CARLA VARONA CERVANTES

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Fields: *Macroeconomics · Labor Economics · International Economics · Human Capital · Gender Economics*

Research: dynamic models of educational choice with labor market information frictions (gender gaps, OECD) · dynastic GE-OLG models with administrative microdata (talent misallocation, Chile)

AFFILIATION

Banco Central de Chile — Monetary Policy Division, Economic Analysis Department

Senior Economist, October 2023 – Present

EDUCATION

European University Institute — Ph.D. in Economics *2023*

Dissertation: "Essays in Economics of Education, Gender and Labor Economics"

Advisors: Russell Cooper and Alexander Monge-Naranjo

European University Institute — MRes. in Economics *2019*

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid — M.A. in Economics *2018*

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid — B.A. in Economics *2015*

PUBLICATIONS

"Labor Market Implications of Education Mismatch"

Varona Cervantes, Carla, and Russell Cooper. European Economic Review, 148 (2022): 104179.

WORKING PAPERS

"Determining Gender Differences in Education and Labor Market Outcomes"

Joint with Russell Cooper. ***Conditionally Accepted, The Economic Journal.***

Abstract: *This paper studies gender differences in educational attainment and labor market outcomes. Across 21 OECD countries, though men are paid more than women, the college attainment rates and college premia are (mostly) higher for women. This paper explains these patterns through the quantitative analysis of a dynamic choice model of education and labor market outcomes. Using the estimated model, we decompose the observed gender gaps through a series of counterfactual exercises. One finding is that these gaps are driven mainly by gender differences in the average compensation at non-college jobs. The estimated lower compensation for non-college women generates for them larger college premia and higher incentives to attend college relative to men. A second finding is that observed gender wage gaps for college workers are largely driven by differences in the gender-specific distributions across signals of ability rather than wage differences across genders given a signal.*

"Implications of Policy Interventions on Eliminating Gender Gaps"

Working Paper, 2026. Submitted.

Abstract: *This paper studies policy interventions intended to eliminate gender differences in labor market outcomes, principally wages, through an estimated model of statistical discrimination with dynamic choices of education and labor market participation. The estimated model matches observed gender gaps in wages, college attainment rates, the college premium, and labor market participation rates. Introducing various interventions into the estimated model allows us to quantify both the intended and unintended consequences of the policies. In the short run, the policy requiring gender-free applications in the market for skilled labor eliminates wage gaps; but once education choices respond, the effects are attenuated. A more comprehensive policy enforcing gender-free compensation reverses the wage gap in skilled markets and eliminates it in unskilled labor markets, even once education adjusts. These interventions also impact college rates, the college premium gap, and participation rates. The effects are country-specific, reflecting underlying differences in estimated parameters by gender across countries.*

WORK IN PROGRESS

"Human Capital Misallocation and General Equilibrium Effects"

Joint with Agustín Díaz and Nadim Elayan-Balagué. Work in Progress, 2026.

Abstract: *We analyze the general equilibrium effects of human capital misallocation in Chile using linked administrative tax, education, and test-score data. We document substantial educational mismatch, with high-ability students from low-income families under-attending college, and we estimate sizable complementarities between ability, schooling, and labor-market outcomes. We build and calibrate a dynastic overlapping-generations (OLG) model featuring borrowing constraints, parental altruism, and both private and public educational investment — integrating K–12 school quality and college choice in a unified general equilibrium framework. The model is estimated via Simulated Method of Moments using administrative microdata linking tax records, educational outcomes, and standardized test scores for a cohort followed from age 10 through age 28. We use the estimated model to quantify the aggregate output, inequality, and intergenerational mobility effects of policies targeting credit constraints and school quality.*

"Labor Market Transitions and Job-to-Job Mobility in Chile"

Joint with external researcher (Banco Central de Chile). Work in Progress. BCCh Documento de Trabajo, expected December 2026.

Abstract: *Descriptive analysis of job-to-job transitions in Chile, focusing on transitions associated with wage cuts, voluntary vs. involuntary separations, tenure profiles, and wage growth at origin vs. destination firms. Uses administrative microdata from the Banco Central de Chile.*

POLICY WORK

Employment Dynamics in Chile: Administrative Data vs. INE Survey *2024–2025*
Series of internal reports (joint with Matías Tapia and Montserrat Martí) comparing formal private-sector employment trends from administrative records (AFC) against the National Employment Survey (ENE). Identified and explained systematic divergences in levels and growth rates across demographic groups, nationality, and sectors, with policy implications for employment measurement in Chile.

Post-Pandemic Labor Market Dynamics: International Evidence and the Case of Chile *2026*
Discussion Note (joint with Brian Pustilnik and Nadim Elayan-Balagué, GEE/GAI). Systematic review of international labor market evidence post-COVID-19 across OECD economies, benchmarked against Chile's anomalous pattern of rising real wages alongside weak employment creation. Presented to senior management, May 2026.

Gender Gaps in Chile: Briefing for the President of the Central Bank *2024*
Prepared analysis on gender gaps in labor and credit markets in Chile using administrative data, including regression-adjusted wage gap estimates and mobility differentials. Presented to the President of the Banco Central de Chile.

IMF Article IV Comments on Chile and Gender *2024*
Provided technical comments on gender-related annexes for the IMF Article IV consultation on Chile.

Effects of Working-Hours Reduction on Employment and Wages: Literature Review *2024*
Synthesized international evidence on the employment and wage effects of mandatory reductions in working hours across France, Germany, Canada, Chile, and Sweden. Prepared as a briefing for the Board of the Banco Central de Chile.

PAST WORK EXPERIENCE

Associate Instructor — NYU Abu Dhabi, UAE *2022–2023*

TEACHING

Numerical Methods (M.A. in Economics) — NYUAD *Spring 2023*
Macroeconomics II (M.A. in Economics) — NYUAD *Spring & Fall 2023*
Economic Policy (Undergraduate) — NYUAD *Fall 2023*
International Economics (Undergraduate) — NYU Florence *Spring 2022*
Macro and International Economics II (M.A. in Transnational Governance) — EUI *Spring 2022*
Macroeconomics III: Incomplete Markets (Ph.D.) — EUI *Spring 2021*

GRANTS, AWARDS AND HONORS

Ph.D. Fellowship, Salvador de Madariaga — Spanish Ministry of Education *2018–2022*
Ph.D. Completion Grant — European University Institute *2021–2022*
General Scholarship for Post-Compulsory Studies — Spanish Ministry of Education *2012–2015*

PRESENTATIONS

Computing in Economics and Finance (CEF), Venice, 2026 [scheduled].
Jornadas de Economía Laboral, Málaga, 2026 [scheduled].
Midwest Macroeconomics Meetings, Richmond, VA, 2024.
LACEA Annual Meeting, Montevideo, 2024.
Gender Gaps Conference, Warsaw, 2024.
37th Congress of the European Economic Association (EEA-ESEM), 2022.
Barcelona School of Economics Summer Forum; XXX Meeting of the Economics of Education Association; ECO-EUI Education Conference; Lisbon Economics and Statistics of Education; Brown Bag Seminar, NYUAD.

LANGUAGES & NATIONALITY

Languages: English (fluent), Spanish (native), Italian (advanced).
Nationality: Cuban, Spanish.