Gabriela Noemi Villalba Marecos

PhD Candidate in Economics | Applied Microeconomics | Labour and Education Policy

15 Leslie Park Road   Webpage
London, UK   g.villalba-marecos@sussex.ac.uk

Research Interests

My work sits at the intersection of development economics, labour markets, and education policy. I use causal inference and microdata to evaluate public programmes and policies. My PhD research explores how education and labour market policies affect opportunities and outcomes.

Education

University of Sussex   **2021 – Present**
PhD in Economics (2024 – Present)
MSc in Development Economics (Distinction)
National University of Asunción   **2015 – 2019**
BSc in Economics (First Honours Class)

Research Experience

Research Assistant – Economics of Education (Field Experiment)   **Jan 2025 – Aug 2025**
Research Institute in Economics and Finance (RIEF), Peru

- Contributed to the project *Information and Adjustment of Expectations: Evidence from a Peruvian Program*.

- Supported design, survey harmonisation, and data cleaning for a field experiment on expectations and academic performance.

- Assisted with econometric analysis combining survey and administrative data.

Casual Research Assistant – Labour and Sports Economics   **Nov 2024 – Feb 2025**
University of Sussex (Prof. Barry Reilly)

- Developed web scraping algorithms in Python for data collection.

- Processed and cleaned datasets for exploratory analysis.

Research Assistant – Applied Microeconomics   **Jul 2023 – Nov 2024**
University of Sussex (with Prof. Shqiponja Telhaj)

- Cleaned and merged administrative datasets on higher education and employment in the Western Balkans.

- Contributed to regional policy report: *Quality and Barriers of Higher Education in Albania*.

- Conducted literature reviews on programme evaluation, education policy, and labour market inequalities.

Research Assistant – Economics of Education   Dec 2022 – Dec 2023
Centre for Economic Performance, LSE

- Worked with large-scale UK education datasets (DTR, SWC).

- Ensured accuracy and consistency of do-files in a long-term project funded by the Nuffield Foundation.

- Collected data on school sponsor types for over 600 converted academies.

Teaching Experience

Doctoral Tutor – Mathematics and Programming   2024 Fall Term
Doctoral Tutor – Quantitative Research Methods   2025 Spring Term
University of Sussex, Economics Department
Teaching Assistant – Development Economics   2020 – 2022
National University of Asunción, FCE Economic School

Publications and Research

Publications

- Lovera, D. & Villalba, G. (2022). Diagnóstico del Desarrollo. Paraguay, 2001–2020. *Ciencias Económicas*, 3(5), 90–106.

Submitted

- Lovera, D. & Villalba, G. (2025). *Brechas de aprendizaje en Paraguay: Un análisis aplicado de determinantes y desigualdades con datos del SNEPE 2018.* Submitted to *Población y Desarrollo*, FCE–UNA.

Research in Progress

- Villalba, G. (2025). *Gender Pay Gap Structure in a Middle-Income Country: Evidence from Paraguay.* Draft prepared for CAF–WELAC 2025 Conference. (Derived from MSc Dissertation, University of Sussex, 2022).

- Bazan, M., Quispe, D., & Villalba, G. (2025). *Information and Adjustment of Expectations: Evidence from a Peruvian Program.* Field experiment with survey and administrative data.

- Olmedo, S. & Villalba, G. (2025). *Innovation and Productivity in Paraguay: Evidence from a CDM Model.* Empirical application of the Crépon–Duguet–Mairesse framework.

PhD Dissertation and Projects

- Villalba, G. (ongoing). *The Effects of Accreditation Policy on Higher Education Outcomes in Colombia.* PhD Project.

- Villalba, G. (ongoing). *The Impact of T Levels on Education and Labour Market Outcomes in the UK.* PhD Project.

Technical and Language Skills

Econometrics and Data Analysis: Stata (Advanced – large administrative datasets), Python (Intermediate – web scraping, data cleaning, regression analysis)

Quantitative Methods: Causal inference, panel data, matching techniques, survey and administrative data integration
Tools: LaTeX, Overleaf, Zotero
Languages: English (C2 – Proficient), Spanish (Native), Guarani (Native), Portuguese (Intermediate), Japanese (Basic)

Awards and Scholarships

Don Carlos Antonio López Scholarship for Doctoral Studies **2024**
Paraguayan Government and Inter-American Development Bank
Business School International Master's Award **2021**
University of Sussex
Scholarship for Summer School in Economics and Finance **2021**
Faculty of Economic Engineering, Statistics and Social Sciences
National Full-Scholarship for Undergraduate Studies **2015**
Itaipu Binacional. Top 5 in national test (academic merit)

Research Grants

FCE-UNA Research Fund (FF) **2022–2024**
Semi-funding for two research projects (co-authored with Prof. Lovera):
   – Diagnóstico del Desarrollo. Paraguay, 2001–2020 (published in Ciencias Económicas)
   – Brechas de aprendizaje en Paraguay: Un análisis aplicado de determinantes y desigualdades con datos del SNEPE 2018 (submitted to Población y Desarrollo)

References

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

Muchin Bazan
Georgia Institute of Technology- Research Institute in Economics and Finance (RIEF)
muchinbr@gmail.com