

# MENG WU

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## EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston, MA, May 2022 (expected)  
Dissertation Title: *Essays on Media, Politics and Firm Innovation*  
Dissertation Committee: Raymond Fisman, Martin Fiszbein and Dilip Mookherjee

B.Sc., Mathematics and Economics (*First Class Honor*), Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, China, 2015

## FIELDS OF INTEREST

Political Economy, Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics

## WORKING PAPERS

“Ownership, Partisanship and Media Slant: Evidence of the U.S. Media during the Sino-US Trade Conflict”, September 2021 (Job Market Paper)  
“State Ownership and R&D Efficiency: Evidence from Chinese Listed Firms” (joint with Yang Ming, submitted), February 2021  
“Checks and Balances: Media Criticism in China”, November 2021

## WORK IN PROGRESS

“Sanction Busting through Minerals Trading” (joint with Giovanna Marcolongo)  
“Perish in Comfort: Growth Impact of an Estate Boom” (joint with Xiangyu Feng and Zhiyuan Chen)

## PRESENTATIONS

The Fifth Camphor Economist Circle (CEC) Conference, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China, May 2021

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Dean's List, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 2013-2015

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Co-organizer, Reporter and Editor, Boston University Alumni Association of China & Xtecher, 2017  
Internship Analyst, BGI Group & UCLA & HKUST, 2013

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant (Online Course Designer), Introductory Macroeconomics, Department of Economics, Boston University, Spring 2021  
Teaching Fellow (Lab Instructor), Econometrics Analysis II, Department of Economics, Boston University, Spring 2020

Teaching Fellow (Lab Instructor), Intermediate Microeconomic Analysis, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2018  
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Macroeconomic Analysis, Department of Economics, Boston University, Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

**LANGUAGES**

English (fluent), Mandarin (native), Cantonese (working knowledge)

**COMPUTER SKILLS:** R, Stata, Python, Matlab

**CITIZENSHIP/VISA STATUS:** China/F1

**REFERENCES**

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## **Ownership, Partisanship, and Media Slant: Evidence of the U.S. Media during the Sino-US Trade Conflict** (Job Market Paper)

I explore what determines media slant towards foreign nations using the 2018-2019 Sino-U.S. trade negotiation as a testing ground. Using an event study design and coverage by local U.S. newspapers, I analyze how stories about China respond to shifts of U.S. policy towards China, and how this media reaction is determined by owners' partisan affinity, controlling for readers' characteristics. I find that local newspapers with Republican-leaning owners increase the intensity of negative coverage following a shift towards hostile trade policies relative to papers of nonpartisan owners, and they decrease this slant following a conciliatory shift; the opposite is true for Democratic-leaning media owners. To address the potential endogeneity of diplomatic events, I select events that induced significant abnormal price fluctuations of trade-war-related financial securities. I further establish a causal effect of owners' preferences by exploiting mergers and acquisitions among national conglomerates as a source of variation in political orientation of owners. These findings imply a spillover from domestic policy in the formation of citizen sentiment towards other nations: the media, as their lens to view the world, is colored by domestic political polarization.

## **Checks and Balances: Media Criticism in China**

I study how political competition among provincial officials affects media criticism in China. I collect news reports by local mouthpiece outlets that criticize the provincial governments from 2004 to 2017. By exploiting the randomness of the pairing of the provincial governor and secretary, I prove that higher competition induces criticism. Specifically, if a pair is assigned such that their promotion examination periods overlap, then during the examination period of the secretary, more critical reports appear on the government-led media outlets. I construct a model to illustrate how competition can be generated by promotion pressure. Intuitively, when both officials go through promotion examination, the economic signal from individuals cannot be observed separately, and media coverage serves as an additional signal to reveal their types. This suggests government-led media outlets can still serve effectively as a watchdog than a lapdog.

## **State Ownership and R&D Efficiency: Evidence from Chinese Listed Firms** (Submitted)

This paper empirically investigates how state-owned firms differ from non-state-owned firms on their R&D efficiency. We estimate the economic value of invention patents granted to Chinese publicly listed firms using the stock market's responses to patent issuances, following the methodology proposed in Kogan, Papanikolaou, Seru and Stoffman (2017). We measure the return of R&D by dividing the future patent value by current R&D expenditure, and find that the state-owned firms' R&D efficiency is higher with very low R&D intensity, and is lower for medium and high R&D intensity. This finding is robust across different specifications, with both non-parametric and parametric models.