

Tamar Zeilberger

CONTACT INFORMATION

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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Comparative Politics; Quantitative Methodology & Formal Theory.
Authoritarian Politics, Institutions, Elites, Political Economy, Political Uncertainty,
Mathematical Modeling, Game Theory, Inference from Observational Data, China.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles, Expected 2023

M.A., Social Sciences, University of Chicago, 2014

B.A., Politics & Sociology, The New School, 2010

DISSERTATION PROJECT

Title: *Investing with “Known Unknowns” in Low-Information Environments: Examining the Economic Effects of Political Uncertainty in Autocracies with Evidence from China*

Committee: Barbara Geddes (Chair), Michael Chwe, Jeff Lewis, & James Tong

Abstract: Political uncertainty, defined as the lack of confidence with which government and policy outcomes can be predicted, has substantial adverse economic effects in democracies. Recently, political uncertainty has surged to unprecedented levels across the globe. At the same time, so too have autocracies in number and influence. Nonetheless, there is scant research on the economic effects of political uncertainty in autocracies. My dissertation contributes to that understudied area, with a focus on investment. I develop a theory that posits that political uncertainty in autocracies will produce heterogeneous effects on investment, and identifies how institutions and other government interventions that transmit information moderate those effects. I model the theory to derive predictions for their sign and magnitude. To test the predictions, I use evidence from China. To that end, I develop a measure of political uncertainty. I first locate an exogenous source of variation in political uncertainty, namely China’s institutionalized and routinized leadership transitions. I then exploit the Communist Party’s tight control over the news media to reveal the internal dynamics of their leadership transitions. This entails identifying informative patterns with human and machine-based analysis of Chinese archival news. With that measure, I leverage variation in investment and interventions by the Communist Party across China, as well as detailed accounting data on domestic firms coupled with convenient restrictions on foreign investment, to estimate the effects of political uncertainty on investment, and identify how they are moderated by institutions and other government interventions.

WORKING PAPERS

“Logic of Political Survival Revisited: Consequences of Elite Uncertainty Under Authoritarian Rule”

“Destabilizing to Stabilize: Interstate Dispute Escalation & Leadership Transitions in China”

“The ‘Benefits’ of Clientelism: Electoral Support as an Insurance Premium with Evidence from Brazilian Municipalities”

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2022
- Annual Meeting of the Society for Political Methodology, 2022[†]
- New Faces in Chinese Politics at University of Wisconsin–Madison, May 2022
- Experimental Mathematics Speaker Series at Rutgers University, May 2022
- Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2018, 2019, 2021
- Western Political Science Association Conference on Authoritarian Politics, 2020[‡]
- Comparative Politics Association Meeting at UCLA, November 2015
- Program on International Politics, Economics, and Security at the University of Chicago, January 2015

[†] poster presentation [‡] cancelled due to COVID-19

GRANTS & AWARDS	Visiting Dissertation Fellowship, Mercatus Center	2021–2022
	Humane Studies Fellowship, Institute for Humane Studies	2021–2022
	Oskar Morgenstern Fellowship (Research Track), Mercatus Center	2020–2021
	Humane Studies Fellowship, Institute for Humane Studies	2019–2020
	Adam Smith Fellowship, Mercatus Center	2019–2020
	EITM Summer Institute, National Science Foundation	2019
	Oskar Morgenstern Fellowship, Mercatus Center	2018–2019
	Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship, UCLA	2018
	Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship, UCLA	2017–2018
	Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship, UCLA	2017
	University Fellowship, UCLA	2015–2016
	Department of Political Science Graduate Fellowship, UCLA	2015–2016
	University Unendowed Scholarship, University of Chicago	2013–2014
Dean’s Scholarship, The New School	2007–2010	

TEACHING

Graduate

- Instructor for Math Camp (Introduction to Mathematics in the Social Sciences for incoming Ph.D. students in Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Geography, Anthropology, Urban Planning, & Environmental Studies), Summer 2020
- Math Maven (Quantitative Methods & Formal Theory Consultant for Ph.D. Students in Political Science), AY 2018-2019, 2019-2020
- TA for Game Theory in Politics I, Winter 2020 (Main Instructor: Michael Chwe); Winter 2021 (Main Instructor: Barry O’Neill)

Undergraduate

- Instructor for Introduction to Data Analysis, Summer 2021
- TA for Politics & Strategy (Introduction to Formal Theory), Fall 2016, 2018, Winter 2022 (Main Instructor: Michael Chwe); Winter 2019 (Main Instructor: Barry O’Neill); Spring 2017, 2019 (Main Instructor: Kathleen Bawn)
- TA for Government & Politics in Latin America, Winter 2017 (Main Instructor: Barbara Geddes)

FIELDWORK

China (Shanghai, Beijing, & Tianjin), August-September 2018

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

EITM (Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models) Summer Institute, Emory Uni-

versity, July 2019

RELEVANT NON-ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE	SXL Group (Shanghai, China) -Research on China market entry and compliance for Shanghai-based consulting firm, 2012.
SERVICE	-Organizer, Comparative Politics Dissertation Biweekly Workshop, UCLA, 2021-2022 -Grants & Fellowships Workshop for Incoming PhD Students, UCLA, 2019 -Discussant, Annual Graduate Student Conference in Comparative Politics (COMPASS), UCLA, 2018 -Organizer, Graduate Student Meeting for the Comparative Politics Speaker Series, UCLA, 2016
LANGUAGES	English (Native), Mandarin Chinese (Intermediate) Computer: R, Python, Selenium, Stata, Maple, Mathematica, L ^A T _E X
REFERENCES	<i>Available upon request</i>