

AUGUSTO OSPITAL

University of California, Los Angeles
Department of Economics

aospital@ucla.edu
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EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Ph.D. in Economics

June 2023 (expected)

Ph.D. candidate

June 2019

Universidad de San Andrés (UdeSA), Buenos Aires

Bachelor in Economics, Summa Cum Laude

July 2014

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Trade and Spatial Economics; Environmental Economics; Industrial Organization

REFERENCES

Pablo Fajgelbaum

Professor of Economics

University of California, Los Angeles

p fajgelbaum@econ.ucla.edu

John Asker

Professor of Economics

University of California, Los Angeles

johnasker@econ.ucla.edu

Jonathan Vogel

Professor of Economics

University of California, Los Angeles

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Will Rafey

Assistant Professor of Economics

University of California, Los Angeles

rafey@econ.ucla.edu

RESEARCH POSITIONS

Dartmouth College, Department of Economics

International Economics Fellow

Winter 2021

Research Assistance

Pablo Fajgelbaum, UCLA

2017-18, 2021-22

Christian Ruzzier, UdeSA

2013-14

PriceStats

Economics Research Intern

Summer 2019

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of California, Los Angeles

Intermediate Microeconomic Theory (Econ 101), TA

Winter 2020, Spring 2020, Fall 2020

Principles of Economics (Econ 1), TA

Spring 2019

Introduction to Econometrics (Econ 103), TA and guest lecturer

Winter 2019, Fall 2019

HONORS AND AWARDS

Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCLA	2022-23
Best presentation award, Proseminar in Industrial Organization, UCLA	2022
Summer Mentored Research Fellowship, UCLA	2021
Best presentation award, International and Development Proseminar, UCLA	2021
TA Award for Outstanding Performance in Remote Learning, UCLA	Spring 2020, Fall 2020
UCLA Department of Economics First Year Fellowship	2017-18
ANCE 2014 Award to the Best Undergraduate of the B.A. in Economics at UdeSA	2015
Best GPA in Economics Award, UdeSA	2014
Best Graduation Thesis in Economics Award, UdeSA	2014
Merit Based Half-tuition Scholarship, UdeSA	2013
Merit Based Scholarship (Beca Abanderados), UdeSA	2010-13

WORKING PAPERS

“Urban Policy and Spatial Exposure to Environmental Risk” (Job Market Paper)

In the past two decades, about half of the new homes in the United States were built in environmentally risky areas. Why is new residential development being exposed to such risk? I posit that land-use regulations restricting development in safer areas contribute to this pattern. I study this question in the context of exposure to wildfire risk in the San Diego, California, metropolitan area, where I show there is a positive correlation between built-out areas and fire safety. I estimate a quantitative urban model using detailed spatial data on zoning, density limits, lot size restrictions, wildfire risk, and insurance. In the model, the regulations benefit landowners and reallocate the population to unregulated at-risk areas. These effects depend on estimated disamenities from wildfire risk, insurance access, and the spatial correlations between regulations, wildfire risk, and location amenities. I find that land-use regulations raise city-level rents by an average 28% and explain 7% of the residents living in fire-prone areas. The estimated present-discounted cost of wildfire risk is \$14,149 per person, with existing regulations accounting for 10% of that cost. Over the next 40 years, as wildfire risk intensifies, the population grows, and the current land restrictions become more binding, the number of exposed residents will grow by 12%. The results show that institutions that restrain relocating out of harm’s way, such as land-use regulations, can limit adaptation to climate change.

“Protectionism Unchained: Determinants and Consequences of Discretionary Trade Policy in Argentina” (with David Atkin, Joaquín Blaum, and Pablo Fajgelbaum)

Many countries utilize discretionary trade policies that target particular firms and products at particular times. Since they are often illegal under WTO rules, the ability to empirically study the drivers and consequences of these policies—and more generally to study hard-to-measure non tariff barriers—has been limited. We study the prominent protectionist experience of Argentina in the early 2010s, where we observe detailed records from a system of discretionary approvals affecting all imports. The restrictions varied across firms in a manner consistent with the government’s rhetoric of encouraging investment and exports. Restrictions also varied across time in an attempt to safeguard the current account, becoming more stringent for initially less-restricted firms when macro conditions worsened. Utilizing these sources of variation to instrument for the quantity restrictions imposed by the policy, we find that firm-level quantitative restrictions increased the prices paid by importers—contrary to the prediction of falling prices generating terms of trade gains from competitive models of trade policy. A trade model with bargaining matched to these responses reveals that high bargaining power of foreign exporters vis-a-vis Argentinian importers shapes the impacts of trade policy.

SERVICE

UCLA International Economics Student Proseminar organizer

2020-22

WORK EXPERIENCE PRE-PHD

PriceStats

Economics Associate

July 2016 - July 2017

Senior Economics Analyst

February 2014 - June 2016

PERSONAL

Citizenship: Argentina, Italy

LANGUAGES

Spanish (native), English (full proficiency)