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Education

University of Southern California
Ph.D. Economics (expected) 2027
M.A. Economics 2023
Marquette University
B.S. Economics & Mathematics 2020

Fields

Development Economics, Environmental Economics

References

Paulina Oliva (Primary Adviser)
Professor of Economics and Spatial Sciences
University of Southern California
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Matthew E. Kahn
Provost Professor of Economics
University of Southern California
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Jeffrey Weaver
Associate Professor of Economics
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Vittorio Bassi
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Job Market Paper

Market Power and the Supply of Recyclable Waste: Evidence from Indonesia's Waste Banks

Informal recycling markets are ubiquitous in developing countries. Low state capacity for waste management creates opportunities for intermediaries to buy and sell sorted recyclable waste for profit. This paper measures the extent of market power that intermediaries have over their sellers, and what this implies for the recovery of recyclable material. Leveraging 757,559 transactions from a national network of Indonesian waste banks, I estimate the elasticity of supply for plastic facing this large buyer of recyclable waste, where I employ a shift-share IV strategy that interacts the price of virgin plastic, a substitute good for plastic waste, with each bank's predetermined plastic revenue share. I find vastly different elasticities in the two segmented markets for suppliers. Waste pickers, who collect for income, have a supply elasticity of 1.97, while households, which deliver only what their own consumption generates, do not respond to the price at all. Given this segmentation, I explore how banks respond when competition for these sellers changes, using the staggered opening of rival banks. When a rival bank opens, incumbents lose about a third of their plastic, all of it from pickers. They respond by adding finer, higher-priced grades of plastic that pickers disproportionately collect, while cutting prices on the coarse, mixed grades into which most household material falls. Competition thus raises pay for sellers who can leave and widens the markdown on those who cannot. These results matter for the design of recycling subsidies. I show that a subsidy targeted to waste pickers would cost about 30 percent less per ton of induced collection than a uniform one, and that a bank that segments its sellers through its menu delivers most of that saving on its own.

Working Papers

Transboundary Pollution and Political Attribution *with Seonmin Will Heo (UCSB)*

This paper studies how transboundary pollution enters domestic politics. When air pollution crosses borders, citizens may observe local pollution without knowing whether the source is foreign or domestic, creating scope for politicians either to provide information or to shift blame abroad. We study South Korea, where fine-dust episodes are salient and pollution from China is a recurring focus of public debate. Combining source-specific pollution shocks with a politician-day panel of Facebook posts by South Korean legislators, we distinguish between environmental attention and explicit attribution to China. Instrumental-variables estimates provide little evidence that exogenous increases in local $PM_{2.5}$ raise politicians' broad environmental communication. By contrast, the clearest evidence consistent with strategic foreign attribution appears in partisan heterogeneity: conditional on discussing fine dust, conservative politicians increase foreign attribution in response to both transboundary and domestic shocks, whereas Democratic estimates are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero. Transboundary environmental problems thus affect politics through selective blame shifting rather than a uniform increase in foreign attribution.

Work in Progress

Internalizing Environmental Externalities: A Coasean Approach to Urban Solid Waste Management in Kampala, Uganda *with Aaron Berman (MIT). Pilot concluded.*

Dynamic Pricing as an Efficiency Tool in Uganda's Electric Boda-Boda Network *with Juliana Pinillos (USC) and Santiago De Martini (USC).*

Spatial Misallocation and Supply-Demand Feedback: Evidence from the Boda-Boda Market in Kampala, Uganda *with Juliana Pinillos (USC) and Santiago De Martini (USC). Data use agreement signed; pilot concluded.*

Private Markets for Public Goods: Understanding the Urban Spatial Distribution of Recycling Markets in India *with Vanshika Fotedar (USC)*

Policy Writing

"Reducing the Waste Burden in Ugandan Cities." IGC Policy Note (with Andrew Womer, IGC)

"Internalizing Environmental Externalities: A Coasean Approach to Urban Solid Waste Management in Kampala, Uganda." IGC Policy Brief (with Aaron Berman, MIT)

Awards

Wrigley Institute for Environment & Sustainability Fellowship	2026
Department of Economics Dissertation Completion Fellowship	2026
IGC PhD Summer Placement (Cities)	2025
USC Department of Economics Summer Research Award	2024-2026
USC East Asian Studies Center Graduate Fellowship	2025
Outstanding Second-Year Paper Award, USC	2023
Provost Fellowship, USC	2021–Present

Research Grants

Institute for Humane Studies Grant	2026
CEGA Development Economics Challenge Grant (Spring)	2026
CEGA Development Economics Challenge Grant (Fall)	2024
IGC SPF Grant	2024
J-PAL K-CAI Travel and Proposal Grant	2024
USC Graduate School Travel/Research Award	2024, 2026

Research Positions
Research Assistant to Profs. Matthew Kahn, Robert Metcalfe, and Paulina Oliva, USC 2023–2024

Teaching
Teaching Assistant, *Intermediate Microeconomics*, USC 2022–2025
Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2024, Spring 2025
Teaching Assistant, Marquette University 2019–2020
Calculus I, *Calculus II*, *Theory of Probability*, *Introductory Statistics*

Presentations
2026: IGC Policy Workshop on Climate Change, Environmental Management, and Sustainable Growth (Kampala, Uganda)
2025: IGC Policy Webinar on Climate Policy and Uganda's Sustainability Path
2024: IGC Climate Change II Workshop (Kampala, Uganda)

Academic Service
Organizer, USC Environmental & Urban Economics Workshop 2024–2026
Treasurer, Women in Economics, USC 2022–2025
Founder, Women in Economics Mentorship Program, USC 2024
Referee: *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*

Software Skills
Python, R, Stata, MATLAB, LaTeX

Languages
English (native)

Citizenship
United States