

Sarah Oliver

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Economics
American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20016

email: so3840a@american.edu
website: www.saraholivecon.com

Education

American University

Washington, DC

PhD, Economics (anticipated May, 2024)

September 2019-present

Dissertation: “Three Essays on Trade in Services, Technology, and the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Committee: Kara Reynolds (chair), Nathan Larson, Walter Park

University of California San Diego (UCSD), School of Global Policy and Strategy

La Jolla, CA

Master of International Affairs, specializing in International Economics

June, 2013

Calvin College

Grand Rapids, MI

Bachelor of Arts, International Relations and French

May, 2011

Job Market Paper

- Services Trade and the Choice of Online versus In-Person Delivery
 - *Abstract:* Trade in services is unique from goods trade in that the trade cost associated with services exports depends on whether the service is delivered in-person (via travel of producer or consumer) or remotely (via the internet). Building on the trade-in-task framework of Grossman and Rossi-Hansberg (2008), this paper develops a task-based model of services trade that explains choice of delivering intermediate services tasks to customers in foreign markets either in-person or over the internet. To test the predictions of the empirical model, I isolate average trade costs for 24 U.S. services sectors, and consider the contribution of internet technology, travel costs, and the share of employees in each sector in occupations that can only be performed in-person to total trade costs. I find that U.S. services exporters with a higher concentration of in-person only employees face significantly higher trade costs than those with employees more concentrated in occupations that can be performed online. Additionally, higher internet use in the importing country significantly decrease trade costs, and sectors with more in-person only employees are more sensitive to changes in commercial flight prices.

Published Papers

- Intangible Trade: Understanding the Relationship Between Trade Barriers and Mode of Supply in Services Sectors. (2023). *The World Economy* 45(5) (with Tamar Khachaturian).

- Trade, Policy, and Economic Development in the Digital Economy. (2023). *Journal of Development Economics*, 164 (103135) (with Peter Herman).
- Brexit Uncertainty and its (Dis)Service Effects. (2023). *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, forthcoming (with Saad Ahmad, Nuno Limão, and Serge Shikher).

Relevant Work Experience

United States International Trade Commission (USITC) Washington, DC
Services Division, Office of Industries

International Economist May 2022-present

International Trade Analyst May 2016-May 2022

American University Washington, DC
Teaching Assistant September 2019-May 2023

Courses:

- International Trade, Microeconomics II (PhD level)
- Microeconomics, Communicating Economics, Mathematical Economics (Masters level)
- Intermediate Microeconomics, Introduction to Game Theory, Senior Policy Analysis Seminar (Undergraduate)

Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) Washington, DC
Research Analyst August 2013-May 2016

University of California San Diego La Jolla, CA
Teaching Assistant September 2012-June 2013

Working Papers and other Publications

- Can Trade Barriers Explain Productivity Differences Between Foreign and Domestic Services Firms? USITC Office of Economics Working Paper 2020-05-B, May 2020 (with Saad Ahmad and Caroline Peters).
- Building Vehicle Autonomy: Sensors, Semiconductors, Software and U.S. Competitiveness. USITC Office of Industries Working Paper ID-063, November 2019 (with David Coffin and John VerWey).
- The Value of U.S. Service Employment in Manufacturing Sectors. *Journal of International Commerce and Economics*, September 2019.
- Using Firm-Level Data to Compare Productivities across Countries and Sectors: Possibilities and Challenges. USITC Office of Economics Working Paper 2018-07-A, July 2018 (with Saad

Ahmad and Caroline Peters)

- Do Non-Tariff Measures Make Domestic Firms More Profitable? Evidence from the Commercial Banking Sector. USITC Office of Industries Working Paper ID-047, December 2017
- Firm Level Analysis of Services Trade Restrictions in the Life Insurance Industry. USITC Office of Industries Working Paper ID-045, November 2016 (with Tamar Khachaturian)
- An Anatomy of Billionaire Wealth. PIIE Working Paper 16.1, 2016 (with Caroline Freund)
- Gains from Harmonizing US and EU Auto Regulations under the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. PIIE Policy Brief 15-10, 2015 (with Caroline Freund)
- “Fish stocks fall as Sea Disputes Fester” Nikkei Asian Review, December 04, 2014.

Presentations

- “Services Trade and the Choice of Online versus In-Person Delivery” Midwest Trade Conference, Fall 2023

Research in Progress (Dissertation)

- Services Trade, Distance, and the Internet
 - *Abstract:* While gravity models of trade perform well in empirical tests of both goods and services, efforts to tailor gravity models to the unique features of services trade have been limited. In particular, since trade in services can be conducted via travel or directly over the internet, trade costs vary both across trade partners and within products. This paper proposes that interacting the level of internet connectivity with a measure of physical distance can help shed light on the unique role of the internet as a direct means of trading services. On aggregate and for 7 of the 10 services sectors considered, increases in the level of internet connectivity across country-pairs significantly decrease distance costs for services trade. The decrease in distance costs ranges from 3–32 percent, depending on the sector and level of internet connectivity. However, this result does not hold for aggregate goods trade using the same sample of countries.
- Services trade Composition and COVID-19 Response
 - *Abstract:* Travel bans related to the COVID-19 pandemic cut off the travel channel for delivering services. For countries that rely on travel services (particularly tourism) heavily in their service export mix, the pandemic could lead to considerable trade losses. The potential economic impact of a government's choice to impose a travel ban or re-open their borders to travel during the pandemic are not constant across countries. In particular, when policy makers consider travel bans, their choice likely depends on potential economic losses, the risk level of the population, and effectiveness of treatment/prevention policies. Thus, where the economic costs of travel bans are more severe, governments may have the incentive to choose economically beneficial policies over those that are aimed at minimizing health risks. The primary research question of this paper is whether travel-service intensive markets re-

opened (or never closed) borders to travel more quickly than markets that were less travel-service intensive.

Professional Tools and Communication

- *Software*: STATA, Python, LaTeX, Mathematica
- *Language*: Advanced French

References

Kara Reynolds (dissertation chair)

Professor and Chair, Department of Economics

American University

Email: reynolds@american.edu

PH: 202-885-3769

Nathan Larson (dissertation committee member)

Associate Professor, Department of Economics

American University

Email: nathan.larson@american.edu

PH: 202-885-3712

Walter Park (dissertation committee member)

Professor Department of Economics and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies,

American University

Email: wgp@american.edu

PH: 202-885-3774

Tamar Khachaturian (USITC)

International Economist

Office of Industry and Competitiveness Analysis

U.S. International Trade Commission

Email: tamar.khachaturian@usitc.gov

PH: 202-205-3299