

QINGYUAN CHAI

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston, MA, May 2025 (expected)
Dissertation Title: *Three Essays on Labor Economics*
Dissertation Committee: Kevin Lang, Daniele Paserman, and Raymond Fisman

B.A., Mathematics and Economics, Fudan University, Shanghai, China, 2019

Exchange Student, University of California, Berkeley, CA, 2017

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor Economics, Development Economics

PUBLICATIONS

“‘Going global’ and FDI inflows in China: ‘One Belt & One Road’ initiative as a quasi-natural experiment,” (with Huiyao Chen and Changyuan Luo) *The World Economy*, (2019) 42: 1654-1672.
“US Outward FDI: Is China a Special Host Country?” (with Changyuan Luo and Chengxue Mao) *Journal of Financial Research (in Chinese)*, (2018) 462: 72-90.

WORKING PAPERS

“Housing Price, Internal Migration, and Intergenerational Mobility,” September 2024. Job Market Paper.
“Obsolescence Rents: Teamsters, Truckers, and Impending Innovations,” (with Costas Cavounidis, Kevin Lang, and Raghav Malhotra), September 2024. NBER Working Paper No.31743.
“Gender Imbalance, Marriage Stability, and Divorce Rate: Evidence from China,” (with Shiyi Sun and Yuan Zhang), August 2024.
“The World Bank and China: Comparing the Impacts of Their Development Projects in Africa,” (with Zhongyi Tang), May 2024.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“The Potency of the Pill: ED Medications and Marriage Stability” (with Daniele Paserman)
“Hope or Trap: Navigating the Dual Impact of Cotton Cultivation on Rural Girls’ Development” (with Fei Teng and Yuan Zhang)
“Siblings and Migration”

PRESENTATIONS

North American Winter Meeting of the Econometric Society (ASSA/NAWM- ES), 2025
NBER Conference on Fertility and Declining Population Growth, 2024
Asia Meeting of the Econometric Society (AMES), 2024
The Northeast Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC), 2023
Asia Meeting of the Econometric Society (AMES), 2023

REFeree EXPERIENCE

Contemporary Economic Policy, Population Research and Policy Review

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Dean's Fellowship, Boston University 2019 – 2024

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for Prof. Kevin Lang, Boston University, 01/2022-present
Research Assistant for Prof. Linh T. Tô, Boston University, 12/2020-01/2021
Research Assistant for Prof. Dilip Mookherjee, Boston University, 05/2021-08/2021
Research Assistant for Prof. Frank Schilbach, MIT, 05/2018-09/2018
Research Assistant for Prof. Ulrike Malmendier, University of California, Berkeley, 09/2017-04/2018

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Behavioral Economics, Boston University, Fall 2020 and Fall 2021
Teaching Assistant, Intermediate Microeconomic Analysis, Boston University, Fall 2021
Teaching Assistant, Introductory Macroeconomic Analysis, Boston University, Spring 2021

DEPARTMENT SERVICE

Graduate Economics Association, Boston University, Officer 2021 - 2022
Co-organizer of Empirical Micro Reading Group, Boston University, 2022–2023
Website maintainer for Theoretical Research in Development Economics (ThReD), 2022-present
Conference Coordinator for Society of Economics of the Household (SEHO), 2021

COMPUTER SKILLS: STATA, MATLAB, SAS, LaTeX, R, Python, ArcGIS, Google Earth Engine, Mathematica

CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS: China/F1

REFERENCES

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QINGYUAN CHAI

Housing Price, Internal Migration, and Intergenerational Mobility (Job Market Paper)

This paper examines how housing affordability affects intergenerational mobility in China by influencing internal migration. Using the Housing Purchase Restriction (HPR) policy as a natural experiment and employing an instrumental variable (IV) approach, I find that rising housing costs deter migration, with a more pronounced effect on children from disadvantaged families. Consequently, these children are less likely to migrate and subsequently earn lower incomes than their counterparts from more affluent families, thereby reducing intergenerational mobility. These findings are consistent with a migration decision model where housing expenses disproportionately burden individuals from less affluent backgrounds. To further explore the policy implications, a bare-bone spatial equilibrium model is developed and estimated to evaluate the effects of various housing policies. Overall, the results underscore the crucial role of parental background in determining children's access to labor market opportunities, even when educational attainment and economic conditions are held constant.

Obsolescence Rents: Teamsters, Truckers, and Impending Innovations (with Costas Cavounidis, Kevin Lang, and Raghav Malhotra)

Motivated by the advent of self-driving trucks, which will dramatically reduce demand for truck drivers, we consider large, permanent shocks to occupations with uncertain arrival dates. Using an overlapping generations model, we examine an occupation facing obsolescence. We investigate the market for teamsters at the dawn of the automotive truck as an à propos parallel to truckers themselves. As predicted by the model, with widespread adoption of trucks cresting the horizon, teamster wages rose, and the number of teamsters fell. Older workers became more likely to enter and less likely to exit work as teamsters. Broadly, our findings suggest that higher wages in an occupation may not reflect strong demand but rather workers' pessimism about its future. A better indicator of worker beliefs might be the age profile of the workers it attracts.

Gender Imbalance, Marriage Stability, and Divorce Rate: Evidence from China (with Shiyi Sun and Yuan Zhang)

The deficit of men or women in a regional marriage market is a commonly observed phenomenon stemming from factors like “Missing Girls”, war, and immigration. However, the impact of this deficit on marriage stability remains insufficiently understood. Leveraging provincial, census, and household survey data in China, we find that a higher male-to-female ratio increases divorce rates. Further analyses suggest that this impact is primarily driven by married women having more outside options. The effect is more pronounced in economies with greater income inequality, where there are more wealthy prospective partners. These findings highlight the significance of gender balance in stabilizing marriages.

The World Bank and China: Comparing the Impacts of Their Development Projects in Africa (with Zhongyi Tang)

While growing literature has documented distinct features of aid projects from China and traditional donors, disparities in aid effectiveness remain not well understood. This paper fills this gap by comparing Chinese and World Bank project impacts on African local economies. Using detailed, geocoded project data and a stacked difference-in-differences approach, we find that Chinese infrastructure projects significantly increase nighttime light in recipient regions, with effects persisting over time, while World Bank projects show no significant impact. Location and project characteristics only partially explain the differences. We further rule out three potential mechanisms: follow-up projects, political favoritism, and implementation by Chinese companies.