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EDUCATION

- The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2019-present
PhD candidate
- Fudan University 2016-2019
Master of Economics
- Chongqing University 2012-2016
B.A. in Economics

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Applied Economics; Political Economics; Economic History; Development Economics

JOB MARKET PAPER

- **“Knowledge Suppression and Resilience under Censorship: Three-century Book Publications in China”** (with Ying Bai and Ruixue Jia).

This study investigates the short-, medium-, and long-term impacts of state censorship on knowledge production, focusing on the largest book banning in Chinese history, triggered by the creation of the *Siku Quanshu* (Complete Library in Four Sections) during 1772–1783. By analyzing publication data of over 161,000 books spanning from the 1660s to the 1940s, we find that categories subjected to more severe bans experienced a significant decline in publications in the decades following the bans (1770s to 1840s). However, as state control relaxed from the 1840s onwards, there was a marked resurgence in the publication of books in previously restricted categories. Further text analysis reveals notable spillover effects on less sensitive books in the same categories as those banned, indicating a chilling effect and associated self-censorship. We also document dynamic responses from publishers and authors, finding that the exit and entry of publishers help explain both the suppression and subsequent revival of knowledge production.

PUBLICATIONS

- **“The Web of Power: How Elite Networks Shaped War and China”** (with Ying Bai and Ruixue Jia), 2023, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 138(2): 1067-1108.

Scholars have argued that powerful individuals can influence the path of a nation’s development. Yet, the process through which individuals affect macro-level political economy outcomes remains unclear. This study uses the deadliest civil war in modern history, the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), to elucidate how one individual—Zeng Guofan—employed his personal elite networks to organize an army that suppressed the rebellion, and how these networks affected the nation’s power distribution. Two findings stand out: (i) counties with more elites in Zeng’s pre-war networks experienced more soldier deaths after he took power; and (ii) post-war political power shifted significantly toward the home counties of these very elites, which created a less balanced national-level power distribution. Our findings highlight the role of elite networks that propagate individual-level influences to shape national politics and the distribution of power in a society.

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

- “Essays and Books: The Impact of Civil Examinations on Knowledge Production”

Using Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques, I analyze the novelty and conventionality of nearly 5,000 essays written by over 1,600 Jinshi candidates from the Qing dynasty, linking these characteristics to their performance in civil examinations and their scholarly outputs, such as published books. I measure each essay’s conventionality (or inverse novelty) by assessing its textual similarity to Zhu Xi’s commentaries on the same topic, and I evaluate each book’s creativity and impact by measuring its textual similarity to both past and future books. The findings indicate that although (1) candidates with a higher level of conventionality tend to perform better in the examination system, (2) they also tend to author and publish less innovative and impactful books, even within the traditional domains of the Confucian classics. These findings suggest that the civil examination system valued conventionality over creativity, which subsequently influences the knowledge production of the entire society.

- “River Network and Conflicts: How Riverine Dynamics Impact Conflict Intensity”

This paper examines the link between the geographical positions of warring factions (specifically the upstream and downstream dynamics of rivers) and the intensity of conflicts, within the context of more than 400 battles fought between warlords in Sichuan Province, China, from 1912 to 1935. Two findings stand out: (i) warlords along the same river are more prone to initiate conflicts; (ii) conflicts along the same river generally result in fewer casualties and shorter durations compared to those between factions on different rivers. These results indicate that shared interests shape the pattern of conflicts.

AWARDS

- Postgraduate Scholarships, 2019-2023
- ICS Mok Hing Cheong Postgraduate Scholarship (HKD 60000)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Teaching Assistant
 - Development Economics
 - Chinese Economy: Heritage and Change

SKILLS AND LANGUAGES

- STATA, Python, ArcGIS, LaTeX
- Chinese (Native), English (Fluent)