

Giulio Schinaia

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Academic Appointments

Postdoctoral Scholar University of Chicago, US 2023-

Education

DPhil (PhD) in Economics	University of Oxford, UK	2019-2023
MPhil in Economics	University of Oxford, UK	2014-2016
BSc in Economics (1st Class Honours)	University of York, UK	2010-2013
Undergraduate Exchange Student	University of Sydney, Australia	2011-2012

Research interests

Development, Behavioral, Labor, and Organizational Economics

Job Market Paper

Information Frictions and Bargaining: Experimental Evidence From Rural Guinea-Bissau (with Brais Álvarez Pereira, Adewusi Mendonça, Dayvikson Raiss Laval Tavares)

Abstract: We study how providing market information and financial advice affects producers' sales decisions and negotiation strategies. Using a nationwide cluster-randomized trial with cashew producers across 290 villages in Guinea-Bissau, we randomly assigned access to weekly updates with market news, farmgate prices, and sales guidance during the trading season. The intervention increased sale prices and encouraged producers to spread sales across multiple transactions. We find treated producers switched buyers and earned higher margins during periods of higher prices. Our results suggest low-cost digital advisory services can increase price pass-through to producers in agricultural commodity markets.

Working papers

The Future in Mind: Aspirations and Long-term Outcomes in Rural Ethiopia (with Tanguy Bernard, Stefan Dercon, Kate Orkin, Alemayehu Seyoum Taffesse)

Conditionally Accepted, Quarterly Journal of Economics

Abstract: Aspirations may condition the future-oriented choices of individuals and thus may play a role in the persistence of poverty or the effort to break out of it. We run a randomized control trial in remote, rural Ethiopia to evaluate an intervention aiming to change how poor people perceive their future opportunities. A treatment group was shown documentaries featuring relatable role models. Five years later, treated households had increased future-oriented investments in agriculture, education, and assets, explained by higher aspirations in lifetime goals. This research provides rare evidence that a light-touch behavioral intervention can have persistent economic impacts in poor populations.

Individual Demand for Building State Effectiveness

(with Yetsedaw Emagne Bekele, Harry Dienes, Dan Rogger)

(With Debrah Ellingsen, Emily Price, and Maggie)
Abstract: Investments in public sector workers' human capital can generate social returns by improving service delivery and state effectiveness. Yet it is unclear whether public workers internalize these broader benefits when making investment decisions. We elicit willingness-to-pay (WTP) for professional development from Ethiopian public servants and embed randomized interventions targeting anticipated benefits. Baseline WTP is positive but below implementation costs. Explicitly emphasizing private benefits modestly raises demand compared to highlighting societal returns. Implicitly increasing the salience of a supportive managerial environment substantially increases WTP, underscoring the role of perceived organizational norms in public service investment decisions.

Selected Work in Progress

Long-run Effects of Increased Access to Asset-collateralized Loans

(with Joshua Deutschmann, Alex Lehner, Michael Kremer)

Abstract: We study the long-run impacts of a temporary expansion in access to water-tank financing for dairy farmers in Kenya. In 2012, farmers were randomly offered a loan with less-restrictive borrowing conditions, enabling treated farmers to acquire water tanks up to seven years earlier. By 2023, control households caught up in tank ownership, but spillovers persisted through technology adoption among neighbors and along milk transporter routes. Treated farmers sold 10% more milk between 2013–2022, held higher savings, relied less on credit for school fees, and invested more in girls' education.

Shifting Management for Performance in the Ethiopian Civil Service

(with Yetsedaw Emagne Bekele, Harry Dienes, Dan Rogger)

Abstract: This study evaluates how exposing public sector middle managers to different management styles influences their beliefs about effective management and organizational performance. We test whether exposing Ethiopian public managers to alternative leadership styles can shift beliefs about effective management, affect learning, and ultimately improve administrative performance. In a randomized controlled trial with middle managers in Ethiopia, participants viewed video narratives depicting either enabling or monitoring supervisory styles, followed by reinforcement messages via email and SMS. We measure impacts on managers' own styles, attitudes, and the performance of their units, drawing on surveys of treated managers, their supervisors, and their supervisees. This study is the first to test a scalable, light-touch intervention designed to change management practices, and the first to account for the hierarchical nature of organizations—particularly in the public sector—by capturing effects across multiple layers of management.

Direct and Indirect Communication Strategies to Deliver Market Information

(with Brais Álvarez Pereira, Aliu BÁ, Nério Cá, Aida Embaló, Mattia Fracchia, Matilde Graçio, Adewusi Mendonça, Dayvikson Raiss Laval Tavares)

Abstract: Access to timely market information can enhance bargaining power in transactions, yet subscription information services reach only a small portion of the market. We conducted a cluster randomized control trial in 187 villages in Guinea-Bissau to compare different channels for disseminating market information. In one third of the villages, producers could receive market updates directly through a subscription service using robocalls and an interactive voice-response system. In the remaining two-thirds of the villages, farmers had access to the service but also received information from community-appointed liaisons who were provided with market updates through weekly calls to a helpline. The liaisons then shared this information with farmers either individually or through group meetings. Amid a challenging cashew season in which prices fell to exceptionally low levels, we found greater use of the service in villages with liaisons and, in some cases, lower prices. This price reduction was observed only in villages where liaisons were appointed by local authorities and not in those where they were chosen democratically. These results indicate that, while human intermediaries can improve access to direct subscription services that provide farming information, the selection method affects effectiveness, underscoring the importance of considering local governance when designing market-advisory interventions.

Labour Market Effects of Ethiopia's Social Safety Net

Abstract: This paper assesses how a flagship social protection program that provides extra income and food, often in exchange for public works, affects local labor markets in Ethiopia. Using repeated cross-sections of the National Labour Force Survey, I show that the program did not change employment rates or wages in this rural economy. Instead, I find that workers shifted from agricultural to non-agricultural self-employment. I complement this analysis using data from the Ethiopian Socio-Economic surveys and find similar results. These results are at odds with previous work due to the thinness of rural wage markets in Ethiopia.

Grants and Awards

IGC Large Research Grant	GBP 60,000	2024
UK Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology	GBP 57,135	2024
IGC Early Career Research Grant	GBP 19,987	2022
Economics Department Doctoral Bursary	GBP 6,754	2022
World Bank Group Knowledge for Change Program	USD 74,065	2021
Economics Department Doctoral Bursary	GBP 8,419	2021
Standing Panel on Impact Assessments Small Grant	USD 5,000	2021
Luca D'Agliano Scholarship	EUR 10,000	2019

Academic Presentations

2025: UChicago, ESWC (Seoul), MWIEDC (UIUC), CSAE,
2024: Illinois Urbana-Champaign, AFE (LSE), PacDev (Stanford),
IGC Ethiopia Sustainable Growth (Addis Ababa),
2023: EWMES (Manchester), IGIER Reading Group (Bocconi),
NOVAFRICA-BELAB (Bissau), AYEW workshop (Warwick/Monash),
2018-2022: CEPR/IFS/UCL/BREAD/TCD Workshop, AFE (UChicago),
EDWRG seminar (UofJohannesburg), ICDE (CERDI), IFAD, NOVAFRICA (x2),
PEP Convening (UC Berkeley), PacDev (USF), NEUDC (BU), CSAE (x2),
Africa MES (ENSEA-Abidjan), CSAE Workshop (Addis Ababa), EEA

Teaching Experience

University of Oxford (undergraduate):

Teaching Assistant, Development Economics	2023
Teaching Assistant, Econometrics	2022-2023
Stipendiary Lecturer, Econometrics; Microeconomics; Intro. to Stats.	2022

University of Oxford (graduate):

Seminar Leader, Evidence in Public Policy (MPP)	2021
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Refereeing

American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Journal of African Economies (x2)

Policy Reports

- [Catalyzing Innovation: Scaling Solutions for Resilient Agriculture, with IFC Impact Evaluation Team and Innovation Commission Secretariat.](#) 2025. International Finance Corporation.
- [Measuring the Impacts of The Ethiopian Management Institute Training and Consulting Services, with Y. Emagne, H. Dienes, D. Rogger.](#) 2023. World Bank.
- [Investing in Human Capital and Foundational Skills, with E. Gardner in Guinea-Bissau Country Economic Memorandum.](#) 2020. World Bank, pp. 47-73.
- [Guinea-Bissau Malaria Indicator Survey 2017 Report, with A. Rodrigues, C. Martins, R. da Silva, B. da Silva, A. Balde, and T. Hall.](#) 2018. Bissau Health Project.

Other Professional Experience

Research Assistant for Stefan Dercon, Rob Garlick, and Kate Orkin <i>Centre for The Study of African Economies, University of Oxford</i>	2018-2021
Short Term Consultant <i>World Bank (MTI & SPJ Global Practices), Guinea-Bissau</i>	2018, 2020
Research Consultant for Amabélia Rodrigues <i>Bandim Health Project, Guinea-Bissau</i>	2018
Economic Advisor, Overseas Development Institute Fellow <i>Ministry of Education, Guinea-Bissau</i>	2016-2018
Research Assistant for Girum Abebe, Stefano Caria, and Simon Franklin <i>Ethiopian Development Research Institute & CSAE</i>	2015
Assistant Economist, International and EU Directorate <i>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK</i>	2013-2014

<i>Languages</i>	English, French, Italian, Portuguese
<i>Software</i>	Matlab, Python, QGis, R, SQL, Stata
<i>Citizenship</i>	Italy, United Kingdom