ELENA PERRA

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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

University of Barcelona January 2026 –
Assistant professor

UNU-MERIT Maastricht January 2022 –
Affiliated Researcher

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of Turin March 2023 – December 2025
Post-doctoral Research Fellow

University of Florence February 2022 – February 2023
Post-doctoral Research Fellow

EDUCATION

University of Florence and University of Trento September 2018 – July 2022
PhD in Development Economics
Department of Economics and Management and School of Social Sciences
Thesis title: "Empirical Essays on the Impact of Infrastructural Investments in Ethiopia"
2022-23 Andrea Vaona award for the best doctoral dissertation in Economics

UNU-MERIT Maastricht October 2021 – January 2022
Visiting Period

University of Passau April 2017 – September 2017
Erasmus + Programme
Evaluation of Development Policies, Rural Development, Health, Public Policy

University of Florence December 2015 – April 2018
MSc in Economics and Development 110/110 *cum laude*

University of Florence September 2011 – October 2015
BA in Economics and Trade

PUBLICATIONS

- Martorano, B., **Perra, E.** and Tiberti, M. (2026). "Beyond Data Gaps: Tracking Spatial Inequality in Africa Via Nighttime Lights". *The Journal of Economic Inequality*, 2026.
- **Perra, E.** (2026). "Road to Division: Ethnic Favouritism in the Provision of Road Infrastructure in Ethiopia". *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 2026.
- **Perra, E.**, Sanfilippo, M. and Sundaram, A. (2024) "Roads, Competition, and the Informal Sector". *Journal of Development Economics*, 2024.

WORKING PAPERS

- Sanfilippo, M., **Perra, E.** and Sileci, L. (2026) "Oil Spills, Water Networks and Local Economic Development"
- Hiluf Abay, Mehari, Tiberti, L. and **Perra, E.** (2026) "The Fertility Highway: How Road Investments Shape Childbearing in Ethiopia"
- Giovannetti, G. and **Perra, E.** (2020). "Syria in the Dark: Estimating the economic consequences of the civil war through satellite-derived night lights". DISEI Working Papers - Economics, Working Paper N.05/2019.

POLICY PUBLICATIONS

- **Perra, E.**, Sanfilippo, M., & Sundaram, A. (2024). "Road infrastructure boosts competition, which affects formal and informal sector firms differently." *VoxDev*.
- Giovannetti, G., Bigi, V. and **Perra, E.** (2020) "Estimates of GDP loss using night-time light satellite imagery". In: "Compounding Crises: Will Covid-19 and Lower Oil Prices Lead to a New Development Paradigm in the Arab Region?". United Nations Development Programme.
- Giovannetti, G., Bigi, V. and **Perra, E.** (2021) "The Impact of Covid-19 on Arab Countries: What can we 'See'?" United Nations Development Programme, RBAS WORKING PAPERS SERIES.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Empirical Methods in Regional and Urban Economics — January 2027 –
University of Barcelona — Lecturer

Econometrics II — January 2027 –
University of Barcelona — Lecturer

Business Econometrics — January 2026 –
University of Barcelona — Lecturer

Development Economics — January 2023 – June 2023
University of Turin — Adjunct Lecturer

Political Economy of Development — January 2022 – June 2023
University of Florence — Adjunct Lecturer

Sustainable Management for Local Development — October 2021
University of Florence — Guest Lecturer

International Trade — September 2015 – April 2018
University of Florence — Academic Tutor

Microeconomics — September 2015 – April 2018
University of Florence — Academic Tutor

WORK EXPERIENCE

University of Turin — March 2023 – December 2025
Post-doctoral Research Fellow

- Postdoctoral researcher in the PNRR-funded GRINS program, developing subnational circular economy indicators and analyzing linkages with international trade and foreign direct investments.

University of Florence February 2022 – February 2023
Post-doctoral Research Fellow
- Principal researcher on EUniWell project, analyzing and reporting the educational performance of the 8 partner universities in the consortium.

European University Institute November 2022 – December 2022
Research Assistant
- Harmonizing and Geolocalizing DHS survey data covering all African countries, combining with geolocalized animal diseases information from FAO. Preparing a technical appendix for the project, and ensuring full replicability.

World Bank February 2022 – June 2022
Consultant
- Analytical support to the LSMS-ISA program. Conducting empirical analysis based on remotely sensed nighttime light data to proxy for spatial inequality.

European University Institute September 2020 – January 2021
Research Assistant
- Data processing and construction of market access indicators for the paper "Trade Liberalization, Roads and Firm Productivity" (Fiorini et al. (2021), Journal of Development Economics).

United Nations Development Programme April 2020 – December 2020
External Consultant
- Report on the impact of COVID-19 on MENA countries.

Euro-Mediterranean Network for Economic Studies (EMNES) June 2019 – Present
Research Fellow
- EMNES Annual Conference 2019 (presenter)
- Working Paper: "Syria in the Dark" (2020)

EDI Economic Development Initiatives (UK) September 2017 – March 2018
Intern, Research Team
- Data Cleaning for Development Projects at the Household Level.
- Academic Literature Reviews on Issues of Data Quality.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Statistical Analysis	R, STATA, Minitab, Python
Mapping	QGIS, ArcGIS, Google Earth Engine
Software and Tools	Quarto, Markdown, MS Office, LaTeX

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2022-23 Andrea Vaona Award for the best doctoral dissertation in Economics.
- Winner, Associazione Villa Favard's Annual Prize for the Most Original Dissertation, 2018.
- University of Florence - Productivity and Merit Scholarships 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.

SUMMER SCHOOLS

FEEM (Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei) 7,8,14,15,22 Oct., 2021.
Autumn School in Spatial Analysis and Policy Evaluation

UEA (Urban Economic Association) 1-3, 2021 Sept., 2021.
PhD Student Workshop

Centro Studi Luca d'Agliano 29-1 Sept., 2021.
XX Summer School in International and Development Economics "Investment Choices in Developing Economies"

IRVAPP 14-19 Dec., 2020
Advanced Methods For Impact Evaluation, "Survey sampling methods and applications"

University of Essex August 2019
52nd Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis. Courses in Quantitative Text Analysis.

SITES June 2019
X Summer School in Development Economics

CONFERENCES

SPANDE 2026 on October 27, University of Alicante, Spain.
IV Workshop on Development Economics in Spain

BCN-DEV meeting 2026 on March 13, University of Barcelona, Spain.
Nordic Conference in Development Economics

NCDE 2025 on June 17-18, Oslo, Norway.
Nordic Conference in Development Economics

CERDI on february 7, 2025, University of Clermont Auvergne, France
Invited seminar

Collegio Carlo Alberto on December 12, 2024, Turin, Italy
Postdoc/RTD Seminars

2022-23 Andrea Vaona Award on September 18, 2023, Verona, Italy
Award Reception Lecture

XXXV SIEP Conference 2023 on September 14-15, 2023, Verona, Italy

NCDE 2023 on June 13-15, Gothenburg, Sweden.
Nordic Conference in Development Economics

Jobs and Development on December 14-15, 2022, Capetown, South Africa
World Bank, IZA, UNU-WIDER, and the Network on Jobs and Development

UNU-Merit Internal Conference on September 29-30, 2022, Maastricht, Netherlands

The Bank Al-Maghrib on June 23-24, 2022, Rabat, Morocco
The International Monetary Fund "Transformational Recovery: Seizing Opportunities from the Crisis"

EUDN on November 25-26, 2022, Wageningen, Netherlands
PhD Workshop on Development Economics

15th North American Meeting of the Urban Economics Association
on October 14-16, 2021

DevEconMeet 2021 on October 1, 2021, University of Florence

SasCa PhD Conference in Economics 2021 on September 16-17, 2021 Alghero, Italy
University of Sassari and Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Urban Economic Association (UEA) PhD Student Workshop on September 1-3, online
University of Sassari and Ca' Foscari University of Venice

EMNES Annual Conference on June 2019, Brussels, Belgium
Towards a Regional Integration and Employment Driven Socio-Economic Model in the Mediterranean: A Comprehensive Policy Road map

LANGUAGES

Italian	Mothertongue
English	Fluent
French	Upper Intermediate
Catalan	Intermediate
Spanish	Elementary

REVIEWS ACITIVITIES

Journal of Development Economics, Ecological Economics; Global Challenges & Regional Science Reviewer; The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy; The Journal of International Trade & Economic Development; Transportation Letters: the International Journal of Transportation Research

REFERENCES

Prof. Giorgia Giovannetti
Professor of Economics
Department of Economics and Management
University of Florence
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Prof. Marco Sanfilippo
Professor of Economics
Department of Economics and Statistics
"Cognetti de Martiis"
University of Turin, Room 15 3.D1
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