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Education

Ph.D. Student in Economics, University of Maryland, 2019–

B.S. in Economics, Wuhan University, 2015–2019

B.S. in Mathematics, Wuhan University, 2015–2019

Fields of Interest

Political Economy, Labor Economics, Public Economics

Research

Working Papers

"Housing Market Regulations and Strategic Divorce Propensity in China", with James Alm and Xun Li, *accepted, Journal of Population Economics*

Abstract: In China's regulated housing markets, a married couple may strategically choose to divorce in order to purchase more houses and/or purchase with more favorable leverages. Our study examines the strategic divorce behavior induced by two major types of housing market regulations in China, quota restrictions and credit restrictions. To overcome the difficulty of using conventional divorce data to disentangle a "real" divorce and a strategic (or a "fake") divorce, we design an identification strategy with data on internet searches for divorce- and marriage-related keywords in 34 Chinese major cities from 2009 through 2016. Our estimates provide robust evidence that these regulations significantly increase the propensity of strategic divorce. Our findings point to the role that housing market regulations play in distorting family's behavior, as well as to the importance of considering the unintended impacts of regulations.

"Is the Bureaucracy Still Attractive? Impacts of China's Anti-Corruption Campaign on Occupational Preference", with Xun Li

Abstract: Economic theory suggests that relative payoff scheme in a society might govern the allocation of talent to productive and unproductive activities. This paper provides empirical evidence by showing how China's recent anti-corruption campaign reshapes people's preference for bureaucratic jobs by affecting the relative payoff scheme. Employing the National Civil Service Exams data from 2012 to 2017 and using central inspections as quasi-natural experiments, our results, based on a difference-in-differences analysis, suggest that the campaign against corruption discourages people from applying for bureaucratic positions. The estimates are robust to several checks. We also carefully examined three underlying mechanisms behind the decline in applicants, which are income, privilege, and uncertainty. We found that the decrease is driven by the increasing political uncertainty, while the effects of income and privilege are not remarkable.

"Role of Professionalism in the Policy Response to COVID-19: Does a Public Health or Medical Background Help?", with Xi Chen, Xun Li, and Qianqian Wan

Abstract: Less than 5 percent of Chinese cities had top-ranked officials with public health or medical backgrounds (PHMBGs). Does professionalism improve their response to a public crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic? Collecting résumés of government and Party officials in almost all prefectural Chinese cities, and matching with other data sources, including weather conditions, city characteristics, COVID-19-related policies, and health outcomes, we demonstrate that cities 15 whose top officials had PHMBGs witnessed significantly lower infection rates, and often lower death rates, than cities whose top officials lacked such backgrounds. Mechanism testing suggests that the effects were at least partially explained by more rapid lockdown or community closure. Our findings offer insights into better preparation for future epidemics via improving leadership team composition, particularly recruiting major officials with PHMBGs.

Work in Progress

"Non-Pecuniary Returns of the Bureaucracy"

"Anti-Corruption and Bureaucratic Inertia", with Jong Jae Lee

"Guns, Coronavirus, and Political Partisanship", with Xun Li and James Macinko

"Social Network Formation", with Xun Li

Research Experience

Research Assistant to Prof. Xun Li (Wuhan University) and Prof. Wei Huang (Chinese University of Hong Kong), 2017–2019

Technical Skills

Software: Stata, Matlab, R

Language: English, Chinese