JUNHAO CHEN

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2024 (expected)
    Dissertation Title: *Three Essays on the Economics of Crowdfunding and Textual Methods*
    Dissertation Committee: Daniele Paserman, Ray Fisman and Siddharth George

M.A., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, January 2018

B.A., International Economics, Fudan University, Shanghai, China, 2016

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Political Economy, Education, Economics of Digitization, Development Economics

WORKING PAPERS

"Life-saving Fundraising: Is Donor Generosity Merit-based or Need-based?"
    Job Market Paper.
"The Economic Impact of Closing Illicit Markets: Evidence from China's Crackdown on
    Prostitution"(joint with Songjun Jiang)

WORK IN PROGRESS

"Social Learning in Policymaking" (joint with Yiming Cao)
"The Intergenerational Effect of Malaria Eradication" (joint with Siddharth George and
    Saravana Ravindran)

PRESENTATIONS

Science of Philanthropy Initiative, Chicago, IL, 2023

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

IED Research Grant ($3000), Boston University, July 2023

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant to Prof. Siddharth George, 2022-2023
Research Assistant to Prof. Marc Rysman, 2021

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Co-Instructor, Intermediate Micro, New York University (Shanghai), Fall 2020
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Macroeconomics, Boston University, Spring 2023
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Microeconomics, Boston University, Spring & Fall 2022
Teaching Fellow, Microeconomic Theory (Master), Boston University, Fall 2021
Teaching Assistant, Intermediate Microeconomics, Boston University, Spring 2020
Teaching Assistant, Economics of Sports, Boston University, Fall 2019
Teaching Assistant, Environmental Economics, Boston University, Fall 2019

COMPUTER SKILLS: Stata, Python, HTML, SQL, LaTeX

CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS: China/F1

REFERENCES

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JUNHAO CHEN

Life-saving Fundraising:
Is Donor Generosity Merit-based or Need-based? (Job Market Paper)

This paper studies how donors respond to merit and need when giving to families facing unaffordable medical expenses. With data from a leading crowdfunding platform in China, I find that campaigns receive more donations if patients or fundraisers report attending (selective) colleges. After controlling for campaign and textual characteristics, I show that, at the transaction level, a serial donor favors patients who attend a higher-ranked college or have a higher education level. An online survey experiment is conducted to elicit respondents' willingness to donate to synthetic fundraising stories, in which the patients' college and medical expenses are independently randomized. Both academic merit and financial need enhance donor generosity. In line with limited knowledge of college ranking, the effect on college rankings is more pronounced for top and in-province institutions. Merit help attract more donation, probably by amplifying the warm glow effect. Novel textual methods based on large language models are developed to extract information from text.

Social Learning in Policymaking
(with Yiming Cao)

Using large language models to categorize policy documents and exploiting a unique social networking setup among policymakers at China's Party School, we investigate the diffusion of policy ideas. The study finds that policy diffusion is more likely between cities with leaders who were classmates in these training programs. The results indicate that social networks significantly influence policy transmission. The impact of these social connections is approximately 10% of the effect of directly moving a policymaker from one jurisdiction to another. These findings primarily apply to non-economic policies, suggesting that when tackling complex social problems, policymakers rely on knowledge exchange with more experienced peers in their network.

The Economic Impact of Closing Illicit Markets:
Evidence from China's Crackdown on Prostitution
(with Songjun Jiang)

Using synthetic control methods, we estimated the economic impact of a crackdown on prostitution in Dongguan. Tourism suffered a major blow due to the removal of the sex industry and increased law enforcement. As collateral damage, we document a reduction in entertainment consumption for local households. Using a spatial diff-in-diff, we explore its economic impact at the block level.

October 2013