Chengzi Yi

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FIELDS OF INTEREST

Primary: Macroeconomics
Secondary: Firm Dynamics, Firm Heterogeneity, International Trade, Financial Economics

EDUCATION

European University Institute 2020–2026(expected)
Ph.D. in Economics

Fudan University 2016–2020
Ph.D. in Finance

Hong Kong Polytechnic University 2011–2012
M.A. in Finance

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies 2007–2011
B.A. in French & B.A. in Economics

VISITING EXPERIENCE

Visiting Researcher 2024
Bank of Finland Institute for Emerging Economies

Visiting Student 2023
Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Visiting Student 2018
London School of Economics and Political Science

WORKING PAPERS

Export Dynamics of Multi-Product Firms with (Non-)Differentiated Products (Job Market Paper)

Presented at European Doctoral Programme Jamboree (2025), Bonn; Macro Working Group (2025), European University Institute; 5th National Macroeconomics Doctoral Academic Forum (scheduled), Xiamen University.

Abstract: Canonical models with heterogeneous firms and sunk export costs predict more profitable firms export ("export sorting"). This paper shows export sorting pattern varies systematically with product differentiation. Using Slovenian administrative data, I document that the gap in value added per worker between exporters and non-exporters is smaller in more differentiated sectors, particularly among multiproduct firms. I rationalise this pattern with a model in which multiproduct firms choose product scope and export participation based on cost efficiency and market-specific product appeal, featuring a "star-product" mechanism. When export costs are shared across products, high-appeal products pull marginal product lines into export bundles, diluting measured productivity among exporters. This composition effect is especially pronounced in high-differentiation sectors, where high markups allow less appealing products to be exported. The model reproduces observed sorting patterns when estimated separately for high- and low-differentiation sectors. I then evaluate a 50 percentage point tariff increase on a single product and find large contractions with substantial spillovers in the low-differentiation sector but minimal spillovers and little aggregate response in the high-differentiation sector.

Collateral Constraints and Asset Composition

Presented at Firm Dynamics Seminar (2025), Liaoning University; BOFIT Seminar (2024), Bank of Finland; European Doctoral Programme Jamboree (2024), Barcelona; Macro Working Group (2024), European University Institute.

Abstract: This paper studies how collateral constraints shape firms' asset composition between real estate and non-real-estate capital. I build a dynamic two-asset model with asset-specific convex and non-convex adjustment

costs, as well as asset-specific pledgeability. I estimate the model using data on Chinese listed manufacturing firms. The estimates indicate greater pledgeability of real estate but substantially higher fixed costs of adjusting it. With adjustment and financial frictions, the model matches the observed right-skewed distribution of the real-estate-to-non-real-estate ratio and the declining share of real estate in total capital as capital size increases. Removing financial frictions eliminates precautionary investments and reduces aggregate capital and revenue; removing both financial frictions and fixed costs raises aggregate capital and revenue. In both counterfactuals, aggregate TFPR increases. In a real-estate-crisis scenario in which real estate becomes non-pledgeable, investment tilts towards non-real estate due to its higher collateral value and aggregate capital rises; however, misallocation worsens: aggregate TFPR falls by 3.6% and revenue by 0.3%.

Revisiting the Investment Regressions: State-owned Firms vs. Private Firms in China

Presented at Finance Seminar (2023), Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Abstract: The investment regression on a sample of Chinese listed firms shows that there is a significant correlation between investment rate and cash flow ratio after conditioning on average Q. This is true for both state-owned firms and private firms, which are conventionally considered to have different financial conditions. As noted by Cooper and Ejarque (2003), the violation of the constant-returns-to-scale assumption creates a wedge between average Q and marginal Q and can lead to a spurious cash effect in the investment regression even when there are no financial frictions. Following their argument, this paper examines the investment regression results of the Chinese firms by estimating a Hayashi's (1982) model which allows for decreasing returns to scale. The estimation results suggest that despite the decreasing returns to scale of capital, the presence of financial constraints brings the standard capital adjustment model closer to the data moments of both state-owned and private firms in China.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Product Differentiation and Export Dynamics of Multi-destination Multi-product Exporter

with Marius Gruenewald

POLICY WORK

Firm Responsiveness over the Business Cycle: New Evidence from Europe (CompNet Firm Productivity Report, 2025)

With Alberto Ferreira and Javier Miranda

Presented at FINPRO 4 Conference (2024); TSI Concluding Conference (2025).

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES / SERVICE

Discussant
BdF-EUI Conference on "The Future of Monetary Policy", Banque de France 2025
Paper: "Optimal Monetary Policy, Tariff Shocks and Exporter Dynamics" by Francesco Pappada (University of Venice, Paris School of Economics)

Master in Economic Research (MRes) Student Mentor 2025–2026, 2023–2024
European University Institute

External Research Consultant 2024–present
The Competitiveness Research Network

Co-Organizer 2021
Macro Working Group, European University Institute

TEACHING

Graduate level
Dynamic Economics: Simulation-Based Estimators, EUI 2022
TA for Russell Cooper

Financial Theory and Policy, Fudan 2017
TA for Lijian Sun

Undergraduate level
Econometrics, NYU Florence 2022
TA for Giampiero M. Gallo

Other
Digital Currencies and Digital Finance, Florence School of Banking and Finance 2023
TA for Thorsten Koeppel & Olena Havrylchyk

Machine Learning: Tools and Applications, Florence School of Banking and Finance 2022
TA for Iman Van Lelyveld & Dieter Wang

International Finance, Fudan International Summer Session 2019
TA for Xiaoyan Fan

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Financial Officer 2013–2015
Guangdong Materials Import & Export Corp.

Assistant Business Officer 2012–2013
The Bank of East Asia

AWARDS & GRANTS

Job Market Fund 2025
European University Institute

Grants for Foreigners 2020–2024
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation

Outstanding Graduate 2020
Fudan University

State Scholarship 2018
China Scholarship Council

Outstanding Ph.D. Student 2017
Fudan University

SKILLS

Programming: Julia, Python, MATLAB, R, Stata

Languages: Chinese (Native), English (Fluent), French (Intermediate), Cantonese (Basic)

REFERENCES

Russell Cooper (supervisor)
Liaoning University/European University Institute
China Economic Research Institute/Department of Economics
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Alexander Monge-Naranjo (supervisor)
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
Research Division
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Halle Institute for Economic Research
Center for Business and Productivity Dynamics
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