

Roberta Ziparo

Contact information

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Current Position

Assistant Professor, Aix-Marseille Université, France 2015-present

Research fields

Development Economics, Labour Economics
Household Economics, Health Economics

Education

CRED, University of Namur, Belgium 2009-2013

Ph.D. in Economics

University of Cambridge, UK Fall 2012

Visiting Student

Louvain Catholic University, Belgium, Bocconi University, Italy 2006-2009

Joint Degree Program: M.Sc. in Economics

Bocconi University, Italy 2003-2006

B.A. in Economics and Social Sciences

University van Amsterdam, Netherlands Fall 2005

Exchange Student

Professional Experience

Postdoctoral Researcher, Paris School of Economics, France 2013-2015

Project Coordinator, NSI Cameroon and CRED, Cameroon 2009-2010

Data collection on “The economic consequences of Extended families”

Field Manager, PRADAN and CRED, India Spring 2009

LSMS Data Collection

Intern, European Commission, D. G. Development Summer and Fall 2008

Referee for *Review of Economic Studies* (1), *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (1) and *World Development* (1)

Publications and Scientific Activity

Working Papers

“Why do spouses communicate? Love or interest? A model and some evidence from Cameroon”, *working paper*

“Extended family and redistributive pressures in Cameroon” (Joint with Jean-Marie Baland, Catherine Guiringer, Isabelle Bonjean), *R&R Journal of Development Economics*

“Sunk-cost fallacy: a tool for enhancing the efficiency of household allocations”, *working paper*

“Intra-household decision making and women incentives to work: impact of the French reform of family law in 1965”, *working paper*

“Difference in discount rates and intra-household distribution of utility”, *working paper*

Work in progress

“Maternal Mortality and the Gender Gap in the Demand for Children in Zambia” (with Nava Ashraf, Erica Field and Alessandra Voena)

“Intra-household distribution of resources in Senegal” (with Luc Bheaghel, Philippe De Vreyer and Sylvie Lambert)

“Household public goods and mutual insurance between household members” (with Timohée Demont)

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Seminars and Conference Presentation

2015

“Family Macroeconomics” Workshop, Edesheim ; University of Cergy-Pontoise ; ADRES Doctoral Conference, La Sorbonne; Nova Lisbon; AMSE-GREQAM; University of Ottawa; University of Melbourne; Growth and Development Seminar, Paris I; Economic Seminar, Clermont Ferrand

2014

EUDN Scientific Conference; Applied Economics Lunch Seminar, Paris School of Economics; OXDEV Workshop, University of Oxford and CSAE; Economic Seminar of DIAL, Paris; Casual Friday Development Seminar.

2013

Paris School of Economics; Advances in Family Economics and Applications to Developing Countries Conference, Paris; PoRESP Conference, Brussels; 5th Meeting of ECINEQ, Bari; ThReD Conference, Oslo; 17th Annual Conference of ISNIE, Florence.

2012

Applied Micro Workshop, University of Cambridge; BREAD Summer School in Development Economics, Ascea; Doctoral Workshop, Economic School of Louvain; CRED Workshop, University of Namur.

Fellowships and Awards

AXA Research Fund, Post-Doctoral Fellowships 2013-2015
FNRS-Belgium, Research Fellowship 2009-2013

Courses Taught

Teaching Assistant in “Development Economics Seminar” 2011-2013
Prof. Jean-Philippe Platteau
Teaching Assistant in “Globalization and International Economics” 2010-2013
Prof. Romain Houssa

Languages

Italian: mother tongue
English: fluent
French: fluent
Spanish: good reading, writing and verbal skills

References

Prof. Nava Ashraf (+1 (617) 495-5058, nashraf@hbs.edu)
Associate Professor, Harvard Business School, Negotiation, Organizations and Markets Unit.

Prof. Jean-Marie Baland (+32 (0)81 724866, jean-marie.baland@fundp.ac.be)
Professor, Centre de Recherche en Economie du Développement, University of Namur.

Prof. Sylvie Lambert (+33 (0) 1 43 13 63 60, sylvie.lambert@ens.fr)
Associate Chair, Paris School of Economics.

Prof. Jean-Philippe Platteau (+32 (0)81 72 4860, jean-philippe.platteau@fundp.ac.be)
Professor, Centre de Recherche en Economie du Développement, University of Namur.

(Last Update: October 2014)

Working papers and work-in-progress articles

Completed projects (submitted or in the process of submission for publication):

Job-Market Paper: *"Why do spouses communicate? Love or interest? A model and some evidence from Cameroon"* (Previously: *"Public Good Provision and Communication in the Household"*)

In first-hand data from Cameroon, we observe that household members often contribute jointly to intra-household expenditure, while at the same time hiding each other's income. This suggests the existence of information flow problems in the household. For the first time in the theoretical literature, we study how intra-household decision making is affected when we relax the hypothesis of symmetric information among spouses: we assume that one spouse does not observe the income realization of the partner and we study under which condition an informative exchange of information can take place. We theoretically determine that, when spouses do not have any common interest (no altruism and separate spheres contribution to expenditure) non-communicating is the only equilibrium. We then introduce two possible motives for the existence of a commonality of intents among spouses: altruism and intra-household transfers due to productivity advantages. We develop two different theoretical models to study how each of the two motives affect communication. We also obtain testable predictions for each of the two models. The Cameroonian data support the communication model based on transfers between spouses.

"The economic consequences of solidarity in extended families" (with Jean-Marie Baland, Isabelle Bonjean and Catherine Guirkinger) R&R at Journal of Development Economics

Traditional systems of mutual help are important in sub-Saharan Africa. In the absence of well-developed markets for credit and insurance, extended families play a major role as the locus of most interpersonal transfers. However these arrangements also involve important inefficiencies. As stressed by Kennedy (1988) and Platteau (1991), the taxation implicit in these family transfers involves large disincentive effects, in particular on effort and investment. In this paper, we use first hand data from Western Cameroon to explore this question. We find that the large majority of transfers follow a given pattern whereby elder siblings support their younger siblings in the early stages of their lives who in turn reciprocate by supporting the children of their elder siblings. We interpret this pattern as a generalized system of informal credit within the extended family. We then explore the implications of this pattern on labour market outcomes and find evidence for strong negative effects of these transfers. For instance, the presence of an older sibling reduces the propensity to work of a younger sibling by 12%, working time by 21% and income by 32% on average. The children of these older siblings partially outweigh these effects, which is consistent with the temporal structure of the transfers. Additionally the transfer pattern implies that younger siblings tend to be net donors at the time at which their own children are growing up which has consequences for fertility and education outcomes. As expected, we find that younger siblings have fewer children who also tend to be less educated.

"A Note on Discount Factors and the Neutrality of Income Redistribution within the Household"

In the theoretical literature on voluntary contribution to public goods, it is well-known that income redistributions between contributors do not change the distribution of utility within the group. The correlation between intra-household bargaining power and spouses' income shares that is often observed empirically, thus, lacks of a clear theoretical interpretation. We explore how differences in discount factors between spouses affect the contribution to public good provision. We find that, when spouses have different discount factors, they tend to specialize in public good contributions at different moments of time. In this context, income redistributions change the non-cooperative distribution of utility.

Working papers:

"The Impact of the Matrimonial Regime on Female Education and Labor Supply: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in France"

In 1966, France passed a game-changing law that reformed the common-law matrimonial regime towards a more egalitarian system and dramatically increased the rights of married women. I develop a theoretical model that

predicts that giving the possibility to women to bargain in the household increases expected education and labour market participation: education increases since it matters for bargaining power; labour market participation increases due to the increase in woman's stake in the household resources. I, then, use the French natural experiment in order to estimate the causal impact of a large and exogenous increase in the equality between husbands and wives within the marriage. I find that women who married under the new regime are between 2 and 5 percentage points more likely to be working more than 30 years after the reform, once maternity and child-rearing constraints are largely over. Moreover, anticipating greater possibilities to work and earn money, girls who were at pivotal education ages when the reform was announced choose to educate longer. The estimates indicate that girls at the end of secondary education increased their education by 0.22-0.25 year as a result of the matrimonial reform.

"The Sunk-Cost Fallacy and the Efficiency of Intra-household Allocations"

We analyze the efficiency of the decision-making process in the household when spouses have incomplete information regarding the preferences of their partner with respect to private consumption goods. Given the asymmetric preferences and incomplete information, the spouses have an incentive to misreport their real evaluation in order to obtain more of the household budget for their private consumption. In such a context, we show that imposing a commitment on the use of purchased goods can be a useful mechanism to enlarge the set of incentive compatible allocations and minimize the inefficiency of intra-household consumption decisions. Our result implies that the empirical phenomenon known as the sunk-cost fallacy is not necessarily irrational in the context of intra-household decision-making.

Work-in-progress:

"Maternal Mortality and the Gender Gap in the Demand for Children in Zambia" (with Nava Ashraf, Erica Field and Alessandra Voena)

This study will investigate potential avenues to involve male partners in family planning decisions, both by understanding the origins of male preferences and designing educational measures to better inform them about the importance of family planning. By providing information on the increased risk of maternal mortality when a woman has children too close together, this program aims to increase male acceptance of family planning, and therefore improve the ability to involve males in health decisions without risking female health. 2,000 households of eligible married couples will be randomized so that either the husband or wife of each household attends an educational community workshop on modern contraceptives, clarification on misconceptions, and encouragement towards family planning counseling. The treatment group additionally receives a curriculum on the risk of maternal mortality in Zambia. After the workshops finish, vouchers for free family planning services are distributed to all participants. The participants' take up of the family planning consultation and subsequent demand of and attitudes toward family planning will be used to measure each intervention's success. Contraceptive use and fertility outcomes will be monitored through clinic data. Couples will also be surveyed again after one year to measure subsequent fertility and stated preferences for children and for family planning.

"Intra-household distribution of resources in Senegal" (with Luc Bheaghel, Philippe De Vreyer and Sylvie Lambert)

Recent theoretical developments in collective models of household decision making allow to estimate the share of household resources owned by each member, under a very general set of assumptions (Dunbar, Lewbel et Pendakur, 2014).

We use a very rich panel dataset that was collected by some of the authors in Senegal, which measures actual individual consumption. We estimate the above-mentioned theoretical model, and test its robustness in a context where family structures are very complex (polygamous multi-core households).

Based on the empirical results, an alternative theory of household organization may be developed.

"Household public goods as a mutual insurance mechanism between household members" (with Timothée Demont)

This project aims at highlighting a novel mechanism of insurance between household members. We show theoretically that public goods, i.e. joint expenditure that affect the utility of all household members, automatically provide a consumption smoothing mechanism within households, even when they behave in a very

non-cooperative way. We use the US PSID panel dataset to test the extent to which this mechanism is relevant. We use exogenous variation in divorce legislation to identify the level of resource sharing within households. We then use economic shocks at the time of marriage to predict the number of children, which are considered as one of the main household public goods. Exploiting these two levels of variation, we check whether divorced spouses with a higher number of children have a higher consumption correlation than couples with fewer children.