

Alberto Jose Ramirez

Personal Information

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Education

Ph.D. in Economics (IDEA), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and Barcelona GSE 2014 – 2018
Supervisor: Joan Llull

MSc in Economics, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona 2012 – 2014
Thesis: *Remittances and Transfer Costs – Evidence from the US Cuban Diaspora*

B.S. in Chemical Engineering (cum laude), University of Florida, USA 2001 – 2007
Thesis: *Hexagonal-Closed Packing Array of Colloids* (National Science Foundation Grant)

Research Fields

Applied Economics, Labor Economics, Structural Microeconometrics, Migration, Development

Teaching Experience

Microeconomic Theory (Graduate), Quantitative Economic Models Master's Program 2015 – 2016

Econometrics 2 (Graduate), International Doctorate in Economic Analysis 2014

Statistics 2 (Undergraduate), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona 2014 – 2017

Research Experience

Lead Field Research Assistant, under direction of Professor Dean Yang 2017 –
Project: Behavioural Biases, Remittances, and Migration of Filipino Community in Barcelona
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

Professional Experience

Consumer and Product Researcher, Consumer Products Division 2007 – 2012
Georgia-Pacific, LLC., Neenah, Wisconsin, USA

Patents

Lee, Jeffrey A., Miller, Joseph H., Oriaran, Philips T., Ramirez, Alberto J., Schuh, Brian J., Sumnicht, Daniel W. 2013. High Softness, High Durability Bath Tissues with Temporary Wet Strength. U.S. Patent Application 20130029105, filed 31 of January, 2013 (Pending). <http://bit.ly/2oEAG4G>

Working Papers

The Effect of Family Migration and Human Capital Investment on Children: Evidence from Indonesia Job Market Paper

We document evidence of a relationship between parental migration and childhood educational attainment in Indonesia. Using all the currently available waves of the Indonesian Family Life Survey (IFLS) we fit a discrete-time probit model to exploit the time-variation of the parents' migration. The duration results indicate a decrease in the hazard of dropping out of school with all types of parental migration. The greatest impact is observed after primary schooling, conditional on having lasted long enough to enter this level. We propose a two period, two markets partial equilibrium dynastic model to account for the selection mechanism inherent in family migration and educational investment in their children. We estimate the model based on a nested logit specification, subject to CRRA utility and a borrowing constraint. We find that both family migration and education costs are substantial in Indonesia, although the cost of educating is about the same between regions. Our counterfactuals show that while family migration does cause households to educate their children in the new location, a 30% education subsidy is equivalent to fully subsidising migration. Notwithstanding, we find that the greatest gains would come from simply eliminating educational costs.

The Role of Transfer Costs in Understanding the Altruistic Motive of Remittances - A Look at the Cuban Diaspora in the US

We study the impact of transfer costs on the transfer derivative, the typical method of testing the altruistic motive on remittance behavior. We show that in the case when the remitting agent assumes the transfer cost, the associated transfer derivative moves away from the theoretical value that altruism predicts. Further, we show that in a dynamic framework this cost exhibits an indirect effect on the transfer derivative as a result of its effect on intertemporal substitution. We take the model to data on Cuban-Americans in the US and calibrate the altruism parameter such that the model's aggregate remittance matches the aggregate remittances to Cuba from the US. We find that the altruism parameter that supports current level of remittances is near the upper bound for reciprocal altruism, but falls short as a possible consequence of policy frictions. As a proxy for a policy friction, we calibrate for a transfer cost composed of a transfer and an exchange fee when the remitting agent assumes these costs and is altruistic. We find that the cost comes fairly close to the average fee reported by remittance agencies; and that transfer fees that support the aggregate remittances increase as the recipient bears more of the cost burden.

Conferences, Presentations, and Workshops

Applied Group Seminar (Presenter), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	2015 - 2017
ENTER Ph.D. Jamboree (Discussant), Madrid	2016
Barcelona GSE Ph.D. Jamboree (Discussant), Barcelona	2015
Barcelona GSE Summer Forums	2015 - 2016

Skills

Programming Languages: Fortran90 (intermediate), C (advanced – through Cython)

Scripting Languages: Python and Cython (advanced), MATLAB (advanced), R (intermediate)

Query Languages: SQL (intermediate)

Statistical Software: STATA (advanced)

Additional Education

Machine Learning Summer School , Barcelona GSE, Barcelona, Spain Week 1: Python programming of neural nets, (un)supervised ML, recommender systems Week 2: R programming of Bayesian ML	July 2017
Dynamic Programming , University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece Estimation of dynamic discrete-choice models, endogenous grid structural estimation, estimation of games, and equilibrium selection techniques	July 2016
Labor Economics Summer School , Barcelona GSE, Barcelona, Spain Topics on migration, economics of education, and labor market outcomes	July 2015
MBA Foundations Business Certificate , University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh, USA	2008 – 2012
German Language Exchange , Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Germany	2005 – 2006

Fellowships and Awards

Personal Investigador en Formació AGAUR, Generalitat de Catalunya, Spain	2015 – 2018
Severo Ochoa Program for Centers of Excellence in R&D Spanish Ministry of Economy & Competitiveness, Spain	2013 – 2015
Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) Scholarship Department of State, administered by Cultural Vistas, USA	2005 – 2006
National Science Foundation Undergraduate Research Grant National Science Foundation, administered by University of Florida Particle Research Center, USA	2003 – 2004

Languages

Native Languages: English, Spanish

Other Languages: German (Level C1a - Grade: 1.7), French (beginner), Catalan (beginner)

References

Joan Llull (advisor)
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