

Anna Zhang

Stanford University
Department of Political Science
616 Serra Street, Stanford, CA 94305

Email: annazhang@stanford.edu
Website: www.annazhang.org

Research Interests

State building, civil conflict, ethnic insurgency, migration, Xinjiang, China, formal theory

Education

Ph.D. Political Science, Stanford University, 2014 – 2021 (expected).

B.A. Russian Studies, Macalester College, 2014.

Dissertation

"Go West, Young Han: State Agents for Containing Armed Insurgency in Xinjiang"

My dissertation focuses on a puzzle that is important for both scholarship on civil war and contemporary politics: Despite numerous features that could have led to full-scale civil war in Xinjiang, China's northwestern peripheral province, why has violence in that region persisted at a low level in terms of the degree of militarization since 1949? Peripheral regions often pose a significant challenge to state building due to their susceptibility to foreign subversion, difficult terrain, and ethnic diversity, which have beleaguered even strong states like China. How has communist China projected power in Xinjiang? I approach these questions by focusing on the state agents for counterinsurgency and thus unpacking a heretofore black box – the space between the Chinese state and Xinjiang's indigenous population. Contrary to classical theories that consider commitment to private property central to civil peace, I argue that it is precisely the Chinese state's monopoly over the market which has allowed it to control Xinjiang without the occurrence of civil war. Specifically, China's ability to allocate essential means of production has enabled it to avoid principal-agent problems common to counterinsurgency. Evidence is based on my year-long ethnographic research in Xinjiang and data from over 500 historical gazetteers. I integrate a game-theoretic approach with both qualitative and quantitative analytical tools such as process tracing and quasi-experimental designs.

Publications

"[Demographic Engineering and International Conflict: Evidence from China and the USSR](#)" (with Lachlan McNamee). 2019. *International Organization* 73(2), 291-327.

Robert O'Keohane award for best article by a junior scholar in *International Organization* in 2019

Best paper award by a graduate student at the 2018 Pacific International Politics Conference.

"[Sons of the Soil: A Model of Assimilation and Population Control](#)" (with Avidit Acharya and David Laitin). 2018. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 30(2), 184-223.

Working Papers

"Controlling Peripheral Territories with State-Owned Enterprises."

"State Capacity, Encirclement, and Ethnic Violence."

"[Repressed and Embittered Winners under Regime Transformation](#)" (with Jidong Chen).

Works in Progress

"State Building as an Agency Problem: Redistributive Response to Ethnic Riots."

"Endogenizing Ethnic Demography: Foreign Intervention and State Building in Xinjiang."

"Ethnicity and Redistribution: Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment on Chinese Bureaucrats" (with Zhongyuan Wang).

Teaching

Comparative Politics:

TA, POLISCI/ECON 247 Games Developing Nations Play (for Barry Weingast), Spring 2019.

TA, POLISCI 348 Chinese Politics (for Jean Oi), Winter 2018.

International Relations:

TA, POLISCI 110 Governing the Global Economy (for Kenneth Scheve), Winter 2016.

Case study: "[One Belt One Road: Chinese Strategic Investment in the 21st Century](#)" (with Kenneth Scheve), *Stanford Graduate School of Business*, Case P-87. 2016.

Formal Theory:

TA, POLISCI 356 Formal Theory, PhD (for Avidit Acharya), Winter 2017.

TA, POLISCI 153 Formal Theory, undergraduate (for Avidit Acharya), Spring 2016.

Conference and Workshop Presentations

APSA mini-conference on China, Virtual Platform, September 2020

Stanford University:

International Relations Workshop, December 2017

Methods of Historical Social Sciences, September 2017

China Social Sciences Workshop, May 2017

Stanford-Berkeley Political Economy Conference, April 2016

Formal Theory Workshop, February 2016

Political Economy Annual Conference, *Higher School of Economics*, Moscow, June 2017.

MPSA, April 2017.

Association of the Studies of Nationalities Conference, *Columbia University*, April 2016; May 2018.

Fellowships

Dissertation fellowship. Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University. \$46,300. 2020.

Dissertation fellowship. Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation. \$20,000. 2019.

Pre-doctoral fellowship. Stanford Center at Peking University. \$14,000. 2017 and 2018.

Grants

Research grant. Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University. \$14,000. 2017; 2020.

Research grant. Stanford Graduate Research Opportunity Award. \$9,000. 2017; 2019.

Research grant. Stanford King Center on Development. \$27,000, 2017 and 2019.

Graduate Student Aid Fund. Stanford University. \$6,656. 2019; 2020.

Peace Science Award. Pacific International Politics Conference. \$1,000. 2018.

Conference grant. Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University. \$500. 2018.

Research grant. Stanford Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. \$7,000. 2018.

Travel grant. Harriman Institute, Columbia University. \$2,250. 2017.

Research grant. Europe Center, Stanford University. \$4,000. 2015.

Skills

Languages: Mandarin Chinese (native), Cantonese (near-native), Russian (reading proficiency)

Technology: ArcGIS, L^AT_EX, Python, R, STATA

Fieldwork

Border provinces in China: Heilongjiang (Summer 2015), Inner Mongolia (Fall 2016), Xinjiang (Winter 2017; Fall 2018; Spring 2019)

Russia: Moscow, Blagoveshchensk (Summer 2015)