

Noah McKinnie Braun

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Economics
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EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh - PhD in Economics 2018-Present
Thesis Title: "Essays on Political Economy" expected Spring 2024
Thesis Committee: Prof. Daniel B. Jones (Co-Chair), Prof. Randall Walsh (Co-Chair), Prof. Ying Shi, Prof. Richard Van Weelden

University of Pittsburgh - MA in Economics 2020

The George Washington University - BS in Economics 2018

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Primary Fields: Public Economics, Empirical Political Economy, Economics of Race
Secondary Fields: Urban Economics, Demographic Economics

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- ["Improving Citizen-initiated Police Reform Efforts Through Interactive Design: A Case Study in Allegheny County"](#) with Yongsu Ahn, Eliana Beigel, Collin Griffin, Sera Linardi, Blair Mickles, Emmaline Rial (*Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization*, 2022)

WORKING PAPERS

- ["Voter ID Laws Impact Turnout Through Registration"](#) (*Job Market Paper*)
- ["Disparate Impacts of *Shelby County v. Holder* on Turnout"](#) with Stephen B. Billings, Daniel B. Jones, and Ying Shi (*R&R, Journal of Public Economics*)
- ["Reduced Flexibility in Voting Differentially Impacts Black Voters"](#) with Daniel B. Jones

SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS

- **"Tax Burden and Preferences for Public Expenditure: Evidence from California's Property Tax System"**
- **"Revisiting the Impact of Voter ID Laws Using New Difference-in-difference Methods"**
- **"Local Politics and Migration Choice"** with Jiangnan Zeng

TEACHING

Main Instructor

- Economic Modeling Skills: Fall 2023
- Intermediate Microeconomics: Summer 2023
 - Teaching Effectiveness Score: 4.85/5
- Introduction to Microeconomics: Summer 2022
 - Teaching Effectiveness Score: 4.42/5
- Teaching Economics, joint with Daniele Coen-Pirani: Fall 2021

Teaching Assistant

- Economic Data Analysis (Grader): Spring 2023
- Introduction to Microeconomics: Fall 2019, Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022
- Game Theory Principles (Grader): Spring 2021
- Introduction to Environmental Economics (Grader): Spring 2020
- Introduction to Health Economics (Grader): Spring 2020

HONORS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

University of Pittsburgh, Economics Graduate Student Teaching Award, 2023

Southern Political Science Association, Prestage-Cook Travel Award, 2023

University of Pittsburgh Arts and Science PBC Conference Grant, 2022-2023, 2023-2024

University of Pittsburgh Arts and Sciences Graduate Summer Fellowship, 2020

University of Pittsburgh Arts and Sciences Graduate Fellowship, 2018

CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

2024: Southern Political Science Association (scheduled)

2023: Northeastern Political Science Association (scheduled); Association of Public Policy Analysis & Management (scheduled); Election Science, Reform, and Administration; University of Pittsburgh Medley Conference

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Graduate Teaching Mentor, University of Pittsburgh	2021-22, 2023-24
Organizer, Economics Graduate Student Peer Mentoring Program	2021-2023

WORKING PAPER ABSTRACTS

"Voter ID Laws Impact Turnout Through Registration" (Job Market Paper)

The proliferation of voter ID laws across the US has had an ambiguous impact on turnout rates among registered voters, despite fear from civil-rights advocates that these laws would suppress turnout. I advance the literature on voter ID laws by studying how Virginia's 2014 law impacted both turnout and registration rates, finding significant and durable declines in both measures. To do this, I gather data on registered voters who lack DMV records and track changes in voting precincts over time to identify areas of the state where more people are likely to be impacted by the voter ID law. My findings suggest that the decline in overall turnout rates in voting precincts with higher shares of voters likely to lack valid ID is driven almost entirely by declines in registration rates. Identifying this suggests that voter ID laws have an important deterrent effect that prevents new voters from participating in the electoral process. I also consider the role of countermobilization against new voting restrictions and find evidence that more Democratic parts of the state saw smaller effects from the voter ID law.

"Disparate Impacts of *Shelby County v. Holder* on Turnout" with Stephen B. Billings, Daniel B. Jones, and Ying Shi (*R&R, Journal of Public Economics*)

In *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013), the Supreme Court struck down a core provision of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) that enabled federal electoral oversight in select jurisdictions. We study whether this decision disproportionately impacted ballot access for Black and Hispanic registered voters. We use a rich dataset on voter behavior for the universe of registered voters combined with Census block-level sociodemographic attributes to document a decrease in turnout for Black, relative to white, individuals. These effects are concentrated in counties with larger Black and Hispanic populations, consistent with strategic targeting of voter suppression.

"Reduced Flexibility in Voting Differentially Impacts Black Voters" with Daniel B. Jones

This paper explores how access to in-person early voting impacts turnout, overall and by race. We study ease of access in two senses: spatial proximity to early voting sites and length of the early voting period. We draw on data from North Carolina from 2010-2014. First, using a spatial regression discontinuity design, we find that spatial proximity is associated with increased use of early voting. This increases overall turnout of Black voters, but not white voters, as white voters close to an early voting site substitute away from election day voting. Second, we combine our regression discontinuity design with a difference-in-differences approach to assess the impacts of a 2013 North Carolina law reducing the early voting period by a week. We find that the law specifically reduced turnout of Black voters. Early voting declined for both impacted Black and white voters, but white voters simply shifted to election day voting.

SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS

“Tax Burden and Preferences for Public Expenditure: Evidence from California’s Property Tax System”

Local governments are often constrained in their ability to set taxes and spending levels, creating a challenge for policy makers to raise adequate funds for local public goods. I propose and test a model for how housing values within a jurisdiction determine preferences for different property tax structures and public goods. Differences in the distribution of housing wealth help determine policy makers’ decisions in whether to raise revenue through either a flat or a progressive tax on property. To test the model, I first demonstrate that California school districts with higher shares of white, wealthy, and highly educated voters are disproportionately likely to propose and raise revenue via flat taxes. Differing levels of support across groups of voters causes the introduction of a flat tax option to distort previous spending levels sustained under a progressive system. I then turn to precinct-level turnout data on individual tax elections and find that flat taxes receive significant opposition from areas with lower home values. My findings suggest that switching from a progressive tax to a flat tax shifts families with low home values to oppose increases in public spending and exacerbates gaps in public goods spending across low- and high-wealth jurisdictions.

“Revisiting the Impacts of Voter ID Laws Using New Difference-in-difference Methods”

The study of voter ID laws is complicated by the staggered timing of adoption across states and lack of data on which voters are likely to be impacted by the new restriction. To ameliorate these issues, I apply the latest methods for estimating event study and difference-in-difference models with staggered timing to a combination of survey and administrative data on voting and registration.

“Local Politics and Migration Choice” with Jiangnan Zeng

We study how the election of local officials and subsequent policy changes impact the migration decisions of political partisans. We find that the election of a Democratic mayor increases the overall population of municipalities in North Carolina, driven by a decline in out-migration and increased in-migration among Democrats.

LANGUAGE AND SKILLS

English (native)

Python, QGIS, R, Stata, LaTeX

REFERENCES

Professor Daniel B. Jones (co-chair)
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Teaching Reference

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PLACEMENT OFFICERS

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Ms. Gwen Viles

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