

# Luís N. Meloni

Associate Professor of Economics • University of São Paulo

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## RESEARCH

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**Interests:** Applied Econometrics & Causal Inference, Quantitative Methods for Policy Evaluation, Public Economics, Labor Economics, Political Economy.

I am an applied economist working on quantitative methods for policy evaluation. My research combines quasi-experimental designs (regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, instrumental variables), randomized controlled trials, and machine learning with large-scale administrative and survey data to identify the causal effects of public policies and regulatory frameworks. I apply this toolkit across education, energy regulation, labor markets, and environmental enforcement, with a complementary line examining how media and information environments shape political accountability and governance. My work has appeared in the *Journal of Development Economics* and *Comparative Political Studies*.

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

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| 2025–present | <b>University of São Paulo</b> , Dept. of Economics — Associate Professor                             |
| 2020–2024    | <b>University of São Paulo</b> , Dept. of Economics — Assistant Professor                             |
| 2016–2019    | <b>Getulio Vargas Foundation</b> , São Paulo School of Economics (FGV-EESP) — Postdoctoral Researcher |
| 2014–2015    | <b>Bocconi University</b> — PODER-CEPR Marie Curie Fellow   |

## EDUCATION

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| 2016 | <b>PhD in Economics</b> , University of São Paulo<br><i>Essays in Empirical Political Economy</i> — Supervisor: Ricardo de Abreu Madeira<br>Sandwich doctorate at <b>Bocconi University</b> — Supervisor: Eliana La Ferrara<br>CAPES Best Thesis Award (Nominee) |
| 2011 | <b>MA in Economic Theory</b> , University of São Paulo   |
| 2006 | <b>BA in Economics</b> , Catholic University of São Paulo  |

## PUBLISHED PAPERS

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**Evaluating the Impact of a Principals' Professional Development Program on School Management Practices: Evidence from Brazil** — with B. Borges, G. Leite, R. Madeira. *Conditionally Accepted*, **Labour Economics**.

**Media Manipulation in Young Democracies: Evidence from the 1989 Brazilian Presidential Election** — with A. Cavgias, R. Corbi, L. Novaes. **Comparative Political Studies**, 2024.

**Policy Enforcement in the Presence of Organized Crime: Evidence from Rio de Janeiro** — with R. Bruce, A. Cavgias. **Journal of Development Economics**, 2023.

**Under Pressure: Women's Leadership During the COVID-19 Crisis** — with R. Bruce, A. Cavgias, M. Remígio. **Journal of Development Economics**, 2022.

## WORKING PAPERS

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### *Public Economics*

**Generative AI and Labor Markets in Emerging Economies: Evidence from Brazil** — with T. Aguirre (Centre for the Governance of AI). *Submitted*.

**From Stories to Skills: Narrative-Based Financial Education and Students' Knowledge and Behavior** — with R. Madeira (USP), R. Serson (J-PAL). *R&R, Economics of Education Review*. AEARCTR-0011363.

*Presented at:* LACEA EGAP session (2024); Brazilian Econometric Society (2024).

**Do Set-Aside Auctions Pay Off? Evidence from Brazil** — with A. Cavgias (Ghent), D. Fazio (NUS), V. Titl (Utrecht).

*Presented at:* European Economic Association (2025); UPF Applied Seminar (2025); Charles University (2024); Utrecht University (2024); Ghent University (2024).

**Extreme Heat, Mortality, and Health Insurance Coverage in Brazil.** *New draft coming soon.*

**Populism and Environmental Enforcement in Brazil.** *New draft coming soon.*

### Political Economy

**Media as Political Currency** — with A. Alberti (USP), A. Cavgias (Ghent).

*Presented at:* LACEA Annual Meeting (2025); Brazilian Econometric Society (2025).

**News vs. Novelas: Can Entertainment Media Undermine Dictatorships?** — with A. Chong (Georgia State), C. Ferraz (UBC), F. Finan (UC Berkeley), E. La Ferrara (Harvard).

*Presented at:* Bocconi (BREAD/CEPR/PODER); UC Berkeley; Yale; NYU; LSE STICERD; PUC-Rio; USP; EESP; Brazilian Econometric Society; CEPR Political Economy Webinar.

## SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

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**Competitive research grants.** Visiting Research Grant, FAPESP / **Universitat Pompeu Fabra** (2025); Post-Doctoral Research Grant, FAPESP (2017–2019); Post-Doctoral Research Grant, CNPq (2016); Marie Curie Fellowship, PODER-CEPR / **Bocconi University** (2014–2015); PhD Research Grant, CNPq (2012–2014); MA Research Grant, CNPq (2009–2011).

**Externally funded projects.** UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of the Federal District, evaluation of a financial education policy in public schools (2022–2024); Instituto Unibanco, evaluation of school management and leadership practices (2023–2025).

## TEACHING

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2020–present      **University of São Paulo** — Undergrad: Microeconomics, Econometrics, Public Economics; Grad: Political Economy, Public Economics

2016–2019        **São Paulo School of Economics** (FGV-EESP) — Undergrad: Statistics, Econometrics; Grad: Statistics, Econometrics

Course evaluations consistently above the department average (e.g., 9.5/10 vs. 8.1 in Econometrics II). Portuguese • English • Spanish.

## SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies, USP (2026–present); Vice-Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies, USP (2024–2026); Member, Faculty Hiring Committee, USP (2025); Graduate Studies Committee, USP (2024); Chair, PhD Admission Committee, USP (2023); Member, PhD Admission Committee, USP (2021–2022).

Referee for *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *Journal of Development Economics*, *European Economic Review*, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, *Brazilian Review of Econometrics*, and for FAPESP and CNPq.

## NON-ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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Collaborations with public institutions and development agencies — Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES), and UN Development Programme (UNDP) — on policy evaluation, regulatory design, administrative data analysis, and direct engagement with policymakers in the energy and education sectors.

## PLACEMENT OF FORMER STUDENTS

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**Graduate.** Mario Remígio (PhD Candidate, Queen Mary University of London); Daniel Mendonça (PhD Candidate, University of Georgia); Renata Serson (Research Associate, J-PAL LAC); Giordano Martinelli (Research Associate, J-PAL LAC).

**Selected undergraduate.** Tomás Aguirre (Researcher, Centre for the Governance of AI); Felipe Bailez (CEO & Founder, Palver); Gabriel Ferraz (MA Student in Statistics, UNICAMP).

## OTHER SKILLS

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**Software:** R, Stata, SQL,  $\LaTeX$ . **Languages:** Portuguese (native), English (proficient), Spanish (advanced/working proficiency).