

# MINGXI LI

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## EDUCATION

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**University of California, Davis**

*Ph.D. in Economics*

*Sep. 2016 - Jul. 2022*

**Peking University**

*M.A. in Economics*

*Sep. 2013 - Jul. 2015*

**Peking University**

*B.A. in Chinese Literature (Minor)*

*Sep. 2011 - Jul. 2013*

**Peking University**

*B.A. in Economics*

*Sep. 2009 - Jul. 2013*

## RESEARCH INTEREST

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Economic History, Urban Economics, Labor Economics

## WORKING PAPERS

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### **Firm Foundations: Legal Systems and Economic Performance in Colonial Shanghai, 1903–1934**

(Job Market Paper)

Abstract: How important are legal systems to economic performance? To address this question, I focus on a historical period from colonial Shanghai, where quite different legal systems operated in the International Settlement and French Concession. In particular, employing novel historical data, I examine 1903–1934 land value discontinuities at the border between them. Substantial discontinuities were found in the 1900s, with higher land values associated with the International Settlement. However, by the 1930s, this land value advantage of the International Settlement had disappeared. A closer look at the institutions reveals that the French Concession adapted its operation to be more business friendly, under competition from the neighboring International Settlement. This suggests that the French legal system *per se* was not a barrier to economic growth, but rather it could function well if interpreted and implemented properly. This paper thus adds to evidence that formal legal system is not a key determinant of economic performance.

### **Path Dependence in Shanghai: How did the Old Tramway Shape the City**

Abstract: This paper studies the short-run and long-run economic consequences of the now-extinct Shanghai tramway system. Geo-locating the tramway lines on both historical cadastral maps and current google maps, I sort land parcels in the 1900s–1910s and residential complexes in 2018 into treatment and control groups based on their proximities to the tramway that opened for public transit in 1908. Utilizing historical data, a triple difference estimation indicates that the tramway system brought integration in the real estate market by connecting geographically dispersed areas. Estimation based on modern data reveals a persistent effect of the tramway lines on the nearby housing price, but only in the “periphery” that is outside the former Settlements and the Old Shanghai Town. Comparison between the effects of tramway in both short-run and long-run thus implies that the influence of the retired public transportation is dissipating over time.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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### **Sell or Rent Out: Private Properties under Different Legal Systems in Colonial Shanghai** (with Shuo Chen)

Abstract: When people become pessimistic about the future or expect a real estate recession, they are more likely to sell their properties. To investigate whether the turmoil and chaos in Shanghai during the first half of the 20th century influenced people's expectations of the future, we analyze the probability of a property going on sale over this historical period. Based on selling and leasing advertisements posted on Shun Pao, we find that in turbulent times including the 1911 Revolution, May Fourth Movement, May Thirtieth Movement, Workers' Armed Uprising, Occupation of Japan, and Recovery of the Settlements, the properties in both the French Concession and the International Settlements were more likely to be sold rather than rented out. However, such effect was more pronounced in the French Concession, implying that property owners were relatively less confident in private property protection under the French legal system.

## PRESENTATIONS

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- All-UC Conference & Graduate Student Workshop *Nov. 2021*
- 15th North American Meeting of the Urban Economics Association *Oct. 2021*
- LSE/UCD Economic History Coffee Hour *Oct. 2021*
- 8th International Symposium on Quantitative History *Jul. 2021*
- Applied Micro Brown Bag at UC Davis *2020 - 2021*

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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- Guanghua School of Management, Peking University** *Sep. 2014 - Jul. 2016*  
Research Assistant (Supervisor: Professor Se Yan)
- China Energy Research Society (CERS)** *Jan. 2012 - Aug. 2012*  
Research Assistant

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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- Department of Economics, UC Davis** Teaching Assistant *Sep. 2016 - Jul. 2021*
- Graduate-level: Microeconomic Theory, Econometric Foundations, Topics in Cross-section Econometrics
  - Undergraduate-level: World Economic History, Economic History (U.S.), Labor Economics, Decision Making, Economic Development, International Economic Relations
- School of Economics, Peking University** Teaching Assistant *Sep. 2014 - Jan. 2015*
- Graduate-level: Intermediate Microeconomics (graduate-level)

## SKILLS

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- Computer Skills: Stata, ArcGIS, R, MATLAB
- Language: Chinese (native); English (fluent)

## HONORS AND AWARDS

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- Research and Travel Awards, UC Davis *2021*
- Exploratory Data and Travel Grant, Economic History Association (EHA) *2019*
- Department of Economics Fellowship, UC Davis *2016 - 2017*
- First Prize of Graduate Student Scholarship, Peking University (5%) *2014 - 2015*
- First Prize of Graduate Student Scholarship, Peking University (5%) *2013 - 2014*
- “Leo KoGuan” Scholarship, Peking University (5%) *2013 - 2014*
- Merit Student, Peking University (10%) *2012 - 2013*
- “ICBC” Scholarship, Peking University (8%) *2011 - 2012*
- “May 4th” Scholarship, Peking University (10%) *2010 - 2011*

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

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- Citizenship: Chinese (F1 visa)
- Gender: Female

## REFERENCES

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### **Christopher M. Meissner (Chair)**

Professor

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University of California, Davis

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### **Gregory Clark**

Distinguished Professor

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### **Shu Shen**

Associate Professor

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