

As an only child moving with my family across three very different regions in Italy I always needed to adapt quickly to new schools and learnt from an early age that the rules of acceptable behavior could be very different in different places. To fit in, one had to figure out the local rules (which I got pretty good at, even mimicking accents quite well, a good skill to learn foreign languages too it turned out) and deal with the pressure to conform to them, which took longer to get good at and didn't quite happen (it turns out that the more you study social norms the less you are interested in conforming to them).

I studied Economics at the University of Venice when it was a four-year long affair, which I further prolonged choosing a research dissertation on Human Capital and Economic Development, then left for my Master's in the UK. At that time in order to supplement a pretty basic scholarship for specialization abroad (which financed little beyond the getting abroad itself) I did a lot of research assistant work which I very much enjoyed. As a result, I landed a job as a researcher on a very big project run by the European Commission and the Inter-American Development Bank in Mexico, fancying myself a development consultant.

In spite of liking the job a lot, I felt underprepared and not quite convinced consultancy was for me, so I went back to school again, this time lucky to obtain a scholarship to do a PhD at the University of Reading on Social Capital and Economic Development, and thus also returning to Mexico in the second year for a fieldwork studying the role of Trust in Microfinance to figure out how a trustworthy reputation could help access resources such as finance and working opportunities. In the middle of the project my lead supervisor left the University so two things happened: firstly I ended up with little supervision and a not so good PhD thesis, secondly as I was by then a valuable teaching resource Reading hired me as a lecturer even if my PhD thesis wasn't finished, which gave me a job (on balance I would still say fight to get good graduate training and supervision and finish your PhD first!).

In the first years of being a lecturer I continued with bits of development consulting too and collaborated with the United Nations Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as local project with the regional development agency of the UK and the Home Office, and continued with my interest in trust and social networks studying how belonging to social networks helped farmers in Latin America, women entrepreneurs in Africa and migrants and social entrepreneurs into the UK.

I became involved almost by chance in research on sex work, and there found that my expertise in social norms was very relevant as stigma, which is attributed to certain people and professions, has a pretty central role in determining their pay and working conditions and thus their wellbeing. My main contribution to the economics of sex work has been to approach it as a form of work with particular characteristics connected to the reputation and attitudes of the parties involved in the trade, as well as that of the society it takes place in. Together with my coauthors, we have not only shown how stigma plays an important role in determining both price and working conditions in the markets for paid sex, but also and how the demand for paid sex differs from that for freely exchanged sex in that the former contains also a demand for control, so that the two aren't perfect substitutes. We have discussed these issues and many others in several academic journal articles and press pieces as well as two books (*Prostitution: A Denied Industry and Demanding Sex*), a contribution to the *Oxford Handbook of Economics of Prostitution*, and two journal special issues covering trafficking, sex tourism, and sex markets.

My main interest continues to be how evolving social norms are shaping both individual decisions and collective outcomes, and have looked at both individual decisions (regarding formal and informal work, as well as sustainable consumption), and the way values are transmitted from immigrant parents to their children. To better understand these issues, I spent a sabbatical studying behavioural economics in order to acquaint myself with insights in these processes that have come from psychology over the last thirty years. I have since done research in the ways in which individuals young and old respond to different performance incentives and to peer pressure, how different propensities to trust, take risks and cooperate affect pay and career gaps, and how unconscious bias can be understood and mitigated in education.

I have gradually become interested in using different kinds of games in both teaching and research, for example designing computer games to conduct experiments in the lab and the field and using board games to simulate economic decisions and understand the interactions between individual characteristics and collective outcomes. I am also using games to help people understand the impact of unconscious bias on decision-making, and help them find ways to mitigate its effects.

I love to work with other people and have been fortunate to collaborate with a number of researchers from both economics and other disciplines including psychology, linguistics, education, mathematics and computer science, and this has helped enormously in shaping my understanding of the problems I care about and hope to help solve. Being an economist has never been as exciting, and I feel we have much to contribute to many of the issues that plague the world, from climate change to inequality, from the care crisis to the value clashes determined by increasing inequality: they all depend on whether we design the right incentives for us to respond to these problems, and the norms we follow or disobey.

There is a lot of work to do!