

XUCHAO GAO

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2025 (expected)
Dissertation Title: *Essays in Urban and Labor Economics*
Dissertation Committee: Kevin Lang, Daniele Paserman and Benjamin Marx

M.A., Economics, Duke University, Durham, NC, 2018

B.A., Agricultural Economics, Renmin University of China, Beijing, China, 2016
Exchange Program, UC Davis, CA, 2014-2015

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor Economics, Urban Economics, Development Economics

WORKING PAPERS

“Do men and women hold different standards on spouses: evidence on mating preferences in China”. October 2024. Job Market paper.

“The impacts of population mobility controls on housing prices: Evidence from the 2014 household registration reform in China,” October 2023.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Network job and worker benefits of rural urban migrants in China,” October 2020.

PRESENTATIONS

Applied Microeconomics Dissertation Workshop, Boston University, 2020-2023
Development Reading Group, Boston University, 2020

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Dean’s Fellowship, Boston University, 2018-2023
Tuition Scholarship, Duke University, 2016-2018
Scholarship for undergraduate exchange program, Renmin University of China, 2014-2015
Scholarship of Academic Excellence, Renmin University of China, 2013-2016
National Scholarship for undergraduate, China Education Ministry, 2012

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for Professor Marjorie McElroy and Professor Seth Sanders, Duke University, 2017-2018

Co-organizer, Development Reading Group, Fall 2020

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Empirical Economics II, Department of Economics, Boston University, Summer 2022
Teaching Assistant, Empirical Economics II (EC204), Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2023
Teaching Assistant, Empirical Economics I (EC203), Department of Economics, Boston University, Spring 2022, Fall 2022, Spring 2023
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Microeconomics Analysis, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2021, Summer 2023
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Macroeconomics Analysis, Department of Economics, Boston University, Summer 2022, Summer 2023
Academic Tutor, Introductory Microeconomics Analysis, Summer 2017

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), Mandarin (native)

COMPUTER SKILLS: STATA, R, MATLAB, LaTeX

CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS: China/F1

REFERENCES

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Do men and women hold different standards on spouses: evidence on mating preferences in China (Job Market Paper)

Some common mating preferences fail to rationalize the matching patterns observed in the Chinese marriage where women's single rates increase in education attainment but in contrast, men are less likely to be single when they become more educated. I propose a utility model that allows testing for the intensity of assortative mating among men and women as well as the impact of traditional gender norms. Estimating the preference parameters with 2010 Census data from China, I find that the preferences vary across regions and at the national level, the estimated preference parameters suggest the traditional divisions of gender roles may still be deeply rooted in people's mating preferences and make education a less desirable trait for women compared to men.

The impacts of population mobility controls on housing prices: Evidence from the 2014 household registration reform in China

Household registration system (Hukou system) as a mobility control instrument in China largely restricts individuals' access to social welfare system out of their hometown, making it costly and inconvenient for migrants to live in the hosting cities in the long term. Majority of the migrants do not consider purchase houses where they work without a Hukou. In this paper, I study the effects of 2014 Hukou reform, a major household registration relaxation, on housing prices in the urban area. Using apartment complex level housing data, I find that the implementation of the reform lead to an increase in prices of lower-quality residential properties while those of higher quality experience negative shocks. This is consistent with the findings in previous literature that more migrant workers move to places where controls are relaxed, which spur demands for basic housing.

Network job and worker benefits of rural urban migrants in China

Despite the rise in the number of rural urban migrants since the 1980s, many migrants remain unaware of or are denied their entitled labor benefits. This situation could be exacerbated by the lack of transparency about worker benefits, and the high mobility of the migrant workforce. Using Chinese rural urban migration data, this paper studies whether jobs obtained through social network provide better worker benefits. My results suggest that network jobs tend to be associated with worse benefits. I discuss a few potential reasons behind this pattern. Furthermore, I find that migrants' decision to stay in urban areas is influenced more by housing benefits than other forms of worker benefits.