

KATE PENNINGTON

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Doctoral Studies University of California, Berkeley
PhD, Agricultural and Resource Economics, expected completion May 2021
DISSERTATION: “Essays in Urban Economics and Political Economy”

PRIMARY FIELDS: Labor Economics, Urban Economics
SECONDARY FIELDS: Environmental Economics, Political Economy

Professor Meredith Fowlie
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Prior Education **University of San Francisco** M.Sc., International & Development Economics 2015
Cornell University B.A., Economics & Inequality Studies 2010

Teaching **UC Berkeley** *Data Science for the 21st Century*, International & Area Studies, Eric Van Dusen 2020
UC Berkeley *Health Economics*, Agricultural & Resource Economics, Michael Anderson 2019
UC Berkeley *Introduction to Econometrics*, Ag. & Resource Economics, Sofia Vargas-Boas 2018
UC Berkeley *Introduction to Econometrics*, Ag. & Resource Economics, Aanchal Jain 2017
U. San Francisco *Math for Economists*, International & Development Economics 2014
Cornell University *Writing Tutor*, Walk-in Writing Service 2007-2010

Languages English (native), Spanish (advanced)

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards 2020 Teaching Effectiveness Award, UC Berkeley
2020-2021 Institute for Research on Labor and Employment Dissertation Fellow
2019-2021 Institute for Women’s Policy Research Fellow
2019 American Cultures Engaged Scholarship Fellow, UC Berkeley
2019 Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor, UC Berkeley
2019 UC Berkeley Synar Fellowship for the Study of American Politics
2019 Soroptimist Fellow
2018-2019 Upjohn Institute for Employment Research Fellow
2018-2019 Fisher Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics Fellow
2018 Sacheti Family Fellowship
2016-2018 Housing and Displacement Researcher, San Francisco City Planning Department
2016 Development Impact Lab Grantee, UC Berkeley
2015-2017 National Science Foundation Fellow
2015 Jacques R. Artus Award, Outstanding Thesis, University of San Francisco

**Research
Papers**

“Does Building New Housing Cause Displacement?: The Supply and Demand Effects of Construction in San Francisco” (JOB MARKET PAPER)

Abstract. San Francisco is gentrifying rapidly as an influx of high-income newcomers drives up housing prices and displaces lower-income longtime residents. In theory, increasing the supply of housing should mitigate increases in rents. However, new construction could also increase demand for nearby housing by increasing neighborhood quality. The net impact on nearby rents depends on the relative sizes of these supply and demand effects. This paper identifies the causal impact of new construction on the displacement of nearby renters by exploiting random variation in the location of new construction induced by serious building fires. I combine parcel-level data on new construction with panel data on individual migration history to test how proximity to new construction affects the risk of displacement, defined as moving to a lower-income neighborhood. I find that new construction reduces displacement risk by 17.14% for people living within 100m, decaying linearly to zero within 1.5km. Next, I show evidence of a hyperlocal demand effect, with building renovations and business turnover spiking and then returning to zero after 100m. I find that gentrification follows the pattern of this demand effect: parcels within 100m of new construction are 2.5 percentage points (29.5%) more likely to experience a net increase in richer residents, decaying to zero within 700m. Affordable housing and endogenous construction do not affect displacement or gentrification. These findings suggest that building new market rate housing has beneficial spillover effects for incumbent residents, reducing rents and displacement pressures while improving neighborhood quality.

“Poisoned by Policy: The Impact of the Flint Water Crisis on Political Participation” with Eleanor Wiseman

Abstract. Unpacking the motivation to vote is a central goal in political science, political economy, and the pursuit of representative democracy, but it is difficult to study empirically. We examine the impacts of a massive municipal and state government failure that exposed a quasi-random sample of households in Flint, MI to elevated lead in their water. Does personal experience of government quality motivate voting? We combine spatial data on lead exposure with the Michigan Qualified Voter File to explore how the results and timing of household lead tests affect voter turnout. To overcome selection issues, we use a triple differences approach that compares voting probabilities among ever-tested voters for elections pre- and post- the water crisis, positive versus negative lead test results, and receiving test results before or after the election. We find that voters who tested positive for lead before the 2015 mayoral election were 3.1 percentage points less likely to vote. However, this average effect masks significant and opposite reactions among Black and White voters. We find that the crisis increased turnout, new voter registration, and the preference for a mayoral challenger for Black residents compared to White residents at several times the magnitude of the impacts of individual lead test results. We interpret these findings as evidence that the crisis increased the salience of race, causing divergence in the voting rates and preferences of Black and White voters.

Research in Progress

“Reproductive Risk Aversion and Contraceptive Choice”

Abstract. A growing body of work shows that restricting family planning budgets and access to abortion causes an increase in births and a decrease in abortion. This paper investigates whether women respond to changing expectations about their future access to reproductive services when they choose a contraceptive method today. I hypothesize that political shocks that increase the risk of high costs and low abortion access cause some women to switch to Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs) like IUDs and implants. LARCs are free or low-cost under the ACA, much more effective than other methods, and last 3-10 years, insulating users from changes in costs or abortion policy in the medium term. Using de-identified patient level data from Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, I find that the unexpected election of the Trump administration in 2016 caused a 35% spike in the probability of switching to a LARC. No such change occurred for contraceptive methods that do not hedge against future risks. Next, I will explore how this changing contraceptive choice affect rates of unintended pregnancy and abortion.

“The Great Recession and Fertility: Separating Changing Preferences from Healthcare Access”
with Kelly Jones

Abstract. We investigate the impact of unexpected economic shocks on women’s ability to access reproductive health services. In the US, access to reproductive services varies widely by income, insurance policy, and location. The disruption of women’s employment and earnings may have a large impact on their access to reproductive healthcare. Yet this access is crucial for economic recovery, since planning births is an important part of achieving career goals and protecting earnings. We will study the extent to which economic shocks affect reproductive healthcare access, and in turn, how reproductive healthcare determines fertility outcomes and economic recovery. We will focus on the heterogeneity of impacts of economic shocks across race and ethnic groups, education levels, and ages (career stages). To date, the related literature has focused on the impact of introducing new contraceptive methods on women’s labor force participation and fertility outcomes and on the impact of curtailing family planning programs. Understanding how economic conditions affect women’s access to services, and how access to those services affects their fertility and economic recovery, is a new contribution with important policy implications.

Prior Employment

The Mahindra Group, Deputy Brand Manager

2010-2012

Talks

- 2020 University of San Francisco International & Development Economics Seminar
- 2020 Urban Economics Association PhD Workshop
- 2020 UC Berkeley Environmental Economics Seminar
- 2018 UC Berkeley Political Economy Research Lunch
- 2018 UC Berkeley Environmental Economics Seminar
- 2018 San Francisco City Planning Department Brown Bag Lecture Series
- 2017 Giannini Foundation of Agricultural and Resource Economics Student Conference
- 2017 University of San Francisco International & Development Economics Seminar
- 2017 Association of Environmental & Resource Economics, Western Economic Association
- 2015 The Pacific Development Conference

Activities

- 2020 Undergraduate economics research mentor
- 2019- 2020 Co-President, [Economists for Equity at Berkeley](#)
- 2015 - 2019 Leadership Board, [Women in Economics at Berkeley](#)