

VALERIA ZURLA

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Contact Information

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Personal Information: Born December 10, 1991, Italian Citizen

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Population Wellbeing Initiative, University of Texas at Austin, 2022 -

Assistant Professor in Economics, University of Naples Federico II, Fall 2022 –

Research Fellow, Center of Studies in Economics and Finance, Fall 2022 –

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics, Brown University, 2017- 2022, Brown University

Dissertation: *“Essays in Public and Labor Economics”*

Advisors: John N. Friedman and Emily Oster

Committee Member: Neil Thakral

MA in Economics, Brown University, 2016 - 2017

MSc in Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University (Summa cum Laude), 2013 - 2015

BA in Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University (Summa cum Laude), 2010 - 2013

Visiting Student, Dartmouth College, Fall 2012

RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary fields: Public Economics, Labor Economics

Secondary fields: Gender Economics, Health Economics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring, 2022 The Economics of Social Policy, Undergraduate level Brown University, teaching fellow for Professor Emily Oster

Summer, 2020 Introduction to Statistics, MPA Brown University, teaching fellow for Professor John N. Friedman

Summer, 2020 Introduction to Microeconomics, MPA Brown University, teaching fellow for Professor Bryce Millett Steinberg

Summer, 2019 Introduction to Statistics, MPA Brown University, teaching fellow for Professor John N. Friedman

Summer, 2019 Introduction to Microeconomics, MPA Brown University, teaching fellow for Professor Emily Oster

Spring, 2016 Empirical Research Methods, Undergraduate level Bocconi University, teaching fellow for Professor Paolo Pinotti

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 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 AND SEMINARS

2022	University of Bergen, Bank of Italy, Stockholm University, Tilburg University, Tor Vergata University, CSEF-University of Naples Federico II, University of Texas at Austin, Analysis Group, Edgeworth Economics, University of Gothenburg, University of Stavanger, Lancaster University, RIDGE Workshop on Public Economics, University of Milan JEM Workshop, EALE 2022*, EEA 2022*, Harvard Policy Impacts Conference*, AIEL Annual Conference of Labor Economics*
2021	PAA Conference, VisitINPS seminar, Brown Applied Micro Lunch, Brown Health Breakfast, PhD-Economics Virtual Seminar, AIEL Annual Conference of Labor Economics, VisitINPS Annual Conference
2020	PAA Conference (canceled due to Covid-19), Brown Health Breakfast
2019	Brown Applied Micro Seminar, Brown Health Breakfast
2018	Brown Applied Micro Seminar, Brown Health Breakfast. NBER Health Economics Research Boot Camp, Organizer Brown Applied Micro Lunch

HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2021	Carlo Dell'Aringa Young Labor Economists Award (\$1,000)
2021-	Policy Impacts Early-Career Scholars Grant, Harvard University (\$10,000)
2020-	VisitINPS Fellowship in Gender Economics (\$6,000)
2020	Population Studies and Training Center International Fellowship
2020	Brown University Teaching Award
2018 - 2022	Population Studies and Training Center Affiliate, Brown University
2018	Brown University, Distinction in Second Year Field Exam
2016, 2017	Unicredit & Universities Foundation, Crivelli Europe Scholarship (\$50,000)

RESEARCH PAPERS

"How Should We Design Parental Leave Policies? Evidence from Two Reforms in Italy" (Job Market Paper)

This paper studies the role of different policy instruments in the design of parental leave policies. Taking advantage of a unique environment in which women, after childbirth, can choose between returning to work, less generous benefits with job protection, and more generous benefits without job protection, I disentangle the effects of different parental leave parameters on women's decisions to return to work, labor market outcomes, and welfare. When cash benefits become more generous, many mothers

choose to forgo job protection and substitute out of the standard parental leave program. While this brings them greater financial security in the short run, it drives long-lasting declines in employment and earnings, most of which occur after the benefits are exhausted. Using a revealed preference approach, I find that mothers attribute a significant value to transfers after childbirth relative to job protection. The high utility value of benefits partially reflects a high cost of working after childbirth. The welfare analysis suggests that increasing the level of benefits with job protection and relaxing constraints by increasing childcare availability is welfare improving for mothers.

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

This paper uses administrative data to analyze the incidence effects of a large EITC program in Italy. I find that firms are an important vector of transmission of incidence: firms very exposed to the tax credit responded to the program by decreasing their employees’ earnings relative to less exposed firms. Evidence suggests that the response was mainly driven by a decrease in the earnings growth rather than by a decrease in earnings level. This finding is consistent with the presence of wage rigidities that prevent firms from directly lowering wages and suggests that the transmission of tax credit incidence from workers to firms happens in a dynamic way.

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

Does refugee immigration affect the quality of neighborhood amenities? In this paper, we exploit the unique setting provided by the Italian refugee reception system to study the effect of refugees’ inflows on housing prices, the extent to which this response reflects individuals’ preferences for immigration, and perceived neighborhood quality. 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%, mainly driven by an amenity effect. We find that the negative effect is larger in larger cities and decreases with the size of the center and the availability of services to facilitate integration. We test whether opening refugees centers impacts local public spending, which we use to proxy the actual quality of local amenities. 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 2.4%, largely driven by a reduction in welfare spending. Given this well-established negative effect, are there factors or policy responses that might mitigate it? Our findings suggest that investing in services devoted to the mutual integration of the local and refugee community can be effective.

RESEARCH PAPERS 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)

“Demand-side Factors and Child Penalty” (with Corinna De Leo)

“Are Women CEOs set up to fail? Testing the Glass Cliff Hypothesis” (with Sergey Egiev)

SKILLS

Stata, Python, R, SaS, Vim, Latex, Github