

ELENA PERRA

Department of Econometrics, Statistics and Applied Economics
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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

University of Barcelona Assistant professor	January 2026 -
UNU-MERIT Maastricht Affiliated Researcher	January 2022 -

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of Turin Post-doctoral Research Fellow	March 2023 - December 2025
University of Florence Post-doctoral Research Fellow	February 2022 - February 2023

EDUCATION

University of Florence and University of Trento PhD in Development Economics Department of Economics and Management and School of Social Sciences <i>Thesis title: "Empirical Essays on the Impact of Infrastructural Investments in Ethiopia"</i> <i>2022-23 Andrea Vaona award for the best doctoral dissertation in Economics</i>	September 2018 - July 2022
UNU-MERIT Maastricht Visiting Period	October 2021 - January 2022
University of Passau Erasmus + Programme Evaluation of Development Policies, Rural Development, Health, Public Policy	April 2017 - September 2017
University of Florence MSc in Economics and Development	December 2015 - April 2018 110/110 cum laude
University of Florence BA in Economics and Trade	September 2011 - October 2015

PUBLICATIONS

Perra, E. (2026). "Road to Division: Ethnic Favouritism in the Provision of Road Infrastructure in Ethiopia". *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 2026, ISSN 0147-5967.

Perra, E., Sanfilippo, M. and Sundaram, A. (2024) "Roads, Competition, and the Informal Sector". *Journal of Development Economics*, 2024, 103339, ISSN 0304-3878.

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"

Martorano, B., Perra, E., Tiberti, M., (2023). "Beyond Data Gaps: Tracking Spatial Inequality in Africa via Nighttime Lights" MERIT Working Papers 2023-032, United Nations University - Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (MERIT) (Under Review)

Giovanetti, 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.

Giovanetti, 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.

Giovanetti, 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

Development Economics

University of Turin

January 2023 - June 2023

- Teaching Assistant

Political Economy of Development

University of Florence

January 2022 - June 2023

- Adjunct Lecturer

Sustainable Management for Local Development

University of Florence

October 2021

- Guest Lecturer

International Trade

University of Florence

September 2015 - April 2018

- Academic Tutor

Microeconomics

University of Florence

September 2015 - April 2018

- 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

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 - Mother tongue

English - Fluent

French - Fluent

REFERENCES

Prof. Giorgia Giovannetti

Professor of Economics
Department of Economics and Management
University of Florence
Via delle Pandette, 32
50127 Firenze (Italy)
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Prof. Bruno Martorano

Associate Professor of Economics
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Prof. Luca Tiberti

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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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Prof. Asha Sundaram

Associate Professor of Economics
Department of Economics
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