Yixin Yang

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland, Expected 2027
M.S. Economics, Arizona State University, 2021
M.A. Economics, New York University, 2019
B.S. Economics (Honors), University of International Business and Economics, Beijing, China, 2017

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Environmental and Resource Economics, Empirical Industrial Organization, Applied Microeconomics

REFERENCES

Dr. Joshua Linn, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland, 2110 Symons Hall, College Park, MD, 20742; linn@umd.edu

Dr. Jorge Holzer, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland, 2117 Symons Hall, College Park, MD, 20742; jholzer@umd.edu

Dr. Erich Battistin, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland, 2212 Symons Hall, College Park, MD, 20742; ebattist@umd.edu

JOB MARKET PAPER

"Does Greener Demand Induce Cleaner Production? Green Procurement Competition and Fuel Switching in the U.S. Cement Industry" (2026)

Abstract: As carbon pricing faces political barriers, governments and large private buyers increasingly turn to green procurement policies, buying only from low-carbon suppliers to encourage clean production. This paper studies how Buy Clean initiatives reshape competition and clean investment in the U.S. cement industry. I develop a two-stage structural model in which plants choose whether to switch from coal to natural gas and then compete in procurement auctions. Counterfactual simulations show that Buy Clean induces plants to switch to cleaner production but also exacerbates market power distortions. Restricting public purchases to low-carbon suppliers weaken competition, increasing their markups on green sales. Shifting demand toward clean plants pushes their output closer to productive capacity, raising their marginal costs and increasing their bids to all buyers. Dirty plants' markups also rise as they face less competition from clean rivals. A border-adjusted carbon tax that induces the same switching rate cuts more emissions at a lower welfare cost per ton of CO2 avoided.

WORKING PAPERS (see abstracts below)

"Chasing the Tail: Small-Probability Overweighting in Recreational Fishing" (2026), with Jorge Holzer, Leif Anderson, James Hilger, and Sabrina Lovell

"When Do Incentives Bind? Task-Level Evidence from Pay-for-Performance using a Randomized Controlled Trial" (2026), with Ellen Green, Dan Silverman, Yue Dong, and Elizabeth Reifsnider *[Submitted]*

"Allocation of Public Procurement Contracts and Political Connection" (2024)

WORK IN PROGRESS

"Environmental Shocks and Recreational Demand: Welfare Evidence from Smartphone Data", with Geret DePiper and Jorge Holzer

"Spatial Mobility, Informational Interventions, and Resource Conservation", with Geret DePiper and Jorge Holzer

"Remote work, travel behavior, and public transit adaptations", with Mengjia Hu

OTHER SELECTED PAPERS AND REPORTS

Tekin, Aysun, Yang, Yixin, Green, Ellen, Reifsnider, Elizabeth, Yeh, Vicky J.-H., Strechen, Inna, & Dong, Yue. (2026). "Standardized Patients' Perspectives on Empathy in Provider Evaluations Under an Experimental Payment Model: A Simulation Study" *[Submitted]*

Yang, Yixin, & Hu, Zhenxiong. (2018). "The Analysis of New Energy Vehicle Policy in Passenger Vehicle Industry of China" (in Chinese). *Tsinghua IGI Industry Reports Series*

Ge, Fei, Yang, Yixin, & Yang, Yajun. (2018). "China's Innovation Policy System: Challenges and Reforms" (in Chinese). *Tsinghua IGI Industry Reports Series*

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Maryland, College Park, MD
Research Assistant to Dr. Jorge Holzer, Dec 2023 - Present
Research Assistant to Dr. Rebecca Epanchin-Niell, May 2023 - Aug 2024

Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ
Research Assistant to Dr. Ellen Green and Dr. Daniel Silverman, Oct 2020 - Feb 2022

Institute for Global Industry, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, May 2018 - Feb 2019
Research Assistant to Dr. Donghong Li and Fei Ge

University of International Business and Economics, Beijing, China, Jun 2016 - Dec 2016
Research Assistant to Dr. Fei Wang

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant
AREC 610 Microeconomic Applications in Agricultural and Resource Markets (Ph.D. core course), University of Maryland, Spring 2023, for Dr. Jorge Holzer

AREC 620 Optimization in Agricultural and Resource Economics (Ph.D. core course), University of Maryland, Fall 2022, for Dr. Lars Olson

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED TALKS

*(*co-author presentations)*

2026: Graduate Student Seminar Series, North Carolina State University (Scheduled); Camp Resources XXVII; WEAI Graduate Student Workshop; Western Economic Association International 101st Annual Conference; Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Conference (scheduled); International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade Conference; Graduate Conference for Social Sciences, IHS; Washington Area Meeting of Economic Scientists Poster Session, George Mason University; UMD AREC Student Workshop

2025: Agricultural & Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting; Advances with Field Experiments Conference, University of Chicago; North American Association of Fisheries Economists Forum; Committee on Economics and Social Sciences Spring Meeting, Marine Fisheries Commission (Virtual); UMD AREC Student Workshop

2024: European Economic Science Association Conference*; Mayo Clinic, Clinical Research Seminar Series*; UMD AREC Student Workshop

HONORS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Jacob K. Goldhaber Travel Grant, University of Maryland, 2025
- Research Training Program, Arizona State University and Mayo Clinic Rochester MACRA Project (National Institute on Aging Project No. 3R01AG062823), 2024, 2025
- Dean's Fellowship, University of Maryland, 2021, 2023

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Discussant: WEAI 101st Annual Conference
Session Organizer and Chair: "Toward Energy Transition: Policy Design and Challenges in Energy Use and Infrastructure", APPAM (scheduled)
Affiliations: Association of Environmental and Resource Economists; Agricultural and Applied Economics Association; International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade

SKILLS

Software: MATLAB, Stata, R, ArcGIS, Python
Languages: English (fluent), Mandarin (native)

PAPER ABSTRACTS

Chasing the Tail: Small-Probability Overweighting in Recreational Fishing
with Jorge Holzer, Leif Anderson, James Hilger, and Sabrina Lovell

Natural resource management is inherently shaped by uncertainty, yet most policy evaluation assumes linear preferences and objective probabilities. We examine how risk preferences and probability weighting shape resource demand and welfare measurement in recreational fisheries, a setting where anglers must commit to a trip without knowing their realized catch. Using discrete choice experiments from the 2018 U.S. West Coast Sport Fishing Surveys, we estimate angler preferences for six species across three fisheries under both Expected Utility and Rank-Dependent Utility frameworks. Combining a CARA utility function with probability weighting, we find that anglers are risk-averse toward catch variability and systematically overweight low-probability, high-reward outcomes, consistent with an inverse S-shaped weighting function. These distortions are stronger among experienced and specialized anglers. Incorporating these preferences into a bioeconomic model, we show that linear-utility models produce biased estimates of effort responses and welfare effects when the upper tail of the catch distribution changes, whether through regulations such as bag limits or through changes in fish stocks.

When Do Incentives Bind? Task-Level Evidence from Pay-for-Performance using a Randomized Controlled Trial, with Ellen Green, Dan Silverman, Yue Dong, and Elizabeth Reifsnider

Organizations designing performance-pay systems must choose both reward size and which tasks to target. A threshold model predicts that incentives will have their largest effects on tasks with intermediate untreated completion, where more decisions are close to indifference. In a randomized experiment, clinicians treated standardized patients under contracts varying reporting and per-task bonuses. Consistent with the model, effects were largest at intermediate control-group completion and smaller at the extremes. Reporting alone raised completion by 8.2 percentage points; a high bonus produced a smaller additional gain, while a low bonus did not. This offers a practical criterion for task targeting.

Allocation of Public Procurement Contracts and Political Connection

This paper investigates how political connections affect the allocation of public procurement contracts, exploiting China's anti-corruption campaign as a quasi-experimental shock to firms' political connections. Using an original dataset scraped from procurement records and a difference-in-differences design, I find that contract values awarded to politically connected firms fall by 39% after the campaign. The decline is larger for firms connected to local officials and in more corrupt regions. Estimating firm-level total factor productivity, I find that the campaign improves the allocative efficiency of public procurement.