

Jacob Lefler

Contact Information

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Doctoral Studies

University of California, Berkeley
PhD, Agricultural and Resource Economics (Expected May 2026)

PRIMARY FIELDS: International Trade, Spatial Economics
SECONDARY FIELDS: Agricultural Economics, Environmental Economics

References

Associate Professor Thibault Fally
fally@berkeley.edu
Department of Agricultural
& Resource Economics

Assistant Professor Kirill Borusyak
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Department of Agricultural
& Resource Economics

Professor Andrés Rodríguez-Clare
arc@berkeley.edu
Department of Economics

Placement Officers

Professor Sofia Villas-Boas
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Professor Marco Gonzalez-Navarro
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Diana Lazo
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Education

Brigham Young University	BS Mathematics, Economics	2019
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Teaching

UC Berkeley	Teaching Assistant, <i>International Trade</i> Undergraduate	2025
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UC Berkeley	Teaching Assistant, <i>Environmental Economics</i> Undergraduate and Masters	2021, 2022
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Research

“Freight in the Time of Covid: Estimating a Model of US Trucking”
(JOB MARKET PAPER)

Trade models typically ignore the freight transportation industry. I develop a model of the US trucking industry that can replicate several stylized facts that I document, including inverse and spatial correlations in transportation prices, while remaining tractable enough to be embedded within a trade model and quantified using market-level data. Rather than being treated as fixed and exogenous, trade costs emerge endogenously as the market-clearing prices of the freight transportation industry. I quantify driver supply using instruments based on Covid-era shocks to US container import quantities. Finally, I use a simple calibration of my spatial model to estimate how changes in freight transportation prices affected goods prices and consumer welfare following the onset of Covid, and I find that changes in transport markets were primarily demand-driven.

Research in Progress

“Transportation Prices and Agricultural Value Chains”

“An Hour Past Paid: The Roles of Time and Money in Determining Trade Costs”
with Thibault Fally, John Kadlick, and Andrés Rodríguez-Clare

Activities	2024	Graduate Admissions Committee	
	2022	Faculty Search Committee	
Prior Employment	UC Berkeley, Research Assistant (Kirill Borusyak)		2024-2025
	UC Berkeley, Research Assistant (James Sallee)		2022, 2024
	UC Berkeley, Research Assistant (David Zilberman)		2020-2021
	Brigham Young University, Research Assistant (Arden Pope)		2017-2019
Military Service	US Marine Corps Reserve, Logistics Officer		2022-Present
	Platoon Commander, Company Executive Officer		