

Jiangnan Zeng
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CONTACT INFORMATION:

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, University of Pittsburgh, expected June 2024
Thesis Title: "Minority Representation, Segregation, and Racial Sorting"
Thesis Committee: Prof. Randall Walsh (Co-Chair), Prof. Daniel B. Jones (Co-Chair), Prof. Claire Duquenois, Prof. Carlos Fernando Avenancio-León

M.A. Economics, University of Pittsburgh, 2020
M.A. Public Policy, University of Chicago, 2018
B.S. Finance, Renmin University of China, 2017

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Primary Fields: Public Economics, Urban Economics
Secondary Fields: Labor Economics, Political Economy

PUBLICATIONS

Estimating the Economic Impact of Intensifying Environmental Regulation in China"
(with Dali Yang and Qiyao Zhou), *Environmental and Resource Economics*, 2023.

WORKING PAPERS

"Racial Representation, Segregation, and Sorting" (*Job Market Paper*)

"Meritocracy and Subnational GDP Manipulation in China" (with Qiyao Zhou),
Revise and resubmit at the **Journal of Urban Economics**

"The City Council Member Next Door" (with Daniel B. Jones and Randall Walsh)
(under review)

"How Minority Representation in Government Affects Police Stop Minorities"
(with Daniel Jones and Xiaohong Wang) (under review)

"Housing market regulations and within-city spatial inequality"

SELECTED RESEARCH IN PROGRESS (with selected abstracts at the end)

“From Sesame Street to the polls: The voting impacts of representation in child media” (with Claire Duquenois)

“Sports and Racial Attitudes” (with Claire Duquenois)

"Local Politics and Migration Choice" (with Noah McKinnie Braun)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Main Instructor

- Introduction to Microeconomic Theory: Summer 2023

Teaching Assistant

- Intermediate Microeconomics (Grader): Summer 2022
- Introduction to Macroeconomic Theory: Spring 2021
- Game Theory Principles (Grader): Fall 2020

SEMINAR AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

2024: American Economic Association Meetings, scheduled; North American Winter Meeting of the Econometric Society, scheduled

2023: European Economic Association Annual Meeting; Society of Labor Economics Annual Meeting (SOLE); Urban Economics Association Annual Meeting

2022: Asian Real Estate Society (AsRES) Annual Conference

2021: Midwest Economics Association Annual Conference (AERE@MEA)

HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS:

Social Science Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (\$25,764), University of Pittsburgh, 2023-2024

Andrew Mellon Pre-doctoral Fellowship (\$25,332), University of Pittsburgh, 2022-2023

Department of Economics Summer Fellowship (\$2,500), University of Pittsburgh, 2020

Distinguished Undergraduate Thesis, Renmin University of China, 2017

RELEVANT POSITIONS HELD:

Research Assistant to Professor Randall Walsh, Pitt Department of Economics, 2021-2022

Research Assistant to Professor Yana Gallen, University of Chicago, 2018-2019

Research Assistant to Professor Dali Yang, University of Chicago, 2018-2019

COMPUTER SKILLS:

Stata, Python, ArcGIS, MATLAB, R, Python

LANGUAGES:

Mandarin (native); English (fluent); French (intermediate)

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Date of Birth: October 25, 1994

Citizenship: China

WORKING PAPERS ABSTRACTS

“Racial Representations, Segregation, and Sorting” (job market paper)

The black population in cities has declined in recent decades. Whether this is due to more appealing amenities in the suburbs or the rising cost of living in cities, politics might have a role in reversing this trend. This paper investigates the impact of electing a black mayor on the location choices of black and white individuals Utilizing data from closely contested mayoral elections and a self-constructed migration dataset derived from North Carolina voter registration records, I establish causal links between the presence of a black mayor and individual location decisions within and across cities. The analysis reveals that the presence of a black mayor significantly increases the net population in both majority-black and white neighborhoods in North Carolina. This effect is more prominent in majority-black regions, which see a significant rise in the black population and a slight uptick in the white population. These findings are corroborated by an examination of data from 120 major U.S. cities at the tract level. In majority-black neighborhoods, the net population increase is attributed to reduced out-migration of both Black and white residents, coupled with an influx of Black individuals from outside the city. In predominantly white areas, out-migration decreases for residents of both racial backgrounds, accompanied by a notable increase in white newcomers. The net effect of these changes is an increase in racial segregation that arises from the increased concentration of black individuals in predominantly black neighborhoods, hinting at potential place-based investment or resource reallocation under the leadership of a black mayor.

“Meritocracy and Subnational GDP Manipulation in China” (with Qiyao Zhou), Revise and resubmit at the **Journal of Urban Economics**

What role do local officials' incentives play in regional economic growth? How do local officials behave under promotion pressure? This paper studies the unintended impact of mayors' promotion incentives on regional economic growth and subnational-level GDP manipulation in China. We employ a regression discontinuity design that accounts for age restrictions in deciding promotions for mayors. We find that when GDP performance is prioritized in officials' promotion evaluations (before 2013), mayors' promotion incentives significantly increase the statistical GDP growth rate by 3.4 percentage points. However, their effects on nighttime light and other non-manipulable real economic growth indicators are close to zero. This gap can be attributed to GDP manipulation under our empirical framework. The above pattern no longer persists after 2013, when

the role of GDP statistics in mayoral promotions was reduced. Our findings indicate that GDP manipulation makes performance-based competition between mayors devolve into a data manipulation game. Further analyses suggest a dynamic pattern of GDP manipulation, and that GDP manipulation hampers officials' accountability.

“The City Council Member Next Door” (with Daniel B. Jones and Randall Walsh)
(under review)

This paper examines whether the election of a city council member generates highly localized benefits within their own neighborhoods. We use housing prices as a summary statistic to capture the numerous and difficult to observe ways in which local government allocates localized amenities. Drawing on data on North Carolina city council elections and the universe of housing transactions, we use a close-elections regression discontinuity strategy. We find that housing prices substantially increase for houses very close (within 0.2 miles) to a newly elected councilmember's place of residence.

“How Minority Representation in Government Affects Police Stop Minorities”
(with Daniel Jones and Xiaohong Wang) (under review)

We draw on statewide data from North Carolina to examine the impacts of racial and ethnic representation in city councils on policing. Specifically, we focus on outcomes of traffic stops; e.g., whether a driver receives a warning or a citation after being stopped. We first document large Black-white and Latino-white disparities in the likelihood of consequence (arrest or citation) after a traffic stop. We then use a difference-in-differences design, focusing on changes following (narrow) elections of nonwhite (rather than white) councilmembers, and find that increased nonwhite council representation significantly reduces Black-white gaps in stops and actions taken after a stop. The magnitude of the reduction is similar with and without officer fixed effects, suggesting that results are largely driven by individual officer-level behavior change rather than a change in the composition of the police force.

“Housing market regulations and within-city spatial inequality”

Housing prices more than tripled in China in the past decade, especially in big cities. The central and local governments took many steps to cool off the overheating housing market; among them, the most stringent one is the 2016-2017 wave of regulation, which tightens home purchasing restrictions on residential parcels by increasing the down payment ratio requirement for mortgages. This paper studies housing market regulations' impact on housing price dispersion and spatial inequality within a city. Evidence based on Shanghai housing market transaction records shows that the 2016-2017 wave regulation decreased city-level price dispersion and spatial inequality. The regulations have a differentiated impact on segments of the housing market, effectively stable the relative prices between low- and high-quality neighborhoods. Results for the other four major cities provide a similar pattern, suggesting a general pattern of the regulation effects in all the metropolitan cities in China.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS:

“From Sesame Street to the polls: The voting impacts of representation in child media” (with Claire Duquenois)

Sesame Street’s representation of minority characters, egalitarian minority-White interactions and portrayal of working women was distinctive in the mass media landscape of 1969, when it started airing. By exploiting technologically induced variation in broadcast reception, this paper identifies the first evidence of long-run reductions in prejudice, with impacts on voter preferences, as a result of exposure to child media.

“Sports and Racial Attitudes” (with Claire Duquenois)

In this project, we investigate whether the public’s racial attitudes are impacted in the short-run by exposure to, and the performance of, key visible minority athletes such as Black NFL quarterbacks and Hispanic MLB pitchers, with potential implications for the incidence of hate speech and crimes.

"Local Politics and Migration Choice" (with Noah McKinnie Braun)

REFERENCES:

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