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Graduate Student Coordinator: Robert Herbst, fherbst@uchicago.edu, (773)-834-1972

Education

The University of Chicago, 2011 to present

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics

Thesis Title: "Skill-Biased Technical Change and Regional Convergence"

Expected Completion Date: June 2017

References:

Professor Erik Hurst (Chair)
Booth School of Business
773-834-4073
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Professor Nancy Stokey
The University of Chicago
(773) 834-1482
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Professor Ralph Ossa
Booth School of Business
773-702-8907
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Professor Jonathan Dingel
Booth School of Business
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Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2011
Master of Research, Economics

Universita' Bocconi, 2008
Laurea Triennale, Economics and Social Sciences

Teaching and Research Fields

Primary fields: Macroeconomics, International Trade

Secondary fields: Economic Growth, Regional Economics, Development Economics

Teaching Experience

Fall 2013 - Winter 2016	International Commercial Polity, Chicago Booth, Teaching Assistant for Professor Ralph Ossa
Fall 2015 - Winter 2016	Introduction to Macroeconomics, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Professor Allen Sanderson
Spring, 2014	Elements of Macroeconomics, University of Chicago, Lecturer
Fall, 2013	International Trade, PhD class, Teaching Assistant for Professors Ralph Ossa and Kerem Cosar
Spring, 2013	Elements of Macroeconomics, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Seyed Ali Madani zadeh

Research Experience and Other Employment

Summer, 2016	Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, Research Fellow
Summer, 2014	World Bank, Short Term Consultant
Winter, 2013	Research Assistant for Professor Ralph Ossa
Fall 2010 - Spring 2011	Research Assistant for Professor Luigi Pascoli

Conferences and Presentations

2016	Minnesota Junior Scholar Conference*; Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago*; Applications Workshop*, University of Chicago; The Chicago Workshop on International Economics (CWIE)*, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago (x2), Econometric Society World Congress, Philadelphia, Marco Fanno Alumni 1st Conference, Milan, SERC Annual Conference, LSE Geography; Capital Theory Working Group (x2), University of Chicago, Applied Macroeconomics Working Group, University of Chicago
2015	International Trade Working Group (x2), University of Chicago; Frontier of Urban Economics, Columbia University; Graduate Student Conference, Washington University in Saint Louis; Graduate Student Conference, Purdue University; Applied Macroeconomics Working Group, University of Chicago

**scheduled*

Honors, Scholarships and Fellowships

2016-2017	The George J. Stigler Economics Fellowship, University of Chicago
2015-2016	Exploratory Special Grant, PEDL-CEPR
2014-2016	Travel and Data Fund, University of Chicago
2013-2016	Social Science Department Scholarship, University of Chicago
2011-2013	Scholarship for graduate studies, Marco Fanno Association
2009-2011	Scholarship for Graduate Studies, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Research Papers

“Skill-Biased Technical Change and Regional Convergence” (Job Market Paper)
Between 1940 and 1980 the wage gap between poorer US cities and richer ones was shrinking at an annual rate of roughly 1.4%. After 1980, however, there was no further regional convergence overall. This paper quantifies the contributions of skill-biased technical change (SBTC) and agglomeration economies to the end of cross-cities wage convergence within the US between 1980 and 2010. I develop and estimate a dynamic spatial equilibrium model that looks at the causes of regional convergence and divergence. The model choice

is motivated by novel empirical regularities regarding the evolution of the skill premium and migration patterns over time and across space. The model successfully matches the quantitative features of the US regional wage convergence. Moreover, the model also reproduces changes in the skill ratio across US cities, as well as, migration patterns after 1980. Finally, the counterfactual analysis suggests that SBTC explains much of change in cross-city wage differentials.

“Mobility Barriers, Spillover and the IT sector in the West Bank” (with Chiara Fratto)

[project financed by PEDL-CEPR exploratory grant]

The goal of this project is to shed light on the sources of the IT sector growth in a developing country, exploiting the recent success of the West Bank. Mobility barriers decrease the opportunity cost of investing in IT at the expenses of good production. Their variation allows us to obtain an estimate of the reduction in the opportunity cost necessary to induce local entrepreneurs to invest in IT. First, we conduct face-to-face and phone interviews with managers of firms and employees with a focus on IT sector in Palestine. We will create a novel dataset with about 400 firms representative of the national economy focusing on: 1) firms demographics and performance; 2) firms’ network; 3) employees background. We complement this unique data source with granular data on firms from the Palestinian Census Bureau of Statistics, never used for research before. Second, we aim to estimate the causal impact of barriers to mobility on the rapid development of the IT sector. We believe that this work can have important policy implications for other developing countries to spur a fast-growing IT sector and enhance sustainable long-run growth that we will estimate through the lens of a firm dynamic model.

“Exogenous Demand Shock and Sectoral Reallocation: The Shrimp Import Ban in Thailand” (with Chanont Banternghansa)

In this paper we study the permanent effect of a large temporary demand shock on sectoral reallocation. We exploit the exogenous variation of the EU import ban on black tiger shrimps in Thailand. In May 2002, under heavy concerns that products from Asian countries contained hazardous antibiotic, the European Union banned the imports of shrimps from Thailand. The price of black tiger shrimps plummeted by more than 50% and their production in few years went close to zero. One month after the ban, the production of white shrimps took off in Thailand. Using three different sources of data— provincial, firm-entrepreneur and household level from the Townsend Thai Project— we investigate the effect of the EU ban on resource reallocation within and across sectors, change in sectoral productivity and welfare gains and losses within Thailand. We find that while the ban was imposed in 2002, only 35% of the entrepreneurs were in the fish/shrimp sector in 2013 and only 36% of the farmers were in the sector in 2008. Through the lens of a sectoral choice model with technology adoption, we aim at quantifying the welfare consequences of the shock for the Thai economy.

“Inertia and Resilience: Determinants of Urban Recovery” (with Cristian Dagnino and Maria Macia Smith)

This paper analyzes the decay and renewal of cities through two concepts: inertia and resilience. Inertia captures how sluggishly the population reacts to shocks and may be related to the extent to which a city invests in public goods or to higher levels of homeownership in the population. Resilience describes how a city redistributes its resources

when facing a negative shock, and factors such as a city's ability to reposition its industrial resources may influence it. We develop a simple, multiple equilibria model of the moving responses of high-skilled workers to investigate how these factors determine whether a city facing a negative shock goes past a tipping point into a downward spiral or instead makes a fast recovery. Our next step will be to test this model with data from US cities in the 1960-2010 period.

Personal Information:

Born: 11/22/1986

Citizenship: Italian

Languages: Italian (native), English, Spanish and Portuguese (fluent)