

Karen Ortiz-Becerra

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Agricultural & Resource Economics
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EDUCATION

University of California, Davis

Ph.D. Agricultural & Resource Economics, 2022 (expected)

- Fields: Development Economics, Labor Economics, and Econometrics

Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia

M.A., Economics, 2012

B.A., Economics, 2010

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Agricultural and Rural Development, Geographic Inequality, Consequences of Conflict and Forced Displacement, Econometrics of Causal Inference

WORKING PAPERS

Land Concentration and Rural Labor Markets: Theory and Evidence from Colombia (*JOB MARKET PAPER*)

Does the consolidation of land affect labor allocation across sectors? Do rural workers benefit from this consolidation? I study the effect of the concentration of land in large farms on rural labor markets in Colombia. Land concentration can affect labor allocation and the equilibrium wage through changes in farm and nonfarm labor demand. To analyze the interaction of these demand effects, I develop a general equilibrium model of rural economies based on four empirical facts that relate the scale of agrarian production with the demand for workers in each sector. The theoretical results indicate that the overall effect on these outcomes is ambiguous, as it depends on three main competing effects: farm labor intensity, aggregate agricultural profits, and share of income spent in local consumption. To estimate the overall effect, I construct an instrumental variable based on the differential exposure of rural municipalities to a demand shock that increased the area used in land-intensive crops during the 1990s. The results suggest that an increase in concentration prompted the movement of labor out of agriculture and increased unemployment rates. In light of the model, these findings are consistent with a situation in which the change in nonfarm labor demand was not large enough to offset the decrease in the demand for farmworkers.

Testing Attrition Bias in Field Experiments (with Dalia Ghanem and Sarojini Hirshleifer) *Revise and resubmit at Journal of Human Resources*

We approach attrition in field experiments with baseline data as an identification problem in a panel model. A systematic review of the literature indicates that there is no consensus on how to test for attrition bias. We establish identifying assumptions for treatment effects for both the respondent subpopulation and the study population. We propose randomization and regression-based procedures to test their sharp implications. We then relate our proposed tests to current empirical practice, and demonstrate that the most commonly used test can over-reject internal validity. Simulations and applications further support the relevance of our analysis.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Industries, Employment, and Clientelism in Local Economies”

“The Economic Impacts of Medical Drone Delivery”, with Oscar Barriga-Cabanillas and Aleksander Michuda

	“Forced Displacement and Early Nutritional Development in Colombia”	
	“A Nonlinear Difference-in-Differences Approach to Attrition Corrections in Randomized Experiments”, with Dalia Ghanem, Sarojini Hirshleifer, and Desire Kedagni	
POLICY PUBLICATIONS	“An Analysis of Urban Crime in Colombia” (with Daniel Mejia and Daniel Ortega), Inter-American Development Bank and Development Bank of Latin America, 2015	
	“Innovation and Employment: Evidence from Colombian Manufacturing Firms” (team led by Alejandro Caballero and Monica Parra), The World Bank, 2011	
AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS	UC Davis Bert & Nell Krantz Fellowship	2021
	UC Davis Provost’s Dissertation Year Fellowship (tuition and stipend)	2019-2020
	UC Davis Henry A. Jastro Graduate Research Award	2019
	UC Davis Graduate Student Association Travel Award	2019
	UC Davis Nonresident Tuition Fellowship	2015-2016
	Bursary Scholar, Global Violence Reduction Conf. University of Cambridge	2014
	Scholarship for Undergraduate Studies from The Carvajal Foundation	2006-2010
PRESENTATIONS	LACEA LAMES Annual Meeting	2021 (scheduled)
	RIDGE Virtual Forum	2021 (scheduled)
	International Association for Applied Econometrics	2021
	Midwest International Economic Development Conference	2021
	AMIE’s 1st Workshop in Applied Microeconomics	2021
	Virtual Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting	2020
	Virtual Seminar on Applied Economics, Colombian Central Bank	2020
	Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta	2019
	Global Violence Reduction Conference, University of Cambridge	2014
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	<i>Teaching Assistant, UC Davis</i>	
	Econometrics Methods (PhD)	2019
	Economics of Agriculture (M.S.)	2017
	Development Economics (undergraduate)	2019, 2021
	Econometric Theory and Applications (undergraduate)	2018, 2021
	Econometrics for Business Decisions (undergraduate)	2021
	Agricultural Labor (undergraduate)	2017
	Intermediate Microeconomics (undergraduate)	2017, 2018
SERVICE	Applied Econometrics Reading Group, Co-organizer	2017-2020
	Development Seminar Series, Student Coordinator	2017-2018
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC	2013-2015
	Consultant, Education Division	
	Consultant, Citizen Security Division	
	The World Bank, Washington DC	2012-2013
	Consultant, Office of the Chief Economist for Latin America and the Caribbean	
	Department of Economics, Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia	2011-2012
	Research Assistant, Center for Economic Development Studies	

Fedesarrollo, Colombia
Research Assistant

2010-2011

SKILLS

- Statistical Packages: Stata, Python, R
- Other: \LaTeX
- Languages: English (fluent), Spanish (native)

PROGRAMMING

ATTREGTEST: A Stata module to implement regression-based attrition tests

REFERENCES

Professor Ashish Shenoy: shenoy@ucdavis.edu
Professor Michael Carter: mrcarter@ucdavis.edu
Professor Dalia Ghanem: dghanem@ucdavis.edu
Professor Stephen Boucher: srboucher@ucdavis.edu