

I am an empirical industrial organization economist who studies how policies and market designs shape outcomes across different groups. I focus on both their intended and unintended distributional effects. I evaluate how rules and market designs advance policymakers' goals and analyze whether, and why, they generate unintended consequences. My work has concentrated on three topics: (1) the design and evaluation of access policies in higher education; (2) the competitive and welfare effects of labor market regulations; and (3) the unintended consequences of delayed reconstruction efforts after disasters. The empirical analysis in my research is grounded in testing economic theory predictions and estimating economic models. I build on theory to develop empirical frameworks that capture the key trade-offs at the heart of each policy question. To identify and estimate these models, I leverage correlations in the data, policy interventions, and natural experiments. This approach often allows me to evaluate the effects of counterfactual policy designs and to uncover the mechanisms driving outcomes observed in equilibrium.

### **Designing Access Policies in Higher Education.**

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My research on group-neutral access policies in higher education is motivated by the search for alternatives to affirmative action, especially as these policies face legal and political limits. Group-neutral policies modify incentives for all students rather than targeting specific groups, so their effects are not guaranteed for any population. College admissions inevitably create both winners and losers due to the scarcity of seats. The distributional impact of access policies depends crucially on how students adjust their choices. Understanding these behavioral responses is key for designing policies that promote equity while preserving system-wide efficiency.

In my Job Market Paper, *Who Wins with Class-rank College Admissions?*, I study Chile's Relative Ranking (RR) rule. The policy increased admission scores for students whose GPA exceeded their school's historical average. Its rationale was to capture merit in context: top students in weaker schools may have strong academic potential but lower standardized test scores. Unlike affirmative action, RR was implemented in a group-neutral way, applying to students in public, voucher, and private schools alike.

The policy affected students not only mechanically through higher scores, but also by changing where they chose to apply. Students often avoid selective programs they perceive as unattainable—behavior known as “skipping the impossible.” Because RR changed application scores, students will revise their applications as some programs become more accessible and others more demanding for them. These changes in applications will translate to changes in the expected equilibrium cutoffs. As cutoff scores of programs are unknown before the admissions are set, students will include or exclude programs after the policy based on the expected equilibrium cutoff. This mechanism shows how expectations and application behavior amplify the impact of access-oriented policies. Because RR shifted scores for students across all schools, its effects can be heterogeneous: gains concentrate among students who underperform on standardized tests despite excelling in high school.

My findings show that RR improved access for high-achieving students from public and voucher schools, and for women, while reducing opportunities for private school students and men. Counterfactual expansions of the policy magnify these effects. I also compare RR to an affirmative action quota, showing that while quotas deliver stronger gains for their beneficiaries, they impose higher costs on other students. By contrast, RR expands opportunities for disadvantaged groups with smaller system-wide distortions.

### **When labor and product markets collide.**

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A second strand of my work studies the interaction between labor and product markets, and asks how regulation in one can create trade-offs in the other. In *When Competition and Labor Market Policy Collide: The Case of the Minimum Wage* (with Rodrigo González Valdenegro), we examine the effects of sector-specific minimum wages in the Uruguayan beer industry, where firms hold power in both labor and product markets. We show that using the minimum wage to curb monopsony power raises employment and wages, improving labor market efficiency. However, because labor-intensive firms pass higher costs into prices, consumer surplus falls and product market concentration increases.

We extend a structural model of oligopolistic competition by embedding firms' hiring decisions into their marginal cost functions. Unlike standard models with constant marginal costs, we allow them to rise with output when the minimum wage does not bind, consistent with an upward-sloping labor supply where attracting more workers requires higher wages. This captures how the minimum wage reshapes firms' cost curves: when it binds, marginal costs flatten and employment can expand without higher wages; when it does not, marginal costs escalate, keeping output inefficiently low while infra-marginal workers earn rents. These cost dynamics carry through to the product market. Lower costs in dominant firms do not necessarily translate into lower prices, as market power limits pass-through and sustains high markups. At the same time, labor-intensive fringe firms pass higher costs into prices, shrinking their market share. The result is a reallocation toward large firms, reduced competitive pressure, and greater concentration. Together, these mechanisms explain why a policy that improves efficiency for workers can at the same time reduce consumer welfare by weakening competition. This project highlights how labor market regulation and product market outcomes are tightly linked, with important implications for households as both workers and consumers.

### **The political aftershocks of an earthquake.**

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Finally, a third strand of my research has dealt with the political effects of natural disasters. In my paper with Francisco Pino, *Political Aftershocks: Earthquake Effects on Protest Participation* we study the effects that the earthquake of 2010 had on student protests behavior in 2011 as a part of the *Chilean Student Movement*. We find that students whose schools were critically damaged by the earthquake participated in protests up to 20 percentage points more than those who were not affected. This effect is larger for students in public schools, who participated between 22 and 40 p.p. more than those in non-affected public schools. The evidence is consistent with students reacting more in schools that experienced delays in the government's response to the catastrophe. The design of the reconstruction plan timely reconstructed voucher schools, relegating public schools depending on local governments behind.

While I do not anticipate working on such topics in the future, this project is representative of my interest in policy design and its (potential unintended) consequences.