

LIYUAN MA

CONTACT INFORMATION

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WORK EXPERIENCE

Postdoctoral Economist – Midwest Market and Entrepreneurship July 2021 - Present
Iowa State University, Ames, IA, USA
Supervisor: Prof. Peter F. Orazem

EDUCATION

Iowa State University, Ames, IA, USA Fall 2016 - May 2021
Ph.D. in Economics (GPA: 3.91/4.0)
Central University of Finance and Economics 2013 - 2016
M.A. in Economics (GPA: 3.7/4.0)
Shanghai University of Finance and Economics 2009 - 2013
B.S. in International Economics and Trade (GPA: 3.51/4.0)

FIELD OF INTERESTS

Primary Fields: Labor Economics; Industrial Organization; Regional and Urban Economics

Secondary Fields: Applied Econometrics; Environmental Economics

RESEARCH REPORT

1. “Minimum Wages and Rural and Urban Firm Entry and Exit”, with Yulong Chen and Peter F. Orazem, *Agricultural Policy Review*, 2021.
2. “Does Rural Broadband Expansion Encourage Firm Entry?”, with Yulong Chen and Peter F. Orazem, *Agricultural Policy Review*, 2020.
3. “What Affects Firm Location and Firm Employment at State Borders?”, with Georgeanne M. Artz, Yulong Chen and Peter F. Orazem, *Agricultural Policy Review*, 2019

RESEARCH

1. “How Relative Marginal Tax Rates Affect Establishment Entry at State Borders”, with Peter F. Orazem and Yulong Chen, **R&R** at *Small Business Economics*
2. “Churning in Urban and Rural Markets: Evidence from Firm Entry and Exit, 1999-2015”. with Peter F. Orazem and Yulong Chen, **under review** at *Journal of Regional Science*
3. “The Heterogeneous Role of Broadband Access on Establishment Entry by Sector and Market Size”, with Peter F. Orazem and Yulong Chen, **under review** at *Regional Studies*
4. “The role of marital transfers in marrying up in the Chinese marriage market”

5. “The changing importance of family background on academic attainment and earnings of the high school classes of 1972, 1980, 1992, and 2004.”, with Peter F. Orazem.
6. “Perceived and Observed Discrimination in the labor market in China”

PAPERS IN PROGRESS

1. “Minimum Wages and Rural and Urban Firm Entry and Exit”, with Peter F. Orazem and Yulong Chen
2. “The Capitalization of State Tax Rates on Housing Values at State Borders, 1980 – 2017”, with Peter F. Orazem, Zachary Martin, and Yulong Chen
3. “Income, prices and poverty in urban and rural China from 1995 to 2013”, with Peter F. Orazem, Weinan Liu, and Li Yu

PUBLICATION (Chinese)

“Supported or Supporting? Family Structure and Employment Choice of the Elderly in Urban China.”
 With Li Yu, Xundong Yin, Belton Fleisher. *Studies in Labor Economics*. 2016, 4(5).

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Iowa State University Summer 2018 - Spring 2021

Economics Research Assistant for Prof. Peter F. Orazem, University Professor

Central University of Finance of Economics

Research Assistant for Prof. Haizheng Li, Special-Term Professor Spring 2015 - Spring 2016

- 2016 Human Capital Research, working as a manager for the project team
- 2015 Human Capital Research, working as the leader of Project Management Committee

Research Assistant for Prof. Li Yu, Professor Fall 2015

- Translation of two chapters in the textbook *Macroeconomics* (written by Acemoglu, Laibson and List, 1st edition, published in Dec. 2015)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Iowa State University

Undergraduate Research Advisor Summer 2021-present

- Instructing data sorting, model setting, empirical analysis, and writing a draft

Teaching Assistant

- Principles of Macroeconomics Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018
- Principles of Microeconomics Fall 2016, Fall 2017, Spring 2018

Central University of Finance and Economics

Stand-alone Instructor

- Research methodology in Human Capital Measurement 2015

PRESENTATIONS

1. “The changing importance of family background on academic attainment and earnings of the high school classes of 1972, 1980, 1992, and 2004”, *Asian and Australasian Society of Labor Economics*, Peking University, Beijing, 2021
2. “The role of marital transfers in marrying up in the Chinese marriage market”, *the 90th Annual Southern Economics Association*, New Orleans, LA, 2020.
3. “The changing importance of family background on academic attainment and earnings of the high school classes of 1972, 1980, 1992, and 2004”, *the 90th Annual Southern Economics Association*, New Orleans, LA, 2020.
4. “The role of marital transfers in marrying up in the Chinese marriage market”, *the 84th Annual Midwest Economics Association*, Evanston, Illinois, 2020 (the conference is canceled due to COVID-19).
5. “The role of marital transfers in marrying up in the Chinese marriage market”, *the 11th International Symposium on Human Capital and Labor Markets*, Beijing, 2019
6. “The role of marital transfers in marrying up in the Chinese marriage market”, *Iowa State Labor Economics Workshop*, 2019.

HONORS AND AWARDS

James R. Prescott Awards (inaugural recipient), Iowa State University, (\$5,000)	2020
3 Graduate Student Travel Grants (Total \$2,000)	2018 - 2021
China National Graduate Scholarship (\$3,000)	2015
2nd award in the Third Academic Thesis Competition of CUFU	2015
2nd award Scholarship, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics	2011
Scholarship of recreation and sports, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics	2010

SKILLS

Software: STATA (proficient), Microsoft Office, R, MATLAB

Language: English (fluent); Mandarin (Native)

REFERENCE

Dr. Peter F Orazem (Major Professor)

University Professor, Department of Economics, Iowa State University
515-294-8656; pfo@iastate.edu

Dr. John V Winters

Professor, Department of Economics, Iowa State University
515-294-6263; winters1@iastate.edu

Dr. Alex Zhylyevskyy

Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Iowa State University
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Research Papers Abstract

The role of marital transfers in marrying up in the Chinese marriage market

We provide theory and evidence about how the traditional marriage expenditure paid by the bride's parents (called dowry) and the groom's parents (called bride price) affect the marriage match in China. We also show how the payments by the bride's and the groom's families change with the local ratio of men to women. We motivate the empirical work using a two-sided search model in the marriage market. Using dowry data from the 2014 and 2016 China Family Panel Studies and the bride price data from 2014 China Labor-force Dynamic Survey, we find evidence supporting positive assortative mating based on the socioeconomic status of the bride and the groom. Within that framework, payments made by the bride's and the groom's families can significantly improve the socioeconomic status of the spouse. We show that higher income and more educated parents will pay more to help attract a more favorable spouse while poorer parents are priced out of the market. As the ratio of marriageable aged men to women rises the dowry paid by the bride's family falls while the bride price paid by the groom's family rises.

The changing importance of family background on academic attainment and earnings of the high school classes of 1972, 1980, 1992, and 2004.

We provide empirical estimates on the relative importance of family background, ability, school quality and the local labor market on school attainment and earnings early in the work career. We demonstrate how these factors have changed in importance over time, using longitudinal information on the high school graduating classes of 1972, 1980, 1992 and 2004. Over that period, family background has become less important, explaining 5.6% of the variation in school attainment for the 1972 cohort and only 2.8% of the variation for the 2004 cohort. Family background explains less of labor market earnings, accounting for no more than 1.3% of the variation of earning across the four cohorts. Meanwhile, locational factors that would include school quality and the strength of the local labor market have become more important. Their ability to explain school attainment rose from 17.6% to 20.4% between the 1972 and 2004 high school cohorts, but their importance to variation in earnings has decreased from 13.4% to 10.9%. Individual ability has become more important for school attainment (8.2% to 9.1%), but it has little importance for earnings.

Churning in Urban and Rural Markets: Evidence from Firm Entry and Exit, 1999-2015

Churning occurs when firms are both entering and exiting a market simultaneously. We present a theoretical argument that churning implies that the same factors that would incentivize firm entry would also lead to greater rates of firm exit. We then present evidence supporting the theory in a variety of markets defined by industry, by size ranging from metropolitan to remote rural counties, and by counties on either side of state borders. The churning rate is greatest in the most agglomerated markets and least in the most remote rural markets.

Perceived and Observed Discrimination in the labor market in China

Using data from the 2015 Chinese General Social Survey, this paper examines how objective measures of wage discrimination and demographic attributes such as gender, education, and marital status relate to employee perceptions of discrimination. I expand upon previous literature by introducing more general employees rather than a specific group and by clearly distinguishing between observed individual and group discrimination measures. The results indicate that observed individual wage discrimination measures are significantly associated with own perception of discrimination rather than with the group discrimination measure upon which the objective definition of discrimination is based, although the effect is relatively small. However, local income inequality is not associated with the perceived discrimination.

How Relative Marginal Tax Rates Affect Establishment Entry at State Borders

This paper studies the impact of marginal capital income, property, sales, and income tax rates on establishment entry. We apply border discontinuity analysis and test relative establishment entry rates in the same industry on either side of state borders. Establishments are significantly more likely to enter on the side of the border with the lower marginal tax rates with property taxes being the most important. Results are used to identify the largest border differences in start-ups due to tax structure and to rank the most distortionary tax structures overall. The greatest distortion in start-ups due to tax rates is at the Wyoming-Idaho with 8.6% lower probability of start-ups on the Idaho side due to tax disadvantages relative to Wyoming. The most distortionary tax structure is Rhode Island's at 14.2% lower probability of entry, but it is not as heavily disadvantaged at the border because its neighbor, Connecticut, has the third most distortionary tax structure.

The Heterogeneous Role of Broadband Access on Establishment Entry by Sector and Market Size

Analysis of broadband access on establishment entry and exit reveals heterogeneous impacts across industries and across urban and rural markets. On average, broadband reduces both establishment entry and exit, meaning that it benefits incumbents relative to start-ups. Broadband entry results in negative net entry in urban markets, and small, positive net entry in rural markets, resulting in a net reallocation of establishments from urban to rural markets. Broadband has different effects across sectors, with net establishment gains in manufacturing, construction, wholesale trade, and real estate in both urban and rural markets and net losses in educational services and hospitality.

The Capitalization of State Tax Rates on Housing Values at State Borders, 1980 – 2017

If housing prices adjust across jurisdictions to equalize utility from housing services across locations, and if higher marginal tax rates lower utility, then housing prices will decrease in high tax jurisdictions relative to low tax jurisdictions. Similarly, housing prices will rise to reflect higher levels of government service or locational amenities. We derive a tractable equilibrium relationship that demonstrates the interrelationship between housing values, tax rates, government services and naturally occurring amenities and then test it against county-level data at state borders using Census housing price data from 1980-2017. The data support the theory and generate a ranking of tax structures by their capitalized impact on housing values at state borders.