

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, Jeffrey B. Lewis, Victor Shih, & James Tong (In Memoriam)

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. Billions of people are subject to autocrats, who preside over resources that rival those in democracies. Nonetheless, there is comparatively little 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 produces heterogenous 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 signs and magnitudes. 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 statistical and machine learning-based analyses of Chinese archival news. With that measure, I leverage variation across China in investment and interventions by the Communist Party, 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

“Destabilizing to Stabilize: Interstate Dispute Escalation & Leadership Transitions in China.” *Under Review*.

“Logic of Political Survival Revisited: Consequences of Elite Uncertainty Under Authoritarian Rule” *Working Paper*.

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

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

- Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023
- Western Political Science Association Conference on Authoritarian Politics, 2020[‡], 2023
- 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
- 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

Political Methodology Society Travel and Participation Award	2022
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, Psychology, Sociology, Geography, Anthropology, Urban Planning, & Environmental Studies), Summer 2020
- TA for Game Theory in Politics I; ; Winter 2021 with Barry O’Neill, Winter 2020 with Michael Chwe
- Math Maven (Quantitative Methods & Formal Theory Consultant for Ph.D. Students in Political Science), Academic Year 2018–2019, 2019–2020

Undergraduate

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

FIELDWORK	China (Shanghai, Beijing, & Tianjin), August-September 2018
ADDITIONAL TRAINING	EITM (Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models) Summer Institute, Emory University, 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>