Maggie Xiaonan Wang

CONTACT INFORMATION	Department of Political Science *Phone:* (413)801-4051 University of Chicago *E-mail:* mxwang@uchicago.edu

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Money in politics, causal inference, observational research

EDUCATION

The University of Chicago

Ph.D. Student, Political Science, since September 2023

Smith College

B.A., Statistical & Data Sciences and Government, May 2020

WORKING PAPERS

Distance in Social Scientific Research (with Daniel de Kadt, Melissa S. Sands, and Anton Strezhnev)

Abstract: Geospatial data and analyses are increasingly common in empirical social science. One standard analytical approach is to flatten space into a scalar measure: the distance between two points. We first offer a conceptual framework for thinking about geographic distance and provide an overview of the ways in which distance can be used empirically. We then focus on the use of distance as a causal variable, focusing on the common method of including a distance-to-exposure variable in a regression while controlling for other potential confounders. We characterize the underlying "hypothetical experiment" implied by this approach – emphasizing the idea that when exposures are held fixed, distance can only be manipulated by changing units' locations. This requires an assumption that location itself is ignorable – an assumption that may be threatened by the presence of unobserved spatial confounding. We provide strategies for diagnosing this confounding and discuss two alternative identification strategies involving assumptions on the randomness of the exposure locations or the randomness of how units are mapped to exposure locations.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Empirical Evidence on Informational Lobbying

The Partisan Revolving Door (with Andy Eggers)

PRESENTATIONS

APSA: 2025 (Accepted)

MPSA: 2026 (Scheduled)

Political Science Quantitative Methods Workshop, The University of Chicago: 2026 (Scheduled)

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Replication Assistant, *The Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 2025 - Present

Graduate Student Coordinator, Political Science Quantitative Methods Workshop, The University of Chicago 2025 - Present

TEACHING

PLSC 30600: Causal Inference, Teaching Assistant for Molly Offer-Westort, Winter 2026

PECO/PPHA 40102, PLSC 41105: Political Economy I - Formal Models of Domestic Politics, Teaching Assistant for Scott Gehlbach, Fall 2025

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Methods for Freeing Public Election Data from PDFs. The Consortium for the Advancement of Undergraduate Statistics Education (CAUSE) and the American Statistical Association. February 2020. (with T. Xiao, K. Santamaria, K. VanAllen)

The Effects of Exporting on Defense Acquisition Outcomes: A Quantitative Look at FMS Contracting. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). 2019. (with G. Sanders, A. Akca, N. Halterman, J. Graham, S. Cohen, and A. Howe)

SELECT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	**Penta Group (formerly Hamilton Place Strategies), Washington, DC**	
	Director, Strategy	2022 - 2023
	Analysis Lead	2022 - 2023
	Analyst	2020 - 2022
	McKinsey & Company (via secondment), Washington, DC	
	Communications Specialist for Public and Social Sectors	2022
SKILLS	Programming: R, Python, STATA, SQL, HTML, Java.	
	Languages: English (native), Mandarin (native), French (conversational)	
SELECT GRANTS AND AWARDS	First-Year Scholars Summer Research Grant, Division of Social Sciences, The University of Chicago, 2024	
	Third Place, American Statistical Association Undergraduate Research Competition, 2020	
PEER SERVICE	Social Sciences Deans Advisory Council, The University of Chicago	November 2024 - Present
	Political Science Student Association, The University of Chicago	March 2024 - Present
LAST UPDATED	December 2025	