

# ANTONIA VAZQUEZ

The University of Texas at Austin  
e-mail: [antonia.vazquez@utexas.edu](mailto:antonia.vazquez@utexas.edu)  
[www.antonio.vazquez.com](http://www.antonio.vazquez.com)

## Education

Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin  
2020 to present

M.A. in Economics, Universidad de San Andrés, Argentina  
December 2016

B.A. in Business UNICEN, Argentina  
July 2015

## References

Prof. Mary Evans  
LBJ School of Public Affairs, UT Austin  
[mary.evans@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:mary.evans@austin.utexas.edu)

Prof. Raissa Fabregas  
LBJ School of Public Affairs, UT Austin  
[rfabregas@utexas.edu](mailto:rfabregas@utexas.edu)

Prof. Manuela Angelucci  
Department of Economics, UT Austin  
[mangeluc@utexas.edu](mailto:mangeluc@utexas.edu)

Prof. Eric Chyn  
Department of Economics, UT Austin  
[eric.chyn@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:eric.chyn@austin.utexas.edu)

## Research Experience

The University of Texas at Austin, LBJ School of Public Affairs. Research Assistant for:

Prof. Eric Chyn, Jan 2024 to May 2025

Prof. Mary Evans, Spring 2023

Prof. Raissa Fabregas, Jun 2021 to Aug 2022

Yale University, MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies  
[2019-20 Fox International Fellow](#)

Universidad de San Andrés, Department of Economics, Argentina  
Research Assistant for Prof. Rossi, 2017 - 2019  
Full-time Research and Teaching Assistant, 2017 - 2019

## Publications

[“The Long-Term Effect of Military Conscription on Personality and Beliefs”](#) with G. Ertola Navajas, P. A. Lopez Villalba, M. A. Rossi. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 104(1), 2022

## Working Papers and Selected Work in Progress

[“Can We Save Failing Schools? Evidence From Los Angeles”](#) (*Job Market Paper*)

Can investing in failing schools help them improve? This paper studies this question using a natural experiment based on a 2017 lawsuit settlement that allocated substantial resources to the

lowest-performing schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Using a difference-in-differences design, I compare 50 secondary schools that received an increase of 13.5% on average in their annual budgets for three years to nearby public, noncharter schools that received no settlement funding. The intervention mandated hiring of additional staff members and allocating of funds for professional development, but allowed discretionary spending on initiatives for high-need students. I find that, in line with the intent of the settlement, schools hired more personnel, including instructional staff such as teachers and counselors and support personnel such as paraprofessionals and school service staff, all effects statistically significant. Settlement schools achieved a 0.75 percentage points reduction in suspension rate relative to unfunded schools, reflecting a marked improvement in performance outcomes. These reductions were particularly notable given that the settlement triggered demographic sorting, with the treated schools losing students overall and shifting toward higher concentrations of economically disadvantaged students and lower Black enrollment. A simple bounding exercise that accounts for demographic sorting indicates that the settlement had meaningful effects on suspension rates, suggesting real improvements on noncognitive dimensions of schooling. Survey evidence suggests that two key mechanism for lower suspensions were improvements to school climate as reported by staff and students, enhancements to educators' capacity and disciplinary approaches.

**“The Psychological Toll of Heat: The Effects of Temperature on Mental Health in Mexico”** with Y. Hong. SSRN, 2025.

- First Place Award at 2025 CHEER Research Retreat Poster Session
- Best Student Poster Award at the 2024 Development Economics Workshop

Rising global temperatures pose critical threats to mental health, especially in developing countries with limited adaptive infrastructure. We investigate how temperature affects a spectrum of mental health outcomes in Mexico from 2008 to 2019, combining administrative records of emergency department (ED) visits, suicide and mortality data, and self-reported well-being measures. Our analysis exploits local variation in temperature using a high-dimensional fixed effects model that controls for municipality-level seasonality and state-year trends. We find that higher temperatures significantly increase ED visits for mental disorders and suicide rates. Women are more likely to seek mental health care through ED visits, while men face heightened risks of suicide and death. Older adults show vulnerability to heat-related suicide. We add to the studies that explain mechanisms: individuals reduce physical activity and shift toward sedentary indoor behaviors as temperatures rise, with no significant changes in sleep time. Self-reported well-being supports the findings with increased psychological distress, diminished autonomy, and overall life dissatisfaction. We document that mental health ED visits rise more sharply in municipalities without access to psychiatrists, highlighting the possibility of institutional gaps in adaptation. However, air conditioning and rurality do not significantly moderate these effects. Our results highlight how institutional adaptation (or the lack thereof) shapes population vulnerability to psychological stress caused by increased temperature in Mexico.

**“Immigration Enforcement and Children Maltreatment”** with K. Cordova, M. Evans, and K. Rittenhouse, 2024 (under review)

We study the effects of a major immigration reform on alleged and substantiated maltreatment of Hispanic children using administrative data from child protective services agencies. Secure Communities ties federal immigration enforcement to local law enforcement, effectively increasing the likelihood of deportation for undocumented immigrants who are arrested for a crime. We exploit the staggered rollout of Secure Communities across counties to estimate a dynamic treatment effect

model. We find that Secure Communities implementation increased the number of Hispanic children per 1000 found to be victims of child maltreatment as well as the likelihood that maltreatment allegations for Hispanic children are substantiated, consistent with increased average severity of investigated cases.

**“The Well-Being Effects of Digital Mental Health Care”** with M. Angelucci and R. Fabregas (field activities in progress)

The rise of AI-powered tools for mental health support has generated enthusiasm about their potential to expand access to mental health support at low cost. Yet important questions remain about effectiveness, user engagement, and whether such tools might exacerbate feelings of isolation or crowd out traditional forms of care. We evaluate the effects of an AI-powered digital mental health app in a randomized controlled trial among women experiencing at least some mild psychological distress in Mexico. Access to the app significantly improved mental health outcomes during the 8-week study period: it reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress; improved subjective well-being, feelings of isolation, and sleep quality; and increased the prevalence of healthful behaviors. In addition, treated respondents were more likely to seek traditional psychotherapy. Engagement with the app was initially high, though use declined over time. However, effects persisted, potentially consistent with "as-needed" use. Our findings suggest that scalable digital tools can improve mental health outcomes, benefiting both individuals with limited sources of support and those who already have access to other forms of care.

**“Who Chooses and Who Benefits? The Limits of Decentralized Choice”** with J. Bruhn, C. Campos, and E. Chyn

The majority of U.S. public school districts now offer school choice programs that allocate seats using a centralized algorithm but with voluntary participation. The optional nature of public school choice segments public education and raises critical questions: who chooses, who benefits, and what policy alternatives can produce better outcomes for children? This paper provides new evidence on these questions by studying the Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest opt-in system in the country. Analyzing two decades of lottery records, we find that students living closer to choice options are both more likely to participate and to experience larger achievement gains. The proximity-based treatment effect heterogeneity is not explained by other observable treatment effect heterogeneity, suggesting a potential role for unobserved demand-side factors. To assess the empirical relevance of this hypothesis, we rely on quasi-experimental variation in distance to schools due to large expansions in choice programming and lottery-based admission lotteries to estimate a generalized Roy model that links families' decisions to apply and enroll to achievement gains. Our estimates indicate that the families least likely to apply under the current system would realize the largest test score benefits if they participated. In other words, decentralized, opt-in systems not only segment public education markets based on student ability and socioeconomic status but also exacerbate existing inequalities in educational outcomes. Policy interventions such as targeted information interventions that cultivate broader participation or mandate participation as is done in cities such as New York can produce sizable reductions in inequality.

**“Enhancing Parental Mental Health and Children’s Outcomes Through a Low-Cost Scalable Program: Evidence from Mexico”** with M. Angelucci, D. Bennett, and R. Fabregas (field activities in progress)

## Research Grants

### *External*

**2025** Arnold Ventures, Strengthening Evidence, with J. Bruhn, C. Campos, and E. Chyn (\$280,116)  
**2024** GEM Incubation Fund, with M. Angelucci, D. Bennett, and R. Fabregas (\$20,000)  
**2024** Spencer Foundation, Small Education Grant, with M. Angelucci, D. Bennett, and R. Fabregas (\$49,600)  
**2024** The Agency Fund, with M. Angelucci and R. Fabregas (\$160,000)  
**2024** Humane Studies Fellowship. Institute for Human Studies (\$5,000)  
**2023** J-PAL North America, with M. Angelucci and R. Fabregas (\$29,811)  
**2023** Expense Support Award. Institute for Human Studies. (\$5,000)

### *Internal*

**2025** Moritz Center for Societal Impact, UT Austin with M. Angelucci, D. Bennett, and R. Fabregas (\$50,000)  
**2024** Moritz Center for Societal Impact, UT Austin with M. Angelucci, D. Bennett, and R. Fabregas (\$25,000)  
**2023** Interdisciplinary Research in Latin American Studies Seed Grant, LLILAS, the University of Texas at Austin, with M. Angelucci, D. Bennett, and R. Fabregas (\$9,910)  
**2023** OVPR Research & Creative Grant. The University of Texas at Austin, with M. Angelucci, D. Bennett, and R. Fabregas (\$9,875)  
**2023** PRC Primary Seed Grant. Population Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, with R. Fabregas (\$19,700)

## Fellowships and Awards

**2025-26** University Graduate Continuing Fellowship. The University of Texas at Austin  
**2024** Institute for Humane Studies Junior Fellowship  
**2023** “Summer School in Economics of Migration” organized by the Global Migration Center at UC Davis and Alianza CDMX  
**2023** Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) Summer Fellowship. The University of Texas at Austin  
**2021** Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) Recruitment Fellowship. The University of Texas at Austin  
**2020-2022** LBJ School Fellowship. The University of Texas at Austin  
**2019-20** Fox International Fellowship. Yale University, MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies

## Conferences and Presentations

**2025:** AI & the Future of Human Capital in the Global South Symposium, LLILAS Seed Grants Initiative, IHS Winter Graduate Conference  
**2024:** IHS Junior Fellowship Convening; IHS Summer Graduate Conference; Texas Development Workshop (poster)  
**2023:** Institute for Human Studies- Downstream Effects of Covid-19 Restrictions on Immigration  
**2022:** APPAM Fall Conference  
**2021:** The University of Texas at Austin- LBJ Public Affairs Colloquium  
**2020:** 11<sup>th</sup> Bolivian Conference on Development Economics; LV Annual Meeting “Asociación Argentina de Economía Política”

**2019:** Yale University Labor/Public Economics Prospectus Workshop; Fox International Fellowship Seminar

### **Referee for**

Applied Economics, APPAM Conference, Journal of Comparative Economics, Journal of Transport Geography, Asociación Argentina de Economía Política

### **Teaching Experience**

**University of Texas at Austin**, LBJ School of Public Affairs

Teaching Assistant, graduate level

Impact Evaluation Methods in Development, Spring 2022, Spring 2023

Applied Microeconomics for Policy Analysis, Fall 2022, Fall 2023

Summer Quantitative Preparation, Summer 2022

**Universidad de San Andrés**, Argentina

Teaching Assistant, undergraduate level

Economic History: Fall 2019, Fall 2018

Microeconomics: Fall 2019, Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Fall 2017

Economics 1: Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018

### **Academic Service**

Student representative on [APPAM Policy Council](#), 2025-2026

Member of [APPAM Student Activities Committee](#), 2023 (member), 2024 (chair), 2025 (member)

Co-organizer and reviewer for LBJ Policy Research Workshop, 2023

PhD Advisory Board cohort representative, LBJ School of Public Affairs, mid 2021 to mid 2025

### **Language**

Spanish (Native); English (Fluent); Italian (A2)

### **Citizenship**

Argentinian and Italian

### **Professional Memberships**

APPAM Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management

### **Affiliations**

Fellow, Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies

### **Citizenship**

Argentinian and Italian

Last update: October, 2025