

# Bianca Ravani Cecato

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## *EDUCATION*

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### **University of British Columbia**

**September 2017 – April 2023**

Ph.D. in Environmental & Resource Economics - Centre for Food, Resource and Environmental Economics (CFREE) – Faculty of Land and Food Systems.

- Research supervisors: Carol McAusland (LFS – UBC), and Patrick Baylis (VSE – UBC).
- Areas of concentration: Climate change mitigation; Economic effects of air pollution; Information and enforcement of environmental regulations.

- **Awards:**

- 4 Year Fellowship (4YF) for doctoral students.
- Best paper award at the 8th Canadian PhD and Early Career Workshop in Environmental and Resource Economics, for the paper “Newspapers, Information and Enforcement of Environmental Laws”.

### **Pontifícia Universidade Católica of Rio de Janeiro – PUC-Rio**

**May 2015**

Master of Arts in Economics

- Areas of concentration: Applied Microeconomics; Development Economics; Labor Economics.
- Thesis - The Labor Market Effects of Credit Shocks: Evidence from the 2008-09 Financial Crisis

- **Awards:** Master’s student fellowship by Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Capes), from the Brazilian Ministry of Education.

### **Fundação Getúlio Vargas**

**July 2012**

Bachelor of Arts in Economics

### **Università Luigi Bocconi, Milan, Italy**

**January - July 2011**

Undergraduate Exchange Program

## *PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENTS*

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### **Postdoctoral Fellow at Smart Prosperity Institute (SPI) – University of Ottawa**

**July 2023 – Present**

- Postdoctoral researcher conducting quantitative and qualitative research on nature-based solutions for climate in Canada.
- Focusing on strategies to conserve more carbon in forests and natural systems, preserve biodiversity and helping develop sustainable Indigenous economies in remote areas.

### **Research assistant at the Vancouver School of Economics (VSE) - UBC**

**January 2019 – April 2023**

- Research Assistant (under Professor Patrick Baylis) with intense programming in R, using air quality monitor data for air pollution and social media (twitter) data to measure people’s response to air quality.
- Joint appointment with the Energy Policy Institute (EPIC) from the University of Chicago for field work in New Delhi. Assisting in implementing a research control trial (RCT) experiment in the field of the economics of air pollution (October - November 2019).

### **UBC Sustainability Scholars Program in partnership with Metro Vancouver**

**May – August 2019**

- Summer internship for graduate students, under the mentorship of Metro Vancouver and the British Columbia Ministry of Environment.
- Solo authored a report for Metro Vancouver, which synthesized the outcomes of the various elements of a visual air quality pilot study for the region, and developed recommendations for improving visual air quality.

**Research Analyst, World Bank - Office of the Chief Economist of the Latin America and Caribbean Region (LCR-CE), Washington D.C, USA** **May 2015 – July 2017**

- Responsible for preparing database on energy prices for analysis; calculating fiscal and economic impacts of energy subsidies; assisting in the preparation of a final report.
- Provided valuable research assistance on various academic papers covering topics of labor, growth, and development. Duties included data preparation and analysis, writing reports, participating on meetings with economists and policy makers, and preparing presentations for various stakeholders.
- Assisted on the preparation of LCR-CE semi-annual policy reports to be presented for country ministers of World Bank members.

**Research assistant in joint project by PUC-Rio and Columbia University** **April 2014 – April 2015**

- The project aimed to investigate the impact of the minimum wage on capital and labor allocation decisions within firms.
- Research Assistant with intense Stata and SAS programming, using various Brazilian surveys: Brazilian Household surveys (PNAD and census), Brazilian matched employer-employee data (RAIS), Brazilian Annual Manufacturing Survey (PIA).

**Teaching Assistant – PUC-Rio** **March – December 2014**

- Undergraduate course in Development Economics.

**Teaching Assistant - UBC** **September 2018 – April 2022**

- Undergraduate course in economic and financial analysis for engineering students.
- Undergraduate course in food and resource economics.
- Undergraduate course in food systems.
- Tutoring Masters students, who were supported by Master Card Foundation, in econometrics and R programming.

## ***WORKING PAPERS***

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**Research Paper: Newspapers, Information and Enforcement of Environmental Laws**

**Abstract:** Can media outlets contribute to stricter monitoring and enforcement of environmental laws? This study investigates how newspaper closures affect environmental monitoring and enforcement activities by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. I propose a model of regulatory behavior where newspapers may influence the probability of detection of environmental violations by working as vehicles of information dissemination about the firms' environmental performance. I find that a daily newspaper closure leads to a drop in the number of inspections, detected violations, and enforcement actions that is within a range of 8%-22% of their yearly averages. Consistent with the information mechanism I propose in the model, I find evidence that newspapers serve as an informant to the regulator and to other firms, improving the effectiveness of regulation enforcement.

**Research Paper: Can Migration Mitigate Weather and Climate Damages?**  
**Joint work with Patrick Baylis (VSE – UBC) and Frederik Noack (LFS – UBC)**

**Abstract:** Extreme weather events threaten the lives and livelihoods of households across the developing world. Migration is a potentially important way to mitigate the cost of these events, but the degree to which it does in practice is not well known. This paper uses a repeated panel of household surveys from Indonesia to examine whether the effects of droughts on individual consumption are mitigated by the ability to migrate. By instrumenting between-survey migration with pre-existing migrant networks, we show that one standard deviation drop in annual precipitation in the origin location reduces consumption by 1.82% for non-migrant individuals, but that migrants are actually able to increase consumption. Given a one standard deviation drop in annual precipitation, the ability to migrate leads to an increase of about 13.9% in consumption over the medium run. These results suggest that removing barriers to migration is a promising strategy for mitigating climate damages.

**Research Paper: The impact of lead exposure on education: Evidence from Mexico**  
**Joint work with Erin Litzow (LFS – UBC) and Tatiana Zarete (LFS – UBC)**

**Abstract:** In the setting we study, a 2009 tightening of environmental standards in the United States caused used lead-acid battery recycling, an industry that emits large amounts of lead pollution, to shift to Mexico. We estimate the effects of this increased industrial activity and associated pollution on student learning in recipient communities in Mexico. We use data from a nationwide test in Spanish and math, conducted from 2006 to 2013. We compare test scores before and after the 2009 U.S. policy change among students attending schools near and downwind of Mexican recycling facilities and those studying farther away. We estimate effects on test scores of negative 0.05-0.09 standard deviations, with effects being slightly stronger for math than Spanish. Comparing dynamic effects across grades, we find suggestive evidence that effects are stronger for students who were younger in 2009. We also compare effects across communities, showing that the costs to education are heavily concentrated in communities that were already worse off before the 2009 change in lead-acid battery recycling activity. The results of our study underline the importance of considering unintended consequences and cross-border spillovers when regulating toxic pollutants. The heterogeneity of effects across communities highlights the need for more research on the costs of lead pollution exposure in low and middle-income countries, where the vast majority of exposure occurs today.

## ***POLICY REPORTS***

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**Report: Lower Fraser Valley Visual Air Quality Pilot Study: Synthesis of Findings**  
**In partnership with Metro Vancouver.**

**Summary:** This report synthesizes the outcomes of the various elements of the Lower Fraser Valley visual air quality pilot study and, where possible, identifies the key features of the study that could be relevant to developing recommendations for a visual air quality program. Regional work on visual air quality has been coordinated by the BC Visibility Coordinating Committee. Results, findings, and recommendations arising from the pilot study inform the development of actions for improving visual air quality.

## ***VOLUNTEER WORK***

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**Volunteer at Academy of Hope (adult public charter school)**

**February – June 2016**

- Volunteer as a tutor for mathematics.

**Volunteering in Favela Santa Marta (Santa Marta Slum), Rio de Janeiro**

**March – December 2010**

- Taught Mathematics and English to children of all ages.

## ***RELEVANT SKILLS***

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- **Languages:** Native Portuguese, fluent in English, advanced Spanish, basic Italian and French.
- **Technical skills:** Advanced Stata; Advanced R/Spatial data software; Intermediate SAS; Basic Python; Proficient in LaTeX and MS Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint).