

# Xianhua (Emma) Zai

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[Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research](#)  
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## EMPLOYMENT

Research Scientist, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany, 2021-  
Researcher, Max Planck – University of Helsinki Center for Social Inequalities in Population Health,  
Rostock, Germany and Helsinki, Finland, 2023-  
Visiting Researcher, Population Research Unit, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, 2023-

## RESEARCH VISITS

PSL Université Paris Dauphine, Paris, France, March 2025  
School of Public Policy and Administration, Xi'an Jiao Tong University, Xi'an, China, January 2025  
Institute for Economic and Social Research (IESR), Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, December 2024  
Department of Economic Analysis, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM), Madrid, Spain, June 2024  
Department of Consumer Sciences, the Ohio State University, April 2024  
Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy, December 2023  
Department of Economics and Finance, University of Rome Tor Vergata, Rome, Italy, December 2023  
Munich Research Institute for the Economics of Aging (MEA), Munich, Germany, October 2023  
Center for Social Inequalities in Population Health, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, September 2023  
PSL Université Paris Dauphine, Paris, France, July 2023

## EDUCATION

Ph.D. Consumer Sciences (Economics Track), The Ohio State University, Columbus, U.S., 2021  
Dissertation: "Essays on Medicaid Aging Waivers and Informal Caregiving for the Elderly"  
M.A. Economics, Fudan University, Shanghai, China, 2017  
B.A. Economics, Jilin University, Changchun, China, 2014

## RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary: Aging, Long Term Care, Health Economics, Social Demography  
Secondary: Population Health, Health Inequalities, Social Discrimination

## PUBLICATIONS

Zai, X. (2025). [From Criticism to Comfort: The Relational Benefits of Long-Term Care Insurance](#). *Health Services Research*

Lin, L., & Zai, X. (2025). [The role of supply responses in public insurance expansion: Evidence from the New Cooperative Medical Scheme in China](#). *BMC Health Services Research*, 25,955

Lin, L., He, M., & Zai, X. (2025). [Evaluating the Impact of Long-Term Care Insurance Reform on Health-Related Quality of Life and Inequality Among Older Adults in China: A Quasi-Experimental Analysis](#). *Economics and Human Biology*, 58, 101495.

Zai, X. (2024). [The unseen shift: How partnership long-term care insurance influences caregiving among older adults](#). *Journals of Gerontology: Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, gbae168.

Eibich, P., & Zai, X. (2024). [Are the grandparents alright? The health consequences of grandparental childcare provision](#). *Journal of Population Economics*, 37, 71.

*Winner of the Kuznets Prize 2025 for the best paper published in the JOPE in 2024*

Zai, X. (2024). [Evaluating the health outcomes of aging in place: The role of Medicaid aging waiver program on U.S. older adults](#). *BMC Public Health*, 24, 2104.

Zai, X. (2024). [Beyond the brink: Unraveling the opioid crisis and its profound impacts](#). *Economics and Human Biology*, 53, 101379.

Lin, L., & Zai, X. (2024). [Assessing the impact of public insurance on healthcare utilization and mortality: A nationwide study in China](#). *SSM – Population Health*, 25, 101615.

Chan, J., Fang, X., Wang, Z., Zai, X., & Zhang, Q. (2020). [Valuing primary schools in urban China](#). *Journal of Urban Economics*, 115, 103183.

## HONORS & AWARDS

Kuznets Prize for the Best Paper, Journal of Population Economics, 2025 Award for the best paper published in the Journal of Population Economics in the year 2024

Sign Up! For Your Career in Max Planck Society Scholar, 2025

AIES Young Research Award, 2023

NDIRA Scholar, University of Minnesota, 2022

Small Grants Award, Retirement and Disability Research Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2020-2021

Jean S. Bowers/Fern E. Hunt Fellowship, College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University, 2020-2021

Career Development Grant, Council of Graduate Students, The Ohio State University, 2020-2021

Scholar of Junior Scholar Intensive Training Program, Retirement and Disability Research Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2020

ACCI Student Professional Conference Scholarship, 2018, 2019

Hua Meng Scholarship of Young Scholars in Economics, Education Development Foundation, Shanghai, China, 2017-2020

Graduate Student Professional Travel Awards, College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University, 2017-2019

## CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 MPIDR seminar (Rostock), Long-term Care Conference (Paris), Open Science Workshop (Rostock), German Health Economics Association (DGGÖ) (Paderborn), PopDays (Cagliari), European Society for Population Economics (ESPE) (Naples), Society of Economics of the Household (SEHO) (Zaragoza)
- 2024 German Health Economics Association (DGGÖ) (Saale/Halle), PAA (Columbus, USA), UAM-UJI Workshop on the Economics of Health and Human Capital (Madrid), EuHEA (Vienna), International Migration in Central and Eastern Europe\* (Rostock), Scholarly Migration and Mobility Symposium\* (Rostock), Demystifying Machine Learning Workshop\* (Rostock), 2nd Annual MaxHel Center Meeting\* (Rostock), 5th Asian Workshop on Econometrics and Health Economics\* (AWEHE) (Guangzhou), SHARE Gateway User Conference (C, Berlin), EuHEA seminar (C), French Health Economists Days (JESF) (C, Rennes)
- 2023 MPIDR Seminar, Electronic Health Economics Colloquium (EHEC), the 12th Annual ASHEcon (chair and discussant, St. Louis), THL Sociogenomics Workshop (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Helsinki), EAPS Health, Morbidity and Mortality Working Group (Budapest), Society for Longitudinal and Lifecourse Studies conference (SLLS, Munich), Workshop on Healthy Ageing and Adult Caregiving (UPenn and LSE, discussant, online), European Health Economics Association (EuHEA) seminar, Italian Association of Health Economics (AIES, Rome)
- 2022 Population Association of America (PAA) Annual Meeting (online), European Population Conference (EPC) (online), American Causal Inference Conference (ACIC) (online), Paris School of Economics (PSE) Summer School (online), 2nd IZA/CINCH/AHIL Workshop on the Economics of Long-Term Care and Healthy Aging (online), Network for Data-Intensive Research on Aging (NDIRA) workshop at University of Minnesota, 29th European Workshop on Econometrics and Health Economics (EWEHE) (discussant, declined), the 6th International Long-term care Policy Network (ILPN) at LSE, Society for Longitudinal and Lifecourse Studies (SLLS) conference (online), the Southern Economic Association (SEA) conference (Ft. Lauderdale), 8th Workshop of dggö Health Econometrics (Leibniz University of Hannover), IESR seminar at Jinan University (C\*2), Nanjing University (C\*2), Renmin University of China (C), Fudan University (C), University of International Business and Economics (C), Chinese Economists Society (CES) (Wuhan, China) (C)
- (C: Presentation by Coauthors; \* Attendance only)

## TEACHING

- Instructor – IMPRS-PHDS (Aging and Health) (2021)
- Co-instructor – CFFS 5250 Retirement Planning and Employee Benefits (Graduate) (Spring 2021)
- Co-instructor – CFFS 4270 Retirement Planning and Employee Benefits (Autumn 2020)

## SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

### *PhD Students*

- 2022– Ailun Shui (Department of Health Economics, University of Groningen)

*Master Students and Research Assistants*

2025–	Julian Gülch (RA of Labor Demography at MPIDR)
2024–2025	Anna Lena Marie Rother (RA of Labor Demography at MPIDR)
2024–2025	Sina Christin Löwe (RA of Labor Demography at MPIDR)
2024–2025	Lisa Rieker (RA of Population Health at MPIDR)
2023–2024	Carlotta Dietrich (RA of Labor Demography at MPIDR)
2023–2024	Caspar David Stordeur (RA of Labor Demography at MPIDR)
2022–2023	Patrik Harnisch (RA of Labor Demography at MPIDR)
2021–2023	Zhenyuan Liu (Department of Health Economics, University of York)

REVIEWING SERVICES

Economics and Human Biology, PLOS ONE, European Journal of Ageing, BMC Public Health, BMC Health Services Research, Health Economics, Journal of Population Economics

SERVICES

Open science workshop organizer, MPIDR (2024–2025)  
 Seminar organizer for social demography, MPIDR (2023–2024)  
 Search committee, EDSO Program at MPIDR (ad hoc)  
 Co-founder, [Graduate Women in Economics Association at OSU](#) (2019–2021)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

European Economic Association (EEA) (2024-)  
 Italian Association of Health Economics (AIES) (2023-)  
 Population Association of America (PAA) (2022-)  
 European Association for Population Studies (EAPS) (2022-)  
 American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) (2022-)  
 Global Labor Organization (GLO) affiliate (2019-)  
 Association for American Council of Consumer Interests (ACCI) (2017-2019)  
 Urban Economics Association (UEA) (2017–2020)  
 North American Meetings of the Regional Science Association (NARSC) (2017–2020)

MISCELLANEOUS

*Programming Languages:* L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Python, Stata, SAS, R, ArcGIS  
*Spoken Languages:* English (fluent), Chinese (native), Japanese (basic), German (B1)