

# MAGDALENA BENNETT

Last updated: January 2024

## Summary

I specialize in **analyzing complex data** to reveal **key insights** and **compelling narratives** for decision-making. My expertise extends to the development and enhancement of **statistical methods for causal inference**, with empirical applications in evidence-based policy, especially in education.

## Contact information

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Present  
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2020 • **Assistant Professor**  
IROM Department, McCombs School of Business, the University of Texas at Austin
- Present  
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2022 • **Research Affiliate**  
Learning Collider
- Present  
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2022 • **Research Affiliate**  
Population Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin
- 2020  
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2015 • **Senior Research Assistant**  
Prof. Peter Bergman, Teachers College, Columbia University  
Prof. Jose Zubizarreta, Columbia University
- 2014  
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2012 • **Research Analyst**  
Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), Santiago, Chile
- 2012 • **External Consultant**  
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Washington, DC

## EDUCATION

- 2020  
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2015 • **PhD., Economics and Education**  
Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY
- 2014  
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2013 • **MSc. Social Policy (Research)**  
London School of Economics, *Merit Distinction*, London UK
- 2012  
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2010 • **MSc. Engineering Science (Applied Microeconomics)**  
P. Universidad Catolica, *Maximum Distinction*, Santiago, Chile

2010  
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2005

- **BS. Industrial Engineering**  
P. Universidad Catolica, *Maximum Distinction*, Santiago, Chile

## SELECTED KEY PROJECTS

- 2023 ● **Tracking on the Field: Racial Diversity and Disparity in Football Quarterbacking**  
Ongoing project
  - Analyzed quarterback recruitment and career progression, identifying racial disparities in high school to college and NFL transitions using multiple-source scraped data. Preliminary results show that QBs of color are 10 percentage points less likely to be recruited as college QBs, even after adjusting for play style and performance.
- 2023 ● **Biased Beliefs and the Dynamic Role of Information in College Choice**  
Randomized Controlled Trial in Chile. Project with Claudia Allende.
  - Conducted a randomized trial with the Chilean Ministry of Education to evaluate the impact of information timing on college admission test preparation, allowing people to dynamically change their inputs to affect their potential choice set.
- 2023 ● **Beyond Exclusion: The Role of the Causal Effect of Testing on Attendance on the Day of the Test**  
Working Paper. Co-authored with C. Neilson and N. Rojas.
  - Investigated standardized testing's impact on student attendance in Chile, using extensive administrative data to identify schools potentially manipulating attendance. Findings show how attendance is differentially affected depending on the academic performance of the student, and large amount of data is used to identify schools that are most likely gaming the system by (des)incentivizing students to show up the day of the test.
- 2023 ● **Determinants of Success in the Context of Microcredits**  
Ongoing observational study and field experiment. Project with William Fuchs and Jaime Millan.
  - Researched factors influencing success among micro-entrepreneurs in Latin America through a extensive in-person surveys. These findings provide input for field experiment to test potential low-cost interventions.
- 2023 ● **Difference-in-Differences using Mixed-Integer Programming Matching**  
Working Paper
  - Developed a methodological approach to enhance difference-in-differences analysis using mixed-integer programming for better adjustment in non-parallel trends.
- 2022 ● **How Far is Too Far? Generalization of a Regression Discontinuity Design Away from the Cutoff**  
Job Market Paper
  - Extended regression discontinuity designs to estimate effects beyond eligibility cutoffs, with empirical application to Chile's free higher education policy.
- 2021 ● **All Things Equal? Heterogeneity in Policy Effectiveness against COVID-19 Spread in Chile**  
*World Development*. Vol 137. 105208
  - Analyzed lockdown effectiveness in Chile using public data, revealing significant variance related to socioeconomic factors.
- 2021 ● **Better Together? Social Networks in Truancy and the Targeting of Treatment**  
*Journal of Labor Economics*. Vol 39 (1). Co-authored with Peter Bergman.
  - Examined spillover effects of a parental information intervention on student attendance, using administrative data to explore social network impacts.

2020

**Building Representative Matched Samples with Multi-valued Treatments in Large Observational Studies**  
*Journal of Computational and Graphical Statistics. Vol 29 (4) pp 744-757.* Co-authored with J. Vielma and J. Zubizarreta.  
· Enhanced traditional matching methods in observational studies to accommodate multiple groups and improve computational efficiency.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

2023

**Research Excellence Grant (\$12,900)**  
The University of Texas at Austin  
· Bennett, M. "Changes in School Attendance Zones over Time: The Effect of Segregation on Zoned-In and Zoned-out Areas"

2022

**Research Excellence Grant (\$20,000)**  
The University of Texas at Austin & Herb Kelleher Entrepreneurship Center  
· Bennett, M., Fuchs, W., and Millan, J. "Determinants of Success in the Context of Microcredits"

2019

**Distinguished Student Paper Award**  
ENAR International Biometrics Society  
· Bennett, M., Vielma, J., and Zubizarreta, J., "Building Representative Matched Samples with Multi-valued Treatments" (2019)

2018

**Post-Primary Education Initiative Grant (\$45,000)**  
Poverty Action Lab (I-PAL)  
· Allende, C. and Bennett, M., "Biased Beliefs and the Dynamic Role of Information in College Choice"

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MENTORSHIP

2023/2024

**PhD. Dissertation Committee, Economics Department**  
Gue Sung Choi  
Jinyeong Son  
· University of Texas at Austin




2023/2024

**PhD. Dissertation Committee, Statistics Group, McCombs School of Business**  
Pedro Santos  
Shentao Yang  
· University of Texas at Austin



2023/2024

**Research Assistant**  
Maryam Sadiq  
Shishir Nambi  
Benny Wang  
· University of Texas at Austin

## Software Skills

-  Statistical software: R (advanced), Stata (advanced)
-  Programming Languages: Python (advanced)
-  Other software: ArcGIS (advanced), MS Excel (advanced)

## Additional information

-  Languages: English (fluent), Spanish (native)
-  Nationality: Chilean