baker & Jessica Pearlman.

Research Assistant Experience

- 2019 **Jamie T. Mullins**, *Department of Resource Economics*, UMass Amherst.
- 2018 **Jamie T. Mullins & Daniel Lass**, *Department of Resource Economics*, UMass Amherst.

Fellowships & Awards

- 2025 **Travel Grant for ASSA 2025**, *Office of Inclusion and Engagement*, UMass Amherst.
- 2021 **Summer Fellowship**, *Department of Resource Economics*, UMass Amherst.
- 2020 **Vijay Bhagavan Teaching Assistant of Distinction Award**, *Department of Resource Economics*, UMass Amherst.
- 2018 – 2022 **Research Enhancement and Leadership (REAL) Fellowship**, *Graduate School*, UMass Amherst.

Teaching Experience

Instructor of Record, UMass Amherst

- 2023 – 2024 **Math Camp for Mathematical Methods for Economics(Econ-751)**, *Department of Resource Economics*.
Summer 2023, 2024
- 2022 – 2023 **Don't Panic: A Guide to College, Economics and the World Beyond (Res-Ec 191)**, *Social and Behavioral Sciences First Year Seminar*.
Fall 2023, Fall 2022
- 2019 – 2022 **Environmental Economics (Res-Ec 262) Online Version**, *University Without Walls - Continuing & Professional Education*.
Summer 2022, Summer 2020, Summer 2019
- 2019 – 2020 **Understanding Resource Economics (Res-Ec 191)**, *Social and Behavioral Sciences First Year Seminar*.
Fall 2020, Fall 2019

Workshops, Institute of Social Science Research, UMass Amherst

- 2023-2025 (i) **Loops and Macros with Stata (Advanced Data Management)** (ii) **Stata for Research: Organize Your Workflow** (iii) **Say it with a Graph!** (iv) **Data Management in Stata with Multiple Datasets** (v) **Introduction to Stata**.

Advising

- 2023 – 2025 **Consultant to Honors Thesis Students**, Amherst College.
Fall 2022, Fall 2020, Fall 2019
- 2019 – 2022 **Supervisor of Undergraduate TAs**, *First Year Seminar*, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences.
Fall 2022, Fall 2020, Fall 2019
- 2019 – 2022 **Undergraduate RA Supervisor**.
Summer 2023
- 2018 – 2020 **Peer Mentor**, *REAL Fellowship*, UMass Amherst.

Teaching Assistant, UMass Amherst

Graduate **Econometric Methods; Probability Theory and Statistical Inference.**

Undergraduate **Cost Benefit Analysis; Environmental Economics; Computing: Foundations to Frontiers; Intermediate Statistics for Business and Economics; Quantitative Methods in Applied Economics.**

Conferences & Guest Lectures

Conference Presentations

- 2025 **Allied Social Science Associations(ASSA) Annual Meeting.**
Title: *Political Representation, Forest Cover and Development in Rural India*
- 2021 **Eastern Economic Association Annual Conference.**
Title: *Women in Political Leadership and Deforestation in Rural India*
- 2020 **Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association Annual Meeting.**
Title: *Gender Based Reservations in Politics and Deforestation in Rural India*
- 2018 – 2022 **Resource Economics Annual Graduate Conference, UMass Amherst.**
Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Fall 2018

Guest Lectures and Panel Discussions

- 2023 **Guest Lecture, Senior Departmental Honors Seminar, Amherst College.**
Fall 2024, Fall 2023
- 2022 **Guest Lecture, Environmental Economics (Res-Econ 262), Department of Resource Economics, UMass Amherst.**
Spring 2022
- 2021 **Panelist, Women in Economics, Department of Economics and Department of Resource Economics, UMass Amherst.**

Service Experience

- 2021 – 2023 **Co-Chair, Graduate Students of Color Association, UMass Amherst.**
- 2021 – 2023 **Senator, Graduate Student Senate, UMass Amherst.**
- 2021 **Co-organizer, Dalit History Month Special on Breakfast with DuBois, Du Bois Library and Progressive South Asians, UMass Amherst.**
- 2019 – 2024 **Co-Founder, Progressive South Asians, Western Massachusetts.**
- 2019 – 2021 **Executive Board Member, Graduate Students of Color Association, UMass Amherst.**
- 2019 – 2021 **Executive Committee Member, Resource Economics Graduate Council, UMass Amherst.**
- 2019 – 2020 **Steward, Graduate Employee Organization, UMass Amherst.**

References

Dr. Jamie T. Mullins (Chair)
Associate Professor
Department of Resource Economics
UMass Amherst
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Dr. Jessica Pearlman
Director of Research Methods Programs,
Institute of Social Science Research
UMass Amherst
✉ jpearlman@umass.edu

Dr. Bernard Morzuch
Emeritus Professor
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UMass Amherst
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