

Qi Zhang

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics	University of Virginia	May 2026 (expected)
M.S. in Economics	Tufts University	May 2020
B.S. in Labor Economics & Social Security	Zhejiang University	May 2018

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH INTERESTS: Applied Microeconomics, International Trade

Pollution Haven Next Door: Evidence from China

Job Market Paper

[Link](#)

While existing studies on the Pollution Haven Hypothesis (PHH) find limited empirical support at the national level, fewer have examined it at a more granular spatial scale. This paper revisits the PHH by investigating the effects of the Key Cities Air Pollution Control (KCAPC) policy, a regional air quality program in China. Using a synthetic difference-in-differences (SDID) design to address non-random selection in treated cities, I analyze how the policy affects both SO_2 outcomes and industrial composition across cities. The findings support the PHH at the regional level: Treated cities shift the source of pollution toward less pollution-intensive sectors, while neighboring cities experience growth in output and capital in pollution-intensive sectors. Further evidence suggests that these patterns are partly explained by strategic production reallocation by local governments via state-owned enterprises (SOEs), as well as firm-level shifts toward cleaner product lines. These findings underscore the importance of spatial context in evaluating environmental regulation and highlight how well-intentioned policies can reshape regional industrial structure in unintended ways.

The Empirics of Prior Appropriation in the Colorado River Basin

Work in Progress with Peter Debaere and Tianshu Li

Prior appropriation is the dominant water rights system in the Western United States that privileges water access by seniority. Using a novel micro dataset for Colorado's largest sub-basin along the Colorado River, we study whether Colorado's prior-appropriation regime allocates water to its most productive uses via an instrumental-variables strategy.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, University of Virginia

2019 - 2024

Intermediate Microeconomics
Introduction to Econometrics
Principles of Macroeconomics
Principles of Microeconomics

Teaching Assistant, Tufts University

2019 - 2020

STATA Session
Graduate Summer Math Camp

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, University of Virginia

Prof. Peter Debaere

2023 - Present

Research Assistant, Tufts University

Prof. Kyle Emerick

2019 - 2020

HONORS AND AWARDS

Varkey Family Endowed Fellowship

Tufts University

2019

Department of Economics Summer Scholarship

Tufts University

2019

SKILLS

Technical STATA, Python, R, ArcGIS

Languages Chinese (native), English (fluent)

REFERENCES

Kerem Cosar (Advisor)

Professor

Department of Economics

University of Virginia

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James Harrigan

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Peter Debaere

Professor

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