

JUAN MARTIN PAL

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DISSERTATION TITLE: “*Essays in Applied Microeconomics*”

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES:

Professor Matteo Bobba
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Professor Ana Gazmuri
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EDUCATION

PhD	Economics (expected)	Toulouse School of Economics	2020-2026
MRes	Economics		2021-2022
MSc	Economic Theory and Econometrics		2020-2021
	Visiting Scholar (Prof. Agostinelli)	University of Pennsylvania	2025
MA	Economics	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	2018-2019
BA	Economics	Universidad de Buenos Aires	2012-2017

FIELDS

Labor Economics, Industrial Organization, Development Economics

PERSONAL DETAILS

Citizenship: Argentina and Hungary
Languages: English, Spanish, French (intermediate)

RELEVANT POSITIONS

Research Assistant	Travis Baseler	University of Rochester	2023
Research Assistant	María Laura Alzúa	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	2018-2020
Research Assistant	Guillermo Cruces	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	2019-2020
Research Assistant	Leonardo Gasparini	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	2019
Junior Researcher		CEDLAS	2018-2021

TEACHING

Toulouse School of Economics

Applied Econometrics	Graduate	2023-2024
RCT and Policy Evaluation	Graduate	2021-2024
Microeconomics 3	Undergraduate	2024-2025
Introductory Econometrics	Undergraduate	2021-2023

Universidad Nacional de La Plata

Econometrics	Graduate	2019-2020
Microeconomics	Graduate	2019-2020
International Economics	Undergraduate	2019

Universidad de Buenos Aires

Development Economics	Undergraduate	2018-2020
Mathematics for Economists	Undergraduate	2016
Calculus II	Undergraduate	2015

HONORS AND AWARDS

PhD Student Grant	Spanish Economic Association	2025
Mobility Grant	Toulouse School of Economics	2025
Doctoral Fellowship	Toulouse School of Economics	2022-2025
Full Funding for MRes	Toulouse School of Economics	2021-2022
Full Funding for M2 ETE	Toulouse School of Economics	2020-2021
Graduate Student Scholarship	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	2018-2019
Honor's Diploma	Universidad de Buenos Aires	2017

PRESENTATIONS (INCLUDING SCHEDULED)

Penn Empirical Micro Lunch, TSE EEE Workshop, HEC Economics PhD Conference, TSE Economics of Education Workshop, EEA Congress (Bordeaux), EWMES (Nicosia), Econometric Society DSE Conference (Hong Kong), SAEe (Barcelona)	2025
IAAE Annual Conference (Thessaloniki), TSE Economics of Education Workshop (Poster Session), TSE EEE Workshop, TSE Empirical Micro Workshop	2024

WORKING PAPERS

1. Education Policy and the Quality of Public Servants

(Job Market Paper) [Link](#)

Awarded fellowship at the 50th Symposium of the Spanish Economic Association (2025)

Abstract: This paper studies the design of higher education policies targeted at improving the recruitment of public servants. I leverage the introduction of a policy in Chile that aimed to increase teacher quality by combining financial incentives and admission standards. Exploiting a sharp assignment rule for financial incentives eligibility, I estimate that, at the threshold, enrollment of high performing students at teacher colleges increased by 42%. For low-income students, two thirds of the increase is due to switching away from non-enrollment. The policy led to a 0.25SD increase in the scores at the college entrance exam, which translated into a 0.11SD increase in Teacher Value Added (TVA). I embed the reduced-form results into a demand and supply model of higher education that incorporates a novel method for solving discrete-continuous games in large markets. Alternative combinations of incentives and admission standards lead to increases of up to 6.6% in the test scores of students enrolled at teacher colleges, and up to 20% in TVA. Targeting the policy to low-income students yields further gains in TVA at no additional cost. To achieve similar gains, the expected wages of graduates from teacher colleges would need to increase by approximately 35%, highlighting the cost-effectiveness of the policy.

2. Effort Choices and Funding Instruments in Higher Education

(with Guillem Foucault) [Link](#)

Abstract: This paper examines the effects of Free College policies on student enrollment and academic performance, with a focus on the 2016 Chilean reform that granted tuition-free higher education to students from the lowest five income deciles. Using a difference-in-differences approach, we find that Free College increased enrollment and persistence in higher education but had modest effects on graduation and dropout rates. To disentangle the role of student effort from selection effects, we develop a structural model in which students choose effort levels in response to financial incentives. Our results highlight that while Free College expands access, it may also weaken performance incentives due to the removal of academic progress requirements. Counterfactual simulations suggest that alternative funding mechanisms can improve both access and academic outcomes by balancing affordability and incentives for effort.

3. The Educational PPP: Parents, Peers, Prices

(with Joaquin Varvasino) [Link](#)

Abstract: This paper studies the roles of financial constraints and information frictions on enrollment and progression in higher education. We use Chilean administrative data, allowing us to link students to their parents and their high school peers. Our empirical strategy exploits the massive entry of private universities during the 1980s to instrument parental educational achievement, panel data methods to estimate peer influence, and the staggered rollout of Free College from 2016 that generated exogenous variation to out-of-pocket fees. Results show that subsidies increase university access, peers enhance

enrollment and match quality, and parental exposure to university causally affects children's university enrollment. We use these findings to inform a dynamic structural model that quantifies these mechanisms and evaluates equity-oriented education policies.

WORK IN PROGRESS

4. General Equilibrium Effects of Large-Scale Education Expansions

(with Matteo Bobba, Olivier De Groote, Guillem Foucault and Ana Gazmuri)

Abstract: While small-scale educational interventions provide valuable insights into effective investments, large-scale education programs may generate substantial general equilibrium (GE) effects that alter their ultimate impact on welfare and inequality. This paper analyzes the consequences of a large-scale college enrollment expansion in Chile, explicitly accounting for GE effects in both education and labor markets, to understand how firms adjust their demand for skill-biased labor in response to increased college graduate supply. The model enables us to decompose observed wage changes into individual returns to education and GE effects, revealing how firm responses shape education decisions and ultimately affect the distribution of earnings. By incorporating both household education choices and firm production decisions, this framework provides a comprehensive assessment of how large-scale education expansions affect welfare and distributional outcomes.

5. Enhancing the Effectiveness of Early Warning System in Education

(with Francesco Agostinelli, Ciro Avitabile and Matteo Bobba)

Abstract: This project develops scalable, low-cost strategies to enhance early warning systems aimed at preventing school dropout in low- and middle-income countries. Despite the growing adoption of data-driven platforms that predict students' dropout risk and provide targeted guidance to school staff, real-world impact remains limited by low user engagement and minimal improvements in outcomes.

We propose an integrated approach that strengthens both the targeting of at-risk students and the engagement of key stakeholders. By systematically combining school principals' expert beliefs about students with machine learning predictions, we harness local knowledge to improve the accuracy of dropout risk assessments. Simultaneously, we foster parental involvement by inviting families of at-risk students to structured meetings with school leadership, sharing clear risk information and practical guidance to support continued enrollment. At-risk students are also offered tailored tutoring in foundational skills by trained educators.

6. Equilibrium Effects of Information Interventions in Online Labor Markets

(with Ana Gazmuri, Estrella Gómez-Herrera and Frank Mueller-Langer)

Abstract: We study the impact of a policy change in an online labor market requiring disclosure of projects' experience requirements, which prompted roughly half of employers to stop revealing their budgets. Exploiting detailed data from the universe of auctions in PeoplePerHour—one of the largest online labor markets—we document that employers who conceal budgets after the policy systematically pay higher winning fees across all project types. Bid variance increases, indicating greater strategic uncertainty for workers. Worker win probabilities remain largely unaffected by the disclosure change, though we observe stronger price-based selection for low-value projects and more pronounced firm

advantage in mid-value segments. To interpret these empirical patterns and evaluate counterfactual information policies, we build a structural beauty-contest auction model. Our framework explicitly captures the strategic interplay between employers and heterogeneous workers under incomplete information, enabling us to simulate the welfare and market impacts of alternative disclosure policies. The results highlight the multifaceted consequences of market design for both sides of online labor platforms, especially when buyers' strategic concealment of information is endogenous.