

**"Markets Make Humans WEIRDer: Evidence from 1850-1920 United States"** (joint with *Max Posch*)

***Abstract:***

This paper studies the impact of market access on individualistic cultural traits, focusing on the expansion of the railroad network and population growth during 1850-1920 U.S. A county-level analysis exploits cross-sectional and time series excess variation in counties' access to markets that are orthogonal to local changes in railroad infrastructure. An individual-level analysis leverages a difference-in-differences framework to estimate the impact of migrating to a higher market access location. We find in both empirical strategies that markets promote individualistic cultural traits. Our results suggest that this relationship is driven by the inherent and direct impact of commerce on culture and psychology, and not by an indirect effect operating through markets' impact on population diversity, economic development, or access to information.