Jie Song

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Education

University of California, Berkeley Expected May 2027
Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics

Georgetown University 2018
Master of Public Policy

The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2016
Bachelor of Social Science in Economics (Honors, First Class)

Research Fields

Urban Economics, Political Economy, Development Economics

References

Professor Thibault Fally
Agricultural and Resource Economics
University of California, Berkeley
fally@berkeley.edu

Professor Kirill Borusyak
Agricultural and Resource Economics
University of California, Berkeley
k.borusyak@berkeley.edu

Professor Marco Gonzalez-Navarro
Agricultural and Resource Economics
University of California, Berkeley
marcog@berkeley.edu

Job Market Paper

Breaking Away: The Endogenous Formation of Local Governments

Abstract: Why do communities break away from counties to form their own municipalities? Tiebout sorting takes local governments as given, but municipal incorporation in the United States allows communities directly governed by counties to form municipalities and gain control over zoning, municipal public goods, and taxes. Using 353 U.S. incorporations from 1970 to 2020, I show that larger communities and those Whiter and richer than their counties are more likely to incorporate. I develop and estimate a model of policy choice and jurisdiction formation that distinguishes two motives: control over local policies and retention of the local tax base. The average incumbent resident of a new municipality gains welfare equivalent to 0.22% of income, comparable to a 9% increase in municipal public goods without higher taxes. About half comes from better-matched zoning, net of higher housing costs, and the rest from keeping the local tax base. Better-matched public goods contribute almost nothing because residents differ far more in their preferences over zoning than over municipal public goods. The tax-base gains come largely at the expense of residents of the remaining unincorporated county, who lose 0.013% of income on average. Giving them veto power would halve expected incorporations, mostly by blocking communities richer than their counties. Allowing new municipalities to compensate these residents would restore most of the vetoed incorporations, because compensation offsets municipalities' fiscal gains while preserving the benefits of local policy control.

Publications

The Gendered Impacts of Income Fluctuations on Household Departure, Labor Supply, and Human Capital Decisions: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan
With Katrina Kosec, Hongdi Zhao, and Brian Holtemeyer.
Feminist Economics 29, no. 1 (2023): 205–235.

Biochar Supply-Chain and Challenges to Commercialization
With David Zilberman, David Laird, Coleman Rainey, and Gabriel Kahn.
GCB Bioenergy 15, no. 1 (2023): 7–23.

Aspirations and Women's Empowerment: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan
With Katrina Kosec, Kamiljon Akramov, Bakhrom Mirkasimov, and Hongdi Zhao.
Economics of Transition and Institutional Change 30, no. 1 (2022): 101–134.

Perceptions of Relative Deprivation and Women's Empowerment
With Katrina Kosec, Cecilia Hyunjung Mo, and Emily Schmidt.
World Development 138 (2021): 105218.

The Effects of Income Fluctuations on Undernutrition and Overnutrition Across the Lifecycle
With Katrina Kosec.
Health Economics 30, no. 10 (2021): 2487–2509.

Research in Progress

Coordination Problem in Transportation Infrastructure Investment

Who Gains from Bringing Government Closer? Evidence from Ethiopia on the Gendered Effects of Decentralization
With Katrina Kosec, Hongdi Zhao, and Lucia Carrillo.

Teaching Experience

University of California, Berkeley, Graduate Student Instructor (leading 2-3 sessions each week)

UC Berkeley Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award (2024–2025)

International Trade (Thibault Fally and Edwin Lai)	2023, 2025, 2026
Advanced International Trade (Kirill Borusyak)	2024
Environmental Economics (James Sallee and Steven Sexton)	2023, 2024
Development Economics (Marco Gonzalez-Navarro)	2022

Research Experience and Employment

University of California, Berkeley
Graduate Student Researcher for Andrés Rodríguez-Clare 2022
Graduate Student Researcher for David Zilberman 2021–2022

International Food Policy Research Institute 2018–2020
Research Analyst for Katrina Kosec

World Bank 2017
Research Intern, Procuring Infrastructure: Public-Private Partnerships

Georgetown University 2017
Research Assistant for Andrew Zeitlin and Jacobus Cilliers

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

2026–2027	Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) Grant ($2,500)
2025–2026	Giannini Foundation Mini-Grant ($35,000)
2024–2025	Giannini Foundation Mini-Grant ($25,000); IHS Junior Fellowship ($6,000)
2023–2024	Fisher Center Research Grant ($15,000); IHS Junior Fellowship ($6,000); Elinor Ostrom Fellowship ($3,500); ARE Summer Grant ($3,000); IHS Grant ($1,500)
Earlier	McCourt School Tuition Scholarship ($20,000)

Presentations

2026	UC Berkeley Trade Lunch, Development Workshop, ARE Department Seminar
2025	UC Berkeley Trade Lunch, Development Workshop
2024	UC Berkeley Development Workshop, IHS Junior Fellowship Meetings
2023	UC Berkeley Development Lunch, Development Workshop, IHS Junior Fellowship Meetings
2022	UC Berkeley Development Workshop
2019	Sustainability and Development Conference; International Society of Political Psychology Annual Scientific Meeting
2018	Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Student Conference

Professional Service

Refereeing: *World Development* (2); *Feminist Economics* (5)

Mentoring and outreach

Mentor, Graduate Applications International Network (GAIN)	2024
Tutor, Economists for Equity at Berkeley	2024
Judge, Rausser College Honors Symposium	2023

Languages

English (fluent); Chinese (native)