

JINCI LIU

✉ jinci.liu@iies.su.se | 🌐 <https://jinciliu.github.io>

ADDRESS

Institute for International Economic Studies (IIES)
Stockholm University
106 91 Stockholm

PERSONAL

刘金词
Born in 1997

EDUCATION

Institute for International Economic Studies, Stockholm University PhD in Economics	Expected 2026
UC Berkeley Haas School of Business Visiting Student, Host: Carolyn Stein	2024
National University of Singapore Master by Research in Economics, 5.0/5.0	2018 – 2020
The Chinese University of Hong Kong B.Soc.Sc in Economics, First Class Honors	2014 – 2018

CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

Research Fields: Management, Organization, Labor, and Innovation

Methodologies: Causal Inference, Structural Modeling, Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing

JOB MARKET PAPER

Managing by Feedback [\[Draft is coming soon\]](#)

Abstract: This paper studies how managers affect workers through feedback. Feedback conveys information and carries a tone that can motivate effort. I construct data from software development teams on GitHub, covering over 200 million feedback messages across 1.7 million teams. Reviewers perform managerial functions by providing feedback and deciding whether code is accepted. Using text classification methods, I classify feedback into types (e.g., toxic, positive, and constructive) and estimate their causal effects on productivity. My instrumental variables design exploits the fact that some teams adopt random reviewer assignments. I find that the tone of feedback matters: toxic feedback reduces future code quantity and quality, whereas respectful criticism (negative but non-toxic) has no such detrimental effects. Positive feedback improves future code quality and raises retention, as measured by LinkedIn job histories. Finally, I measure reviewer quality by their contribution to developer productivity growth and show that feedback explains a substantial share of the variation in reviewer quality.

WORKING PAPERS

[How does the Division of Labor Affect Team Productivity? Evidence from GitHub](#)

Abstract: Does the division of labor increase team productivity? This paper provides new evidence challenging the conventional view that specialization increases productivity. I create a panel dataset from GitHub, covering 35 million task allocations across 64,400 software development teams from 2017 to 2023. My result shows a negative relationship between team specialization and various productivity metrics, including output quality, quantity, and user issue resolution time. To identify causal effects, I exploit GitHub's introduction of an automatic task assignment feature, which evenly distributes tasks across team members. Using a matched difference-in-differences design, I find that adoption of this feature reduces specialization and leads to significant gains in productivity: output quality rises by 4%, output quantity by 21%. Team communication also increases by 13%, suggesting that improved interaction and knowledge exchange are a key mechanism behind these productivity gains. These findings highlight a trade-off in non-routine production: while specialization increases task-specific human capital, it

impedes cross-task knowledge spillovers that are essential for innovation.

[Political Preferences and Migration Decisions of College-Educated Workers](#) (with Mitch Downey) *R&R: AEJ Applied Economics*

Abstract: We study the consequences of political polarization along educational lines in the United States. Descriptively, we show that college graduates are now well to the left of non-college voters on economic and social issues and much more so than 15 years ago. We then estimate the causal effect of a Republican governor on college graduates' inter-state migration rates, finding that conservative governance substantially reduces the inflow of college-educated workers. Finally, we analyze a structural model of migration that quantifies the implications of plausible changes in political control for cross-state spillovers and college/non-college earnings inequality.

[The Demographic Impact of Adverse Rainfall in Rural China](#) (with Wenjie Tian and Kang Zhou) *R&R: Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*

Abstract: Using high-frequency monthly precipitation data, we investigate the demographic consequences of extreme rainfall variability, comprising extreme droughts and heavy rainfall, in rural China. We find that both forms of extreme weather increased fertility rates, particularly for male births, between 1990 and 1999. More than a decade later, individuals who experienced extreme weather conditions, especially heavy rainfall, in utero showed lower educational attainment compared to their unexposed counterparts. Notably, we identified the second trimester of pregnancy as the critical period, with exposure during this period exerting the most significant negative impact on adult educational outcomes. Analyzing the mechanism, we find that extreme weather events reduce household incomes and increase child mortality. These findings highlight the enduring demographic impacts of environmental disasters.

WORK IN PROGRESS

- **Timely Feedback and Toxic Communication: Evidence from a Field Experiment** (with Huen Tat Au-Yeung)

The study has been submitted to the Swedish Ethical Review Authority for review. The Authority judged it to be exempt from the ethical review requirements. The experiment is scheduled for October 2025. Details of the experimental design are withheld intentionally to prevent participants from learning about the study in advance.

- **Power within Teams: How Decision Power Affects Productivity**

Abstract: Should decisions in organizations be made from the top down or the bottom up? A key question in organizational economics is whether concentrating decision-making power in managers improves coordination or if delegating power to workers enhances productivity. I explore this issue within software development teams on GitHub, where code reviewers have the formal authority to decide whether to accept contributions. By measuring how decision-making power is distributed within teams, I link it to both output quantity and code quality. By leveraging GitHub's introduction of automatic reviewer assignment as a natural experiment, I find that a more balanced distribution of power increases team productivity. These findings suggest that granting workers greater decision-making authority can improve productivity in knowledge-intensive environments and highlight the significance of organizational design for team performance.

- **The Evolution of Jobs and The Rise of Women: 1939 – 2022** (with Arash Nekoei, Jósef Sigurdsson, and Fabian Sinn)

AWARDS & GRANTS

Google	2023 – 2025
Research Credit (EUR 3,000)	
Carl Mannerfelt Foundation	2024
Research & Travel Grant (SEK 26,000)	
Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU)	2023
Research Grant (SEK 766,834)	

Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Stiftelse Research Stipend (SEK 500,000)	2021
National University of Singapore Admission Scholarship	2018
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Excellent Research Paper Award of CUHK–Mirrlees Award	2018

TEACHING

Applied Empirical Economics I, Stockholm University PhD Economics	2022 – 2023
Econometric Modeling and Applications II, National University of Singapore PhD Economics	2020
Microeconomic Analysis I, National University of Singapore Undergraduate Economics	2020

PRESENTATIONS

2025: 1st Asian Conference on OrgEcon, IIES BrownBag, SOFI BrownBag, Hong Kong Labor Symposium, PSE-CEPR Policy Forum, CEPR Joint Workshop on IMO & ESF, SUDSWEC Conference (SSE), National PhD workshop in Finance (Swedish House of Finance)
2024: UC Berkeley Labor Lunch, UC Berkeley IO Workshop, UC Berkeley IO Therapy
2023: ENTER Jamboree (University of Mannheim), IIES BrownBag, Zhejiang University
2022: Stockholm University <i>Labor Fika</i>
2018: Trade and Industry Department HKSAR

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Referee Service: Academy of Management Annual Conference
Departmental service: Co-organizer of the seminar series <i>Labor Fika</i> 2022 – 2024 Student representative, Working Environment and Equal Opportunities 2022 – 2023

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Institute for International Economic Studies Research Assistant	2020 – 2022
National University of Singapore Research Assistant for Bingjing Li	2018 – 2020
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Research Assistant for Ng Ka Ho and Hsieh Chih Shing	2017 – 2018

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Real Estate Analytics (8PROP), Singapore Data Scientist Intern	2020
Hong Kong Trade Development Council Summer Analyst	2017

COMPUTER SKILLS & LANGUAGES

Computing: Stata, Python, R, \LaTeX , Git, Matlab, SQL

Languages: Mandarin (Native), English (Fluent), Cantonese (Conversational)

REFERENCES

Arash Nekoei

arash.nekoei@iies.su.se

Associate Professor of Economics

Institute for International Economic Studies

Stockholm University

Mitch Downey

mitch.downey@iies.su.se

Assistant Professor

Institute for International Economic Studies

Stockholm University

Jósef Sigurdsson

josef.sigurdsson@su.se

Associate Professor

Department of Economics

Stockholm University