

# Ben ZOU

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UPDATED: Feb 2025

## EMPLOYMENT

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2022 - present Daniels School of Business, Purdue University  
2024 - present, Associate Professor of Economics  
2022 - 2024, Assistant Professor of Economics  
2015 - 2022 Assistant Professor of Economics, Michigan State University

## EDUCATION

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2015 Ph.D. Economics, University of Maryland, College Park  
2009 M.A. Economics, Peking University  
2006 B.S. Mechanical Engineering, B.A. Economics, Peking University

## FIELDS OF INTEREST

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Labor Economics, Urban Economics, Economic Development

## PUBLICATIONS

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1. "China's Commuting-based Metropolitan Areas," with Ting Chen and Yizhen Gu. *Journal of Urban Economics*. Vol. 144, Nov 2024.
2. "Home Location Choices and the Gender Commute Gap," with Yizhen Gu, Naijia Guo, and Jing Wu. *Journal of Human Resources*. 59(2): 545-575, Mar 2024.
3. "The Motherhood Penalty in China: Magnitudes, Trends, and the Role of Grandparenting" with Lingsheng Meng and Yunbin Zhang. *Journal of Comparative Economics*. Volume 51, Issue 1, September 2023, Pages 105-132.
4. "A Marriage-Market Perspective on Risk-Taking and Career Choices: Theory and Evidence," with Hanzhe Zhang. *European Economic Review*, Volume 152, February 2023, 104379.
5. "Industrializing from Scratch: the 'Construction of Third Front' and Local Economic Development in China's Hinterland," with Jingting Fan, *Journal of Development Economics*. vol. 152, Sep 2021.
6. "Subways and Road Congestion," with Yizhen Gu, Chang Jiang, and Junfu Zhang, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. 13(2):83-115, Apr 2021.
7. "The Alibaba Effect: Spatial Consumption Inequality and the Welfare Gains from e-Commerce," with Jingting Fan, Lixin Tang, and Weiming Zhu, *Journal of International Economics*. 114: 203-220. Sep 2018.
8. "The Local Economic Impacts of Military Personnel Contractions," *Journal of Labor Economics*. 36(3): 589-621. Jul 2018.
9. "Incomplete Disclosure: Evidence of Signaling and Countersignaling," with Ben Bederson, Ginger Zhe Jin, Phillip Leslie, and Alex Quinn, *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*, 10(1): 41-66, Feb 2018.
10. "The Effect of Aid on Growth: Evidence from a Quasi-Experiment," with Sebastian Galiani, Stephen Knack and L. Colin Xu, *Journal of Economic Growth*. 22 (1): 1-33, Mar 2017.

11. “Business Cycles and Divorce: Evidence from Microdata,” with Judith K. Hellerstein and Melinda Sandler Morrill, *Economics Letters*, 188: pp. 68-70. 2013.

## WORKING PAPERS

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1. “Promoting Healthy Diets at a Large Restaurant Chain,” with Weijia Dai and Ginger Jin.
2. “Migration Restrictions and the Migrant-Native Wage Gap: The Role of Wage Setting and Sorting,” with Naijia Guo, Li Zhang, and Rongjie Zhang. Jan 2025.
3. “Fare Structure and Demand for Public Transit,” with Yizhen Gu, Qu Tang, and Yacan Wang, Jul 2024.
4. “The Dual Local Markets: Family, Jobs, and the Spatial Distribution of Skills,” with Jingt-ing Fan, Nov 2021.
5. “Interactions among Donors’ Aid Allocations, Evidence from an Exogenous World Bank Income Threshold,” with Stephen Knack and L. Colin Xu, Jun 2014.

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES AND AFFILIATIONS

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Faculty affiliate, Purdue University Research Center in Economics (PURCE), 2022-present

Consultant, World Bank, Summer 2011, 2012; Winter 2012

Survey team leader, China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Survey (CHARLS), Peking University, 2008-2009

## TEACHING

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Purdue University

2024– Topics in Labor and Urban Economics (Ph.D.)

2024– Development Economics (undergraduate)

2022– Urban Economics (undergraduate)

Michigan State University

2016-2022 Labor Economics I (Ph.D.)

2017-2022 Urban Economics (undergraduate)

2016-2018 Analysis of Labor Markets (undergraduate)

University of Maryland, College Park

2011 Methods and Tools of Economic Analysis (undergraduate)

## FUNDING AND AWARDS

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- 2024 Department Distinguished Teaching Award.  
for two courses in Spring 2024 (Development Economics, Urban Economics).
- 2019 Dr. Delia Koo Endowment Awards, Asian Studies Center,  
Michigan State University
- 2017-2018 Dr. Gwen Andrew Faculty Initiatives Fund, College of Social Sciences,  
Michigan State University
- 2017 Special Foreign Travel Fund, Michigan State University
- 2014 Western Economic Association International Graduate Student Workshop
- 2014 The Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship, University of Maryland
- 2014 University of Maryland 2014 Invention of the Year Finalist  
"A National Database of Food Safety Inspections for Retail Establishments,"  
with Benjamin Bederson, Alexander Quinn, Ginger Jin, and Phillip Leslie.  
The business established based on this database was acquired in 2023.
- 2013 U.S. Department of Labor ETA Research Papers Program
- 2010-2014 Graduate Assistantship, University of Maryland
- 2009-2010 Graduate Fellowship, University of Maryland

## CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

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(including scheduled)

2025 AEA-ASSA.

2024: AEA-ASSA (poster), AREUEA-ASSA, Peking University HSBC Business School, University of Hong Kong, Jinan University, Econometric Society North America Summer Meeting, UEA, Conference on Urban and Regional Economics (CURE). SMU-Jinan Conference on Urban Economics.

2023: Mid-Midwest Applied Microeconomics Workshop, Northeast Workshop on Energy Policy and Environmental Economics at Cornell, Conference on Infrastructure and Urban Development in the Developing World at U Tokyo, UIUC, UEA.

2022: SOLE, University of Maryland, Online Spatial & Urban Seminars.

2021: MWIEDC@NWU, Peking University, Purdue University, UEA.

2020: Chinese Economist Society North America Meeting, UEA, Summer Virtual Conference on Urban Economics, Jinan University.

2019: Lehigh University, PacDev@USC, MWIEDC@Wisconsin, UEA, University of Oklahoma, University of Michigan, University of Calgary, Purdue University.

2018: AREUEA-ASSA, University of Queensland, University of New South Wales, Victoria University of Wellington, University of Melbourne, Development Day Conference at University of Chicago.

2017: Econometric Society Asian Meeting, Fudan University, Development Day Conference at Northwestern University.

2016: AEA Annual Meeting, Econometric Society Winter Meeting, UM/MSU/UWO Labo(u)r Day, NBER Chinese Economy Meeting, Econometric Society North America Summer Meeting, NBER Summer Institute (PRIT group), NEUDC@MIT.

2015: University of Chicago Harris School, Cornerstone, Michigan State University, NEUDC@Brown University, UEA, NARSC.

2014 & earlier: U.S. Department of Labor (DoL), SOLE, WEAI Graduate Student Workshop, UEA, the Chinese Economist Society (CES) North America Conference, Southern Economic Association (SEA) Annual Meetings, ISNIE.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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Professional Awards:

- 2024 Excellence in Reviewing Award, *Journal of Human Resources*.

Professional Associations:

2019-2020 Board of Directors, The Chinese Economist Society

Conference Organizer and Program Committee Member:

2025 Program Committee, AREUEA National Conference  
2024 Program Committee, China Urban Economics Association Meeting  
2023 Program Committee, Chinese Economist Society China Meeting  
2021 Reviewer Panel, Midwest International Economic Development Conference  
2020 Reviewer Panel, S.C. Lee Best Paper competition, Asian Studies Center, MSU  
2020 Reviewer Panel, Midwest International Economic Development Conference  
2020 Organizer, Chinese Economist Society North America Meeting.  
2019 Reviewer Panel, Midwest International Economic Development Conference  
2019 Organizing Committee, Midwest Macro Meeting

Referee for academic journals:

*American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, American Economic Journal: Microeconomics, American Economic Review, American Economic Review: Insights, American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Canadian Journal of Economics, China Economic Review, China Quarterly, Economic Development and Cultural Change, Economic Journal, Economics Letters, European Economic Review, IMF Economic Review, Journal of Comparative Economics, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Economic Geography, Journal of Economic Growth, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Journal of Economics and Management Strategy, Journal of the European Economic Association, Journal of Human Resources, Journal of International Economics, Journal of Labor Economics, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Journal of Urban Economics, Labour Economics, National Tax Journal, Oxford Economic Papers, Regional Science and Urban Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics, Review of Finance, Review of Industrial Organization, Review of International Organizations.*

ad hoc reviewer for research grants:

*National Science Foundation, Israel Science Foundation.*

## DOCTORAL STUDENTS

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Doctoral Dissertation Committee (first placement) [current affiliation]

\* indicates as committee chair

At Purdue University

current Sisi Zhou, Qilu Pan, Junni Pan\*, Yuansen Li (Ag Econ)

At Michigan State University

2024 Raghav Rakesh (Bates White)  
2023 Kaidi Wu (JP Morgan Chase)  
2023 Alex Johann (Lewin Group)  
2022 Nick Brown (Queen's University, postdoc) [Florida State University]  
2022 Priyankar Datta (Walmart)  
2021 Narae Park (University of Texas at Austin, postdoc) [KIIIEP]  
2020 Akanksha Negi (Monash University)  
2017 Kyong Hyun Koo (Korea Institute for International Economic Policy.)

## SERVICES

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Purdue University

2024 Summer Research Opportunity Program (Shivi Pandey)  
2023– Faculty advisor for PURCE undergraduate research assistants

Michigan State University

2016–2022 Mentor for Econ Scholars Program  
2018–2020 Graduate Admission and Award Committee  
2016–2019 Advisor for Summer Research Opportunities Program  
2018 Econometrics Qualifying Exam Committee  
2016–2017 Organizer of Applied Seminar  
2016–2017 Department Advisory Committee

## INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA COVERAGE

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2024 [South China Morning Post](#)  
2023 [The Paper](#) (in Chinese)  
2020 [VoxChina](#)  
2019 [Caixin](#) (in Chinese)  
2018 [AEA Research Highlight](#), [VoxDev](#), [China Urban Traffic Research Report \(2018Q3\)](#)  
[Caixin](#) (in Chinese)  
2016 [VoxEU](#), [IGC Blog](#), [NBER Digest](#), [Chicago Policy Review](#)  
2015 [Listen Up](#), [Lansing](#)  
2014 [The Economist](#)

## PERSONAL

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Married with one son (born in 2020).