Curriculum Vitae – Fall 2023

Family name: Hípola
Given name: María Belén
Gender: female
Date of birth: 27/09/1996
Citizenship: Spanish
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Qualifications

PhD in Economics – Bocconi University (2023-Present)
MA in Economics – Columbia University (2021-2022)
Bachelor's in Economics – Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Bachelor's in Mathematics and Statistics – Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Awards and Scholarships

Master Synthesis Competition Award 2023 ($1,000)
La Caixa Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies 2020 (approximately $150,000 in tuition and stipends)

Research Interests

Economics of education, labor, development.

Working papers

Enrique Llopis, Elvira Alonso, Paloma Fontanillo, Belén Hípola, Sara Méndez y Javier Ramos, "Welfare Levels of the Rural Population in Murcia, 1769-1895. Mortality and Demographic and Economic Instability" Working paper, Spanish Association of Economic History, 2017.

Abstract
The main objective of this study is to make an estimation of the welfare levels of the Murcian population between the last third of the eighteenth century and the end of the nineteenth century. In order to tackle this topic, we have built several indicators for general mortality, catastrophic mortality, and economic and demographic instability. The main sources that have been used for the development of this research are baptism and burial parish registers, as well as the mercurial of Murcia city. The most relevant conclusions that can be drawn from this essay are: 1st) Murcian welfare levels went through important ups and downs between 1769 and 1889: in the first fifteen years of the 19th century their situation worsened dramatically; there was an improvement between 1815 and 1839 that drove welfare levels above the ones attained during the last quarter of the 18th century; and they deteriorated again from the 1840s till the 1880s, but not as sharply as between 1800 and 1814. 2nd) Almost all the indicators used in this research suggest that the well-being of the regional population had not improved substantially by 1865-1889 when compared with the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Work in Progress

"Holding Back Retention: The Effects of Learning Cycles on Enrollment and Student Achievement in Brazil"

Abstract

It is unclear whether repeating a grade has positive effects on student outcomes. In countries with high levels of repetition, it is particularly relevant to understand the causal effects of retention on dropout behavior and student achievement to improve the design of these policies. To this end, I evaluate a new retention policy design progressively implemented between 2013 and 2018 in schools in Distrito Federal, Brazil. The learning cycles policy restructures school organization so students can only be retained in four grades throughout primary and lower secondary school. Using school-level data, I estimate the dynamic causal effects of the policy on enrollment and test scores following an event-study difference-in-differences empirical strategy. I find that learning cycles increase enrollment in lower secondary by 9-12% on average while also having significant average negative effects on Portuguese test scores and no significant effects on math scores. These findings suggest there is a trade-off: relaxing retention can have a positive impact in reducing dropout, albeit at the potential cost of lowering test scores.

Studies abroad
Université Paris-Dauphine (Bachelor's Erasmus program)

Work Experience
E.g.:
June 2022 - Aug.2023 BARNARD-TEAGLE FELLOW at Barnard College - Columbia University
Sept. 2022 - May 2023 GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT at Barnard College - Columbia University
June 2022 - Aug. 2022 GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW at Program for Economic Research - Columbia University
Nov. 2020 - May 2021 FISCAL POLICY FELLOW at FPWA (Non-profit organization)
June 2019 - Feb. 2020 FULL-TIME INTERN at Banco Santander - Credit Risk Model Validation
Sept. 2016 - June 2019 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW at Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Language Skills
Spanish (native), English (C2 Cambridge Proficiency). French (B2 DELF), Portuguese (A2)

IT Skills
R, STATA (advanced); Python, SAS, SQL (intermediate)

Other Activities
Media Articles:
-"Ideology and polarization in times of coronavirus" by Javier Padilla and Belén Hípola. English version published in LSE Eurocrisis and Spanish version in Agenda Pública.
-"Coronavirus and American Elections: A Story of Polarization" by Javier Padilla and Belén Hípola. English version published in CUNY Thought Project.

Università Bocconi
PhD SCHOOL