

TU 'ERIC' NGO

tu-ngo@uiowa.edu | t-ericngo.github.io | Iowa City, Iowa, USA

SUMMARY

Passionate computational social scientist with experience applying statistics, econometrics, network analysis, and artificial intelligence (AI) to solve complex research problems. Able to implement and evaluate statistical, machine learning, and large language models (LLMs) methods using STATA, R, and Python. Eager to leverage my skills to create positive real-world impact.

EDUCATION

University of Iowa

PhD Candidate, Political Science

MA, Political Science (Conc. International Relations & Research Methodology)

Iowa City, IA

08/2024 – Present

08/2021 – 12/2023

Truman State University, USA

Bachelor of Science, Political Science & International Relations

Kirksville, MO

08/2017 – 05/2021

WORK EXPERIENCE

Department of Political Science, University of Iowa

Graduate Researcher

08/2021 – Present

- Solving complex problems in a total of 10 quantitative research projects, both independently and collaboratively.
- Collecting, managing, and analyzing datasets of up to 1,000,000 data points using Stata, R, and Python.
- Utilizing advanced statistics, econometrics, data science, and artificial intelligence to answer complex questions.
- Disseminating research insights through visualizations and presentations at 9 conferences and workshops.

Department of Political Science, University of Iowa

Graduate Teaching Assistant

08/2021 – 12/2024

- Instructed a total of 20 discussion classes under 4 professors in International Relations and US Foreign Policy.
- Guided and graded roughly 90 students per semester on their weekly assignments and research essays.
- Awarded a university-wide Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award (04/2025).

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) Journal

Editorial Assistant & Replication Data Analyst

08/2023 – 05/2024

- Conducted data analysis to inspect results of accepted peer-reviewed articles at FPA using Stata, R, and Python.
- Ensured timely communication between the authors and editorial team.

Advising System Improvement Project, Truman State University

Lead Consultant

08/2020 – 12/2020

- Led a 3-person team of consultants to help Truman State's reforms in academic advising system by conducting a campus-wide survey and statistical analyses (in R) on students' advising experience.
- Delivered insights and policy recommendations via a presentation and 18-page report to Truman State authorities.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Examining How Political Elite Networks Shape Peace & Conflict in Autocracies Using LLMs

Principal Investigator

01/2024 – Present

- Conducting novel quantitative research on how networks and factions of elites in authoritarian regimes influence autocratic leaders' tendency to engage in international conflict & domestic repression.
- Overcoming the lack of open data on authoritarian elites by collecting a novel dataset on biographies and relationships of elites in government cabinets across 15 autocracies globally, using large language models (LLMs) and natural language processing (NLP) techniques for information extraction and knowledge graphs construction.
- Fine-tuning Llama 3.1-8B (PEFT/LoRA procedures) using distillation data from Llama 3.3-70B and GPT-4 for NLP tasks, specifically joint NER and RE to identify elites, educational institutions, affiliations, and family members.
- Implementing workflow using Python packages including Transformers, OpenAI API, Unsloth, and Scikit-learn.

Racing for Influence: US-China Foreign Aid Competition and Domestic Politics of Recipient States (*Under Review*)

Principal Investigator

09/2023 – Present

- Introducing a novel systematic investigation on how recipient states' political regime and political turnovers shape the dynamics of the US-China foreign aid competition around the world.
- Analyzing global data on recipient countries' political turnovers, political regimes, and US and Chinese aid using advanced structural equations models, instrumental variable regression, and time-series methods in Stata and R.

Us Versus Them: Ethnic Political Inequality, Diversionary Nationalism, and International Conflict (*Under review*)

Principal Investigator

02/2023 – 03/2025

- Examining how ethnic political inequality motivates governments to start diversionary conflicts to increase nationalism and distract the populace from internal struggles.
- Analyzing cross-national and time-series data on ethnic inequality, domestic security crises, and international conflicts using regression models in R and Stata.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Travel Award (\$500) , WhoGov Workshop on Political Elites, University of Oslo (<i>Scheduled</i>)	09/2025
PolMeth Travel & Accommodation Award (\$700) , Society for Political Methodology (<i>Declined</i>)	07/2025
Travel & Accommodation Award (\$6000) , Swedish Research School in Computational Social Science	06/2025
Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award (\$1000) , University of Iowa	04/2025
Post-Comprehensive Exam Research Fellowship (\$11,000) , Graduate College, University of Iowa	02/2025
Best Graduate Seminar Research Paper (\$250) , Department of Political Science, University of Iowa	09/2024
Iowa Recruitment Fellowship (\$45,000) , Graduate College, University of Iowa	08/2021
Grants-in-Aid of Scholarship and Research (\$1500) , Truman State University	06/2020
Truman State Presidential Scholarship (\$36,000) , Truman State University	08/2017

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & INVITED TALKS

American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting , Vancouver, BC	09/2025
WhoGov Workshop on Political Elites , Oslo, Norway (<i>Scheduled</i>)	09/2025
International Studies Association Midwest (ISA-Midwest) , St. Louis, MO	11/2024
Peace Science Society (International) 2024 , Ann Arbor, MI	11/2024
Large Language Models (LLMs): Innerworkings, Applications and Ethics , Iowa City, IA	10/2024
American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting , Philadelphia, PA	09/2024
International Studies Association (ISA) Meeting , San Francisco, CA.	04/2024
International Studies Association Midwest (ISA-Midwest) , St. Louis, MO	11/2022

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

Graduate Student Representative , IR Faculty Recruitment Committee, Ulowa Political Science Department	2024
Co-Coordinator , International Relations (IR) Workshop Series, Ulowa Political Science Department	2023 – 2024
Mentor for Incoming Graduate Students , Ulowa Political Science Department	2022 – 2024
President , Vietnamese Student Association (VSA), Truman State University	2019 – 2020
Representative of the Student Government , Undergraduate Faculty Council, Truman State University	2018 – 2019

SKILLS & LANGUAGES

Research/Analytical: Large Language Models (LLMs), Machine Learning, Text Analysis, Computational Social Science, Network Analysis, Econometrics, Advanced Statistics, Time Series, Archival Research, Knowledge Graph, OpenAI, HuggingFace

Computing Software: STATA, R, Python (Transformers, Llama, OpenAI API, Scikit-learn, NLTK, SpaCy), SPSS

Languages: Vietnamese (Native), English (Fluent), Japanese (Elementary)