Weizheng Lai

Bowdoin College
Hubbard Hall 8
Brunswick, ME 04011

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

PLACEMENT DIRECTORS AND COORDINATOR

Placement Directors:	Prof. Luminita Stevens	stevens7@umd.edu	+1 (301) 405-3515
	Prof. Nolan Pope	npope@umd.edu	+1 (801) 995-9184
	Prof. Yusufcan Masatlioglu	yusufcan@umd.edu	+1 (301) 405-3527
Placement Coordinator:	Ms. Orpha Jewell	ofjewell@umd.edu	+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

Development Economics, Labor Economics, Political Economy, Economic History, Applied Microeconometrics

DISSERTATION AND REFERENCES

Essays on the Political Economy of China

References:

Prof. Allan Drazen (co-chair)	Prof. Ethan Kaplan (co-chair)	Prof. Peter Murrell
Department of Economics	Department of Economics	Department of Economics
University of Maryland	University of Maryland	University of Maryland
drazen@umd.edu	edkaplan@umd.edu	pmurrell@umd.edu
+1 (301) 405-3477	+1 (301) 405-3501	+1 (301) 405-3476

Prof. Margaret Pearson
Department of Government and Politics
University of Maryland
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. "Property Rights, Fiscal Capacity, and Social Capacity: The Lasting Impact of the Taiping Rebellion," with Lixin Colin Xu and Li Yang, accepted by *Journal of Economic Growth*.

2. "Anti-Corruption and Political Trust: Evidence from China," with Ming Fang and Congling Xia, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, Vol. 234, June 2025.

3. "China's Anticorruption Campaign and Civil Servant Fever," with Xun Li, *Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol. 67, No. 2, May 2024.

4. "The Effect of Education on Voter Turnout in China's Rural Elections," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, Vol. 221, May 2024.

5. "Housing Market Regulations and Strategic Divorce Propensity in China," with James Alm and Xun Li, *Journal of Population Economics*, Vol. 35, July 2022.

6. "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

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: Evidence from Weimar Germany," 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

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

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	Faculty-Student Research Award, 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

Software	Stata, Matlab, R
Language	English, Mandarin Chinese