Ge (Sybil) Sun

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Research Interests

Macroeconomics, Labor Economics, Development

Education

University of Notre Dame — Notre Dame, IN
Ph.D. in Economics — May 2026 (exp)
Dissertation: *Labor Market Dynamics in Developing Economies: The Role of Growth, Discrimination, and Rigidity*
Committee: Joseph Kaboski (Chair), Taryn Dinkelman, Zachary Stangebye

National University of Singapore — Singapore
M.Sc. in Financial Engineering — 2020

Peking University — Beijing, China
M.A. in Economics — 2020

Beijing Foreign Studies University — Beijing, China
B.A. in Economics (Minor: English Literature) — 2016

Job Market Paper

"Expected Fertility, Labor Market Contracts, and the Gender Wage Gap" — 2025

Abstract: This paper examines how employers' expectations about women's future fertility increase the gender wage gap in contract-based labor markets—standard settings in many occupations that involve long-horizon, complex tasks. In such environments, salaries are set in advance based on expected match productivity rather than contemporaneous output; if employers expect women's productivity to decline more than men's after childbirth, they offer lower wages today. Exploiting China's relaxation of the One-Child Policy as a quasi-experiment, I implement a difference-in-differences design and find that women's wages declined by 15.3% immediately after the reform, despite no short-term increase in actual births. To interpret these findings, I develop a search-and-matching model with on-the-job human capital accumulation, integrated with a household framework in which non-contractable fertility-driven effort choices are made. Effort links the two components by governing human capital growth and, in turn, long-run productivity in the labor market. Estimating the model on Chinese data, I find that gender differences in expected productivity—rooted in the unbalanced division of household labor—explain nearly the entire pre-reform wage gap and approximately 80% of the post-reform widening. The policy implication is stark: women-protective rules that preserve employment through legislative contract provisions may not reduce the gap; by reinforcing employers' present-value pricing, they can be offset by *ex ante* wage markdowns applied to all women.

Working Papers

1. "Technology, Growth, and Skill Obsolescence" (with Rong Hai, Joseph Kaboski) 2025
2. "How Significant Is the Impact of a Negative Grade Shock?" (with Virna Vidal Menezes, Zhongheng Qiao) 2025
3. "Flexible Imputation of Incomplete Network Data" (with Weisheng Zhang) 2025

Teaching Experience

University of Notre Dame

1. Teaching Assistant, Econometrics 2024F & 2025S
2. Teaching Assistant, Statistics for Economics 2023F
3. Instructor, Development Data Boot Camp for Young Economists Summers 2022–2023
   – developed the complete course materials that are still in use.

Peking University

1. Teaching Assistant, International Economics 2018F & 2019S
2. Teaching Assistant, Advanced Macroeconomics 2017F

Honors and Awards

1. NBER Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program (runner-up) in Gender in the Economy 2025
2. Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts Dissertation Fellowship 2024–2025
3. Outstanding Teaching Assistantship Award 2024
4. Graduate Student Research Award 2023

Research Grants

1. BIG (Building Inclusive Growth) Lab Graduate Student Research Grant 2025
2. Kellogg Professionalization Grants 2024

Seminar and Conference Presentations

WEAI Annual Conference (2025); CES North American Conference (2025); SEA Annual Meeting (2024, 2025)

Languages English (fluent); Mandarin Chinese (native)

References

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