

# XINYUAN CHEN

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## EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, 2024 (expected)  
Dissertation Title: *Essays on Political Participation: Theory and Evidence*  
Dissertation Committee: Kevin Lang, Randall P. Ellis and Dilip Mookherjee

M.A., Economics, Columbia University, New York City NY, 2017  
Advisor: Irasema Alonso

B.A., Business Economics (*College Honors*), University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), CA, 2016

## FIELDS OF INTEREST

Political Economy, Applied Microeconomics, Applied Microeconomic Theory

## WORKING PAPERS

“Ballots, Buddies, and Battlegrounds: Peer Effects in Political Participation among First-Time Voters,” September 2023. Job Market paper.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

“Mobilizations, Ethics, and Social Norms: Theoretical Framework on Turnout”

## PRESENTATIONS

Boston University, Dissertation Workshop in Empirical Micro, Boston MA, 2023 (scheduled)  
Boston University, Micro Dissertation Workshop, Boston MA, 2021, 2022

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Summer Challenge Economics, Metropolitan College, Boston University, Summer 2021, Summer 2022  
Teaching Fellow, Microeconomic Theory (graduate), Department of Economics, Boston University, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2023  
Teaching Fellow, Intermediate Microeconomic Theory (undergraduate), Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Spring 2022  
Teaching Fellow, Energy and Environmental Economics, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2020  
Teaching Fellow, Public Economics, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2020  
Teaching Fellow, Economics of Public Sector, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2020

**LANGUAGES:** English (fluent), Mandarin Chinese (native)

**COMPUTER SKILLS:** STATA, MATLAB, ArcGIS, Mathematica, LaTeX

**CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS:** China/F1

**REFERENCES**

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## **Ballots, Buddies, and Battlegrounds: Peer Effects in Political Participation among First-Time Voters** (Job Market Paper)

This study examines how first-time voters respond socially and strategically to their peers' political participation. I examine how ethnicities, political inclinations, and expectations about electoral outcomes influence peer effect dynamics. I leverage large-scale micro data for registered voters during the 2012 presidential election in Texas. To address endogeneity, I utilize peers' voting eligibility as an instrumental variable for their actual turnout decisions. I construct school-based social networks by incorporating geographic information on students' residences, public high schools, and school districts. Existing literature mainly focuses on positive social incentives. This paper reaffirms the established findings of conformity within party affiliations. White Democrats' likelihood of voting rises by 3pp for each additional white Democrat peer who votes, and by 11.5pp for each Hispanic peer in a Republican county who votes. Voters who think they may be pivotal respond to peers differently. Voting of white Republicans in moderately competitive Republican counties rises by 5pp for each additional white Democrat peer who votes. In contrast, this likelihood drops by 4pp in moderately competitive Democratic counties.

## **Mobilizations, Ethics, and Social Norms: Theoretical Framework on Turnout**

This paper presents an ethical-voter model on turnout with an emphasis on extrinsic social values. Recent evidence has illustrated substantial social impacts on turnout. (Gerber et al., 2008; Della Vigna et al., 2014; Palfrey and Pogorelskiy, 2019) What determines the level of ethical values on prosocial activities in society, and how does it affect social norms and collective actions? This paper considers these questions, as well as an emphasis on party mobilization efforts, and proposes a two-stage mechanism for voter turnout. Stage one is the mobilization stage, in which parties hold rallies and incentivize voters to commit. Stage two is the coordination stage, in which voters observe mobilization, snowball ethics values through individual participation, and determine the social norms. Parties decide on optimal mobilization levels in an all-pay auction setting, similar to Levine and Mattozzi (2020), and the mixed-strategy solution accounts for variations in turnout. Furthermore, in a large-small party setting, the large party has an advantage in stage one, in which it can mobilize a large number of voters at a low cost. However, the small party has an advantage in stage two, in which the small population allows for a higher rate of accumulation of ethical values.