Raul Mathias Leon

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PERSONAL PROFILE

My primary research focus is on econometric theory, with a specific aim: developing statistical methods to enhance public policy. I am particularly intrigued by topics such as partial identification, "benign overfitting" and double randomization strategies for mediation analysis. In applied areas, I am interested in studying problems that present identification difficulties, such as peer effects in classrooms, neighborhood effects and their relation to intergenerational mobility, and, more recently, identification issues present in persistence studies (deep roots).

EDUCATION

- **The University of Chicago** *August, 2023 - Present*
  Master of Arts in Public Policy Studies with a Certificate in Research Methods IL, US
  - PhD level coursework: Applied Econometrics sequence I-III (A), Game Theory (A), A Course in Experimental Economics (A), Social Interactions (A), Empirical Analysis II (Audit), Econometrics with Partial identification (Audit)
  - GPA: 3.95/4.00

- **The University of Queensland** *February - December, 2022*
  Bachelor of Economics (Honours) Brisbane, AUS
  - First Class Honours in Econometrics
  - PhD level coursework: Advanced Econometric Theory (7/7), Advanced Microeconometrics (7/7), Macroeconomics A (7/7), Microeconomics A and B (6/7), Computational Methods in Economics (Audit)

- **The University of Queensland** *August, 2019 - December, 2021*
  Bachelor of Economics Brisbane, AUS
  - Major in Quantitative Methods

- **Universidad Nacional de Música** *2016 – 2017*
  Associate Degree in Music Performance with a Specialization in Oboe Lima, Peru

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- **Harris School of Public Policy** *March, 2024 - Present*
  Research assistant for Prof. Christopher Blattman and Prof. Scott Gehlbach IL., Chicago
  - I work on the project "The Personalist Penalty: Varieties of Autocracy and Economic Growth" that aims to contribute to a decades-long literature focusing on comparing income growth in democracies versus autocracies.
  - Developed the robustness analysis section of the paper
  - Automated Stata-to-LaTeX table creation and developed the replication package
  - Constructed databases and conducted a literature review
  - Developed methodologies for "Who Joins Drug-Selling Gangs and Why? Occupational Choice among Teenage Boys in Medellin". This project utilizes a population-based survey of all 7th–8th grade boys in high-risk neighborhoods, complemented by experimental interventions targeting the highest-risk youth.

- **Harris School of Public Policy** *March, 2024 - Present*
  Apprenticehsip under the supervision of Prof. Steven Durlauf IL., Chicago
  - Conducted an extensive literature review on persistence studies
  - Develop research ideas for academic papers
  - Formalize the identification challenges of deep-roots
  - Participate and contribute to the Inequality Working Group, Stone Center for Research on Wealth Inequality and Mobility

- **Center for The Economics of Human Development** *August, 2023 - Present*
  Research assistant for Prof. James J. Heckman and Dr. Sadegh Eshaghnia IL., Chicago
  - I work on the "The Origins and Persistence of Inequality" project which uses data from Denmark and the US to measure intergenerational inequality across a wide number of dimensions to understand the mechanisms behind how parents' resources and investments in their children, along with social influence, serve to create opportunities.
  - Construct databases and replicate findings from existing literature
  - Analyze sorting patterns to examine selection into neighborhood
  - Estimating neighborhood value-added measures, intergenerational elasticity (IGE) as well as rank-rank correlations
  - Conduct mediation and sensitivity analyses
  - Conduct inference on moment inequalities

- **Universidad de Lima** *November, 2022 - February 2023*
  Research assistant for Prof. Ricardo Nieva IL., Chicago
  - The project produced empirical evidence for a new general equilibrium theory of corruption and its relation with labor productivity and the complexity of goods produced in an economy. The model used in the study extends the Tullock contest model by letting identical workers and a non-productive enforcer contest over a resource.
  - Assist in literature review and database construction
  - Data analysis via dynamic panel data methods in Stata
- **The University of Queensland** *May – December, 2022*
  Research assistant for Dr. Edgar Brea, University of Queensland IL., Chicago
  - The project built predictive models to nowcast Australian firms' innovativeness
  - Mine textual data from firms' website and scrape annual reports PDFs using R
  - Train and test supervised learning models predicting the innovativeness of firms listed in the ASX using R
  - Construct data-based indicators from the ASX firms using natural language processing methods

WORKING PAPERS AND WORK IN PROGRESS T= HONOURS THESIS, N = NSF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

[T] *"When Excellence Backfires: The Impact of Superstars on Peers"* with Rigissa Megalokonomou (Monash)
Presented at the Applied Young Economist Webinar (AYEW) - (Warwick)

[N] *"Testing for Mechanisms Driving Neighborhood Effects"*

TEACHING

- Applied Econometrics II (PhD level), for Prof. Ingvil Gaarder, *Harris School of Public Policy* Winter 2025
- Applied Econometrics I (PhD level), for Prof. Steven Durlauf, *Harris School of Public Policy* Fall 2024

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Merit Award, Harris School of Public Policy, 2023-2025
- CEMFI Summer School Scholarship: awarded on a merit basis, Center for Monetary and Financial Studies, 2023
- Lima Summer SE Scholarship: awarded on a merit basis to pursue two graduate courses, jointly from the Lima School of Economics and Vancouver School of Economics, 2023
- Scholarship for academic performance: "Thomas A. Plein Endowed Scholarship", from University of Queensland, 2022
- Dean's Commendation for Academic Excellence, from The University of Queensland, 2021 and 2022
- UQ Future Leader (awarded to the top 5% of graduates), from The University of Queensland, 2021
- Scholarship for excellence in social service and academic performance: "Latin America Global Leaders Scholarship", from The University of Queensland, 2019

REFERENCES

Professor
Steven N. Durlauf
Harris School of Public Policy
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Rigissa Megalokonomou
Monash University
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Professor
Christopher Blattman
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Professor
Scott Gehlbach
Harris School of Public Policy
✉ gehlbach@uchicago.edu

SHORT COURSES

- *Advanced Numerical Methods in Macroeconomics (jointly taught by Jesús Fernández-Villaverde, UPenn and Galo Nuño, BIS)*
- *Machine Learning for Economics (Prof. Vadim Marmer, UBC)*
- *Difference in Differences: Foundations and New Methodology (Prof. Sebastian Tello-Trillo, Batten)*
- *Extra: Description of Selected Advanced Courses*

SKILLS

- R, STATA, Python, LaTeX