

Jianxuan Lei

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EDUCATION

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Ph.D., Department of Work and Organizations, Carlson School of Management
Advisor: Dr. John W. Budd

Minneapolis, MN

Expected May 2026

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

M.A. in Human Resources and Industrial Relations

Minneapolis, MN

May 2021

Renmin University of China

Bachelor in Business Administration, Renmin Business School
Visiting student to Aalto University, Finland in 2017

Beijing, China

June 2019

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Industrial relations, with a particular focus on (1) trade unions in different institutional contexts and (2) identities at work and how they relate to power and inequality

WORKING PAPERS

Lei, Jianxuan. “Trade union membership and women’s right to work: From gender antagonism to inclusive solidarity?”
Manuscript available upon request

Abstract: The notion that women do not have the equal right to work as men underlies gender antagonism in early trade unionism. While unions have been increasingly promoting gender equality and female-friendly workplaces, it remains unclear whether individual members’ attitudes towards women’s work have changed over time. In this study, I provide the first large-scale, comparative, and quantitative analysis of this question, covering more than 50,000 individuals across 47 European countries from 1990 to 2020. The results suggest a rather complex picture. Specifically, in the early 1990s, union members did not differ significantly from non-members in their attitudes towards women’s right to work. Since the late 1990s, union members exhibited more egalitarian gender attitudes than non-members. However, by 2020, the union-nonunion attitude gap appeared to have vanished. Further analysis indicates that a breadwinner ideology, in which manhood is defined in relation to wage labor, is the primary driver for less egalitarian gender attitudes among union members. In addition, the entrenchment of neoliberalism possibly contributes to the vanished union-nonunion attitude gap by altering the landscape of right-wing politics.

Lei, Jianxuan. “The importance of legal strength for trade unions: Theory and evidence in the Chinese context.”
Manuscript available upon request

Abstract: This paper studies how legal strength—the effectiveness of a broad legal system—influences the effects of trade unions on labor outcomes in China. By identifying a triple-agent aspect of Chinese unions, I propose that Chinese unions can affect employment conditions through three unique channels with different types of power. More importantly, legal strength possibly influences Chinese unions in distinct patterns by interacting with each of the three channels. Drawing on data from multiple sources, I empirically test the prediction and find that Chinese unions are associated with better labor outcomes when the legal system is featured by timely legislation, strong legal enforcement, and abundant legal resources. On the contrary, Chinese unions have less or no influence on labor outcomes when the legal system is relatively weak. Finally, I discuss the general implications of legal strength for trade unions in other institutional contexts.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Budd, John W., and **Lei, Jianxuan.** “Unionization and household income volatility.” *Data collection and cleaning*

Lei, Jianxuan. “Higher Education Expansion and Union Decline in the United States” *Idea development*

AWARDS & HONORS

2023, Carlson School Ph.D. Student Conference Travel Fellowship, University of Minnesota (\$750)

2022, Carlson School Summer Research Fellowship, University of Minnesota (\$5,000)

2022, Deans, Chairs, and Directors Council (DCDC) Best Student Paper Award, Labor and Employment Relations Associations (LERA)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

Lei, Jianxuan. June 2023. Trade union membership and women's right to work: The complex dynamics between gender, labor, and politics in Europe. Labor and Employment Relations 75th Annual Meeting. Detroit, MI

Lei, Jianxuan. May 2022. Trade union membership and women's right to work: The complex dynamics between gender, labor, and politics in Europe. The Centre for Employment Relations, Innovation and Change (CERIC) Doctoral Conference at the University of Leeds (remote)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Minneapolis, MN

September 2021 - Present

- Fall 2021: HRIR 5442 Performance Management, MCOM 5400 Managerial Communication
- Spring 2022: HRIR 3071 Union Organizing and Labor Relations, HRIR 5662 Personnel Economics
- Fall 2022: HRIR 5662 Personnel Economics, HRIR 6801 MHRIR Capstone, MGMT 4040 Negotiation Strategies
- Spring 2023: HRIR 5662 Personnel Economics, HRIR 6701 Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining

SERVICE & ACTIVITIES

Union Organizing for Graduate Workers

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Minneapolis, MN

March 2022 - Present

Pay and Fees Petition for Graduate Workers

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Minneapolis, MN

March 2022 - May 2022

MISCELLANEA

Professional Affiliations: Labor and Employment Relations Associations (LERA)

Skills: Stata, Python, L^AT_EX

Languages: Chinese (native), English (proficient)