ANDRÉS BARRIOS FERNÁNDEZ

Assistant Professor

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics — 2013-2019
Thesis title: Essays in Economics of Education
London School of Economics and Political Science

M.Res. in Economics — 2013-2015
London School of Economics and Political Science

M.Sc. in Engineering — 2009-2010
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

B.Sc. in Engineering — 2003-2009
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

RELEVANT POSITIONS HELD

Director — 2024-present
Human Development Lab. Universidad de los Andes.
Santiago, Chile.

Assistant Professor — 2022-present
School of Business and Economics. Universidad de los Andes.
Santiago, Chile.

Luksic Visiting Scholar — 2025
DRCLAS, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA, USA.

Postdoc Fellow — 2021-2022
Department of Economics. MIT. Cambridge, MA, USA.

Postdoc Researcher — 2019-2020
VATT Institute for Economic Research, Helsinki, Finland.

Research Assistant — 2018
National Bureau of Economic Research. Cambridge, MA, USA.

RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS

Research Affiliate — 2024-present
IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Bonn, Germany.

Research Affiliate — 2021-present
Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). London, UK.

Associate — 2019-present
Centre for Economic Performance (CEP), LSE. London, UK.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor — 2022-present
Universidad de los Andes

- Topics in Applied Microeconomics.
- Evaluation of Public Policies and Social Programs.

Graduate Teaching Assistant 2014-2019
London School of Economics and Political Science

- Introduction to Econometrics.
- Principles of Econometrics.
- Public Finance.
- Public Economics.
- Course manager (Introduction to Econometrics).
- Academic Mentor.

Lecturer 2012-2013
School of Engineering, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

- Economics Principles.

PUBLISHED PAPERS

Elite Universities and the Intergenerational Transmission of Human and Social Capital *(American Economic Review)* with C. Neilson and S. Zimmerman

Do elite colleges help talented students join the social elite, or help incumbent elites retain their positions? We combine intergenerationally-linked data from Chile with a regression discontinuity design to show that, looking across generations, elite colleges do both. Lower-status individuals who gain admission to elite college programs transform their children's social environment. Children become more likely to attend high-status private schools and colleges, and to live near and befriend high-status peers. In contrast, academic achievement is unaffected. Simulations combining descriptive and quasi-experimental findings show that elite colleges tighten the link between social and human capital while decreasing intergenerational social mobility.

O Brother, Where Start Thou? Sibling Spillovers on College and Major Choice in Four Countries (The Quarterly Journal of Economics) with A. Altmejd, M. Drlje, J. Goodman, M. Hurwitz, D. Kovač, C. Mulhern, C. Neilson and J. Smith.

Family and social networks are widely believed to influence important life decisions but causal identification of those effects is notoriously challenging. Using data from Chile, Croatia, Sweden, and the United States, we study within-family spillovers in college and major choice across a variety of national contexts. Exploiting college-specific admissions thresholds that directly affect older but not younger siblings' college options, we show that in all four countries a meaningful portion of younger siblings follow their older sibling to the same college or college-major combination. Older siblings are followed regardless of whether their target and counterfactual options have large, small or even negative differences in quality. Spillover effects disappear, however, if the older sibling drops out of college, suggesting that older siblings' college experiences matter. That siblings influence important human capital investment decisions across such varied contexts suggests that our findings are not an artifact of particular institutional detail but instead a more generalizable description of human behavior. Causal links between the postsecondary paths of close peers may partly explain persistent college enrollment inequalities between social groups and suggest that interventions to improve college access may have multiplier effects.

Neighbors' Effects on University Enrollment (American Economic Journal: Applied Economics)

This paper provides causal evidence that close neighbors significantly influence potential applicants' decision to attend university. I create a unique dataset combining detailed geographic information and individual educational records in Chile, and exploit the quasi-random variation generated by student loans eligibility rules. I find

that potential applicants are significantly more likely to attend and complete university when their closest neighbor—defined as the closest individual applying to university one year before—becomes eligible for a student loan and enrolls in university. This increase in enrollment is mediated by an increase in the probability of taking the admission exam and applying to university. The closest neighbor typically lives 0.09 km away, and neighbors' influence decays with distance. My results highlight the importance of social influences for university enrollment decisions and suggest that financial aid and university access policies may have important spillover effects.

Recidivism and Neighborhood Institutions: Evidence from the Rise of the Evangelical Church in Chile *(Journal of Labor Economics)* with Jorge García-Hombrados

This paper uses rich administrative data from Chile to provide causal evidence that the local institutions of the neighborhood to which inmates return after prison matter. Specifically, we show that the opening of an Evangelical church reduces twelve-month reincarceration rates among property crime offenders by 11 percentage points, an effect that represents a drop of 18% in the probability of returning to prison for this group of individuals. We discuss three classes of mechanisms that could drive these effects: promotion of Evangelism, provision of social support, and increased difficulty to commit crimes. Our analyses suggest that the social support that Evangelical churches offer to their communities—i.e., charitable activities and alcohol and drug abuse rehabilitation—is an important driver of their effects on recidivism. Evangelical churches also seem to make it more difficult to commit crimes by reducing the number of potential criminal partners in the neighborhood. Finally, we show that NGO openings also reduce recidivism. Organizations helping their beneficiaries to improve their earnings potential or to overcome alcohol and drug abuse problems reduce reincarceration rates by 11 and 10 percentage points, respectively. These results suggest that interventions that give recently released inmates access to local support networks could play an important role in encouraging desistance from crime.

Teacher Value-Added and Gender Gaps in Educational Outcomes *(Economics of Education Review)* with M. Riudavets-Barcons.

This paper uses rich administrative data from Chile to estimate teacher value added (TVA) on test scores and on an index of educational attainment. We allow each teacher to have a different TVA for male and female students and show that differences in TVA explain an important part of the gender gaps we observe in test scores and in postsecondary education trajectories. We next exploit rich information on teaching practices and show that, at least in terms of the practices we observe, there do not seem to be important differences in what makes teachers effective for male and female students. We do find, however, significant associations between certain practices and teacher effectiveness, which suggest that some teaching strategies benefit all students independently of their gender. Finally, we also show that on average female teachers are more effective at teaching female students and that math teachers tend to be biased in favor of male students. Interestingly, teachers with smaller gender biases seem to be more effective for both male and female students.

It's Time to Learn: School Institutions and Returns to Instruction Time (Economics of Education Review) with G. Bovini.

This paper investigates whether the effects of a reform that substantially increased daily instruction time in Chilean primary schools vary depending on school institutions. Focusing on incumbent students and exploiting an IV strategy, we find that longer daily schedules increase reading scores at the end of fourth grade and that the benefits are greater for pupils who began primary education in no-fee charter schools

rather than in public schools. We provide evidence that these two types of publicly subsidized establishments, which cater to similar students but differ in their degree of autonomy, expand the teaching input in different ways: to provide the additional instruction time, no-fee charter schools rely more on hiring new teachers and less on increasing teachers' working hours than public schools do.

Peer Effects in Education *(Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Economics and Finance)*

The identification of peer effects is challenging. There are many factors not related to social influences that could explain correlations among peers. This article discusses the main challenges for the identification of peer effects, describes some of the empirical strategies commonly used to overcome these challenges, and summarizes the main findings of the literature on peer effects in education. Peers have been shown to affect many important outcomes, including academic performance and educational trajectories. Confirming the existence of peer effects is important from a policy perspective. Both the cost-benefit analysis and the design of policies are likely to be affected by the existence of social spillovers. However, making general policy recommendations from the current evidence is not easy. The size of the peer effects documented in the literature varies substantially across settings and depends on how peers are defined and characterized. Access to better data and the ability to map social networks will facilitate investigating which peers and which characteristics matter the most in different contexts. Conducting more research on the mechanisms behind peer effects is also important. Understanding their drivers is central to incorporating them in designing new educational programs, identifying competing policies, and gaining a deeper understanding of the nature and relevance of different forms of social interactions for the youth.

WORKING PAPERS & ONGOING WORK

Boots in the Beat: Effects of Beat Policing on Victimization and Crime Perception *(Conditionally Accepted at The Economic Journal)* with Jorge García-Hombrados and Daniel Pérez-Parra

This paper provides causal evidence on the effects of beat policing on public security and police effectiveness. Using rich administrative and survey data from Chile, we study *Plan Cuadrante*, a reform that shifted policing toward a beat-policing model by subdividing urban municipalities into smaller geographic units—i.e., quadrants—and permanently assigning officers to these quadrants rather than rotating officers across the municipality. Exploiting the staggered implementation of the program across municipalities, we find large improvements in both public safety and security perceptions. Among surveyed households, twelve-month victimization rates declined by 10 percentage points (36%), and administrative records show a 10% decline in crimes reported to the police. Arrests increased by 14% even as crime declined. The reform also improved security perceptions. The share of households perceiving increased criminal activity fell by 15 percentage points (36%), and, consistent with this pattern, household investment in private security measures declined by 7.7 percentage points (37%). In some municipalities, implementation of *Plan Cuadrante* was accompanied by significant increases in police resources. However, our mechanism analyses indicate that our findings are not driven by resource increases alone, as they remain sizeable in municipalities with resource increases similar to those in control municipalities. The beat-policing components of the reform—i.e., permanent officer assignment and greater local knowledge—appear to be key to reducing crime and improving security perceptions.

The Global Gender Gap in STEM Applications: Pipeline vs. Choice *(Conditionally Accepted at the Economics of Education Review)* with Isaac Ahimbisibwe,

Adam Altmejd, Georgy Artemov, Aspasia Bizopoulou, Martti Kaila, Jin-Tan Liu, Rigissa Megalokonomou, José Montalbán, Christopher Neilson, Sebastián Otero, Jintao Sun, and Xiaoyang Ye

This paper uses data from coordinated application and admissions systems in Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Finland, Greece, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, and Taiwan to document differences in gender representation among talented students applying to STEM majors. These ten countries are very different in size, economic development, culture, gender norms, and geographic location. However, in all of them, university admission decisions rely on algorithms that allocate students to specific college-major combinations based on their academic performance when applying to the university. We focus on students scoring in the top 10% of the university admission exam and show that female representation among STEM-major applicants varies from 24% in Uganda to 46% in Sweden. In the settings we study, these differences can be driven either by gender gaps in academic performance at the time of application or by gender gaps in the way these top-scoring students submit their applications. While we find some significant variation in female representation among top 10% scorers—32.3% in Uganda to 65.6% in Sweden—we find a remarkably stable gender gap in applications to STEM across countries—between 21 and 25 percentage points in all countries except China, where it reaches 37 percentage points. These results indicate that i.) closing gaps in academic performance is not enough to eliminate inequality in college trajectories across gender groups and ii.) the gap in the way men and women make choices about major does not decrease significantly with economic development.

Brief yet Effective: Group Counseling and College Access for Disadvantaged Students with Josefina Eluchans-Errázuriz and Fernanda Ramírez-Espinoza

Large socioeconomic gaps in higher-education access and completion persist even among similarly talented students with access to financial aid, pointing to an important role for information frictions and unequal support. We study whether a brief, low-cost counseling intervention can help close these gaps. Using a randomized controlled trial in Chile, we evaluate a short group counseling program for disadvantaged senior high school students that combines a customized information package with four one-hour sessions delivered during the school day by external counselors. Our sample includes 26,853 students in 229 high schools randomly assigned to control, information-only, or information-plus-counseling arms. Linking administrative records and survey data, we find that assignment to the full counseling program increases admission-exam registration by 13 percentage points, exam taking by 11 percentage points, financial-aid applications by 7 percentage points, and higher-education enrollment by 7 percentage points. These gains persist through reenrollment and graduation from short technical degrees—outcomes we can already observe. Effects are largest for students with lower parental education, lower parental expectations, and higher information frictions, suggesting that the program partly substitutes for limited family and school support. By contrast, information provision alone improves students' understanding of the higher education system but does not increase confidence in that knowledge or alter their educational trajectories. Our findings show that short, structured counseling interventions of this kind—well suited for scale-up—can mitigate counselor scarcity and improve higher education trajectories.

Immigrant Exposure and Native Students' Educational Outcomes with Patricio Domínguez and Josefina Vilaplana

This paper provides causal evidence on how immigrant exposure affects native students' short- and medium-term educational outcomes, using administrative records for the universe of K–12 students in Chile, linked to parent, teacher, and student surveys. Our identification strategy exploits within-family variation, instrumenting

younger siblings' immigrant exposure with the share they would have faced in their cohort had they attended their older sibling's school. A one-standard-deviation increase in the immigrant share within the school cohort—3.1 percentage points—raises test scores by 0.03–0.04 standard deviations and improves long-run outcomes such as on-time high-school graduation and higher-education enrollment. Peer composition is a key driver of these effects: immigrants sort into schools where they outperform native peers on both cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions, including motivation and grit. Heterogeneity analyses confirm this mechanism—exposure to high-motivation-grit immigrants improves native outcomes, while exposure to low-motivation-grit immigrants worsens them—and because immigrants have higher motivation-grit than natives on average, the net effect is positive. In line with this, teachers report fewer classroom disruptions as the immigrant share rises. We find no evidence that immigrants crowd out school resources. Teacher–student ratios and teacher quality proxied by teacher test scores, experience, and certification remain unchanged with greater immigrant exposure.

Elite Universities and the Formation of Influential Politicians with Christopher Neilson, Antonia Paredes, and Seth Zimmerman

Do elite universities help outsiders join the political elite, or help incumbent elites retain their positions? We combine five decades of digitized Chilean admissions records with new administrative data on high-rank bureaucrats and elected officials, and a regression discontinuity design, to show that admission to an elite college degree raises the probability of becoming a high-rank bureaucrat by 80%, with no effect on candidacy or election. The effect is driven by mid-SES applicants, who already have reasonable representation among elite-degree applicants: elite universities diversify the political elite to some extent, rather than simply entrenching the advantage of the already-overrepresented high-SES group. Of three candidate mechanisms—public-service vocation, human capital, and social capital—only social capital, proxied by college peers' surnames shared with Chile's pre-1970 political elite, accounts for the effect. Event studies confirm this channel: networks built around the same college degree and cohort activate most sharply once a connected minister takes office.

Who, Where, and How? Unpacking the Effects of Affirmative Action in College Admissions with Nano Barahona, Tomás Larroucau, Sebastián Otero, and Jorge Rodríguez

We study how the targeting and design of affirmative action in college admissions shapes beneficiaries' educational trajectories and labor market outcomes. Our setting is Chile, where two programs, BEA and PACE, expand university access for disadvantaged students through very different eligibility rules. BEA targets students in the bottom 80 percent of the national income distribution and reserves seats for these students, who must nonetheless compete for them using the same exam-based composite score as regular admissions. PACE targets a substantially more disadvantaged population and, although it too requires taking the admission exam, allocates seats solely on students' rank within their high school class. Using a regression discontinuity design around each program's eligibility cutoff, we find that eligibility expands students' choice set and raises university enrollment, with effects substantially larger for PACE. This enrollment response reflects a shift in application behavior rather than improved performance on the admission exam. University graduation eventually rises for both programs, but only after a long delay. Within our observation window, the graduation gain for PACE remains far smaller than its enrollment gain. This combination of long completion lags and in some cases modest graduation-to-enrollment ratios points to student-program mismatch, even as both programs raise average employment and earnings in the long run. Graduation is closely tied to a

program's academic rigor and to the gap between a student's own preparation and that of the program's typical entering class. Academic rigor and selectivity correlate with graduates' average earnings, but the relationship is far from one-to-one. These results suggest that accounting for program rigor, preparation gaps, and returns when designing special admission programs can reduce mismatch and improve beneficiaries' graduation and labor market trajectories.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Affirmative Action Programs in College Admissions with Carolina Allende and Jorge Rodríguez

This paper provides causal evidence that giving preferential access to college to talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds not only benefits them but also their younger siblings and neighbors. Eligibility for this program depends on students graduating from high school in the top 10% of their class. We thus overcome endogeneity concerns using a regression discontinuity design through which we compare the outcomes of individuals whose high school GPA places them marginally above and below the top 10% of their class. We proceed in a similar way to estimate spillovers. We compare individuals with an older sibling or neighbor in the margin of qualifying for preferential admissions. Eligibility for preferential admissions increases college enrollment by 6.5 percentage points (17%) and college completion by 3.5 percentage points (12%). The younger siblings and close neighbors of direct beneficiaries also benefit from the program. They become 1.9/1.7 percentage points more likely to attend and 1.6/1.0 percentage points more likely to complete college respectively. These indirect effects represent between 25% and 40% of the direct effects. Social spillovers of programs that expand access to college are not trivial and should be incorporated in the evaluation and design of this type of program.

The Aftermath of a Superstar Firm Collapse: Labor Market Trajectories and Entrepreneurship following Nokia's Decline with Jarkko Harju, Tuomas Matikka and Sami Remes

The rapid decline of Nokia mobile phone operations in 2009–2012 left many high-skilled workers looking for new career paths. We use rich, matched employer-employee data covering all Nokia workers and other individuals in Finland to study how this sudden labor market shock affected displaced workers. We find that workers displaced from Nokia experienced large and long-lasting losses in the labor market. They suffered large drops in earnings and were more likely to be unemployed than similar workers displaced from other firms even three years after the mass layoffs took place. These losses, however, were attenuated by an important increase in entrepreneurship. We find that a distinctively large share of the high-skilled Nokia workers established a new business after being displaced (9% compared to 3% for displaced workers from other firms). This effect was amplified by generous start-up grants provided by Nokia since 2011 as a part of Bridge, their global support program for displaced workers. The larger number of entrepreneurs does not seem to have resulted in lower entrepreneurial quality. The firms founded by former Nokia employees perform similarly to those founded by similar workers displaced from other firms or to all those established in Finland during the decline of Nokia. This result suggests that encouraging high-skilled displaced workers to become entrepreneurs can reduce the costs of mass layoffs, as it increases the number of established firms without significantly affecting their performance.

REFERENCES

Steve Pischke
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London, WC2A 2AE
s.pischke@lse.ac.uk
Tel. (44-20) 7955-6509

Christopher Neilson
Yale University
28 Hillhouse Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511
christopher.neilson@yale.edu
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Seth Zimmerman
Yale University
Edward P. Evans Hall
New Haven, CT 06511
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AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS

Fondecyt Regular, ANID (USD 120,000)	2026
Luksic Visiting Scholar, DRCLAS Harvard University (USD 39,000)	2025
Teaching Award, Universidad de los Andes	2024
Fondecyt Iniciación, ANID (USD 110,000)	2022
OP Research Foundation (USD 30,000)	2022
Yrjö Jahnsson Foundation (USD 45,000)	2022
Spencer Foundation Small Research Grant (USD 37,500)	2022
Yrjö Jahnsson Foundation (USD 55,000)	2021
MueveTP Project Incubator. Fundación Luksic (USD 150,000)	2021
Department of Economics Fellowship, LSE.	2014-2018

COMPUTER SKILLS

ArcGIS, C++, Matlab, Python, R, Stata.

LANGUAGES

Spanish (native), English (fluent).

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Referee:

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, American Economic Review, Applied Economics Letters, The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy, The Economic Journal, Economica, Economics of Education Review, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Human Capital, Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Public Economics, Nature, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, The Quarterly Journal of Economics, The Review of Economic Studies, The Review of Economics and Statistics, The World Bank Economic Review.

Scientific Committees:

Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Society of Labor Economists (SOLE)

Organization of Academic Events:

First Workshop on Economics of Education, Valle Nevado, Chile	August 2023.
Second Workshop on Economics of Education, Valle Nevado, Chile	August 2024.
Third Workshop on Economics of Education, Valle Nevado, Chile	August 2025.
Fourth Workshop on Economics of Education, Valle Nevado, Chile	August 2026.

Website.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Fourth Valle Nevado Workshop on Economics of Education (2026), NBER Summer Institute (2026), NBER Education Group Spring Meeting (2026), ASSA Annual Meeting (2026), NBER Education Group Fall Meeting (2025), NBER Summer Institute (2025), NBER Education Group Spring Meeting (2025), Third Valle Nevado Workshop on Economics of Education (2025), Ski and Labor Switzerland (2025), NBER Education Group Fall Meeting (2024), EALE (2024), Second Valle Nevado Workshop on Economics of Education (2024), RIDGE (2024), NBER Education Group Spring Meeting (2024), NBER Summer Institute (2024), SOLE (2024), ASSA Annual Meeting (2024), NBER Education Group Fall Meeting (2023), Workshop on Educational Choices and Transitions in Secondary and Tertiary Education (2023), First Valle Nevado Workshop on Economics of Education (2023), KU Leuven Summer Event (2023), Helsinki Economics of Crime Workshop (2023), 7th IZA Workshop on Economics of Education (2022), NBER Summer Institute (2022), CESifo Area Conference: Labor Economics (2022), SOLE (2022), NBER Education Group Spring Meeting (2022), 6th IZA Workshop on Economics of Education (2021), 3rd IZA Workshop on Economics of Education (2018).

SEMINARS

Universidad Andrés Bello, University of Rochester, Tufts University, Arizona State University, Bentley University, Georgetown University, University of Virginia, Boston University, Teachers College, Columbia University, University of Maryland, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard Kennedy School, Universidad de Chile, Tulane University, PUC-Rio, Insper, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Centre for Economic Performance (LSE), Universidad Diego Portales, Carnegie Mellon University, Queen Mary University of London, University of Oxford, University of Warwick, University of Surrey, Aalto University, University of Helsinki, VATT Institute for Economic Research, Bank of Italy, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Uppsala University, Stockholm University, Washington State University.

PREDOCS

Carolina Allende, Research Manager at J-PAL.

Gustavo Faúndez, PhD student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Camilo Jaramillo, PhD student in Economics at UC Berkeley.

Josefina Muñoz, Junior Researcher at the IDB.

Sofía Schuster, Economics Analyst at the Central Bank of Chile.

Alex Valenzuela, PhD student in Economics at the University of Michigan.

Josefina Vilaplana, Advisor at the Chilean Ministry of Education.

PhD THESIS COMMITTEES

Marc Riudavets-Barcons (advisor), Helsinki Graduate School of Economics.

Hernán Hochschild (thesis committee), Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

Aino Kalmbach (thesis committee), Helsinki Graduate School of Economics.