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Author(s)	李, 夢丹
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氏名：李 夢 丹

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Essays on wage inequality and COVID-19 control in China

（中国の賃金格差に関する研究と COVID-19 制御の実証研究）

This thesis focuses on two crucial topics of interest to Chinese society in recent times: the wage gap and COVID-19. In recent years, President Xi Jinping has attempted to narrow China's yawning wealth gap, pushing the country to achieve "common prosperity."

Rural-urban migrants are an important group of low-income earners in China. I analyze the wage gap between urban natives and rural-urban migrants from 2002 to 2013 in China in chapter 1. Lots of migrants have flooded into cities since the reform and opening up, with the most striking inflow happening at the start of the 2000s (Meng et al., 2013). However, the migrants do not enjoy the same treatment as urban natives, leading to a concerning wage gap between urban natives and migrants. Chinese government has made efforts to improve the labor market system and protect migrants' rights. The wage gap has narrowed

17% from 2002 to 2013. I focus on the wage convergence and aim to underpin the causes of wage gap reduction. I use the Chinese Household Income Project (CHIP) survey dataset in 2002 and 2013 and employ Juhn, Murphy, and Pierce (1991) decomposition method in analyzing the wage gap changes. The results show three main causes of the wage gap reduction: reduced discrimination (31.58%), favorable wage structure (31.24%), and improvement in job characteristics of migrants (24.56%). I further explore the wage gap trends in different skill groups, and the findings reveal that low-skilled migrants benefit more from the labor market than high-skilled migrants.

I then analyze Chinese wage inequality trends from 1989 until 2015 in chapter 2. Although an extensive amount of literature has documented the widened wage inequality in China, only a few previous studies have analyzed the upper and lower tails of the wage distribution as separate entities. I notice that there are divergent trends of the upper tail and lower tail wage inequality from 1989 to 2015 and lower tail wage inequality widened more than that of the upper tail. This trend is increasingly noticeable in groups with larger numbers of high-skilled workers, such as men and urban residents. I use China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS) from 1989 to 2015 to conduct the analysis, while the method I employ is quantile decomposition (Autor et al., 2005; Melly, 2005). The results show that residual inequality significantly impacts the wage gap on lower quantiles, particularly inequality between the 25th and 5th percentile. The findings reveal that in addition to the measures

already being implemented, such as upgrading education and increasing skills training, other factors such as focusing upon the quality of education and improving the labor market legal system are also crucial in raising the wages of low-income groups and narrowing the overall wage gap.

Chapter 3 is an empirical study about the role of governmental tweets in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic. It is well known that China has implemented relatively strict traffic restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19. In addition to these measures, China has also made considerable efforts to use social media to control COVID-19. During the pandemic, the Chinese government aggressively sent tweets on Sina Weibo, one of the most popular social media platforms, to convey important information about the virus. Between 10 January 2020 and 29 February 2020, the government published 20,433 tweets, which conveyed crucial information, such as updates on confirmed cases and other crucial healthcare information. This chapter discusses the effect of these tweets on containing COVID-19 in China. I use several datasets, including Weibo tweets, COVID-19 infection data, other datasets of human mobility, other social media platforms in China, and traditional media data. The empirical results show that a 10 percent increase in tweets published by the government caused a 1.38 percent decline in new confirmed COVID-19 cases. The findings further indicate that the effect of governmental tweets is more noticeable in regions with less restraining travel policies. I further argue that the effect

relies primarily on two mechanisms: governmental tweets that encouraged people to travel less and accurate Coronavirus information released by the government to help people protect themselves.