

Zeyi Qian

PhD Candidate · Economics · Urban and Trade

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Education

Clark University	Worcester, Massachusetts
PhD in Economics	2026 (Expected)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unproposed Dissertation: Quantitative Analysis on Spatial Distribution of Firms and International Trade• Advisor: Dr. Junfu Zhang (Chair) and Dr. Kensuke Suzuki	
Clark University	Worcester, Massachusetts
MA in Economics	2023
Shanghai University	Shanghai, China
MA in Economics	2021
University of Toronto	Toronto, Ontario
International Visiting Graduate Student	2020
Shanghai Ocean University	Shanghai, China
BA in Economics	2018

Research Papers

Working Papers

Local Business Climate, Trade Costs, and Spatial Distribution of Chinese Manufacturing Firms: A Quantitative Analysis (JMP)

with Kensuke Suzuki and Junfu Zhang

Abstract: This paper studies the determinants of the spatial distribution of economic activities in China. Specifically, we focus on the different patterns of sectoral growth across Chinese provinces in the last two decades, followed by a series of dramatic policy reforms, including trade liberalization, infrastructure development, change in business climate, and relaxation of mobility restrictions. To understand how those factors interact with each other to shape the spatial distribution of economic activities across regions and sectors, we develop a spatial general equilibrium model of international trade in the spirit of the Melitz-Chaney framework. We extend the heterogeneous firm model to a multi-sector and multi-region setup, incorporating rich sectoral and regional interactions. We bring the model to the data for the Chinese economy and simulate the counterfactual equilibria to account for the underlying mechanism of regional development. Our counterfactual results show that the expansion of manufacturing employment is the primary driver of the distribution of firms and economic development. The reduction in trade costs intensifies competition, which negatively impacts firm entry, with domestic trade costs having a more significant effect than international trade costs. Improvements in the business environment, which lower entry costs, are beneficial for firm entry. These shocks collectively contribute to the growth and specialization of China's economy. Finally, we measure how manufacturing employment, trade costs, and entry costs drive welfare.

Trade Shock and Dynamic Labor Allocation

Abstract: The early 21st century saw the U.S. economy undergoing a profound structural shift, driven by the “China shock” following China's accession to the WTO. This trade shock initially significantly affected U.S. manufacturing, causing widespread job losses and economic disruption. However, contrary to expectations, the shock also accelerated the growth of the service sector, which emerged as a primary driver of economic expansion. A key mechanism behind this transformation was reducing labor relocation costs, enabling workers—particularly those with lower education levels—to switch industries and maximize their life utility. This adjustment not only offset the negative effects of the trade shock but also contributed to a re-optimization of labor market allocation. To understand this counterintuitive outcome, we develop a dynamic spatial model grounded in the frameworks of CDP and ACM. Our model integrates declining labor relocation costs with heterogeneity in workers' education levels and labor mobility. Numerical exercises using a toy model show that reducing labor relocation costs allows more low-educated workers to transition into the service sector. These findings highlight the critical

role of declining labor relocation costs in mitigating trade shock impacts and achieving an optimal labor market allocation.

Publications

Zhao, H., *Qian, Z., Guo, Y., and Ye Y. 2025. **How City Size Affects Firm Survival: Evidence from Chinese Enterprise Registration Data.** *Applied Economics Letters*, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504851.2025.2473662>

*Qian, Z., Zhang, J. and Chen, Q., 2024. **Estimating Round-Tripping FDI from Firm-Level Data in China.** *International Studies of Economics*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ise3.102>

Chen, Q., Yang, J., and Qian, Z., 2022. **International Twin Cities and Chinese Export Activities.** *Economic Theory and Business Management*, (3), 137-155.(in Chinese)

Chen, Q., *Qian, Z., Chen, Y. and Shi, Z., 2021. **Promotion Effect of FDI on Enterprise Survival in Host Country—A Discussion on Industry Safety and Market Access of Foreign Investment.** *China Industrial Economics*, (7), 137-155.(in Chinese)

Qian, Z., Chen, Q., Shi, Z., Li, X., 2021. **The Man-Bear Race: A New Explanation of Regional Competition for China's High-Speed Rail Stations.** *South China Journal of Economics*, 40(2), 66-83.(in Chinese)

Presentations

- 2025 Annual Meetings of the MEA , **Midwest Economics Association**; Graduate Student Seminar, **Clark University**
- 2024 Graduate Student Seminar, **Clark University**
- 2023 Chinese Economist Society North American Conference, **University of Oklahoma**; Graduate Student Seminar, **Clark University**
- 2022 Graduate Student Seminar, **Clark University**
- 2020 Camphor Economic Circle Seminar, **University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences**
Academic Forum on Regional Science and Urban Economics, **Shanghai University of Finance and Economics**;
Shanghai Postgraduate Academic Forum, **University of Shanghai for Science and Technology**; Forum on Frontier
2019 of International Trade Theory and Demonstration, **Southwestern University of Finance and Economics**; Urban
Development Forum, **Renmin University of China**; Innovation Forum, **Shandong University of Finance and Economics**; National Development Youth Forum, **Peking University**

Teaching & Research

Teaching Assistant

- Spring 2025 ECON 265: Econometrics, supervised by Dr. Moshi Alam (**Clark University**)
- Fall 2024 ECON 160: Intro to Statistical Analysis, supervised by Dr. Moshi Alam (**Clark University**)

Research Assistant

- 2021-2024 Supervised by Dr. Junfu Zhang, Dr. David Cuberes, Dr. Jon Denton-Schneider, and Dr. Kensuke Suzuki, (**Clark University**)
- 2018-2021 Supervised by Dr. Qiangyuan Chen (**Shanghai University/Renmin University of China**), and Dr. Yao Luo (**University of Toronto**)

Academic Services

- 2025 Anonymous Reviewer, *International Studies of Economics*

Awards, Fellowships, & Grants

2025-2026	IER Project Research Grant (IERPK2527), Hitotsubashi University, Japan	<i>JPY 500k</i>
2024	E. C. H. Veendorp Award, Clark University	<i>USD 0.5k</i>
2023	Sheftel Travel Award, Clark University	<i>USD 0.6k</i>
2021-2024	NSFC Grant (72073093), National Natural Science Foundation of China	
2020	Joint Program Grant for Graduate Students Studying Abroad, Shanghai University	<i>CNY 10k</i>
2018	Shanghai Municipal Government Consulting Project Grant (2018-Z-D02), Pudong New Area Government, Shanghai	
2019	National Scholarship, Ministry of Education of China	<i>CNY 20k</i>
2017	Shanghai Municipal Scholarship, Shanghai Municipal Education Commission	<i>CNY 8k</i>

Language & Skills

Language: Chinese (native), English (fluent)

Computer: Matlab, Julia, Stata, R, ArcGIS, Python (web crawling)