

HAIKUN ZHAN (CHARLOTTE)

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

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics, The University of Melbourne, 2017 to 2022 (expected March 2022; on leave 2020)

Master of Economics, The University of Melbourne, 2016

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

FIELDS

Political Economics; Development Economics; Economic History

WORKING PAPERS

Central Administration and the Rise of Local Institutions: Evidence from Imperial China (Job Market Paper)

Abstract: In this paper, I study whether a strong centralized state facilitated the development of local institutions in Imperial China from 1000 A.D. to 1900 A.D. I exploit plausibly exogenous variation in the state administrative capacity in the local area induced by regime changes. Using a novel and newly digitized prefecture-level panel dataset, I find that local institutions flourished when the state administrative capacity was strong and prevalent. This is likely because a strong centralized state could better co-opt local institutions, which granted them political power. Further investigation reveals that local regions exposed to weaker state administrative capacity did not receive compensating investments in public goods from the central state. This illustrates an important development issue: places with weak centralized states lack public goods provision both from the state and local institutions. As a result, these regions might face more developmental difficulties.

This paper has been awarded (i) the Best Paper Prize at the 34th Ph.D. Conference in Economics & Business; (ii) the Best Paper Prize at the 16th Australasian Development Economics Workshop

Presentations (including scheduled): Cliometrics Workshop; Ph.D. Conference; ADEW2021; Workshop on Natural Experiments; YSI-EHES Economic History Graduate Webinar; Virtual HPE Workshop

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.

Presentations: APCC2018; ADEW2019

PUBLICATIONS

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

(with Eik Swée and Nattavudh Powdthavee)

Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, 95, 101765

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 individual 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 perceived income inadequacy is associated with earlier war onset during periods of rebel recruitment, and with later peace onset in general. These results are mainly driven by the effect of perceived deprivation among marginalized communities on rebel-initiated violence, and hold regardless of whether we account for actual economic circumstance. Our results suggest that civilian perception of economic well-being ought to be considered seriously as a determinant of war and peace.

Presentations: SERC2019; The Conflict and Economic Development Workshop

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

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| 2021 | Best Paper at the 16th Australasian Development Economics Workshop |
| 2021 | Best Paper at the 34th Ph.D. Conference in Economics & Business |
| 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 |
| 2017-present | Research Training Program Scholarship |
| 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 |

PRESENTATIONS (INCLUDING SCHEDULED)

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| 2021 | Virtual Historical Political Economy Workshop YSI-EHES Economic History Graduate Webinar 8th Annual Workshop on Natural Experiments in History: Development, Health, and Labour 16th Australasian Development Economics Workshop (Monash University) 34th Ph.D. Conference in Economics and Business (The University of Queensland) Australasian Cliometrics Workshop (The University of Melbourne) Ph.D. Brown Bag Department of Economics Brown Bag |
| 2020 | Ph.D. Brown Bag |
| 2019 | 15th Australasian Development Economics Workshop (The University of Western Australia) Singapore Economic Review Conference (Nanyang Technological University) The Conflict and Economic Development Workshop (Deakin University, *co-author) Ph.D. Brown Bag |
| 2018 | Australasian Public Choice Conference (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) Ph.D. Brown Bag |

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant: The University of Melbourne (2014-2021)
Introductory Microeconomics; Applied Microeconometrics Modelling; Econometrics 2; Macroeconomics; International Finance

Guest Lecturer: The University of Melbourne (2021)
Honours Economics Research Essay; Special Topics in Economics 2

OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

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| Journal Referee: | Journal of Peace Research |
| Coordinator: | Political Economics Reading Group (2017-2019) |
| Research Assistant: | Dr. Eik Swee (2016-2017); A/Prof. Leslie Martin (2020); Dr. Nicolas Salamanca (2020) |
| Mentor: | Graduate Students Mentoring Program |

PERSONAL

Citizenship: Australian
Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 16 July 1992

REFERENCE

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