

XUCHAO GAO

Department of Economics
3300 Dyer St, Room 301S
Dallas Texas 75275 USA
Cell: (984) 377-9383
Email: xuchaog@smu.edu
Web site: <https://xuchaogao.github.io>

POSITION

Postdoctoral Fellow, Southern Methodist University (Supervisor: Daniel L. Millimet) 2025

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, August 2025
Dissertation Title: *Essays in Labor and Urban 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
Study Abroad Program, UC Davis, CA, 2014-2015

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor Economics, Urban Economics, Development Economics

WORKING PAPERS

“[Single by Choice or Rejection? Evidence on Mating Preferences in China](#)” August 2025. Job Market paper. Under review
“[The impacts of population mobility controls on housing prices: Evidence from the 2014 household registration reform in China](#),” August 2025.
“[Worker Benefits of Rural Urban Migrants in China](#)”, August 2025.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Government Funding, University Innovation on Local Economic Growth,” with Daniel L. Millimet and Shuo Qi

BOOK CHAPTERS

“Policy-based Evidence Making” (with Daniel Millimet and Shuo Qi), in preparation for Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics, ed. Klaus F. Zimmermann, Springer Nature.

PRESENTATIONS

Global Labor Organization (GLO) Conference Job Market Sessions, 2025
Applied Young Economist Webinar (AYEW), 2025
Applied Microeconomics Dissertation Workshop, Boston University, 2020-2024
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 Undergraduates, 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, Fall 2024
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, Duke University, Summer 2017

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), Mandarin (native)

COMPUTER SKILLS: STATA, R, MATLAB, LaTeX

CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS: China/F1

REFERENCES

**Professor Kevin
Lang**

Department of Economics
Boston University
Phone: (617) 353-5694
Email: lang@bu.edu

**Professor Daniele
Paserman**

Department of Economics
Boston University
Phone: (617) 353-5695
Email: paserman@bu.edu

**Professor Benjamin
Marx**

Department of Economics
Boston University
Phone: (617)-353-4123
Email: bmarx@bu.edu

**Professor Daniel L.
Millimet (Postdoctoral Supervisor)**

Department of Economics
Southern Methodist University
Phone: (214)768-3269
Email: millimet@smu.edu

XUCHAO GAO

Single by Choice or Rejection? Evidence on Mating Preferences in China (Job Market Paper)

In China, the marriage rates increase with education for men but decrease for women. However, as in most countries, positive assortative matching is still observable in the data. This pattern is inconsistent with some simple models of marital matching.

In this paper, I ask what preferences can explain the observed mating pattern for individuals born between 1972 and 1975 in China. I allow their utility from marrying to depend on their education and their spouse's education. The utility function allows for a discrete jump and a different slope if the wife's education exceeds the husband's. In addition, each person has idiosyncratic preferences for each potential spouse. I assume utility is nontransferable and solve for equilibrium assuming a deferred acceptance algorithm.

I find that women are strongly averse to marrying less-educated men. In contrast, men are rewarded for marrying more-educated wives. The model fits the high single rate among low-educated men and high-educated women. Moreover, when I predict single rates for earlier birth cohorts, I fit the pattern for low-educated men and high-educated women born after 1970 relatively well, but not that for earlier cohorts. This suggests that mating preferences change significantly across generations.

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

The household registration system (Hukou system) as a mobility control instrument in China largely restricts individuals' access to the social welfare system outside their hometown, making it costly and inconvenient for migrants to live long-term in host cities. Without local Hukou, most migrants will not consider purchasing houses where they work. In this paper, I study the effects of the 2014 Hukou reform on housing prices. Using apartment-complex-level housing data, I find that the implementation of the reform increased prices for lower-quality residential properties, while those of higher quality experienced negative shocks. This is consistent with findings in previous literature that more migrant workers move to places where controls are relaxed, spurring demand for basic housing.

Network job and worker benefits of rural urban migrants in China

Despite the rise in rural-urban migration since the 1980s, many migrants in China remain without access to formal worker benefits. Using panel data from the 2008-2009 RUMiC survey, this paper examines how job search methods affect benefit provision among rural-urban migrants.

Comparing cross-sectional and fixed effects approaches, I find that apparent negative associations between network job search and formal benefits largely reflect worker selection rather than causal effects. Most relationships disappear when controlling for individual fixed effects, indicating that workers who rely on networks are negatively selected. The exception is pension benefits, where network job search maintains a significant negative effect, suggesting network-based hiring genuinely channels workers into jobs that avoid long-term benefit obligations. These findings reveal that networks primarily matter through selection rather than direct causal effects.