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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Primary: labour economics; economics of education, skills and human capital.
Secondary: microeconometrics; intergenerational mobility.

REFERENCES

Ghazala Azmat
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Jean-Marc Robin
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Robert Gary-Bobo
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EDUCATION

Sciences Po, Paris, France
Ph.D. in Economics, 2017–2021 (Expected).
Supervisors: Prof. Ghazala Azmat & Prof. Jean-Marc Robin.
M.Sc. in Economics, Sept. 2015 – July 2017. Summa cum laude (top 2%).

University of Cambridge, England
Advanced Diploma in Economics, Sept. 2013 – July 2014.

University of Birmingham, England
B.Sc. in Mathematics and Chemistry, Sept. 2008 – July 2012. First-class honours.

RESEARCH PAPERS

The role of earnings expectations versus non-pecuniary factors in university attendance

Why do some people choose to attend university, and enjoy state-subsidised benefits, while others do not? I shed new light on this key issue by comparing and quantifying the roles of earnings expectations and non-pecuniary factors in educational decisions and career choices. I also investigate changes over time, and the implications for social mobility. To do this, I specify a Roy-like model of educational choice, in which I explicitly include earnings expectations and other, non-pecuniary, factors. I estimate my model on detailed longitudinal data from two UK cohorts, using information on students' choices and their later wages. In particular, I exploit data on students' expectations

about key non-pecuniary outcomes both at, and after, university. I find that income maximisation, despite its prevalent role in the literature, is only a small part of the story: non-pecuniary factors are four times as important as earnings expectations in determining whether someone goes to university. Non-pecuniary factors also drive the SES-gap in educational attainment, and are responsible for the huge growth in degree attainment between the 1970 and 1990 cohorts. I then specify an improved model of earnings expectations, allowing for unobserved heterogeneity in students' earnings expectations. I use a novel technique to estimate the model via the EM-algorithm, which I developed with coauthors in another project. Estimation of this updated model is currently ongoing.

A non-parametric finite-mixture approach to difference-in-difference estimation, with an application to professional training and wages
with Robert Gary-Bobo, Julie Pernaudet, and Jean-Marc Robin.

We develop a finite-mixture framework for nonparametric difference-in-difference analysis with unobserved heterogeneity correlating treatment and outcome. Our framework includes an instrumental variable for the treatment, and we demonstrate that our method allows us to relax the no common trend restriction usually required in difference-in-difference analysis. We also show that outcomes can be Markovian provided there are multiple post-treatment observations. Our main theoretical contributions are the substitution of an instrument for the common-trends assumption, and a non-parametric identification proof. Empirically, we apply our framework to evaluate the effect of on-the-job/professional (re)training on wages, using novel French linked employee-employer data. Estimating our model using the EM-algorithm, we find small ATEs and ATTs on hourly wages of between 2% and 3%. However, we find larger effects on hours and annual wages with both ATEs and ATTs of over 5%. Extending our model to include *observed* as well as unobserved heterogeneity produces very similar results.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Revisiting the wage returns to university via a non-parametric finite-mixture approach to difference-in-difference estimation

Using a novel methodology I estimate the wage returns to a university education in the UK for two cohorts separated by 20 years: one who left school at the beginning of a period of huge expansion in university attainment (1988) and the other who left school as the expansion slowed (2008). I exploit the economic content of the Roy model to justify exclusion restrictions, allowing non-parametric identification of a model with unobserved heterogeneity. My estimation strategy allows wages to be Markovian (where there are sufficient post-treatment observations), so I can compare results on short panels (both cohorts) with those exploiting longer panels (1988 school leavers). I assume individuals can be classified into a finite number of types, which affect both their ability at school and their productivity. I can exploit test scores (from secondary school) and wages (at age 25 and after) to estimate these latent types, which along with exclusion restrictions permit estimation of a range of important treatment effects. Estimation via the EM-algorithm is currently ongoing.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Sciences Po, Paris
Graduate Microeconomics 3, Teaching Assistant (TA), 2017–2018.
Introduction to Econometrics (Undergraduate), Lecturer, 2018–2019.
Intermediate Microeconomics (Undergraduate), TA, 2017–2019. Head TA, 2020.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Department for Transport, London, England
Summer internship, Government Economic Service, 2016

Technopolis, Brighton, England
Economic consultant, 2014-2015

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

Doctoral School Scholarship, Sciences Po, 2017–2020.
Summa cum Laude (top 2%), Sciences Po, 2015–2017.
Natural Sciences Award, University of Birmingham, 2009.

CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

2019: Sciences Po Lunch Seminar.
2018: Sciences Po Lunch Seminar.
2017: PhD Seminar, Sciences Po.

COMPUTER SKILLS

R, Stata, Julia.

LANGUAGES

English (native), French (conversational).