

Gastón López

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Fields Industrial Organization, Applied Microeconomics

Education Ph.D., Economics, Northwestern University, 2024 (Anticipated)

Dissertation: Essays on Industrial Organization and Public Economics

Committee: Rob Porter (Chair), Vivek Bhattacharya, David Dranove, Gastón Illanes

M.A., Economics, Northwestern University, 2019 M.A., Economics, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, 2016 B.A., Economics, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2014

Fellowships & Awards

Dissertation University Fellowship, Northwestern University, 2023-2024

Distinguished Teaching Assistant Awards, 2023 Distinguished Teaching Assistant Awards, 2022 Distinguished Teaching Assistant Awards, 2021

Scholarship for M.A. in Economics, FIEL Foundation, 2014 Magna Cum Laude, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2014 Academic Merit Grant, Banco Santander Rio, 2013

Scientific Vocation Encouragement Grant, Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional, 2013 Scientific Vocation Encouragement Grant, Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional, 2012

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Northwestern University, 2019-2023

Applied Econometrics (undergraduate); Econometrics (graduate); Intermediate Microeconomics

(undergraduate); Monopoly, Competition and Public Policy (undergraduate)

Teaching Assistant, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, 2014-2015
 Probability (graduate); Macroeconomics (undergraduate),
 Teaching Assistant, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2011-2013
 Statistics (undergraduate); Microeconomics (undergraduate)

Job Market Paper

"How do Governments Engage in Price Discrimination? Evidence from a Nationalization in Argentina" with Francisco Pareschi

State-owned enterprises (SOEs) have the potential to correct market failures, but they are also subject to the influence of politics and interest groups. We study this trade-off in the context of the nationalization of the leading gasoline company in Argentina. Descriptive analysis suggests that pricing patterns changed after the nationalization. First, the government exerted less market power, charging lower prices on average and benefiting consumers. Second, it engaged in less *economic price discrimination*, reducing the correlation between prices and consumers' willingness to pay. Third, it engaged in *political price discrimination*, charging lower prices in provinces that have political connexions with the firm. Motivated by these findings, we develop and estimate a model of supply and demand of gasoline under market power and recover the government's objective function. We find that public

provision leads to welfare gains but is also associated with redistributive motives. Compared to a benevolent planner that internalizes the welfare of all consumers and firms equally, the government chooses prices as if it only cares about favoring middle-income consumers and consumers in provinces that have political ties with the firm. Lastly, we use the model to assess the firm's response to policy alternatives, including pricing rules that aim to align government actions with the public interest and are in place in government agencies worldwide. We find that rules effectively reduce the influence of politics in pricing but are associated with higher costs: they mitigate half of the welfare gains generated by the nationalization and increase the tax-payers burden by 10%. These findings emphasize the importance of politics and interest groups in shaping governments' decision-making and the role of SOEs as instruments for redistribution.

Other work

"Reducing Consumer Inertia in Tobacco Markets", with Francisco Pareschi

"How Do Governments Make Tax Decisions? Evidence from a Tax Decentralization Reform"

"Entry Under Demand Spillovers: Evidence from the Healthcare Industry"

Previous Employment Compass Lexecon, Aug 2016-Aug 2018 (Senior Analyst)

Compass Lexecon, Aug 2015-Aug 2016 (Analyst)

Languages

English (fluent), Spanish (native)

Programming

Python, Stata, SQL

References

Professor Robert Porter (chair)
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