GABRIELA NOEMI VILLALBA MARECOS

PhD Candidate in Economics · University of Sussex
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Applied microeconomics, with research interests in the economics of education, labour economics, inequality, and social mobility. I use causal inference and administrative, survey, and experimental data to study how education and labour market institutions shape individual opportunities and socioeconomic outcomes.

EDUCATION

PhD in Economics 2024 – Present
University of Sussex

MSc in Development Economics (Distinction) 2021 – 2022
University of Sussex

BSc in Economics (First Class Honours) 2015 – 2019
National University of Asunción

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Experimental and Labour Economics Apr 2025 – Jan 2026
Research Institute in Economics and Finance (RIEF) · with Dr. Muchin Bazan

- Contributed to *Information and Adjustment of Expectations: Evidence from a Peruvian Training Program*, a field experiment combining survey and administrative data.
- Conducted survey harmonisation, data cleaning, sample construction, and econometric analysis integrating experimental and administrative sources.

Casual Research Assistant, Labour and Sports Economics Nov 2024 – Feb 2025
University of Sussex · with Prof. Barry Reilly

- Developed Python web-scraping algorithms to collect and process unstructured information from online sources.
- Implemented text-cleaning and structured data-extraction pipelines for exploratory quantitative analysis.

Research Assistant, Applied Microeconomics Jul 2023 – Nov 2024
University of Sussex · with Prof. Shqiponja Telhaj

- Cleaned, harmonised, and merged large administrative datasets on higher education, academic staff, and employment outcomes in the Western Balkans.
- Produced descriptive and econometric analysis in Stata and contributed to the regional policy report *Quality and Barriers of Higher Education in Albania.*
- Conducted literature reviews on higher-education quality, programme evaluation, and labour-market inequalities.

Research Assistant, Economics of Education Dec 2022 – Dec 2023
Centre for Economic Performance, LSE · with Prof. Shqiponja Telhaj & Dr. Emma Duchini

- Worked with large-scale UK education datasets, including DTR and SWC, in a project funded by the Nuffield Foundation.
- Maintained and checked reproducible Stata do-files, ensuring consistency across data vintages and analytical outputs.
- Collected, classified, and validated information on school sponsor types for more than 600 converted academies.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

PhD Chapters

- **Does a Higher Education Quality Policy Improve Outcomes? Evidence from Teacher Training Programmes.**
  Evaluates the effects of mandatory quality accreditation on student outcomes and higher-education provision using linked administrative data and quasi-experimental methods.
- **Mismatch and Inequality in Higher Education: Evidence from Colombia.**
  Examines student sorting across higher-education institutions and socioeconomic differences in mismatch using linked administrative records.

Working Paper

- **Gender Pay Gaps in a Middle-Income Country: Household Roles and the Motherhood Penalty.**
  Examines gender wage inequalities across the earnings distribution, with a focus on household roles and the motherhood penalty, using nationally representative household survey data. *Developed from MSc dissertation, University of Sussex.*

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCES

- **Royal Economic Society Annual Conference**, Newcastle, UK, 2026. Presented research on higher-education quality policy. Main session.
- **2nd Junior Workshop on Economics of Latin America**, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, 2026. Presented research on mismatch and inequality.
- **5th Southern PhD Economics Conference**, 2026. Poster presentation.
- **CAF–WELAC Conference**, 2025. Presented *Gender Pay Gap Structure in a Middle-Income Country: Evidence from Paraguay.*

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Software	Stata (advanced – large administrative datasets, reproducible workflows, data management and econometric analysis); Python (web scraping, text processing, data cleaning and regression analysis); LaTeX; Overleaf; Zotero
Econometrics	Causal inference; difference-in-differences; instrumental variables; regression discontinuity; panel data; programme evaluation; matching methods
Data	Large administrative microdata; survey data; experimental data; data linkage; survey harmonisation; longitudinal and panel-data workflows
Research workflow	Reproducible Stata do-files; data cleaning and merging; documentation; literature review; descriptive and econometric analysis
Languages	Spanish (Native); English (Advanced); Portuguese (Advanced); Japanese (Beginner)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Doctoral Tutor 2024 – 2026

University of Sussex, Department of Economics

- Mathematics & Programming
- Quantitative Methods for Business & Economics
- Introduction to Econometrics

Teaching Assistant, Development Economics 2020 – 2022

National University of Asunción

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS & RESEARCH FUNDING

- **Don Carlos Antonio López Scholarship for Doctoral Studies** (2024) — Paraguayan Government & Inter-American Development Bank.
- **Doctoral Overseas Conference Grant** (2026) — University of Sussex, supporting participation in the Junior Workshop on Economics of Latin America, Berlin.
- **Business School International Master's Award** (2021) — University of Sussex.
- **FCE–UNA Research Fund** (2022–2024) — research funding for projects on economic development and educational inequalities in Paraguay.
- **Paraguayan Full Scholarship for Undergraduate Studies** (2015) — Itaipu Binacional; top-performing recipient in national selection examination.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA), 2026.
- World Bank, *Reproducible Research Fundamentals*, 2026.
- Royal Economic Society Easter Training School, 2026.
- Accredited Researcher for secure-data research in the UK, 2025.
- Training in secure data access and research data use - UK Data Service, 2024.

REFERENCES

Prof. Shqiponja Telhaj
University of Sussex / Centre for Economic Performance, LSE
S.Telhaj@sussex.ac.uk

Dr. Muchin Bazan
Research Institute in Economics and Finance / Universidad Católica de Chile / Georgia Institute of Technology
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