Yunjie (Grace) Xie

Department: Department of Economics, Rice University
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Education

Rice University Houston, Texas
Ph.D. in Economics, 2023–Present
Primary dissertation supervisor: Rossella Calvi. Graduate GPA: 3.95/4.00.

Columbia University New York, New York
M.A. in Economics (STEM), 2021–2022
Thesis: "Evaluation of the Intra-household Allocations in China Based on China Family Panel Studies."
Advisor: Pierre-Andre Chiappori.

Renmin University of China Beijing, China
B.A. in Taxation, School of Finance, 2017–2021
Graduated first in class. Thesis: "Evaluation of the Health Poverty in China from the Perspective of Intergenerational Transmission."

Research Interests

Household Economics, Labor Economics, Aging and Health Economics, Development Economics, Policy Evaluation

Research Papers and Work in Progress

- "Gender Pension Gaps in China: A Dynamic Model of Household Labor Supply and Intergenerational Childcare" [Third-Year Paper]
- "Unequal Prosperity: The Changing Landscape of Global Individual Poverty," with Rossella Calvi, Tanmay Devi, and Eduard van der Merwe
- "Poverty, Growth, Redistribution, and Political Dynasty in the Philippines," with Tomoki Fujii
- "Collective Action for Climate Resilience: Evidence from Rural India," with Tanmay Devi, Eduard van der Merwe, and Aanchal Bagga

Completed Ph.D. Coursework

- Health Economics
- Microeconomics I and II
- Macroeconomics
- Econometrics I and II
- Topics in Econometrics II
- Programming for Data Science
- Computational Economics
- Dynamics in Computational Economics
- Economic Growth and Development
- Financial Economics I
- Empirical Industrial Organization II
- Readings in Advanced Topics
- Econometrics Workshop; Workshop in Economics II

Research Experience

Research Assistant for Rossella Calvi 2025–Present
Rice University
Research assistance on empirical and quantitative projects in development, household, and individual welfare economics.

Research Assistant for Jeffrey Sachs 2021–2022
Center for Sustainable Development, Columbia University
Supported research on sustainable development and policy evaluation.

Research Assistant for Tomoki Fujii 2020–2021
Singapore Management University
Supported empirical research on poverty, redistribution, and political economy in the Philippines.

Additional Research and Professional Experience

Research Fellow 2022–2023
Jain Family Institute, New York, New York
Worked on data cleaning, attrition analysis, treatment effect estimation, and power calculations for cash transfer survey data.

Research Intern 2022
Sustainable Development Solutions Network, New York, New York
Built sector-level datasets for developing countries and supported calibration of computable general equilibrium models in GAMS.

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics 2023–Present
Rice University
Courses: Ph.D. Econometrics; Undergraduate Macroeconomics; Computational Economics; Principles of Economics; Development Economics.

Honors and Fellowships

- Social Sciences Research Institute Pre-Dissertation Research Grant Award, 2026
- Expanding Horizons Fellowship, 2026
- CIISR Graduate Research Fellowship, 2025
- Robin C. Sickles Award for Best Performance in the First-Year Econometrics Courses, 2025
- The Maria Esther and Carlos Linares Award for Best Performance in Economics First-Year Courses, 2024
- Gaston Rimlinger Fellowship in Economics, 2024
- First Place, CSBS 2021 Data Analytics Competition

Research Skills

Stata, Julia, Python, R, MATLAB, SAS, GAMS, SQL, LaTeX

Research Interests and Motivation Statement

NBER Mentoring Program on Aging and Health Economics Research

Yunjie (Grace) Xie

I am a Ph.D. student in Economics at Rice University, advised by Rossella Calvi. My research interests are at the intersection of aging, health, household economics, and public policy, with a focus on how family caregiving responsibilities shape economic security later in life. I am especially interested in settings where formal social insurance systems interact with informal family support, and where these interactions generate gendered consequences for labor supply, pension accumulation, and old-age poverty risk.

My current third-year paper, "Gender Pension Gaps in China: A Dynamic Model of Household Labor Supply and Intergenerational Childcare," studies one such interaction. In China, women receive substantially lower pension income than men in old age. At the same time, grandmothers often play a central role in caring for grandchildren, especially in a context of limited formal childcare provision, earlier retirement ages for women, and rapid population aging. My project asks how much of the gender pension gap can be attributed to grandchild caregiving, through which margins caregiving affects pension accumulation, and which policies may reduce old-age inequality most effectively.

To answer these questions, I use the China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study and estimate a dynamic discrete-choice model of couples' joint labor supply, grandchild caregiving, savings, and pension accumulation. The model allows me to study observed behavior and policy counterfactuals. Preliminary results suggest that grandchild caregiving is an important contributor to women's lower pension income, particularly for women near the retirement margin who leave formal employment to provide care. The project also shows that retirement-age policy, care credits, and childcare subsidies can have different effects depending on how labor supply and caregiving are jointly determined within households.

This project has made me increasingly interested in aging and health economics more broadly. While the paper focuses on China, the underlying issues are relevant across many contexts: populations are aging, families remain central providers of care, and public policy often depends implicitly on unpaid or undercompensated caregiving labor. I am now exploring how to develop this line of work into a job market paper. I hope to ask broader questions about how caregiving affects older adults' labor supply, health, financial security, and dependence on family transfers, and how pension, long-term care, and childcare policies can better account for these household spillovers.

I am applying to the NBER Mentoring Program on Aging and Health Economics Research because it would provide the field-specific guidance I need to move from a promising third-year paper toward a stronger research agenda in aging and health economics. I would benefit from exposure to frontier work on caregiving, long-term care, retirement, health, and old-age economic security. I would also value learning more about major datasets in the field, how researchers formulate empirically credible questions, and how to position a project that combines household behavior, structural modeling, and policy evaluation.

The guidance most helpful to me would be feedback on three dimensions. First, I would like advice on sharpening the central research question of my current project so that it speaks clearly to aging and health economists as well as to labor and development economists. Second, I would appreciate methodological guidance on combining reduced-form evidence, structural modeling, and policy counterfactuals in a transparent and persuasive way. Third, I would value mentorship on developing a broader research pipeline: identifying feasible extensions, learning which datasets and institutional settings may be most promising, and understanding what makes a project compelling as a job market paper in this field.

Participating in the workshop would help me clarify both the direction of my current project and my longer-term research agenda. I hope to learn from scholars working directly on aging, health, retirement, and caregiving, and to receive concrete guidance on building a research career around questions of family care, social insurance, and old-age well-being.