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Contact Information

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 Evanston, IL 60208

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Fields

Macroeconomics, Political Economy

Education

Ph.D., Economics, Northwestern University 2019-present
 Committee: Giorgio Primiceri (co-chair), Georgy Egorov (co-chair), Lawrence Christiano
 M.Sc. in Economics (highest honors), University of Chile 2014
 B.Sc. in Industrial Engineering (highest honors), University of Chile 2014

Job Market Paper

The Evolution of the Welfare State

Abstract: The evolution of the welfare state over the last few decades has differed strikingly across countries in the world. For example, spending on social benefits as a fraction of GDP has substantially increased in the US and France since 1980, but it has declined in the last three decades in countries like Israel and Sweden. To explain these different trends, I propose a model with agents that are heterogenous in occupation and wealth, and who vote on social benefits over the course of their lifetime. The model highlights the key role of “aspirational voters”—members of the middle class who support pro-business policies and sacrifice social benefits hoping to become future entrepreneurs. The importance of aspirational voters, in turn, depends on wealth inequality. According to the model, social spending is expected to increase in rich countries with high wealth inequality, while it should decline if inequality is low. A calibrated version of the model successfully predicts the observed trends of social spending in 18 out of 24 countries from all continents.

Working Papers

The Political Economy of Labor Policy (submitted) [pdf](#)

Abstract: This article explores the political origins of size-contingent Employment Protection Legislation (EPL), which typically imposes stricter requirements on larger firms. The theory is based on the political conflict between workers and entrepreneurs that is shaped by endogenous occupational decisions. The equilibrium policy protects workers in larger but not in smaller firms. This is true regardless of the weights the government puts on the welfare of workers and entrepreneurs. Firms strategically adjust their labor demand in response to the size-contingent EPL policy, resulting in welfare distortions. These welfare distortions can be eliminated by balancing the bargaining power of workers and entrepreneurs.

The Regressive Effects of Worker Protection: The Role of Financial Constraints [pdf](#)

Abstract: Employment protection laws (EPLs) are aimed to protect workers. However, if firms cannot easily adjust to EPLs, then their workers may not benefit from higher protection at all. I address this concern from both a theoretical and empirical perspective. In the model, EPLs crowd out external finance, discouraging firms’ investment and employment. These distortions are larger in more financially constrained firms that have less room to accommodate EPLs. As a result, EPLs harm financially constrained firms and their workers, while they may only benefit unconstrained firms and their workers. I test the predictions of the model by exploiting the adoption of state-level US wrongful discharge laws. I find

strong evidence that EPLs reduce labor earnings, firms' profits, investment, and employment in more financially constrained firms. This negative effect is decreasing in the level of financial constraints. Overall, EPLs have regressive effects as they only benefit the most unconstrained firms and their workers.

Publications

“Wealth Inequality and the Political Economy of Financial and Labour Regulations” with Ronald Fischer [pdf](#)

Journal of Public Economics, 204, 2021, 104553

Abstract: This article studies the interplay between inequality and the effectiveness of financial and labor regulations. We motivate the paper by observing that the cross-country correlation between wealth inequality and the strength of regulations increases with a country's GDP per capita. In poor countries the relationship is negative, but might become positive for rich enough countries. In our model, initial regulations and wealth inequality determine occupational choice and thus create endogenous interest groups. We embed these groups in a political economy model, and use it to endogenize political platforms and explain our observation. We show that increased inequality in a poor country leads in equilibrium to lower creditor and worker protection. In rich countries the effect is reversed and higher inequality means that less advantaged groups can exert more pressure towards laws that work in their favour.

“The Inequality-Credit Nexus” with Ronald Fischer and Patricio Valenzuela [pdf](#)

Journal of International Money and Finance, 91, 2019, pp. 105–125

Abstract: This paper explores the inequality-credit nexus from both a theoretical and an empirical perspective. The paper develops an overlapping generation model in which the effect of income inequality on private credit depends on the countries' per capita income and on the quality of laws protecting creditor rights. The model predicts that greater inequality leads to higher levels of private credit in countries with low per capita incomes and weak legal rights, while this effect is ambiguous or negative in economies with higher aggregate income and stronger credit protection. Using a panel dataset of 155 countries over the 1982–2015 period, the paper shows empirical evidence that is robust and consistent with the model's predictions. The paper's major finding suggests a credit channel through which inequality may affect economic outcomes.

Research Experience

Research Assistant, Economic Research Department, Central Bank of Chile 2014–2019

Teaching Experience

| | |
|---|------------|
| Teaching Assistant, Undergraduate, Northwestern University | |
| Political Economics, Bruno Strulovici | 2023 |
| Macroeconomics, Robert Gordon, Giorgio Primiceri, Larry Christiano | 2021, 2022 |
| Introduction to Macroeconomics | 2020, 2021 |
| Teaching Assistant, Graduate, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile | |
| Heterogeneous Agents in Macroeconomics | 2017, 2018 |
| Teaching Assistant, Graduate, University of Chile | |
| Heterogeneous Agents in Macroeconomics | 2016, 2017 |
| Labor Economics | 2014 |
| Econometrics | 2013, 2014 |
| Lecturer, Graduate, Diego Portales University | |
| Empirical Industrial Organization, Master in Economics | 2014 |
| Teaching Assistant, Undergraduate, University of Chile | |
| Industrial Organization | 2013 |
| Macroeconomics | 2013 |
| Microeconomics | 2011 |

Introduction to Calculus

2010

Fellowships & Awards

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|---|-----------|
| Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award, Northwestern University | 2022-2023 |
| Northwestern University Fellowship | 2019-2023 |
| Research Grant. Complex Engineering Systems Institute (ISCI), University of Chile | 2014 |
| Scholarship for Master's Degree. National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT), Government of Chile | 2013-2014 |

Seminars and Conferences

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|---|------------------------|
| Macroeconomics Lunch Seminar, Northwestern University | 2021, 2022, 2023 |
| Latin American and Caribbean Conference (LACEA) | 2017 |
| Mini-Workshop on Industrial Organization & Economic Theory, Complex Engineering Systems Institute (ISCI), University of Chile | 2014, 2016, 2017 |
| Seminar of the Central Bank of Chile | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 |
| Annual Meeting of the Chilean Economic Society (SECHI) | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 |
| Open House Master in Economics, University of Chile | 2014 |

Editor

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|---|-----------|
| Assistant Editor of the Journal of Economía Chilena (The Chilean Economy) | 2018 |
| Editor of the Working Papers of the Central Bank of Chile | 2015-2017 |
| Editor of the Economic Policy Papers of the Central Bank of Chile | 2015-2017 |
| Editor of the Studies in Economics Statistics of the Central Bank of Chil | 2015-2017 |

Languages

English (fluent), Spanish (native), Portuguese (fluent)

Programming

Matlab, Fortran, Julia, Stata

References

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| Professor Lawrence Christiano Department of Economics Northwestern University 2211 Campus Drive Evanston, IL 60208 847-491-8231 l-christiano@northwestern.edu | |