

Andrea Salvati

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Education

Ph.D. in Economics, Rice University	(Expected) 2022
M.Sc in Economics (<i>Summa cum Laude</i>), University of Bologna	2014
B.Sc. Economics and Finance, University of Cagliari	2011

Research Fields

Primary: Economics of Education

Secondary: Labor Economics, Applied Microeconomics, Public Economics.

Working Papers

“Tailoring Instruction to Students’ Knowledge: Teacher Rewards, Peer Spillovers, and The Impact of Ability Tracking on Student Achievement” (Job Market Paper)

This paper develops and estimates an equilibrium model of endogenous instruction and student effort to empirically investigate the relationship between instructional choices, classroom composition, and student achievement. The model allows teachers to vary in instructional ability and to value differently the achievement of students with different levels of prior knowledge. Using a unique dataset that combines school administrative data with rich information on instructional practices from five US school districts, I find that teachers attach a higher value to the achievement of students at lower quantiles of the distribution. I further explore the model’s implications by simulating a counterfactual scenario where I track students into classrooms based on prior test score performance. Results show that tracking has heterogeneous effects on students with different levels of prior knowledge. Moreover, the distribution of these effects depends on the mechanism used to assign teachers to classrooms. In particular, the combination of tracking with the assignment of high-ability teachers to lower tracks would benefit students at the bottom tercile of the distribution despite the lower level of peer quality.

“An Evaluation of the Alief Independent School District Jump Start Program: Using a Model to Recover Mechanisms from an RCT”, with Flávio Cunha and Kenneth I. Wolpin. (Revise and Resubmit at *Quantitative Economics*)

Recent research shows that the substantial differences in school readiness observed at the beginning of Kindergarten across socio-economic groups are partly due to disparities in the quality of childrens early environment. Theory, consistent with a wide range of data, suggests that early interventions that target malleable, fundamental skills during sensitive periods of development in early childhood could help close these gaps. Indeed, empirical evidence shows that small-scale parenting interventions implemented by high-quality staff can lead to an improvement in parental investments and a boost in child development. Evidence about the impact of large-scale parenting interventions is more mixed. This paper reports the results of the evaluation of a parenting intervention developed and implemented by the Alief Independent School District in Texas. The goal of the intervention is to encourage and train parents to teach their children foundational skills for Pre-K. The results of a randomized controlled trial based on three yearly cohorts show that the program impacted parental investments and child development as measured by two different tests of school readiness. We go beyond reporting program impacts by building and estimating a model of parental choice of input levels. Our model allows for a production function of knowledge that features individual-specific coefficients that capture the marginal productivity of parental inputs. We find that the mechanism we posit for the programs impact is validated by the model estimates.

Work in Progress

“An Evaluation of a Food Scholarship Program on College Graduation”, with Flávio Cunha and Kenneth I. Wolpin.

“Social Interactions and the Effect of Bullying on Skill Development”, with Qinyou Hu.

Publications (Pre-PhD)

“Incentives to Local Public Service Provision: An Evaluation of Italy’s *Obiettivi di Servizio*”, with G. Barone, G. de Blasio, and A. D’Ignazio, *Papers in Regional Science*, 98, 1195-1213, 2019

Research Experience

Research Intern, Bank of Italy 2014-2015

Research Assistant

Professor Kenneth I. Wolpin, Rice University	2016-2020
Prof. G. Bellettini, Prof. C. Berti Ceroni, and Prof. C. Monfardini, University of Bologna	2014-2015
Professor Giorgio Bellettini and Enrico Cantoni, University of Bologna	2013

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Rice University Fall 2015–Present

Graduate: Computational Economics (2017), Macroeconomics I (2016)

Undergraduate: Economics of Human Capital (2017), Mathematical Economics (2020-2021), Political Economy (2018), International Economics (2016-2018,2021), Principles of Economics (2015-2016).

Teaching Assistant, University of Bologna 2015
Economics Statistics (Spring 2015)

Other Experience

Summer School in Dynamic Structural Econometrics, University of Chicago	2019
Project Assistant, Gene Campaign NGO (New Delhi, India)	2014
Summer School in Advanced Econometrics, London School of Economics	2013
Erasmus Exchange Program, Bogazici University (Istanbul, Turkey)	2013

Scholarships, Honors, and Awards

Rice Fellowship, Rice University	2015-2021
Bonaldo Stringer Particularly Deserving Award, Bank of Italy	2015
Erasmus Scholarship, Bogazici University	2013

Conferences and Seminars

2021: SSES Annual Congress, ESPE Annual Conference, EEA-ESEM Conference, Labor Econometrics Workshop (Monash University), EALE Annual Conference, SEA Annual meeting (scheduled), GEEZ seminar (scheduled)

2020: Rice Economics Department Seminar

Skills

Languages: Italian (native), English

Programming skills: R, Fortran, Stata, Julia, MATLAB, \LaTeX , C (beginner), C++ (beginner)

References

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