

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

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

To understand the influence of interest groups and redistributive motives in state-owned enterprises, we study the nationalization of YPF, Argentina's leading gasoline company. Descriptive analysis reveals a triple impact of nationalization. First, it led to lower prices, benefiting consumers on average. Second, it reverts *economic price discrimination*, by smoothing the correlation between markups and price elasticities. Third, it creates *political price discrimination* by charging lower prices in provinces that had political connections with the firm. Motivated by these findings, we develop and estimate a model of supply and demand of gasoline and recover the objective function of the State-Owned Enterprise (SOE), allowing for heterogeneity in how the SOE internalizes different groups of consumers and firms. Our estimates of the objective function reveal redistributive motives behind the nationalization.

In comparison to a benevolent planner that internalizes the welfare of all consumers equally, the government chooses prices as if it only cares about low-income consumers in provinces that have political ties with the firm and middle-income consumers in all provinces. We then use the model to evaluate the firm's response to policy alternatives, including privatization and rules that aim to limit SOEs' discretion in doing pricing, such as uniform pricing mandates. We find that rules are effective in limiting the influence of politics in SOEs' decision-making but are associated with high social costs: they mitigate half of the welfare gains generated by the nationalization and increase tax-payers costs by 10%. These findings shed light on the complexities of public provision, emphasizing the importance of politics and interest groups in shaping SOEs' actions and the role of SOEs as instruments for redistribution.

Other work

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

"Public Providers as Insurers Against Shocks: Evidence from the Liberalization of the Argentina Crude Oil Market"

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

Languages

English (fluent), Spanish (native)

Programming

Python, Stata, SQL

References

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