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978-1-107-05278-9 - Coercion and Social Welfare in Public Finance: Economic and Political Perspectives

Edited by Jorge Martinez-Vazquez and Stanley L. Winer

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## COERCION AND SOCIAL WELFARE IN PUBLIC FINANCE

### *Economic and Political Perspectives*

Although coercion is a fundamental and unavoidable part of our social lives, economists have not offered an integrated analysis of its role in the public economy. The essays in this book focus on coercion arising from the operation of the fiscal system, a major part of the public sector. Collective choices on fiscal matters emerge from and have all the essential characteristics of social interaction, including the necessity to force unwanted actions on some citizens. This was recognized in an older tradition in public finance, which can still serve as a starting point for modern work. The contributors to the volume recognize this tradition but add to it by using contemporary frameworks to study a set of related issues concerning fiscal coercion and economic welfare. These issues range from the compatibility of an open access society with the original Wicksellian vision to the productivity of coercion in experimental games.

Jorge Martinez-Vazquez is Regents Professor of Economics and Director of the International Studies Program in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University in Atlanta. He has published more than twenty books and numerous articles in academic journals, such as *Econometrica*, the *Journal of Political Economy*, the *Journal of Public Economics*, the *Southern Economic Journal*, and the *Review of Economics and Statistics*. He has directed multiple fiscal reform projects, having worked in more than seventy countries including China, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, and South Africa. He is the current coeditor of *Hacienda Pública Española/Review of Public Economics*. Professor Martinez-Vazquez holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Economics from Washington University in St. Louis.

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*Jorge Martinez-Vazquez:*

*To Isaac, Jonah, Lily, Amelia, Oliver, Eleanor, and Emma*

*Stanley L. Winer:*

*To Navah and Zev*

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# Coercion and Social Welfare in Public Finance

*Economic and Political Perspectives*

Edited by

**JORGE MARTINEZ-VAZQUEZ**

Georgia State University

**STANLEY L. WINER**

Carleton University



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## Editors' Preface and Acknowledgments

The papers and formal discussions presented in this volume emerged from the workshop on “Coercion and Social Welfare in Contemporary Public Finance,” held at Stone Mountain, Atlanta, in October 2010. This conference was designed and organized by us with the intention of creating the book on the meaning and role of coercion in public finance that is before you. The idea for working on public finance in the Wicksellian tradition emerged in the course of our own individual research activities, and we are fortunate to have been able to collaborate in bringing together a distinguished group of scholars to explore this line of thought more fully than we could do on our own.

We are indebted to the authors and discussants for their participation at the workshop and for their work in helping turn a stimulating workshop into a cohesive book. We thank Roger D. Congleton, Walter Hettich, Michael C. Munger, George Tridimas, and John Joseph Wallis for reviewing early drafts of our Introduction to the volume, as well as two anonymous reviewers of the manuscript for their helpful suggestions. We also want to thank Luc Noiset, Tom Rutherford, and David Wildasin for their participation at the seminar.

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