

JOY CHEN

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PERSONAL

Legal Name: Yuxin Chen
Born: January 1991 in Beijing, China
Citizenship: Australian

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Economics, Stanford University, 2019 (expected)
B.Comm. Economics (with honours), University of Melbourne, 2012
B.S. Mathematics and Statistics, University of Melbourne, 2011
Undergraduate Exchange Program, University of California, Berkeley, 2010

REFERENCES

Prof. Avner Greif (Primary)
Economics Department, Stanford University
(650) 725-8936
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Prof. James Fearon
Political Science Department, Stanford University
(650) 725-1314
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Graduate School of Business, Stanford University
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Prof. Avidit Acharya
Political Science Department, Stanford University
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RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary fields: Economic History, Political Economy
Secondary field: Applied Microeconomics

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2017–18 Research Assistant for Prof. Avner Greif, Stanford University
2014–15 Research Assistant for Prof. Petra Moser, Stanford University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2017 Teaching Assistant for Dr. Mark Tendall, Stanford University, Undergraduate Macroeconomics
2016 Teaching Assistant for Prof. Avner Greif, Stanford University, Undergraduate Economic History
2016 Teaching Assistant for Dr. Chris Makler, Stanford University, Undergraduate Microeconomics
2015 Teaching Assistant for Prof. Pete Klenow, Stanford University, Undergraduate Macroeconomics
2010-13 University Tutor, University of Melbourne, Undergraduate Microeconomics and Macroeconomics

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2018 SIEPR Dissertation Fellowship, Stanford Institute for Economic Policy and Research
- 2018 Joint Winner of Best Papers Award, International Symposium of Quantitative History
- 2016 Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, Stanford Center at Peking University
- 2016 Bradley Graduate Fellowship, Stanford Institute for Economic Policy and Research
- 2013–14 Stanford Graduate Fellowship, Department of Economics, Stanford University
- 2009–11 Melbourne National Scholarship, University of Melbourne
- 2009 Australian Student Prize, Australian Federal Government

WORKING PAPERS

State Formation and Bureaucratization: Evidence from Pre-Imperial China (Job Market Paper)

– An earlier version of this paper is one of the two winners of the Best Paper Award at the International Symposium of Quantitative History, 2018

How does one build a centralized bureaucratic state? A dominant view is that wars incentivize rulers to engage in direct extraction of resources, thereby increasing state capacity. The formation of the Chinese empire, which became one of the longest-lived regimes with a centralized bureaucracy, is understudied and can provide useful insights. Using hand-collected data, I present the first systematic evidence on patterns of wars, state-building and activity of political elites in pre-imperial China, and argue that they cannot be explained by warfare alone. I then demonstrate increasing activity of non-nobles in state administrations, and argue that human capital is an important channel for state-building as it reduces the cost of administrative appointments. Furthermore, I postulate that increased productivity and incidence of civil unrest contributed to the increase in human capital by improving commoners' access to and incentives for learning. In addition, I postulate a geographical dimension to wars' effects on state-building: when military threat is large, rulers need to incentivize agents to defend against invasion by giving them residual claims to the land. I develop a model to formalize these claims, and test the model's predictions in light of historical examples and data. I find that bureaucratic rule is more likely to transpire in regions that face less military threat, and when agents have weaker political connections.

Occupational Hazard and College Major Choice: Evidence from Anti-Doctor Violence (with Shiyu Bo, Yan Song and Sen Zhou)

We study how news media affects students choice of college majors. We focus on how newspaper reports on violence against doctors in China deter students from pursuing a health-related career. We construct a unique news database by collecting articles from more than 1,200 newspapers. For each city, we define media attention as the total number of relevant articles published in all newspapers issued by that city. Exploiting variations in media attention across cities and over time, we find that an additional article on anti-doctor violence leads to around 0.5 percent decrease in the number of students studying health-related majors. This effect doubles when we focus on sub-disciplines training physicians and nurses. Students attending elite colleges are more responsive to media attention. Moreover, our analysis reveals that media attention deters students with above-median test scores from health-related majors. These results are robust to controlling for a rich set of covariates, including measures for local provision of medical services.

Mate Preferences and Housing Prices in China: Evidence from Online Dating (with Sitian Liu)

In China, homeownership has traditionally been an important factor in a man's "marriageability." In this paper, we estimate the effects of China's surging house prices on individuals' mate preferences. Using data from China's largest dating website, we estimate mate preferences based on users' decision to reply to a first-time message from a contact. We find that site users, in particular women, have strong preferences for homeownership, and women are more likely to respond to a homeowner as house prices in his city of residence increase. Moreover, homeowners have stronger preferences for homeownership than non-homeowners.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Forming Political Coalitions in the Period of Disunion (with Xiaoming Zhang)

[Data Collection Stage]

The Period of Disunion (220–589 A.D.) is characterized by frequent civil wars and regime changes, and political domination by prestigious aristocratic families. Even though China became re-unified under the Sui in 581 A.D., the dominance of the aristocracy continued well into late Tang (618–907 A.D.). In this paper, we empirically study the characteristics of ruling coalitions that gave rise to political centralization. In particular, we examine the composition and mobility of office-holding aristocrats prior to China’s re-unification. To do so, we digitize data on political elites and officials in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, a period just prior to re-unification, from the *Dictionary of Personal Names in the Twenty-Five Histories*.

State Capacity and the Socioeconomic Origins of Bureaucrats in Ming China (with Jason Guo)

Since Weber, scholars have claimed that the rise of rational bureaucracy to replace the personal rule of aristocracy is an essential component of state building. In particular, a merit-based bureaucratic system can strengthen the administrative capacity of the state, and China is viewed as such a typical case. In the context of Ming China (1368–1644), we study the socio-economic origins of bureaucrats, who constitute the administration of the imperial state, and how this affects the state’s ability to tax and to suppress civilian revolts. We match degree holders in the civil examination to kinship lineages based on surname and location. Preliminary analysis reveals that a greater number of lineages at the prefecture-level is positively associated with a greater number of degree holders, controlling for examination quota and population. Degree holders who have membership to lineages, or are members of larger lineages, obtain their degrees at a younger age, and achieve higher ranks in the examination.

BOOK REVIEWS

Chen, Joy and Avner Greif (2018). “The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century. By Richard von Glahn.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, *Forthcoming*.

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

- 2018 International Symposium on Quantitative History
- 2017 All-UC Economic History Graduate Student Workshop

LANGUAGES

Chinese and English (bilingual)

PROGRAMMING

Python, Stata, MATLAB, LaTeX