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REFERENCES

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[Professor Alexander Ludwig](#)

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CURRENT APPOINTMENT

2023 - Today Postdoctoral Associate, NYU Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Mentor: Prof. Étienne Wasmer

PAST POSITIONS

2022 Postdoctoral Fellow, ECARES (Université Libre Bruxelles) Brussels, Belgium

EDUCATION

2018 - 2022 Ph.D. Economics (*Cum Laude*), IDEA-Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
(Committee: Prof. Nezir Guner, Prof. Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis, Prof. Étienne Wasmer, Prof. Ludo Visschers)

2020 Ph.D. Visiting Scholar, Dept. of Economics, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Host: Prof. José Víctor Ríos Rull

2016 - 2018 M.Sc. Master in Quantitative Economics, Paris1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Macroeconomics, Labor Economics, Growth and Development, Inequality, Health, Family Economics, and Policy Evaluation.

My research lies in the field of Macroeconomics. I make use of structural quantitative models as tools to highlight the mechanisms behind empirical facts observed in the data.

JOB MARKET PAPER ([Download link](#))

“A Quantitative Theory of the HIV Epidemic: Education, Risky Sex and Asymmetric Learning”
(with Daniela Iorio and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis) 2025

WORKING PAPERS

“Kramer vs. Kramer. On the importance of Children and Divorce Filings for Understanding Divorce Rates in the USA”, NYUAD Working Paper 2024

“Stage-Based Identification of Policy Effects” with Christopher Busch, Alexander Ludwig and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis, 2023

“Evaluating the Effectiveness of Policy Against the Covid-19 Pandemic” with Christopher Busch, Alexander Ludwig and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis, Barcelona School of Economics Paper 2023

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

- “Employment and Human Capital Investment Responses to Payroll Tax Reductions” with Étienne Wasmer, Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis and Pranav Mimani, 2025
- “The Ozempic Economy, Sugar Addiction, Labor Market and Optimal Subsidies” with Fane Groes, Veda Narasimhan, Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis and Tanya Surovtseva, 2025
- “Double Selection in Causal Inference” with Christopher Busch, Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis and Tanya Surovtseva, 2025
- “HIV Diffusion: Evidence from One Million Blood Tests” with Daniela Iorio and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis, 2024
- “Agricultural Productivity in Bolivia before and after the 2006 reform” with Sergio Bobka

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2024 Research Assistance, Mission Bozio-Wasmer pour le Premier Ministre
Les politiques d'exonérations de cotisations sociales : une inflexion nécessaire (2023-2024)
- 2018 Research Internship, Banc Sabadell, Barcelona Spain
- 2017 (Summer) Research Internship, Leibniz Institute for Economic Research Halle IWH, Germany
- 2016 Research Internship, Central Bank of Bolivia-at the Advisory of Economic Policy
- 2013 - 2015 Research Assistant for Prof. Oscar Molina, Universidad Privada Boliviana

TEACHING EXPERIENCE Average student evaluations score: 4.3/5

- 2023 - 2024 Intermediate Macroeconomics (Undergraduate), New York University Abu Dhabi
- 2022 Research Methods in Economics (Graduate), Université Libre de Bruxelles
- 2021 Teaching Assistant, Econometrics I (Graduate), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
- 2020 Instructor, Statistics II (Undergraduate), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
- 2013 - 2015 Teaching Assistant, Microeconomics II (Undergraduate), Universidad Privada Boliviana

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

- 2023 - 2026 Postdoctoral Research Fund Award
- 2018 - 2022 FPI Ph.D. Scholarship from the Spanish Ministry of Science
- 2016 - 2018 Erasmus Mundus Scholarship: Full funding for my Master in France
- 2014 Goethe Institute Excellence Scholarship: Full scholarship to learn the German language
- 2012-2015 Excellence Scholarship, Universidad Privada Boliviana

PRESENTATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

AI and Learning the Macroeconomy (2025, BSE-UAB, Spain), Society of Economic Dynamics Conference (2025, University of Copenhagen, Denmark), Canadian Economic Association Annual Meeting (2025, UQAM, Canada), McGill Economics Brown Bag Seminar (2025, McGill University, Canada), York Economics Seminar (2025, York University, Canada), New Frontiers for Policy Evaluation (2025, NYUAD, UAE), PostDoc Seminar (2023-24-25, NYUAD, UAE), Development Seminar (2025-26, NYUAD, UAE), Melbourne Economics Seminar, (2024, University of Melbourne, Australia), Queensland Economics Seminar, (2024, University of Queensland, Australia), Workshop of the Australian Macroeconomics Society WAMS-LAEF, (2024, University of Western Australia, Australia), Deakin Economics Brownbag, (2024, Deakin University, Australia), Macro-Development Workshop, (2024, Deakin University, Australia), Monash Economics Seminar, (2024, Monash University, Australia), Developments in the Theory and the Applications of Counterfactual Methods for Policy COMPIE (2024, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands), International Workshop on Migration and Family, Poster (2024, IESEG Paris, France), Barcelona Summer Forum, Income Dynamics and the Family (2024, UAB-BSE, Spain), Health and Demography Seminar (2024, NYUAD, UAE), Inequality Seminar (2024, NYUAD, UAE), Global Dynamics Seminar (2024, NYUAD, UAE), AFEPOP Inaugural Conference (2024, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, France), Economics Brownbag Seminar (2023, NYUAD, UAE), Society of Economics of the Household SEHO (2023, University of Copenhagen, Denmark), Workshop on Families, Human Capital, and Inequality, Poster (2023, Mannheim University, Germany), Household Economics Gathering (2022, KU Leuven, Belgium), Leuven Summer Event (2022, KU Leuven, Belgium), DTMC Workshop on Interactions between Labor and Marriage Markets (2022, Aarhus University, Denmark), Essex-Barcelona Workshop on Labor Economics (2021, UAB, Spain), Macro Club, UAB internal seminar series (2019-20-21-22, UAB, Spain), Barcelona School of Economics Ph.D Jamboree (2018-19 UAB-Pompeu Fabra, Spain), IMF Gender and Macroeconomics Conference, Poster (2017 Washington DC, USA), 7th Bolivian Conference on Development Economics (2016 UPSA, Bolivia).

COMPUTER SKILLS

MATLAB, STATA, R, Python, Julia, (HPC & parallel computing), LaTeX

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Spanish-Native, English-Fluent TOEFL iBT grade:107, German-Fluent, TestDaF Level C1, French-Fluent TCF Level C1, Catalan-Medium, Level B1

JOB MARKET PAPER

A Quantitative Theory of the HIV Epidemic: Education, Risky Sex and Asymmetric Learning (2025) joint work with Daniela Iorio and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis

We explore learning about HIV infection odds from risky sex as a new mechanism explaining the Sub-Saharan Africa HIV epidemic. Our novel empirical evidence reveals a U-shaped relationship between education and being HIV positive across the epidemic, which prompts the idea of asymmetric learning: more educated individuals potentially learn faster and update their (latent) beliefs about infection odds more accurately than less educated individuals, inducing earlier sexual behavioral change among the more educated. Our non-stationary model incorporates three HIV epidemic stages, chronologically: a myopic stage where agents are unaware of how risky sex causes infections, a learning stage where agents update beliefs on infection odds, and an ART stage reflecting treatment introduction. Anchored to the micro evidence—the U-shaped HIV-education gradient—we find that our learning mechanism is powerful: a 5-year earlier learning reduces new AIDS deaths by almost 45%, and a 10-year earlier learning results in a 60% drop. Removing learning altogether reveals that under full information, i.e life expectancy asymmetries present only through education, play a much smaller role than learning.

RESEARCH

Employment and Human Capital Investment Responses to Payroll Tax Reductions (2025) joint with Etienne Wasmer, Pranav Mimani and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis

To counter the negative effects on employment for low-skilled workers, some countries have developed policies that reduce social contributions for low wage workers. We examine the effects of such policies on employment, the incentives to invest in employee training, and salary progression. We propose a model featuring dual heterogeneity of workers and firms, as outlined by Shimer and Smith (2000), to which we add specific human capital accumulation. We calibrate the model on France, where the policy of tax relief, initiated in 1993, has reached a record of 80 billion euros (2.5% of GDP). We find that the reductions in social contributions for low wage workers disincentivize human capital investments and contribute significantly to the high concentration of workers who prefer to keep earning the minimum wage. Our simulations suggest that a one percent reduction of the social contribution subsidy increases average wages by 4% and net employment by 2.5%.

Double Selection in Causal Inference (2025) joint with Christopher Busch, Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis and Tanya Surovtseva

A long-standing question in research using natural experiments for causal inference is the appropriate functional form of the outcome variable, often involving a choice between level or logarithmic formulations. This choice is crucial because the assumption of a single constant selection bias (CSB)—or, equivalently, a parallel time trend—for identifying the policy effect cannot hold simultaneously in both formulations. To address this issue, we propose a novel double-selection (DS) econometric approach, in which units face two types of selection: a level shifter (single CSB in levels) and a proportional shifter (single CSB in logs). We show unique identification of the DS and, consequently, the causal effects. We propose a DS estimator in levels and conduct inference.

HIV Diffusion: Evidence from One Million Blood Tests (2024) joint work with Daniela Iorio and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis

We mine 1 million HIV tests in Sub Saharan Africa to empirically show how the HIV epidemic diffuses across demographic and economic groups. We show how the patterns of HIV infection change across stages of the epidemic.

Kramer vs. Kramer. On the importance of Children and Divorce Filings for Understanding Divorce Rates in the USA (2024)

I document that approximately 70% of divorce filings in the 1970's were done by wives in the United States. Since then, this figure has experienced a large decline, reaching 56% in 2015. At the same time, divorce rates sharply increased from 1960 until the mid 1980's and have declined since then. I construct a life cycle model of endogenous marriage and unilateral divorce with endogenous labor supply and savings that jointly explains these facts. I use my model to measure the contribution of changes in the gender-wage gap, property division laws and child custody arrangements in explaining the divorce patterns over time. First, the reduction in the gender-wage gap generates two opposing effects. On the one hand, the reduction of the gender-wage gap increases the value of divorce for married women and, on the other hand, unmarried women become more selective in the marriage market thus raising the quality of newly formed matches. Second, children increase the value of divorce for the custodial parent; so a higher probability of getting child custody raises the chances of filing for divorce. Third, a higher share of assets assigned to wives upon divorce can either increase or decrease divorce rates by altering the savings decision of the household. My model accounts for approximately 50 per cent of the decline in divorce filings and 70 per cent of the variation in divorce rates between 1970 and 2015. I find that the decrease in the gender-wage gap and the increase in the probability of getting child custody for men are major drivers behind the changes in divorce rates and in divorce filings, respectively. Importantly, I find that failure to match who files for divorce can lead to opposite counterfactual results.

Stage-Based Identification of Policy Effects (2023) joint with Christopher Busch, Alexander Ludwig and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis

We develop a method that identifies the effects of nationwide policy, i.e., policy implemented across all regions at the same time. The core idea is to track outcome paths in terms of stages rather than time, where a stage of a regional outcome at time t is its location on the support of a reference path. The method proceeds in two steps. First, a normalization maps the time paths of regional outcomes onto the reference path—using only pre-policy data. This uncovers cross-regional heterogeneity of the stage at which policy is implemented. Second, this stage variation identifies policy effects inside a window of stages where a stage-leading region provides the no-policy counterfactual path for non-leading regions that are subject to policy inside that window. We assess our method's performance with Monte-Carlo experiments, illustrate it with empirical applications, and show that it captures heterogeneous policy effects across stages.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Policies Against a Pandemic (2023) joint with Christopher Busch, Alexander Ludwig and Raül Santaaulàlia-Llopis

We apply a novel method to evaluate policies against a pandemic. In the context of the application, the essence of our approach is the insight that epidemic dynamics are best tracked over stages, rather than over time. The application focuses on the nationwide stay-home policy enacted in Spain against the Covid-19 pandemic. We find that the policy saved 16.8% of lives relative to the number of deaths that would have occurred had it not been for the policy intervention. Its effectiveness evolves with the epidemic and is larger when implemented at earlier stages.

Agricultural productivity in Bolivia before and after the 2006 reform (2022) joint work with Sergio Bobka

We compute a measure of agricultural TPF for Bolivian Agricultural Production Units (APU) before and after the 2006 agricultural reform. Using very detailed farm level census data on input and output quantities in production we are able back out individual farm productivity for the years 1984 and 2013. We then conduct a missallocation exercise where we observe a reduction of the degree of factor misallocation between the years 1984 and 2013, associated to the 2006 land reform.

The Ozempic Economy: Sugar Addiction, Labor Market and Optimal Subsidies with Fane Groes, Veda Narasimhan, Raul Santaaulàlia-Llopis and Tetyana Surovtseva
Read about this article in [Nada es Gratis](#) blog.