

LASHA CHOCHUA



CONTACT

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- Tbilisi, Georgia
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- [Lasha Chochua](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lchochua)

SKILLS

Programming

Python	●●●●●
R	●●●●●
Mathematica	●●●●●
Bash	●●●●●
Latex	●●●●●

Operating Systems

Linux	●●●●●
MacOS	●●●●●
Windows	●●●●●

Software & Tools

Visualisation	●●●●●
Matplotlib, Seaborn	
Data handling/analysis	●●●●●
PostgreSQL, Numpy, Scipy, Pandas	
AWS, Docker	●●●●●
Office	●●●●●

Languages

English	●●●●●
Georgian	●●●●●
Russian	●●●●●
German	●●●●●

AWARDS

- The Best Doctoral Thesis Prize, Bielefeld University
- Graduate School Scholarship, German Academic Exchange Service
- Graduate Student Scholarship, University Carlos III of Madrid

CERTIFICATES

Data Science Bootcamp Certificate
SPICED ACADEMY

RESEARCH INTEREST

- International Trade, Trade Policy
- Applied Game Theory, Political Economy
- Applied Econometrics
- Applied Machine/Deep Learning

CURRENT POSITION

07/2024 - to present
International School of Economics
Georgia
Associate Professor

WORK HISTORY

- 12/2023 - 05/2024
Kiel Institute for the World Economy
Germany
Postdoctoral Researcher
- 04/2019 - 03/2023
Bielefeld University
Germany
Postdoctoral Researcher
- 06/2015 - to present
PMC Research Center
Georgia
Scientific Board Member
- 10/2011 - 12/2016
Free University of Tbilisi
Georgia
University Lecturer
- 07/2007 - 08/2007
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, United Kingdom
Intern in Chief Economist's Office
- 03/2005 - 08/2006
Poti Sea Port LTD
Georgia
Investment Projects Specialist

EDUCATION

- 2013 - 2019
Bielefeld University
Bielefeld, Germany
Doctor of Economics
- 2008 - 2010
University Carlos III of Madrid
Madrid, Spain
M.A. in Economic Analysis
- 2006 - 2008
International School of Economics
Tbilisi, Georgia
M.A. in Economics
- 1999 - 2005
Iv. Javakishvili Tbilisi State University
Tbilisi, Georgia
B.A. in International Economics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- International Trade, Econometrics, Game Theory (Bachelor & Graduate Courses)
- Economics of European Integration (Graduate Course)
- Law and Economics (Bachelor Course)

RESEARCH PAPERS

Plurilateral Trade Agreements: A Complementary Margin to Preferential Liberalization with James Lake and Gerald Willmann

We show that plurilateral agreements facilitate global tariff liberalization by creating an MFN-based margin of cooperation that leaves preferential access via preferential trade agreements (PTAs) unchanged. In a model of endogenous trade agreement formation with farsighted governments, PTAs become rigid once exclusion or free-riding incentives bind, constraining further PTA expansion. Plurilateral agreements relax these constraints by allowing countries to liberalize selectively in a differentiated-goods sector without altering existing PTAs. As a result, the stable equilibrium trade network consists of the PTAs that would arise absent plurilaterals, augmented—but not replaced—by plurilateral MFN liberalization. This mechanism provides an explanation for the growing role of sectoral plurilateral agreements within the WTO as preferential liberalization becomes increasingly constrained.

Tariff Cuts, Uncertainty Reduction, and the Force of Many: The Impact of Plurilateral Agreements with Irene Iodice

Do countries gain more by liberalizing trade together than alone? We study the WTO's 2016 Phase II expansion of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA), which eliminated tariffs on products covering roughly 12% of world goods trade. Using triple-difference structural gravity, importer-product market access rose by 4–6%. Decomposition reveals nearly half reflects general-equilibrium coordination spillovers—exceeding contributions from direct tariff cuts or reduced policy uncertainty. Exploiting variation in coalition size, spillovers turn positive once participants span about two-thirds of world imports—well below the 80% critical-mass benchmark commonly assumed for plurilaterals. Conditional general equilibrium counterfactuals show ITA Phase II reduced members' import price indexes by 1.4 percentage points on average, peaking near 2.0 percentage points by 2019. Joint liberalization yields benefits beyond the sum of individual actions—evidence of the force of many.

The Farsighted Stability of Global Trade Policy Arrangements with Stefan Berens and Gerald Willmann

In this paper, we study the stability of trade policy arrangements under different regulatory scenarios. Unlike previous papers, we consider an extensive set of trade policy arrangements and unlimited farsightedness of negotiating parties. In the standard three-country setup, global free trade (GFT) is uniquely stable under symmetric endowments. When two countries are small (large), the availability of Preferential Trade Agreements decreases (increases) the stability of GFT. Furthermore, in equilibrium strategic complementarity between Customs Unions (CUs) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) can ensure GFT stability. As asymmetry increases, GFT becomes unattainable, and the MFN regime is the only stable outcome without PTAs.

Endogenous Trade Policy in the Presence of Lobbying and Heterogeneously Ignorant Voters with Giorgi Papava

Based on the Protection for Sale approach of Grossman and Helpman (1994) we develop a theoretical model in which exogenously organised groups provide political contributions to influence trade policy. The incumbent government cares about contributions yet simultaneously takes into account the potential reactions of voters. We formally consider citizens' voting decisions, assuming they have heterogeneous ignorance thresholds, and explicitly derive the objective function of the policy-maker. We find that the resulting equilibrium structure of protection differs from the standard case. Free trade obtains only if no group lobbies and ignorance levels are the same. On average, more ignorant groups will have lower (if any) protection from the policy-maker and, also, groups represented by lobbies will not always be supported by the incumbent government.

The Impartial Observer under Uncertainty with Stefan Berens

This paper extends Harsanyi's Impartial Observer Theorem by introducing Knightian Uncertainty in the form of individual belief systems. It features an axiomatic framework of societal decision-making in the presence of individual uncertainty. The model allows the analysis of scenarios where individuals agree on the ranking but not on the likelihood of social outcomes. The preferences of the impartial observer are expressed by a weighted sum of utilities - each representing individual preferences with different belief systems. To incorporate common criticism of the framework of Harsanyi (1953), our approach is based on the generalized version by Grant et al. (2010). The belief systems are introduced as second-order beliefs following Seo (2009).

WORK IN PROGRESS

Sectoral Labor Mobility and Trade Policy with Ana Burduli and Giorgi Papava




Global Supply Chains under plurilateral cooperation with Irene Iodice and Daria Taglioni

Free trade agreements versus customs unions: welfare decomposition with Gerald Willmann




Why do we observe 'tariff peaks' after the preferential liberalization? with Gerald Willmann

SELECTIVE POLICY RELATED RESEARCH




Quantifying the Impact of Foreign Investment Restrictions in Specific Sectors in Jordan

 USAID/Jordan, Economic Reform Activity  Senior Economist  2024




Corporate Income Tax System Evaluation

 USAID, GGI, ISET Policy Institute  Consultant  2023




Tax Expenditure Analysis for Georgia

 USAID, GGI, Georgian Ministry of Finance  Leading Expert  2021




RIA on Establishment of Employment Mechanism in Georgia

 PMCG, GIZ  Team Leader  2017

RIA on Estonian Corporate Income Tax Model Implementation in Georgia (in force since 01.01.2017)

 USAID, GFG, Association of Young Economists of Georgia  Leading Expert  2016

Joint Feasibility Study on Georgia-China Possible Free Trade Agreement (in force since 01.01.2018)

 PMC Research Center, University of International Business and Economics (China), Georgian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development  Leading Expert from Georgia  2015