

JOSE ROJAS-FALLAS

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EDUCATION

University of Oregon

Ph.D in Economics

Expected 2026

Portland State University

M.S. Economics

2021

B.S. Quantitative Economics

2019

B.S. Psychology

2019

JOB MARKET PAPER

"FDI & College Major Choice"

Abstract

This paper studies how the local presence of multinational corporations (MNCs) affects students' college major choices in a developing country context. Using administrative data from Costa Rica's two largest public universities covering over half a million applicants from 2007 to 2020, I examine whether exposure to MNCs—measured through firm-level location and industry data from the country's Free Trade Zone (FTZ) regime—shapes individual decisions about field-of-study specialization. I develop a novel index of MNC presence by industry and location, incorporating geographic proximity between applicants and firms. I then estimate a multinomial logit model where students choose among broad and narrow field-of-study categories, allowing for heterogeneous responses to MNC presence across industries. The results show that MNCs meaningfully influence major choice, but the effects vary by industry and field. Service-oriented MNCs, such as those in architectural and engineering services, shift students toward both STEM and arts-related fields, while large manufacturing exporters—like medical device producers—have limited impact on STEM enrollment. Disaggregated analysis reveals that applicants tend to select majors that align with the perceived skill demands of nearby MNCs, suggesting that students respond to local labor market signals when making educational investments. These findings highlight an important and previously understudied channel through which FDI can shape human capital formation—not only through access to education, but also through the type of skills students choose to acquire. The results underscore the need for education and industrial policy coordination to ensure that specialization patterns evolve in step with economic transformation.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Peer-Reviewed Publications

[Wage Differences Matter: An Experiment of Social Comparison and Effort Provision when Wages Increase or Decrease \(With J. Forrest Williams\)](#), *Games*, 2020; 11(4):59.

Working Papers

["Does the Global South Import Ideology Shifts? Evidence from Costa Rica and CAFTA-DR"](#)

Works in Progress

SEMINAR AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Conference

ASSA CSMGEP Dissertation Session	Scheduled 2026
Western Economic Association Conference	2025
Southern Economic Association Conference	2024
Western Economic Association Conference	2024
AEA Summer Mentoring Pipeline Conference	2024

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Southern Economics Association Graduate Student Award	2024
Gerlof Homan Graduate Scholarship in International Economics, University of Oregon	2024
Graduate Teaching Fellowship, University of Oregon	2021-Present
Ronald E. McNair Scholar, Portland State University	2017

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

EC 390: Problems and Issues in the Developing Economies	Fall '25
EC 320: Introduction to Econometrics	Summer '25
EC 380: International Economic Issues	Fall '24, Winter '25
EC 311: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory	Summer '23, Winter '24

Teaching Assistant

EC 421: Introduction to Econometrics II	Spring '24
EC 430/530: Urban & Regional Economics	Fall '22, Winter '23
EC 330: Urban & Regional Economics	Fall '22
EC 311: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory	Winter '23, Spring '23
EC 201: Intro. to Microeconomics	Fall '21, Winter '22, Spring '22

ACADEMIC SERVICES AND AFFILIATIONS

REFERENCES

Anca Cristea , Department of Economics, University of Oregon	cristea@uoregon.edu
Woan Foong Wong , Department of Economics, University of Oregon	wfwong@uoregon.edu
Alfredo Burlando , Department of Economics, University of Oregon	burlando@uoregon.edu