

VALERIA ZURLA

Contact Information

Brown University
Department of Economics
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Personal Information

Born December 10, 1991, Italian Citizen

Undergraduate Studies

BA in Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University (*Summa cum Laude*), 2013
Visiting Student, Dartmouth College, Fall 2012

Graduate Studies

MSc in Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University (*Summa cum Laude*), 2015
MA in Economics, Brown University, 2017
Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, Brown University, 2017- 2022 (Expected)

References:

Professor Emily Oster
Department of Economics
Brown University

Professor John N. Friedman
Department of Economics
Brown University

Professor Neil Thakral
Department of Economics
Brown University

Teaching and Research Fields:

Primary fields: Public Economics, Gender Economics
Secondary fields: Labor Economics, Health Economics

Teaching Experience:

Summer 2019, Introduction to Statistics, MPA Brown University, teaching fellow
2020
Summer 2019, Introductory Microeconomics, MPA Brown University, teaching fellow
2020
Spring 2016 Empirical Research Methods, Undergraduate level Bocconi University,
teaching fellow

Research Experience and Other Employment:

2017-2020 Brown University, Research Assistant for Professor Emily Oster

2016	Bocconi University, Research Assistant for Professor Fabiano Schivardi and Professor Guido Tabellini
2016	Bocconi University, Research Assistant for Professor Fabiano Schivardi and Professor Tom Schmitz
2015	Bocconi University, Research Assistant for Professor Fabiano Schivardi
2013-2014	Action Institute, Research Associate

Professional Activities:

2021	Seminar presentations: PAA Conference, VisitINPS seminar, Brown Applied Micro Lunch, Brown Health Breakfast, AIEL Annual Conference of Labor Economics (scheduled)
2020	Seminar presentations: PAA Conference (canceled due to Covid-19), Brown Health Breakfast
2019	Seminar presentations: Brown Applied Micro Lunch, Brown Health Breakfast
2018	Seminar presentations: Brown Applied Micro Lunch, Brown Health Breakfast
2018	NBER Health Economics Research Boot Camp
2018-2019	Organizer Applied Micro Lunch, Brown University

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:

2021	Policy Impact Early-Career Scholars Grant (\$10,000)
2020	VisitINPS Fellowship in Gender Economics (\$6,000)
2020	Population Studies and Training Center International Fellowship
2018-present	Population Studies and Training Center Affiliate
2018	Brown University, Distinction in Second Year Field Exam
2018-present	Brown University, Department of Economics, PhD Scholarship
2016, 2017	Unicredit & Universities Foundation, Crivelli Europe Scholarship
2015	Allianz Summer Academy
2014-2015	Bocconi University, IGIER Visiting Student Initiative

Working Papers:

Making Quitting More Attractive for New Mothers: Unemployment Insurance, Parental Leave and Maternal Labor Supply

I estimate the effect of increasing unemployment insurance generosity around childbirth on women's return to work, labor market outcomes and welfare. Using Italian administrative data on the universe of working mothers, I implement regression discontinuity and difference-in-differences designs around changes of two unemployment insurance reforms that increased, respectively, the level of benefits and the duration of benefits. Both reforms increased separations from the pre-birth employer and delayed mothers' return to work. Investigating the sources of the increase in UI take-up, I document significant program interactions between unemployment insurance and parental leave policies, suggesting that women are willing to give up job protection for more generous benefits. I find that increasing the generosity of UI policies leads to significant negative effects on labor market outcomes in the short- and medium-run. I investigate the potential mechanisms behind these effects. I derive normative

implications for parental leave policies using behavioral responses through program interactions and estimate the welfare effects of the policies.

Firm Responses to Earned Income Tax Credits: Evidence from Italy (*Submitted*)

In this paper, I present new evidence on the incidence of Earned Income Tax Credits by analyzing the introduction of a large EITC program in Italy, the so-called 80 Euros Bonus. I evaluate the effects of the introduction of the program using matched employer-employee administrative data. I find that, contrary to the prediction of the standard competitive model, the annual earnings of the recipients of the tax credit do not decrease after the introduction of the program. However, earnings of eligible workers grow at a slower rate relative to similar non-eligible workers. This finding is not driven by labor supply responses and suggests that firms might respond to the introduction of the program by adjusting earnings growth. This type of response is plausible in a setting where institutional or norm-based wage rigidity prevents firms to directly adjust the level of wages and highlights the possibility that incidence may be shifted from workers to firms in a dynamic way. Exploiting pre-reform, firm-level variation in exposure to the policy, I explore the role of firm-level mechanisms as potential determinants of tax incidence. I find that average earnings of eligible employees in high-exposure firms decrease by 240 EUR after the introduction of the program compared to less exposed firms.

Welcome to the Neighborhood? Evidence from the Refugees' Reception System in Italy (with Giulia Buccione)

Between 2014 and 2017, Europe experienced massive refugee inflows. Local reception systems had to adapt, opening new emergency reception centers to host refugees. This phenomenon has prompted an ongoing debate on the impact of forced displacement on host countries' economic and social outcomes. In this paper, we exploit the unique setting provided by the Italian refugee reception system to study: (i) the effect of refugee inflows on housing prices, arguing that they reflect changes in natives' perceptions toward refugees; (ii) local public spending. Using administrative data on the exact location of reception centers and a dynamic event study design, we find that, after the opening of a reception center, areas close to the center experience a relative fall in housing prices of about 1%. The effect is mainly driven by larger cities and is decreasing with the size of the center and the center offering services to facilitate integration. Finally, having assessed that natives' perceptions react to the arrival of refugees, we test whether local public spending is affected since refugees represent a shock to the homogeneity of the community of reference. We find that after the opening of a reception center, areas close to the center experience a relative fall in expenditure per capita of about 20 EUR, largely driven by a reduction in welfare spending.

Work in Progress:

Breastfeeding, 1950 to 2015: Trends, Selection and Labor Force Participation (with Martha Bailey and Emily Oster)

We study patterns of breastfeeding behavior in the US over the period from 1950 to 2015. Over this period, health recommendations about the benefits of breastfeeding have become more ubiquitous. We aim to evaluate how breastfeeding rates evolve with these recommendations, to document shifts in the demographic patterns of breastfeeding over this period and to provide some preliminary analysis of how geographic patterns in breastfeeding link to policy. Our primary innovation is to bring a comprehensive set of data to this topic, assembling a compilation of six datasets to provide a time series dataset from the 1950s to the present. We document declining breastfeeding rates from the 1950s through 1970s and then increases from the 1970s to the present. Breastfeeding initiation rates at present are higher than at any point since 1950. We further document that longer term breastfeeding (through 6 months)

parallels this until the most recent period, when initiation rates have continued to rise while continuation has stagnated. There have been significant demographic shifts over this period. Higher socioeconomic status groups adopted breastfeeding more quickly in the 1970s, with other groups catching up through the 1980s to the present. Notably, these groups have not shown the same catch-up in continuation of breastfeeding. Breastfeeding through six months remains highly selected towards women with more education, for example. Finally, we show some suggestive evidence that neither Baby-Friendly Hospital presence nor paid leave policies are linked at the state level to higher breastfeeding rates.

The Effect of Physician Migration on Health Outcomes (with Diego Verdugo)

Physician shortages have become a severe problem in many countries, especially in rural areas. Chile has historically suffered from shortages that are reflected in high waiting times (an average of 462 days for a surgery) and significant costs in terms of lives. In this paper, we ask whether foreign migration can help addressing these shortages by exploiting a sudden and arguably exogenous wave of physician migration from Venezuela to Chile, starting in 2015. We build a novel dataset on the universe of physicians working in the public sector in Chile to study the effect of this physician supply shock on health outcomes, health care access and crowd-out of Chilean physicians from the public to the private sector. We present descriptive evidence on how the shock propagated through the health care system. Using an event study design and an instrumental variable strategy we find that, in hospitals and areas most affected, overall mortality decreases right around the time of the inflow of new physicians by around 0.2 percentage points. We perform a heterogeneity analysis looking at mortality from different causes. We discuss and test different explanations for this result: decreases in waiting times, increases in the availability of specialists and faster diagnoses.

Program Interactions and Welfare Analysis: A Bayesian Adaptive Choice Experiment (with Marshall Drake, Neil Thakral, Linh T. Tô)

Skills:

Computing skills: Stata, Matlab, SAS, Python, Vim, LaTeX

Language skills: Italian (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate)