

**Contact Info:** [vrrios@post.harvard.edu](mailto:vrrios@post.harvard.edu)

**Summary** I belong to an emerging generation of scholars that rejects the commonly accepted notion that research is inexorably detached from policy decisions and social mobilization. Relying on data analysis and research journalism, I advance an acute understanding of the pressing social problems of Mexico, my home country, as academic, activist, and non-profit entrepreneur.

**Education** **HARVARD UNIVERSITY** Cambridge, MA

**PhD/MA in Government, 2013**

**Major:** Social Policy and Inequality.

- Conducted research on Mexico's inequality, criminal violence and political corruption.
- Designed a big-data algorithm to geocode crime hotspots in Mexico. Results requested by CIA, DEA, FBI, and featured in *Foreign Policy*, *Huffington Post*, *Scientific American*, and others.

**Awards:** *American Political Science Association's Leonard D. White Award* for the best public administration dissertation; Harvard's Merit Fellowship for outstanding research conducted at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences; profiled as one of [Harvard's 15 Stellar Graduates](#) by the Harvard Gazette.

**INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO AUTÓNOMO DE MÉXICO (ITAM)**

Mexico City

**Bachelor of Arts, 2005**

**Major:** Political Science; Graduated top 1% of class

**Professional Experience**

2016-on **Non-profit entrepreneur & activist** International

- Selected as [Young Global Leader 2020](#) by the World Economic Forum for her vision, courage, and influence to drive positive change in Mexico. Fellow, International Women's Forum 2019-20.
- Columnist at *El País*. Writes at *The New York Times* and *Expansión Política*. Has contributed with *The Intercept*, *The Washington Post*, & *La Hora de Opinar* (Mexican National TV).
- Co-founder of [Dateras](#), a group of female coders promoting the use of cutting-edge tools for public influence. Designed Haiti's poverty targeting tool; visualized World Bank's operations databases.
- Coordinator of [¡FuisteTu?](#), a collective of NGOs & private partners honored with a "special mention" by Mexico's National Council for Policy Evaluation for designing an algorithm to identify acts of corruption.
- Selected as one of Latin America's "[Top-5 Corruption Busters](#)" by *America's Quarterly*; and as "[selection commissioner](#)" of the Anti-corruption System by the Mexican Senate, an honor reserved for top-activists.

2009-on **Academic, HARVARD UNIVERSITY & PURDUE UNIVERSITY** USA

- Positions: Instructor, Harvard Summer School (2018-today) & HKS Executive (2011-2013). Visiting Assistant Professor, Harvard University (2019) & Purdue (2017-2018). TA, Harvard (2009-2010).
- Teaches: Intro to Public Policy, US-Mexico Politics, Corruption in Latin America, Mexican Politics, Inequality & Corruption, and Advanced Quantitative Methods for Social Scientists.
- Conducts research on Mexico's inequality, corruption, and violence. Has published 14 peer-reviewed papers and is coauthor of *The Missing Reform*, a book analyzing Mexico's top public policy issues.
- Fellow/Grantee: Guggenheim Foundation, The Wilson Center, Center for US-Mexican Studies, etc.

2014-2015 **Founding CEO, MÉXICO ¿CÓMO VAMOS? (MCV)** Mexico City

- Managed, designed and implemented impact strategy for think tank researching Mexico's local economies.
- [Profiled by The Economist](#) as Mexico's "mover and shaker" for designing an anti-corruption campaign ("*anti-corruptómetro*") that was the catalyst for anti-corruption reform.
- Honored by CONEVAL as a "best impact data generator" due to innovative impact model designed to decode cutting-edge quantitative research for decision makers.
- Increased MCV's market value 529%, up to capitalizing \$10M USD yearly in unpaid publicity.

2011, 2013 **Policy Adviser, MEXICAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT** Mexico City

- Partnered with IADB & experts to design a national pension reform and unemployment insurance.
- Developed a Bayesian crime index to evaluate the impact of security policies in Mexico.
- Represented the Minister of Finance at the National Security Council and directive cabinet meetings.
- Briefed National Security Spokesman on criminal trends in one-on-one bi-monthly sessions.

2006-2007 **Deputy Director, MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT** Mexico City

- Ensured reporting and monitoring of best global poverty-relief practices to enhance Mexico's strategies.
- Wrote an annual report on Children's Human Rights delivered to the United Nations.

2003-2005 **Research Assistant, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY** Mexico City

- Assessed Mexico's political risk to recommend the allocation of USAID's funding in Mexico.
- Data collection for book *Courting Democracy in Mexico*; field research in Oaxaca's indigenous counties.

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**Methodological Skills:** Econometrics, microeconomics, statistics, geographic referencing, and formal modeling.

**Languages:** R, English (advanced), and Spanish (native).

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**Peer-Reviewed Publications (selected)**

- “*Understanding elite’s interest in redistribution*” (with Holland) in *Comparative Political Studies* (2021).
- “*Human resource management is a tool to reduce corruption*” (with Nieto) *Public Administration* (2020).
- “*Cash transfers’ effect on government support*” (with Ivaschenko & Doyle) in *Disasters* (2019).
- “*Explaining the assassination of journalists*” (with Holland) in *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2017).
- “*Violence and forced migration*” in *Latin American Research Review* (2014).
- “*Multicultural institutions, distributional politics and mobilization*” in *LA Politics & Soc* (with Eisenstadt)(2014).

**Think-tank and applied research reports (selected)**

**Fuiste Tu?:** *Where and how does public money get lost* (2019).

**The Wilson Center:** *Innovation happens in Mexico* (2018), *Mexico’s special economic zones* (2016), *Four rule of law policies to make Mexico grow* (2015), *Why is Mexico violent again?* (2018), *Mexico’s petit revolution* (2013).

**Mexico ¿Cómo Vamos?:** *Inequality; Informality; Reducing poverty in Mexico; Advancing local economies* (2015).

**Trans-border Institute:** *Drug violence in Mexico* (with Molzahn & Shirk 2011; Shirk 2010).

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**Other Publications (selected)**

**El País:** *¿Por qué AMLO abraza la austeridad?* (2020), *Élite tropical* (2019), *El talón de Aquiles de AMLO* (2018).

**The New York Times:** *Women are fed up and the president doesn’t get it* (2021), *No, no eres clase media* (2020); *Drug Legalization could create more crime* (2012); *Doing the math on the Mexican drug wars* (2010).

**The Intercept:** *Mexico’s workers pinned between US business interests and obsessive austerity* (2020).

**The Washington Post:** *How to Win the Mexican Drug War* (2013).

**America’s Quarterly:** *What can Mexico learn from Haiti’s development plans* (2016).

**Harvard Kennedy School Review:** *Who started the Mexican drug war?* (Cover article; 2013).

**Harvard Review of Latin America:** *Keys to reduce violence. Targeted policing and civic engagement* (2012).

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**Conferences and public speaking (selected)**

**UCSD:** *Defense of the Mexican economy and health protection against COVID-19* (2020) (San Diego, CA).

**Harvard University:** *Political origins of corruption* (2019); *Mexico’s security challenges* (2019) (Cambridge, MA).

**Wilson Center:** *The missing reform* (2018) (Washington, DC); *Nudge innovation in Mexico* (2016) (Boston, MA).

**United Nations, Public Service Forum:** *Using data to reduce corruption* (2018) (Marrakech, Morocco).

**Cornell University:** *Corruption types & income inequality: Evidence from Latin America* (2019) (Ithaca, NY).

**The World Bank:** *Cash transfers’ effect on government support: Evidence from Fiji* (2018) (Washington, DC).

**The Guggenheim Foundation:** *Understanding Mexico’s Drug Violence* (2011) (New York, NY).

**US Department of State:** *The future of Mexican drug cartels* (2011) (Washington, DC).

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**TV and Radio (selected)**

- National TV Talk Show; *La hora de opinar*, Political analyst (Occasional collaborator, 2018-on).
- 103.3FM; *Anchorwomen* with Ruiz-Healy, (Mex; Weekly, 2 hrs., National Radio, 2014-2016).
- Bloomberg TV; *Regional economy analyst* (Mex; Weekly, 2014-2015).
- National TV Talk Show; *La entrevista con Sarmiento*, Commentator (Occasional collaborator, 2018-on).

**Research Grants** Young Global Leader at World Economic Forum 2020-2025, International Women’s Forum 2019-on, Wilson Center Fellow 2015-2017, Guggenheim Fellow 2014, Stanford University 2012 (declined), Harvard Real Estate Institute 2009, Harvard Kennedy School 2010, David Rockefeller Center for LA Studies 2011, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs 2010, Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences 2011, University of San Diego 2009, University of California, San Diego 2009-2010.

**Scholarships:** Mexico’s National Council of Science and Tech., Harvard University, Fulbright Scholar (declined).

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**Professional References:** (1) Steve Levitsky (Department of government, Harvard University; slevitsky@harvard.edu); (2) Gary King (Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences, Harvard; king@harvard.edu); (3) José Octavio López Presa (Mexico’s Anti-Corruption System).

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**Volunteer Experiences:** Democracia Deliberada (2017-on); Mexico’s National Anti-Corruption System (Selection commissioner 2016-2019); Admissions Committee to Harvard College (Interviewer 2013-2015); Open Source Creation (2012); Harvard Mexican Association (Campaign 2012, Treasurer 2008); United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office (Intern 2008) Quality of Professional Journalism (Spokesperson 2005); ITAM’s Political Science Student Association (Coordinator 2002), ITAM’s Newspaper & Literary Magazine (Editor 2002).

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