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 Citizenship: Italian

Fields

Primary Fields: Labor Economics and Gender Economics
 Secondary Fields: Development Economics

Education

Ph.D., Economics, Northwestern University (anticipated) 2022
 Dissertation: Essays in Labor and Gender Economics
 Committee: Prof. Matthew Notowidigdo (Chair), Prof. Lori Beaman, Prof. Jonathan Guryan, Prof. Seema Jayachandran
 M.A. Economics, Northwestern University 2017
 M.Res., Economics, Université Catholique de Louvain, *Summa cum Laude* 2015
 B.A., Economics, University of Genoa, *Summa cum Laude* 2013

Fellowships & Awards

NBER Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program in Gender in the Economy, with Ashley Wong (\$27,000) 2021–2022
 Dissertation Year University Fellowship (DYUF), Northwestern University 2021–2022
 11th UniCredit Foundation Best Paper Award on Gender Economics, with Menaka Hampole and Ashley Wong (\$2,966) 2021
 Dissertation Fellowship from the Boston College Center for Retirement Research and the Social Security Administration (SSA), with Ashley Wong (\$28,000) 2020–2021
 Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award 2019–2020
 Buffett Institute Graduate Student Dissertation Research Travel Award, Northwestern University (\$2,000) 2019–2020
 Susan Schmidt Bies Prizes for Doctoral Student Research on Economics and Public Policy for best third-year Ph.D. student research paper 2019–2020
 Buffett Institute Graduate Student Dissertation Research Travel Award, Northwestern University (\$3,000) 2018–2019
 Universite Catholique de Louvain Fellowship 2015–2016
 Fellowship in Family Economics, Université Catholique de Louvain (declined) 2015–2019

Grants

JPAL Jobs and Opportunity Initiative, with Edward Asiedu, Monica Lambon-Quayefio, and Ashley Wong (\$49,979). 2020–2021
 The Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics, with Edward Asiedu, Monica Lambon-Quayefio, and Ashley Wong (\$24,480) 2020–2021
 PEDL Exploratory Research Grant, with Edward Asiedu, Monica Lambon-Quayefio, and Ashley Wong (\$51,331) 2020–2021
 JPAL Post-Primary Education Initiative, with Ashley Wong (\$48,510) 2019–2023
 The Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics, with Ashley Wong (\$39,452) 2018–2019
 Graduate Research Grant, Northwestern University (\$3,000) 2018–2019

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Northwestern University	
ECON 342: Economics of Gender	Fall 2020, Spring 2020, Winter 2019
ECON 340: Family Economics	Winter 2020
ECON 201: Introduction to Macroeconomics	Fall 2019
Teaching Assistant, Université Catholique de Louvain	
ECON 2122: Advanced Macroeconomics II (graduate)	Spring 2016
ECGE 1312: Public Economics	Spring 2016
POLS 1211: Macroeconomics	Spring 2016
ECGE 1115: Political Economics	Fall 2016
ECGE 1212: Macroeconomics	Fall 2016

Research Experience

Research Assistant, Prof. Dean Karlan, Northwestern University	Winter 2021
Research Assistant, Prof. Lori Beaman, Northwestern University	Fall 2017-Spring 2019

Presentations & Conferences

Workshop UniCredit Foundation - Bocconi on Gender Economics	(scheduled) 2021
6 th IZA Workshop: The Economics of Education	2021
4 th IZA Workshop on Gender and Family Economics: “Women in Leadership”	2021
Univesità degli Studi di Genova	2021
ASSA Annual Meetings, Career Progression – Glass Ceiling	2021
University of Michigan, H2D2 Research Day (poster session)	2020

Refereeing

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, Management Science, Journal of Demographic Economics

Service*Affiliations*

Graduate Affiliate at Buffett Institute for Global Studies, Northwestern University	2018 – Current
Graduate Affiliate at Institute for Innovations in Developmental Sciences (DevSci), Northwestern University	2018 – Current
Graduate Associate, Shepard Residential College, Northwestern University	2018 – Current

Mentoring

Economics Ph.D. Mentorship Program, Northwestern University	2019–Current
Graduates Mentoring Undergraduates Student Group, Northwestern University	2020–2021

Departmental Service

Empirics and Methods in Economics Conference (EMCON) Northwestern University and University of Chicago	2018, 2019
Applied micro workshop, Northwestern University	2019

Working Papers

“Peer Effects and the Gender Gap in Corporate Leadership: Evidence from MBA Students” [*Job Market Paper 1*] with Menaka Hampole and Ashley Wong

Abstract: Women continue to be underrepresented in corporate leadership positions. This paper studies the role of social connections in women’s career advancement. We investigate whether access to a larger share of female peers in business school affects the gender gap in senior managerial positions. Merging administrative data from a top-10 US business school with public LinkedIn profiles, we first document that female MBAs are 24 percent less likely than male MBAs to enter senior management within 15 years of graduation. Next, we use the random assignment of students into sections to show that a larger proportion of female MBA section peers increases the likelihood of entering senior management for women but not for men. This effect is driven by female-friendly firms, such as those with more generous maternity leave policies and greater work schedule flexibility. A larger proportion of female MBA peers induces women to transition to these firms where they attain senior management roles. We find suggestive evidence that some of the mechanisms behind these results include job referrals and gender-specific information transmission. These findings highlight the role of social connections in reducing the gender gap in senior management positions.

“Undergraduate Gender Diversity and Direction of Scientific Research” [*Job Market Paper 2*] with Ashley Wong

Abstract: Can diversity lead to greater research focus on populations underrepresented in science? Diverse researchers can bring new questions and perspectives, but exposure to diversity may also inspire scientists, regardless of demographic identity, to pursue new topics. This paper studies a new determinant of research ideas: the diversity of the academic environment. Between 1960 and 1990, 76 all-male US universities, including many elite and prominent research institutions, transitioned to coeducation. Using a generalized difference-in-differences design, we document a 42% increase in the number of gender-related research publications authored by scholars at newly coed universities. This increase is explained by a combination of a more diverse researcher pool in terms of gender and prior research interests, as well as a shift in the research focus of individual scientists towards more gender-related topics. A bounding exercise suggests that the direct effects of the policy on scientists’ research focus can account for more than half of these gains. These findings suggest that a diverse academic environment can influence the direction of scientific research.

“The Spillover Effects of Maternity Leave Extensions on Unemployment Insurance” with Ashley Wong

Abstract: This paper examines the fiscal externality of maternity leave extensions on unemployment insurance using German administrative data. We exploit a reform in Germany to show that extensions of maternity leave reduce mothers’ UI take-up by 20% and total unemployment benefits by 22% in the first five years after childbirth. The timing of the reduction suggests the use of UI as a substitute for income replacement in the absence of paid leave. Importantly for welfare calculations, the reduction in UI benefits is substantial and represents almost half of the increase in maternity leave benefits. However, while this reduces the cost of extending maternity leave, it also reduces the mothers’ willingness to pay for the policy as the additional maternity leave benefits are offset by the reduction in UI payments. Incorporating effects on UI substantively reduces the implied marginal value of public funds (MVPF) of the policy. We also document considerable heterogeneity of these estimates by pre-birth earnings.

Work in Progress

“Business Collaborations and Female Entrepreneurship” with Edward Asiedu, Monica Lambon-Quayefio, and Ashley Wong

Abstract: Search and contracting frictions can hinder the creation of business partnerships and the effectiveness of business collaborations. In developing countries, these relationships are often informal and conducted with family members and friends, suggesting that search costs and contracting frictions can be important barriers to firm growth. We conduct an RCT in Ghana on a sample of 1,772 female entrepreneurs to investigate the effect of an online matching service combined with access to legal information and advisory services on collaborations and firm performance. Specifically, we hypothesized that access to the matching service can alleviate search frictions. In addition, access to legal advisory may help mitigate contracting frictions by formalizing interfirm relationships and lowering risks of collaboration. The results of this study will shed light on the potential collaboration barriers faced by female entrepreneurs.

This study is registered in the AEA RCT Registry and the unique identifying number is: AEARCTR-0006439. *Data collection in progress.*

“Pension Caregiver Credits and the Gender Gap in Old-Age Income” with Fabio Blasutto and Ashley Wong

Abstract: We study a 2001 pension insurance reform in Germany that introduced additional caregiver credits for working mothers with children between the ages of 3 and 10. Using administrative social security data from Germany combined with a difference-in-differences design, we find that the reform leads to a 66.5% increase in yearly retirement contributions during the eligibility period. 66% of the total effect can be explained by a change in the labor market outcomes of eligible mothers, while the remaining 34% is the mechanical effect of the reform. We find a significant increase in employment earnings, driven by both an increase in employment and a switch from marginal to employment subject to social security contributions. This translates into a 9.1 percentage point (18.3%) reduction in the gender gap in lifetime non-marginal earning points. Finally, a simple life-cycle model predicts that the pension reform leads to a 9.8% increase in retirement income and a 12% reduction in the gender gap in old-age income.

“Saving for a (not so) Rainy Day: A Randomized Evaluation of Savings Groups in Mali” with Lori Beaman, Dean Karlan and Bram Thuysbaert

Abstract: High transaction and contracting costs are often thought to create credit and savings market failures in developing countries. The microfinance movement grew largely out of business process innovations and subsidies that reduced these costs. We examine an alternative approach, one that infuses no external capital and introduces no change to formal contracts: an improved technology for managing informal, collaborative village-based savings groups. Such groups allow, in theory, for more efficient and lower-cost loans and informal savings, and in practice have been scaled up by international non-profit organizations to millions of members. Individuals save together and then lend the accumulated funds back out to themselves. In a randomized evaluation in Mali, we find improvements in food security, consumption smoothing, and buffer stock savings. Although we do find suggestive evidence of higher agricultural output, we do not find overall higher income or expenditure. We also do not find downstream impacts on health, education, social capital, and female decision-making power. Could this have happened before, without any external intervention? Yes. That is what makes the result striking, that indeed there were no resources provided nor legal institutional changes, yet the NGO-guided, improved informal processes led to important changes for households.

Other Research

“The Effects of Academic Calendar on Faculty Outcomes” with Valerie Bostwick, Stefanie Fischer, and Ashley Wong

“Effect of Beliefs and Gender Roles on Girls’ Math Education” with Ashley Wong

This study is registered in the AEA RCT Registry and unique identifying number is: AEARCTR-0003054. *Data collection completed*

Languages

English (fluent), Italian (native), French (intermediate)

References

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