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Education

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Warwick	2012-2017
Visiting Graduate Student, UC Santa Barbara	2017
Master of Science in Finance, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	2012
Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Universidad Santa María, Chile	2009

Research Fields

Labor Economics, Development Economics, Economics of Education, Applied Microeconomics.

Published Papers

[“Unleashing Waste-Pickers’ Potential: Supporting Recycling Cooperatives in Santiago de Chile”](#)
(joint work with Pablo Navarrete). World Development, January 2018.

Working Papers

[“The Effects of Homeownership Assistance on Labor Supply”](#) (Job Market Paper).

[“The Effect of a Basic Pension on Mortality: a Regression Discontinuity Design”](#) (joint work with Enrico Minglio, Pablo Navarrete and Gonzalo Navarrete).

[“When do School Principals Matter?: The Effects of a Reform in the Selection Procedure of School Principals on School Outcomes”](#).

Work in Progress

“The Classroom-wide Impact of a Behavioral Program for Disruptive Students: Effects on Disruptive Students, Classmates, and Teachers” (joint work with Clément de Chaisemartin).

“The Effects of High-Performing Public Schools” (joint work with Claudio Allende and Nicolas Libuy).

“The Effects of Homeownership Assistance on Students’ Performance”.

“The Spillover Effects of a Basic Pension for the Elderly on the Employment of Household Members” (joint work with Rafael Carranza and Enrico Minglio).

Presentations

2017: Universidad Diego Portales (departmental seminar), University of Warwick (internal seminar), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (internal seminar), Pompeu Fabra (students’ seminar), UC Irvine (students’ seminar), UC Santa Barbara (internal seminar), USC (students’ seminar), University of Sussex (departmental seminar).

2016: European Winter Meetings of the Econometric Society (Edinburgh, Scotland), Ph.D. conference (University of Leicester), Habitat and Urban Development conference (Development Bank of Latin America), University of Warwick (internal seminar).

Grants, Awards and Scholarships

1. “The Effect of a Basic Pension on Mortality: a Regression Discontinuity Design”. Winner of the Health for Social Inclusion in Latin America Competition, *Development Bank of Latin America*, 15 000 USD, 2017.
2. “The Effects of Homeownership Assistance on Labor Supply”. Winner of the Habitat and Urban Development Competition, *Development Bank of Latin America*, 15 000 USD, 2016.
3. Grant for overseas fieldwork, *The Economic and Social Research Council*, 3 200 GBP, 2015.
4. PhD Scholarship, *The Economic and Social Research Council*, 2013.
5. Master Scholarship, *University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign*, 2011.
6. International Visitor Leadership Program, *Government of the USA*, 2008.

Teaching Experience (teaching assistant)

Econometrics 1 , University of Warwick	2016-2017
Econometrics, Universidad Santa María, Chile	2006-2008

Previous Work Experience

Advisor, Ministry of the Presidency, Government of Chile	2009-2010
Research Assistant, ECLAC, United Nations	2008

References

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Abstracts

[“The Effects of Homeownership Assistance on Labor Supply” \(Job Market Paper\)](#)

Secure housing tenure is often thought to be a means of escaping poverty traps. Accordingly, policies that heavily subsidize private-market homeownership for low-income households are becoming part of the developing world landscape. To estimate the effect of this intervention type on the employment of beneficiaries, I implement a regression discontinuity design exploiting individual-level administrative data from a Chilean program that uses an arbitrary threshold to allocate homeownership vouchers. For the average user, the voucher represents approximately 5.1 years of salary and covers 97 percent of the total price of the purchased house. I present three main findings. First, receiving a voucher does not have an effect on the employment levels of heads of households, but it reduces the employment levels of their children. Second, children in new-homeowner households are more likely to be enrolled

in full-time education, which may explain the decrease in their employment. Third, residential stability, residential area quality, and proximity to employment hubs do not seem to play any role in these findings. Results in this paper suggest that subsidized private-market homeownership could be an effective way to mitigate the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

“The Effect of a Basic Pension on Mortality: a Regression Discontinuity Design” (joint work with Enrico Minglio, Pablo Navarrete and Gonzalo Navarrete)

Global life expectancy has dramatically increased in recent years, yet life expectancy inequalities across income groups are widening. In this paper, we estimate the causal effect of a permanent income increase, in a late stage of life, on health outcomes. We implement a regression discontinuity design exploiting an arbitrary threshold in a Chilean *basic pension* program that grants lifelong monthly payments of around 40 percent of the minimum wage to those aged 65 and above without a pension. We find that, four years after applying, the mortality rate of recipients decreases by between 2.5 and 4.0 percentage points. Improvements in health seem to be driven by the income shock leading to healthier lifestyles, which decrease the occurrence of respiratory and circulatory diseases. The effect is particularly concentrated among pension recipients who do not live with working-age family members. This seems to be explained by the pre-existence of intra-household transfers of income from working-age family members to applicants, which cease when pension payments begin. Results suggest that an income increase for older individuals could partially balance health disparities created by income inequalities over a lifetime. Furthermore, this may reduce the intergenerational transmission of poverty, by alleviating the financial burden imposed on younger family members.

“When do School Principals Matter?: The Effects of a Reform in the Selection Procedure of School Principals on School Outcomes”

School principals are generally considered to play an important role in the production of education, but the empirical evidence supporting this belief remains scarce. To explore their effectiveness in improving school outcomes, I exploit a Chilean reform that alters the selection process for public school principals. This reform provides plausibly exogenous variation in principals’ characteristics. Using a difference-in-differences approach, I find that principals appointed under the reform tend to be younger, less experienced, and more highly educated. Drawing from a panel dataset of teacher responses, I observe that the new principals improve the general climate in their schools by decreasing violence and expanding community engagement. On the other hand, new principals do not improve teacher-monitoring practices, teachers’ pedagogical methods, or students’ test scores. These results could be explained by the fact that principals operate in a context where authorities can neither dismiss nor reward them, and where parents seem to place a high importance on school safety.

“The Classroom-wide Impact of a Behavioral Program for Disruptive Students: Effects on Disruptive Students, Classmates, and Teachers” (joint work with Clément de Chaisemartin)
[Link to presentation slides](#)

In classrooms, negative externalities arise when one student disrupts the class and the learning of her classmates. Mental-health programs aiming to improve the behavior of disruptive students are a strategy to mitigate these externalities. Small-scale demonstration studies carried out in the USA have found promising effects on the disruptiveness and learning of beneficiaries. “Skills for Life” (SFL) is a nation-wide mental health program for disruptive 2nd graders in Chile, during which disruptive students follow 10 2-hour group sessions with a psychologist while at school. In this paper, we conduct a randomized controlled trial in 172 2nd-grade classes to measure the effects of SFL on disruptive students, but also on their non-eligible classmates. We find three main results. First, the program does not decrease the disruptiveness of eligible students, it does not improve their learning, and it reduces their academic self-esteem. We can rule out small positive effects on test scores and disruptiveness. Second, the program does not improve the learning of non-eligible students, and it

seems to increase their disruptiveness. Third, the program reinforces friendship ties between eligible students, and between non-eligible students. Overall, our results suggest that mental health programs targeting disruptive students might not be an effective nation-wide policy to improve learning, at least in the context of a middle-income country.

Last updated: November 9, 2017