

# Elisa Macchi

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## REFERENCES

Lorenzo Casaburi, Assistant Professor of Economics, University of Zürich.  
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Ernst Fehr, Professor of Economics, University of Zürich.  
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David Yanagizawa-Drott, Professor of Economics, University of Zürich.  
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## Education

1 Aug '15 -	PH.D. in Economics, UZH Zürich (expected completion: June 2021)
Jul '15	M. PHIL. in Economics (LMEC), Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna
Jul '13	B.A. in Economics and Business, Università degli Studi di Milano - Bicocca

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## Visiting Positions

Sep '18 - Jul '19	VISITING FELLOW Economics Department, Harvard University (sponsor: Prof. Dr. Benjamin Enke)
Sep '12	ERASMUS SEMESTER Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

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## Working Papers

"Worth your weight: Experimental Evidence on the Benefits of Obesity in Low-Income Countries."  
[job-market paper]

This paper provides experimental evidence on the wealth-signaling value and associated financial benefits of obesity in a low-resource setting. My empirical strategy leverages two experiments, which randomly assign obesity using weight-manipulated portraits. I provide three main results. First, residents of Kampala (Uganda) perceive obesity as a reliable signal of wealth (against other traits, e.g. beauty or health). Second, the body-mass wealth signal is exploited to mitigate asymmetric information in credit markets and in turn, being obese has financial benefits. In a real-stake field experiment with 124 Kampala credit institutions, professional loan officers screen borrowers based on body mass. Obesity facilitates access to credit: looking at loan officers' evaluations, going from normal weight to obese is equivalent to increasing borrower's income by 60%. Third, the obesity premium is driven by asymmetric information. To test for the wealth-signaling hypothesis, I vary the amount of borrowers' financial information available to the lenders: reducing the degree of asymmetric information lowers the obesity premium by two-thirds. While these results could

be consistent with standard screening mechanisms, loan officers appear to place too much weight on obesity as a wealth signal —possibly distorting the allocation of credit. On the borrowers' side, obesity benefits are commonly known and significantly overestimated —thus inefficiently raising the perceived cost of healthy behaviors.

*"EU Transfers and Euroscepticism: Can't Buy Me Love?"*, with A. Borin and M. Mancini [*forthcoming, Economic Policy*]

The future of an institution, such as the European Union, ultimately depends on people's support. This paper investigates whether EU redistributive policies have improved public attitudes towards European integration, both in terms of public opinion and political preferences. We focus on Cohesion Policy funds, whose allocation allows us to single out these effects by means of a regression discontinuity approach. The results show that EU transfers have mitigated the rise of Eurosceptical attitudes and reduced political consensus for anti-EU parties. The effects are homogeneous across different socio-economic groups, including the most disadvantaged ones. The improvement in public support for the EU does not appear to be exclusively a spillover of the positive economic effect of funding; we show evidence suggesting the existence of a 'reciprocity-effect' channel, i.e. citizens in recipient regions recognize the beneficial role of the EU as the source of funding.

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## Work-in Progress

*"Obesity Benefits and Malnutrition: Evidence from Uganda"*

*"Pressure to Employ, Productivity and Technology Adoption: Experimental Evidence from Rural Uganda"*, with B. Caprettini (UZH).

*"The Mental Health of Graduate Students and Professors: Evidence from European Economics Departments"*, with P. Barreira (Harvard) and C. Sievert (Harvard).

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## Grants & Honors

July '20	<i>Diligentia Stiftung Research Grant</i> , with D. Yanagizawa-Drott (USD 39'500)
July '21	<i>Swiss Re Fund for Development Economic - Top-up grant</i> (USD 10'800)
Dec '19	<i>GRC Travel Grant</i> (USD 2'800)
Sep '19	<i>Swiss Re Fund for Development Economics</i> (USD 27'000, maximum amount)
May '19	<i>Director's Grant Zurich GSE</i> (USD 5'400, maximum amount)
Nov '18	<i>SNSF Doc. Mobility scholarship</i>
Mar '17	<i>B. Stringher scholarship (particolarmente meritevole)</i> • Banca D'Italia
Mar '15	PhD scholarship • University of Zürich
Jan '14	Unicredit <i>Ad Honorem</i> • Unicredit S.p.a.
Sep '14	LMEC top-four-students scholarship • Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna
2010- '12	Merit-based scholarships • Università degli Studi di Milano - Bicocca

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## Conferences & seminar presentations

2020	NEUDC, Dartmouth (virtual); <i>BREAD/CEPR/STICERD/TCD</i> (virtual); <i>DEVPEC</i> , Stanford (virtual); <i>Essen Health Conference</i> (virtual); <i>Early Career Behavioral Economics Conference</i> , BRIQ; <i>Internal</i>
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2019	<i>Applied Microeconomics Seminar</i> , University of Zürich. <i>Development Economics Lunch</i> , Harvard; <i>Internal Applied Microeconomics Seminar</i> , University of Zürich; <i>Development Economics Lunch</i> , Harvard; <i>Political Economy and Culture Workshop</i> , Harvard; <i>Project Design seminar</i> , University of Zürich.
2018	<i>Political Economy Seminar</i> , Government department, Harvard; Accepted for poster presentation at SSDEV; <i>Internal Applied Microeconomics Seminar</i> , University of Zürich.
2017	<i>European Trade Study Group (ETSG)</i> , European University Institute and University of Florence; <i>Internal Applied Microeconomics Seminar</i> , University of Zürich.

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## Teaching Experience

Spring '18	<i>T.A., Econometrics for Policy Analysts</i> (M.A.), University of Zürich
Fall '17	<i>T.A., Labor Economics</i> (M.A.), University of Zürich
Spring '17	<i>T.A., Intermediate Econometrics</i> (B.A.), University of Zürich

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## Relevant Employment History and Professional Activities

Jan '18	PhD Member of hiring committee for 2 positions in "Economics of Child and Youth Development / with a focus on breastfeeding." Economics department, University of Zürich.
Jan '17- Jan '19	Research Assistant for Fabrizio Zilibotti, SNSF Project " <i>Inequality, cultural transmission, and human capital accumulation</i> "
Jun '17- Sep '17	Ph.D. Intern, DG Economics, Statistics and Research, Bank of Italy

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## Personal skills

### IT

Stata • R • Python •  $\text{\LaTeX}$  • OTree • HTML (beginner)

### LANGUAGES

Italian (native) • English (fluent) • Spanish (fluent) • German (advanced)