

HAIKUN ZHAN (CHARLOTTE)

Ph.D Candidate, Department of Economics, The University of Melbourne

Phone: (+61)425556789 ◊ Email: h.zhan@student.unimelb.edu.au ◊ Website: haikunzhan.github.io

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics, The University of Melbourne, 2017 to present

Master of Economics, The University of Melbourne, 2016

Bachelor of Commerce (Honours), The University of Melbourne, 2015

FIELDS

Development Economics; Political Economics; Economic History; Economics of Conflict; Applied Microeconomics

WORKING PAPERS

Do Perceptions of Economic Well-Being Predict the Onset of War and Peace?

(with Eik Swee and Nattavudh Powdthavee)

Abstract: While material deprivation is an important determinant of civil conflict, psychological factors can also explain the incentives for warfare. This paper considers whether and to what extent civilian perception of economic well-being, possibly influenced by hearts-and-minds tactics that are employed by insurgents, predicts war and peace onset. Using unique micro data bracketing the onset of the Nepalese Civil War, we find that higher levels of perceived income adequacy are associated with later war onset during periods of rebel recruitment, and with earlier peace onset in general. These results are mainly driven by the effect of perceived deprivation among marginalised communities on rebel-initiated violence, and hold regardless of whether we account for actual economic circumstance. Our results suggest that civilian perception of well-being ought to be considered seriously as a determinant of war and peace.

Hidden Costs of War: Evidence from Nepal's Maoist Insurgency

Abstract: This paper uses a unique longitudinal dataset to examine the costly behavioral changes adopted by agricultural households in response to the 1996–2006 Maoist insurgency in Nepal. After the war onset, agricultural households that were exposed to high conflict intensity expand their crop cultivation choices—from mainly cereals to cereals and non-cereals—in order to avoid the Maoist tax on cereals. A one standard deviation increase in conflict exposure induced the average household to expand its number of non-cereal crops from 4.36 to 6.01, a 37.84% increase, while continuing to cultivate the same number of cereal crops. This behavioral change exposed households to greater income risk because the value of non-cereal crops is much more volatile. A risk-averse agricultural household would, as a consequence, suffer a 16.35% decline in welfare.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Central Administration and the Rise of Local Institutions

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

2019	Australasian Development Economics Workshop Travel Grant
2019	Faculty of Business and Economics Travelling Research Scholarship
2017	Deans Honours List
2017	Eric J. Ingram Prize in Microeconomics
2016-present	Faculty of Business and Economics Doctoral Program Scholarship
2015	Australian Finance Conference Prize for Economics of Financial Markets
2011-2014	International Undergraduate Academic Merit Scholarship

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2020	Ph.D. Brown Bag
2019	Ph.D. Brown Bag Australasian Development Economics Workshop (University of Western Australia) Singapore Economic Review Conference (Nanyang Technological University) The Conflict and Economic Development Workshop (Deakin University, *co-author)
2018	Ph.D. Brown Bag Australasian Public Choice Conference (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant: the University of Melbourne (2014-2020)

Introductory Microeconomics; Applied Microeconomics Modelling; Econometrics 2; Macroeconomics; International Finance

OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Journal Referee: Journal of Peace Research

Coordinator: Political Economics Reading Group (2017-2019)

PERSONAL

Citizenship: Australian

Gender: Female