PhD Thesis Defense

Laura Giuffrida (XXXVI cycle)

Will discuss her PhD thesis titled

Essays on exploring social media data and spatial econometric models in non-market valuation

On **Thursday December 14th 2023 at 15pm** at the Direction Meeting room, Via Santa Sofia 100.

Abstract

Protected areas offer unique opportunities for recreation, but the non-market nature of these benefits presents a significant challenge when trying to represent value in the decision-making processes. The most common techniques to value recreation are based on resource-intensive primary surveys which are difficult to perform at a large scale or in remote locations. This is true in the case of Italy, where a large and diverse network of protected areas suffers from lack of data. Here, we offer an alternative data source for the valuation of recreation by integrating the metadata of geotagged photographs from social media into single-site, individual travel cost models for 67 Italian protected areas. Count data model results are generally consistent with standard economic and consumer demand theory for ordinary goods, with a zero-truncated Poisson model returning down sloping demand curves for 50 of 67 sites. A significant travel cost coefficient was returned for 33 sites (p-value <0.05) for which consumer surplus estimates were found in the range between €6.33 and €87.16, with a mean value per trip of €32.82. Although not without their own challenges, the results presented highlight the possibilities of new forms of spatial big data as a novel data source for environmental economists.

Advisor:

Prof. Maria De Salvo

Co-advisor:

Prof. Giovanni Signorello