Research Statement

I am an economist who studies the role of government policy in stabilizing business cycles and responding to the challenges posed by new digital and automation technologies. I have tackled these questions by sometimes developing theory, sometimes using novel data and empirics, but most often by bringing the two together. I received a National Science Foundation CAREER Award in 2023.

Business cycles and stabilization policy. What are the causes and consequences of business cycles? How can monetary and fiscal policies alleviate recessions? Researchers face two challenges in tackling these macroeconomic questions: cause and effect are hard to identify when many forces are at play simultaneously — as is common in the aggregate economy — and it is hard to measure equilibrium effects directly in the data or to construct counterfactuals scenarios from evidence alone.

Two of my papers (1,2) have pushed an agenda forward that shows how to draw inferences from regional evidence about the aggregate economy with the aid of theoretical models. Moreover, in my job market paper (3) I have developed a semi-structural methodology for performing counterfactual policy analysis without having to fully specify a structural model. In ongoing work, I am using the methodology to quantify how US fiscal integration helps stabilize regional business cycles.

In another paper (4) we studied how the dynamics of spending in durable goods affect business cycles; in particular, how the composition of demand in recessions affects the strength of recoveries. In ongoing work, we are analyzing how durables shape the optimal design of stimulus checks.

Lastly, I have studied the interaction between inflation and nominal rigidities. In past work (5) we analyzed how inflation affects price setting in menu cost models and tested key predictions of these models using data from Argentina. In future work, I aim to quantify how inflation hurts workers when wages are rigid, since a fear of inflation eroding wages is a concern in many surveys.

New technologies and governments. New technologies — like AI and robots — hold the potential to transform modern economies but have brought new challenges to the fore. This has raised questions about the role of governments. When technologies use data, what innovation policies and regulations are appropriate? Could governments misuse AI as a tool of social control? When technologies automate jobs and displace workers, how should governments respond?

In previous work (6,7) we have studied the interplay between AI, data and the government in the context of China’s facial recognition AI industry. In ongoing work, we are furthering this agenda to analyze the international ramifications of China’s emergent leadership in such surveillance technology. Going beyond this context, in a new project I am focusing more broadly on how governments should regulate technological industries when strong economies of scale lead to market concentration — such as new digital industries where data is a key input.

In two papers (8,9) I have studied a different aspect of technological innovations: how labor markets adjust to them. The first paper, in particular, analyzed optimal policies in response to automation. In a new paper, we are studying how governments should manage episodes of labor reallocation more generally, such as those following trade liberalization or climate policy changes.