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**Education**

The University of Chicago, 2011 to 2017

Ph.D. in Economics

Thesis Title: “Formal Firms, Informal Workers and Household Labor Supply in Mexico”

Completion Date: June 2017

BA, Economics, ITAM, Magna Cum Laude, 2009

BA, Political Science, ITAM, Magna Cum Laude, 2011

References:

Professor Steven J. Davis (chair)

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**Teaching and Research Fields:**

Primary fields: Applied Macroeconomics, Labor Economics

Secondary fields: Economic Development, Public Economics, Firm Dynamics

**Teaching Experience:**

Winter, 2016 MBA Money and Banking, University of Chicago Booth School of Business,  
Teaching Assistant for Professor Kinda Hachem

Spring 2015 Elements of Economic Analysis 3, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant  
for Professor Rafael Lopes de Melo

Spring, 2015 Economics for Public Policy, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for  
Professor Sabina Shaikh

Winter, 2015 Public Policy Analysis, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Professor

Winter, 2015	James A. Leitzel MBA Money and Banking, University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Teaching Assistant for Professor Kinda Hachem
Fall, 2014	Economics for Public Policy, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Professor Sabina Shaikh
Winter, 2014	Public Policy Analysis, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Professor James A. Leitzel

**Research Experience and Other Employment:**

05/17 to date	Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Visiting Scholar
2013 to date	Millennium Economics LLC, Research Associate
Mar-Aug 2015	The World Bank, External Consultant
2014	International Labour Organization, External Consultant
2012	University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Research Assistant
2012	National Banking and Securities Commission (CNBV), Financial Inclusion Consultant
2008-2011	National Banking and Securities Commission (CNBV), Special Projects Director
2006	Análítica Energética SC, Research Assistant
2004-2005	Center for Applied Economics and Public Policy (CEAPP) at ITAM, Research Assistant

**Professional Activities:**

2017	Stanford Labor Seminar, ITAM Alumni Conference
2016	Washington University Economics Graduate Student Conference, Capital Theory Workshop, University of Chicago, Empirics and Methods in Economics Conference, Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Seminar, Princeton University, Graduate Student Conference, Western Economics Association International, Graduate Student Dissertation Workshop, Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting

**Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:**

2016-2017	Reid Economics Fellowship, University of Chicago
2015-2016	Francis William Immasche Dissertation Fellowship, University of Chicago
Summer 2015	CSWEP Economic Research Fellow. Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
2011-2015	CONACYT scholarship

**Publications:**

Samaniego de la Parra, Brenda, Luis F. Munguia, y Leonardo Iacovone (2015). “El salario mínimo y la productividad empresarial” World Bank: Washington, DC. Mimeo.

Sara, Elder and Samaniego de la Parra, Brenda. “Why we must focus on the quality of jobs for youth: a note for the post-2015 development agenda” Work4Youth publication series, No. 23. International Labour Office. Geneva: ILO, 2014.

Sameer Khatiwada and Samaniego de la Parra, Brenda. “International Migration and Development” in *World of Work Report 2014: Developing with jobs* International Labour Office. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Rev. Geneva. ILO, 2014.

Jorge Davalos and Samaniego de la Parra, Brenda “Regional economic and labour market developments. Latin America and the Caribbean” in *Global Employment Trends 2014: The Risks of a Jobless Recovery*. International Labour Office. Geneva: ILO, 2014.

Brenda Samaniego de la Parra and Lopez-Moctezuma Jassán, Carlos. “Financial Inclusion through Mobile Financial Services: The Mexican Case” in *Financial Inclusion: Theoretical and Practical Approaches*. Alliance for Financial Inclusion and Central Bank of Ecuador, 2010.

### **Research Papers:**

*“Formal Firms, Informal Workers and Household Labor Supply”* (Job Market Paper)

I construct a unique employer-employee-household matched panel dataset to study the consequences of “off-the-books” or informal employment at formal firms in Mexico. I find that 25% of all employees at firms registered with tax authorities are informal workers who do not receive the benefits mandated by law. Using data from the Ministry of Labor’s (STPS’s) randomly applied inspections between 2005 and 2016, I analyze the effects that regulation enforcement has on formalization, labor turn-over, and wages. I find that inspections increase the probability that a worker will transition from an informal to a formal job within the same establishment. However, inspections also increase the likelihood that informal workers separate from their jobs. There is no evidence of a change in wage for informal workers that remained employed after an inspection suggesting that the cost of registration, in terms of after-tax wages, is not levied over the newly formalized workers. Instead, after an inspection, average wage levels for formal workers at inspected firms are lower relative to their counterparts at non-inspected firms, indicating that coworkers of informal employees bear part of the increase in the firms’ labor costs. I then use the exogenous shock to a worker’s informal employment status generated by STPS’s inspections to measure the elasticity of spousal labor supply with respect to access to the benefits of a formal job. I find that the spouses of informal workers that become formal after an inspection are more likely to remain unemployed, less likely to start a new formal job and, conditional on employment, are more likely to transition to a higher paying job.

*“Application Flows”* (with Steven J. Davis)

We build a new U.S. database that links application flows to millions of online vacancy postings since January 2012. Our raw data come from DHI Group, Inc., a company that owns and operates several online platforms for posting job vacancies and attracting applications. Employer-side clients of these platforms comprise organizations that hire on their own account and recruiting firms that solicit applicants for third parties. The database identifies employer-side clients, daily application flows for each vacancy posting, job title and city of employment, and other information. Vacancy postings are concentrated in technology sectors, computer-related occupations, financial services, business and management consulting, and certain other professional occupations. We deploy the database to construct an array of novel labor market tightness and mismatch indicators, which we use to revisit U.S. labor market conditions in the past five years. We also document a heavy bunching of applications in the first few days after vacancy posting and greater jobseeker activity early in the workweek and in the first half of the month. In addition, we investigate how enhancements to the search and matching functionality of DHI platforms affected the volume and distribution of application flows.

## **Work in Progress:**

### *"The Effects of Mexico's Labor Market Reforms on Formal Employment"*

In 2012, Mexico's Congress approved a set of reforms aimed at increasing labor market flexibility and improving employment conditions for women and young workers. The reforms increased enforcement by adding to the resources available to verify employers' abidance with the regulation, and increasing the penalties for non-compliance. In this paper, I analyze how inflows and outflows to formal jobs have changed since the reforms were implemented. I show that almost half of the growth in formal jobs is due to higher within-firm informal to formal jobs transitions. I find that firms adjusted their criteria for formalizing workers: firms now place more weight on on-the-job experience than on education when determining who to "promote" to a formal job. I show that these empirical findings are consistent with a model where firms decide which workers to hire and under what type of contract based on the expected costs of getting caught with informal workers. Finally, I explore the implications of this change in the composition of the formal workforce for resource allocation and productivity.

### *"Cyclical Behavior of Informal Employment and Self-Employment"*

In this paper, I analyze the cyclical behavior of gross worker flows in Mexico focusing on "off-the-books" or informal workers employed at formal firms. I show that transitions across formal and informal employment differ significantly between self-employed workers and employees. I find that the share of informal workers employed at formal firms is countercyclical due to the decrease in the job-finding rate for formal jobs during recessions as well as the pro-cyclical behavior of within-firm informal to formal transitions. Flows from formality into informal self-employment are also pro-cyclical. This evidence suggests the distinction between informal employees at formal firms, formal employees and informal self-employment is critical when attempting to model an economy with a large informal sector. Differences in the dynamics of informal employment and self-employment have important implications for unemployment fluctuations.

### *"The Hazards from Informality: Measuring the Consequences of Entering the Labor Market in an Informal Job"*

In this paper, I analyze the effects of entering the labor force in an informal job in Mexico. Since job finding rates in the informal sector are higher than in formal employment, informal jobs can offer young individuals entering the labor force the necessary work experience to transition to better quality jobs. However, if informal employment sends a negative signal about a worker's quality, entering the work force in an informal job can lead to worse labor market outcomes in the future. In this paper, I use random inspections by the Ministry of Labor to analyze the labor market trajectories of informal and formal workers. I first show that establishments are more likely to hire formal workers after an inspection. Using the Labor Markets Trajectories Survey (MOTRAL), a survey that collects data on labor market outcomes between 2007 to 2012 for workers in Mexico, I compare the labor market outcomes of observationally equivalent workers hired before and after an inspection at inspected and non-inspected establishments to analyze the hazards from informality.

### *"Worker Reallocation, Skill Transferability and Inequality in Mexico"* (with Claudia Macaluso)

We document the heterogeneity in occupational and geographical mobility across workers in Mexico and use this insight to study the effects of policies that incentivize firms to relocate in economically disadvantaged areas (Special Economic Zones 'SEZ'). We argue that SEZ may achieve only modest results in decreasing geographical inequality. Due to high training costs, high worker mobility across regions and low skill transferability, it is cheaper for firms to attract migrant workers from the North rather than hire the low-skilled workers from the South, thus perpetrating rather than alleviating inequality.