

Prize in memoriam of Etta Chiuri

2015 Edition

In compliance with the statutory prescriptions, the Committee in charge of awarding the prize in memoriam of Etta Chiuri, fifth edition (2015), was composed as follows:

- Prof. Massimo Bordignon, as the President of the Società italiana di economia pubblica (SIEP);
- Prof. Daniela Del Boca, as the Director of the Centre for Household, Income, Labour and Demographic economics (CHILD);
- Prof. Claudio Lucifora, as the President of the Associazione italiana economisti del lavoro (AIEL);
- Prof. Tullio Jappelli, designated by the Centre for Studies in Economics and Finance (CSEF);
- Prof. Ernesto Longobardi, on behalf of the Comitato premio Etta Chiuri.

The members of the Committee met online systematically in the month of July 2015 and examined the 21 articles submitted for the prize. The overall quality of the papers submitted was highly appreciated.

Eventually, the selection process resulted in the unanimous decision of awarding the 2015 Etta Chiuri Prize to Francesca Carta and Lucia Rizzica for their joint paper “Female employment and pre-kindergarten: on the unintended effects of an Italian reform” (June 29, 2015).

The motivation for this decision is as follows:

<< The Carta-Rizzica paper investigates the effects of a reduction in the price of childcare on mothers’ labour supply decisions, in terms of both market participation and actual employment. The paper enriches the theoretical and empirical literature on childcare services and female labour supply, to which Etta Chiuri herself contributed with a seminal paper that is mentioned by Carta and Rizzica.

The Carta-Rizzica work provides both theoretical and empirical results. At the theoretical level the mother’s labour supply choices are modelled in a dynamic framework, taking into account that mothers need childcare not only if they are employed, but also if they search actively for a job. It is shown that lowering the price of childcare increases the participation rate, but has an ambiguous effect on actual employment. This is because the reservation wage can increase or decrease, depending on the relative gains for the employed and unemployed women generated by the decrease in the cost of childcare.

The empirical analysis refers to the Italian case. Exploiting the discontinuities in the rules that determine access to pre-kindergarten, it is estimated that the reduction in the cost of childcare leads to an increase in participation of mothers in the labour market and to an increase in employment. It is shown that the latter effect is not only due to the increase in the participation rate, but also to a decrease in the reservation wage of unemployed women. The policy implications of the theoretical and empirical results are neatly illustrated.

The Committee in charge of awarding the 2015 Etta Chiuri Prize unanimously concludes that the Carta-Rizzica paper highly deserves the prize in consideration of (a) the importance of the issue considered; (b) the full correspondence of the topic with the research interests of Etta Chiuri; (c) the relevance of the policy implications of the results. >>