

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 Large-Scale Nationalization" 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 examine 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 with political connexions with the state-owned firm. Motivated by these findings, we develop and estimate a model of gasoline supply and demand under market power and recover the government's objective function. We find that

public provision lead 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 set 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 company's response to policy alternatives, including pricing rules that align government actions with the public interest and are in place in government agencies worldwide. Our findings show 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 taxpayers' burden by 10%. These findings emphasize the importance of politics and interest groups in shaping governments' decision-making process 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

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