

# Weizheng Lai

Bowdoin College  
Hubbard Hall 8  
Brunswick, ME 04011

Website: [laiwz.github.io](https://laiwz.github.io)  
Email: [laiwz96@gmail.com](mailto:laiwz96@gmail.com)  
Phone: +1 (240) 413-0847

## PLACEMENT DIRECTORS AND COORDINATOR

Placement Directors:	Prof. Luminita Stevens	<a href="mailto:stevens7@umd.edu">stevens7@umd.edu</a>	+1 (301) 405-3515
	Prof. Nolan Pope	<a href="mailto:npope@umd.edu">npope@umd.edu</a>	+1 (801) 995-9184
	Prof. Yusufcan Masatlioglu	<a href="mailto:yusufcan@umd.edu">yusufcan@umd.edu</a>	+1 (301) 405-3527
Placement Coordinator:	Ms. Orpha Jewell	<a href="mailto:ofjewell@umd.edu">ofjewell@umd.edu</a>	+1 (301) 405-0931

## EMPLOYMENT

2025–2026 Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics, Bowdoin College  
Summer 2022 Short-Term Consultant, Development Research Group, World Bank

## EDUCATION

2025 Ph.D. Economics, University of Maryland  
2021 M.A. Economics, University of Maryland  
2019 B.A. Economics and B.S. Mathematics, Wuhan University

## RESEARCH FIELDS

Political Economy, Development Economics, Labor Economics, Applied Microeconometrics

## DISSERTATION AND REFERENCES

*Essays on the Political Economy of China*

### References:

Prof. Allan Drazen (co-chair)  
Department of Economics  
University of Maryland  
[drazen@umd.edu](mailto:drazen@umd.edu)  
+1 (301) 405-3477

Prof. Ethan Kaplan (co-chair)  
Department of Economics  
University of Maryland  
[edkaplan@umd.edu](mailto:edkaplan@umd.edu)  
+1 (301) 405-3501

Prof. Peter Murrell  
Department of Economics  
University of Maryland  
[pmurrell@umd.edu](mailto:pmurrell@umd.edu)  
+1 (301) 405-3476

Prof. Margaret Pearson  
Department of Government and Politics  
University of Maryland  
[mpearson@umd.edu](mailto:mpearson@umd.edu)  
+1 (301) 405-0423

## JOB MARKET PAPER

“[Migrant Integration and Social Stability: Evidence from China](#)” with Yu Qiu.

**Abstract:** Contemporary public discourse often raises concerns that migration may threaten social stability, fueling support for exclusionary integration policies. We study this issue by estimating the causal effect of China’s recent reform of its internal migration institutions on labor unrest (e.g., strikes). Exploiting variation from the reform’s population-based discontinuity rule, we find that the reform significantly reduced labor unrest. A key mechanism is migrants’ enhanced settlement intentions: to secure the opportunity of settlement offered by the reform, migrants have weaker incentives to engage in unrest. We show that the reform increased the likelihood of migrants remaining in migration destinations, and through a novel causal mediation analysis, we find that enhanced settlement intentions can explain 63 percent of the reform’s effect on labor unrest. Moreover, the reform’s effect on labor unrest is more pronounced in places where migrants live closer to their origins or are culturally similar to natives, making them more inclined to stay once the reform lowers institutional integration barriers. We find no evidence that the reform changed migrant composition, significantly improved migrants’ wellbeing, or prompted governments to tighten social control.

## PUBLICATIONS

1. “[Anti-Corruption and Political Trust: Evidence from China](#),” with Ming Fang and Congling Xia, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, Vol. 234, June 2025.
2. “[China’s Anticorruption Campaign and Civil Servant Fever](#),” with Xun Li, *Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol. 67, No. 2, May 2024.

3. “The Effect of Education on Voter Turnout in China’s Rural Elections,” *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, Vol. 221, May 2024.
4. “Housing Market Regulations and Strategic Divorce Propensity in China,” with James Alm and Xun Li, *Journal of Population Economics*, Vol. 35, July 2022.
5. “Role of Professionalism in the Policy Response to COVID-19: Does a Public Health or Medical Background Help?,” with Xun Li, Qianqian Wan, and Xi Chen, *China Economic Review*, Vol. 71, February 2022.

#### WORKING PAPERS

6. “Property Rights, Fiscal Capacity, and Social Capacity: The Lasting Impact of the Taiping Rebellion,” with Lixin Colin Xu and Li Yang, minor revisions requested by *Journal of Economic Growth*.
7. “Adverse Experience and Occupational Outcomes: Evidence from Children of the Cultural Revolution”
8. “The Impact of Trade on Foreign Policy Preferences: The Case of Taiwan”

#### WORK IN PROGRESS

9. “Feudalism and Democracy,” with Kartikeya Batra, Arseniy Braslavskiy, and Ethan Kaplan.

#### TEACHING

##### *Bowdoin College*

Political Economy of Development: Fall 2025

Econometrics (Causal Inference): Fall 2025

Intermediate Microeconomics: Spring 2026

##### *University of Maryland*

Intermediate Microeconomics: Summer 2023 (rating 3.83/4)

Principles of Microeconomics (Tutor): Spring 2025 (rating not solicited)

Ph.D. Econometrics Sequence (TA): 2022–2024 (rating 3.8–4/4)

Ph.D. Probability and Statistics (TA): Summer 2022–2024 (rating not solicited)

#### PRESENTATIONS

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|------|---|
| 2025 | West Virginia University, University of Adelaide, University of Bath  |
| 2024 | Society of Labor Economists Annual Meeting, Chinese Economists Society North America Meeting, Urban Economics Association North America Meeting, DC Political Economy Center Workshop, Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting, University of Queensland |
| 2022 | University of Queensland  |
| 2021 | Global Labor Organization & Renmin University Joint Conference  |

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Referee      *Agribusiness: An International Journal* • *British Medical Journal: Leader* • *China: An International Journal* • *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* • *Journal of Economic Growth* • *Journal of Human Resources* • *Journal of Population Economics* • *Oxford Development Studies* • *Public Choice*

#### GRANTS AND AWARDS

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|-----------|--|
| 2024      | Chiang Ching-kuo Doctoral Fellowship, Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation (declined) |
| 2024      | Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship, University of Maryland                 |
| 2024      | Jacob K. Goldhaber Travel Grant, University of Maryland                      |
| 2023      | Award for Economics Poster Competition, University of Maryland               |
| 2022      | Best Third-Year Paper Prize, University of Maryland                          |
| 2022      | Melville Ulmer Prize (Best Second-Year Paper Prize), University of Maryland  |
| 2019      | Distinguished Graduate, Wuhan University                                     |
| 2015–2019 | Academic Excellence Scholarship, Wuhan University                            |

#### SKILLS

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|----------|---------------------------|
| Software | Stata, Matlab, R          |
| Language | English, Mandarin Chinese |