DONGYANG HE

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EDUCATION

Pennsylvania State University | Ph.D. Candidate in Economics (STEM)   2025 (expected)

Pennsylvania State University | M.A. in Economics, B.S. in Mathematics (Honors)   2019

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Urban Economics, Spatial Economics, Household Economics

WORKING PAPERS

Distributional Effects of Exclusionary Residential Zoning Policies: Insights from the Greater Boston Area

Job Market Paper [Link]   2024

This paper examines the impact of zoning policies on housing affordability and welfare inequality across income groups in the Greater Boston area. I focus on two specific regulations: Floor Area Ratio (FAR) restrictions and density regulations, both of which limit the supply of smaller, affordable housing units. Using a housing supply model, I show that these policies significantly reduce housing affordability, with the most affordable housing options at the tract level being, on average, five times more expensive under zoning constraints. To evaluate the welfare effects of these policies, I incorporate the housing supply model into a quantitative spatial equilibrium framework that captures both housing demand and supply across census tracts in the city. My results indicate that in the absence of zoning regulations, welfare for the lowest 10% income group could have been 41.6% higher, while welfare for higher-income groups would be mildly lower. Additionally, removing zoning regulations today could still increase welfare for the lowest 10% income renter group by 34.7%, but would negatively affect around 80% of current residents due to neighborhood demographic shifts. Property owners would also face declining property values, with an average decrease of 2.7% and significant variation across tracts. These findings suggest that while radical zoning reforms could enhance welfare for lower-income households and reduce inequality, they would also impose welfare losses on the majority of current residents. This research highlights the critical role of zoning policies in exacerbating housing affordability and the importance of considering distributional effects in zoning policy reforms.

Migration and Proximity Preference in Fertility Decision   2021

This paper examines the role of spatial distance from migrants' hometowns in shaping fertility and mobility outcomes. Using U.S. survey data, I demonstrate that the likelihood of having children declines with increasing distance from one's place of origin, suggesting a "proximity preference" in fertility behavior. This preference appears driven by the reduced access to familial support and increased insecurity faced by long-distance migrants, factors that may discourage childbearing. To quantify the impact of this preference on fertility and mobility, I develop a spatial equilibrium model with endogenous fertility decisions. Counterfactual experiments reveal that proximity preference exerts a substantial influence on both mobility and fertility choices, with skilled workers exhibiting a more pronounced proximity preference in fertility limiting their fertility and mobility outcomes. Additionally, my analysis estimates that changes in migration patterns account for approximately 5% of the decline in fertility rates observed since 2000.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Economist Intern at Amazon	SU 2024
RA for Prof. Michael Gechter	SU 2022, SU 2018
Short-Term Consultant, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	SP 2019
RA for Prof. Nick Tsivanidis	FA 2018

Teaching Experience

Instructor, Penn State University

Intermediate Microeconomics	SU 2023
International Economics	SU 2021

Teaching Assistant, Penn State University

Intermediate Macroeconomics	SP 2023 - FA 2023
Labor Economics and Labor Markets	SP 2021 - FA 2022
Monetary Theory and Policy	FA 2020
Classical Analysis	SP 2018
Numerical Analysis	SP 2018, FA 2017

Honors and Awards

Department of Economics Graduate Assistantship, Penn State	2020 - Present
Schreyer Scholar, Penn State	2019
Phi Beta Kappa	2019
Bates White Research Funding	2018
Mathematics Advanced Study Semesters Fellowship	2017

Modeling

Python, R, Stata, Matlab, ArcGIS, SQL

References

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