



Economic Legacies of North-to-South Migration in China during 1127-1130 *(in English)*

Mr. BAI Ying
Ph.D. Candidate
Division of Social Science
HKUST



Biography:

Mr. Bai is a Ph.D. candidate at Division of Social Science in Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. He previously graduated from Peking University and Shandong University for his Master and Bachelor degrees. His research areas are Development Economics, Economic History and Political Economy.

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the long-term effect of immigrants on the economic prosperity of the receiving economy. From 1127–30, around 5 million people fled to southern China after the abrupt demise of the Northern Song Dynasty in 1127. By constructing a dataset that includes 288 prefectures and exploiting the spatial variation in the settlement of immigrants, the empirical analysis shows that the influx of refugees enlarged the population density of the lands they settled initially, but that this effect decreased after the civil exam became the primary channel for selecting government officials. However, the level of human capital gradually increased in the prefectures that received more immigrants, because the investment in the quality of their children rather than the quantity can better help immigrants' family promote political status, compete with the natives over resources and avoid extinction. Due to the increase in human capital, historical immigrants could have a significantly positive effect on the economic prosperity of the host prefecture in the year 2000, measured by GDP per capita and average nighttime luminosity. I employ the number of northern-born government officials assigned to southern prefectures from 1127–30 as an instrument of the size of the immigrant flows, and find that the results remain robust