

Ernesto Ugolini

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Education

Ph.D. in Economics

Aix-Marseille School of Economics (AMSE), Marseille, France 2021 - 2025 (exp)
Advisors: Renaud Bourlès (AMSE, Central Marseille) and Lorenzo Rotunno (IMF, AMSE)

Visiting Student

Bocconi University, Milan, Italy Spring 2024
Hosts: Jan David Bakker, Italo Colantone, and Gianmarco Ottaviano

Master in Economics

AMSE, Marseille, France 2019 - 2021

Master of Arts in International Political Economy

King's College London, London, UK 2017 - 2019

Bachelor in Economics and Business

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy 2014 - 2017

Exchange Program, Economics and Business

University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia 2016

Research Interests

International Trade, Political Economy, Spatial Economics

Job Market Paper

Varieties of Democracy and Preferences for Economic Integration

This paper develops and empirically tests a theory that explains the growing opposition to globalization by examining how democratic institutions mediate the redistribution of trade gains. Combining a factor proportions model of trade with a political economy model in which political power may be unevenly distributed, I model voters' decisions between a pro-trade and a protectionist party based on each party's expected tax policies, which determine voters' post-tax income. In this model, the winning party sets the tax rate, with the extent of redistribution determined by the strength of democratic institutions. Trade integration lowers the pre-tax income of trade losers, but it can raise their post-tax income if aggregate gains are redistributed effectively. The model predicts that in countries with strong democratic institutions, trade integration with lower-skilled trading partners reduces support for protectionism as redistribution mitigates the impact on trade losers. Conversely, in weaker democracies, inadequate redistribution results in increased support for protectionism. To test this prediction, I construct a panel dataset of 66 democracies from 1950 to 2020, incorporating variables of trade integration, voting patterns, and democracy levels. By using advancements in air transportation relative to sea routes as an instrument for trade integration, I confirm that trade shocks increase protectionist voting in weak democracies, while decreasing it in strong democracies.

Working Papers

Trade Shocks and the Changing Economic Geography of the US with Priyam Verma (Ashoka University)

In this paper, we causally estimate the general equilibrium impact of international trade shocks on U.S. local markets' employment and wages, considering domestic trade and production linkages. Using a Ricardian multi-country, multi-sector model, we derive a comprehensive measure of Market Access (MA)—a sufficient statistic that captures general equilibrium effects. We quantify MA for 722 U.S. commuting zones across 22 sectors by estimating domestic sectoral trade costs through infrastructure networks and

production linkages using sectoral input-output linkages, covering the period before and after China's WTO accession. We then structurally estimate equations linking changes in wages and employment to shifts in MA, employing a model-based instrumental variable to isolate exogenous variation in Market Access induced by the China shock. Our findings suggest that labor markets with higher domestic MA gain employment through input-output linkages and reduced spatial competition, offsetting initial employment losses from the China shock.

Foreign Aid and Democracy: Chinese Aid vs World Bank Aid with Matteo Sestito (University of Lusanne) and Vera Z. Eichenauer (German Federal Ministry of Finance)

This research investigates whether Chinese aid influences democratic attitudes and democratic institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. China's growing presence may have spread the "Beijing Consensus," characterized by economic growth without political liberalization, potentially impacting democratic preferences. To test this hypothesis, we match a georeferenced dataset on Chinese aid projects in Africa (2000–2012) with Afrobarometer survey data from 29 countries. We identify the effects of foreign aid by comparing areas with implemented projects to those with pending projects, isolating selection factors that make these areas recipients of aid. Additionally, we aim to distinguish whether this impact is driven by economic factors, cultural influences, or a mix of both.

Seminars and Conferences

2024: Bocconi Trade Tea seminars (Milan, Italy), Bocconi Politics and Institutions seminar (Milan, Italy), ETSG2024 (Athens, Greece), Jamboree 2024 (Dublin, Ireland), ARC2024 (Ispra, Italy)

2023: RIEF network (Brussels, Belgium), LAGV (Marseille, France), AMSE PhD seminar

2022: ADRES (PSE, Paris, France), LAGV (Marseille, France), Asset (Crete, Greece), AMSE PhD seminar

Awards, Fellowships, & Grants

2020 - 2021 Academic fellowship, Aix-Marseille University, France
€7,500

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Aix-Marseille University Introduction to Economics <i>Undergraduate, 1st year</i>	2024 - 2025
Teaching Assistant, Aix-Marseille University Micro III: General Equilibrium Theory <i>Undergraduate, 2nd year</i>	2021 - 2024
Teaching Assistant, Aix-Marseille University Data Analysis with Excel <i>Undergraduate, 1st year</i>	2024

Relevant Experience

Co-founder and co-organizer - AMSE Trade Reading Group AMSE, Marseille, France https://sites.google.com/view/amsetrade/home?authuser=0	2021 - present
Research Assistant AMSE, Marseille, France	Jan. 2019 - Jun. 2019

Language and IT Skills

Languages: Italian (Native), English (Fluent), French (Fluent)

Software: Latex

Programming: STATA, MATLAB, QGIS, preliminary knowledge of R-Studio

References

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