

HONG WANG

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Appointments

Harvard University, Department of Economics *Aug. 2026–Mar. 2027*
Mary Beth and Chris Gordon Postdoctoral Fellow in Gender Inequality

Education

Boston University
Ph.D. in Economics *Aug. 2026*
M.A. in Political Economy *Aug. 2024*

New York University
B.A. in Mathematics and Economics, *cum laude* *May 2018*

Fields

Primary Fields: Economic History, Political Economy
Secondary Fields: Gender Economics, Media Economics
Methods: Historical Data Construction, NLP, Computer Vision, Deep Learning, Spatial Analysis

References

Martin Fiszbein
Boston University
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James Feigenbaum
Boston University
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Robert Margo
Boston University
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Claudia Goldin
Harvard University
cgoldin@harvard.edu

Melissa Dell
Harvard University
melissadell@fas.harvard.edu

Research

Boston University, Research Assistant to James Feigenbaum *2022–2023*

Teaching

Boston University, Teaching Fellow, Introductory Microeconomics and Macroeconomics *2021–2025*

Job Market Paper

What Killed the ERA?

The Role of Entrepreneurs in the Marketplace of Ideas and Policy

Despite overwhelming congressional support, the ERA died three states short of ratification. Exploiting topographic and geochemical variation in predicted access to Phyllis Schlafly's CBS commentaries, I find FM availability reduced Illinois House ERA support by 18.4 percentage points and women's-rights sentiment across five battleground states by 0.21 standard deviations; television increased legislators' adoption of Schlafly's framing.

Working Papers

Grounded

Radio Propagation, Soil Geochemistry, and Political AM Radio

Can better physics change what historical radio studies conclude? Replacing terrain-based AM exposure with a soil-conductivity ground-wave model reverses the US association but barely changes German vote estimates. In the US, 72.9 percent of the shift comes from the propagation benchmark rather than exposure alone; geochemical-instrument audits remain fragile. Better physics changes measurement, but does not establish causality.

A Republic, Not a Democracy

The John Birch Society and the Geography of the American Right

Through local chapters, the John Birch Society mobilized an anti-communist strand of the American right. I digitize 45,188 records from its 1987 rolls, revealing a suburban geography aligned with Goldwater, not Wallace. Most later associations appear across rather than within states, where evidence is narrow. JBS geography predicts neither Trump affinity nor January 6 defendants per resident. The pattern indicates partisan absorption, not organizational persistence.

A Choice, Not an Echo

A Theory of Cultural Matching in the Marketplace of Ideas and Policy

How do institutions create stakes in their own persistence, and when do those stakes become political? I develop a model of cultural matching in which inherited arguments become viable only when they fit citizens left unmatched by the dominant interpretation, are recoverable by a particular entrepreneur, and meet a dated opportunity. The framework links heterogeneous reform incidence to the first activation of political opposition; the ERA illustrates the mechanism.

Papers in Progress

China's Many Starting Lines

Migration Regimes and the Measurement of Intergenerational Mobility

How much of an immigrant family's mobility occurs before the parental baseline observed in U.S. data? Using Chinese and U.S. censuses, migration surveys, and Chinese Exclusion case files, preliminary evidence reveals sharply different starting positions within China, occupational shifts at U.S. entry, and much smaller child than parent schooling gaps.

The Evangelical Origins of the Welfare Queen

with Brianna Alderman and Gabby Toborg

Using Christian media exposure, we study whether substitution between private charity and public welfare created incentives for churches to advocate against the welfare state by turning congregational sentiment against welfare recipients.

Deep Learning for Census Linking

with Abhishek Arora and James Feigenbaum

Using Sentence-BERT, we develop cosine-similarity methods to improve name-variant disambiguation over time for historical census record linkage.

Seminars & Conferences

Harvard University, Economic History Graduate Workshop

2023, 2024, 2025

London School of Economics, Queer Conference

2025

Research Grants

Boston University, Institute for Economic Development Research Grant, \$3,000

2025

Academic Service

BU–Harvard Summer Deep Learning in Economics Reading Group, Organizer *2024*

Other Work

Cassandra 41, Speculative fiction *2026*

Based on Aghion and Howitt’s (1992) model of creative destruction, a future built on endless innovation becomes a world where a monopolist is haunted by the prophecy of his own replacement.

Other Experience

Minds Matter Boston, Mentor *2022–2025*
College-access mentoring for low-income high school students.

Global Citizen Year, Fellow *2013–2014*
Volunteer at a community foundation focused on social entrepreneurship in Florianópolis, Brazil.

Languages, Software Skills, and Citizenship

Languages: English, Italian, Portuguese

Software Skills: Python, PyTorch, QGIS, L^AT_EX

Citizenship: United States