

Zeren LI

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EMPLOYMENT

National University of Singapore
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
Assistant Professor

2023–Present

Yale University
Postdoctoral Associate
Leitner Program in International and Comparative Political Economy

2021–2023

EDUCATION

Duke University
PhD in Political Science

2021

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
MPhil in Social Science

2016

Fudan University
LLB in Political Science

2014

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Comparative Political Economy, Government-Business Relations, Corruption, Bureaucracy, China

PUBLICATIONS

[“Subsidies for Sale: Post-government Career Concern, Revolving-Door Channels, and Public Resource Allocation in China.”](#) *Journal of Politics*, 2024
- Kellogg/Notre Dame Award for Best Comparative Politics Paper, Midwest Political Science Association

[“Connections as Liabilities: The Cost of the Politics-Business Revolving Door in China.”](#) *British Journal of Political Science*, 2023

[“The Decline of Factions: The Impact of Purge on Political Appointments in China.”](#) With Melanie Manion, *British Journal of Political Science*, 2023

[“Public Investment As Downward Benefit Distribution: Theory and Evidence from China’s Public-Private Partnership Programs.”](#) With Daniel Z. Li and Qi Zhang, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 2023

[“Markets Under Mao: The Persistence of Market Activity in Maoist China.”](#) With Adam Frost, *The China Quarterly*, 2023

[“Judicial Recentralization as Political Control: A Difference-in-Differences Analysis of Judicial Leader Rotation in China.”](#) With Zeyuan Wang, *Social Science Quarterly*, 2023

[“The Last Strike: Age, Career Incentives and Taxation in China.”](#) With Arthur Zeyang Yu, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 2022

[“Within-Party Mobility and Economic Performance in Authoritarian Regimes: Evidence from China.”](#) With Arthur Zeyang Yu, *Party Politics*, 2022

“An Introduction to Procedural Rule in China’s Provincial People’s Congress.” *Chinese Law & Government*, Vol. 49 No. 1, 2017: 1-4

WORKING PAPERS “Brokerage and Patronage: Regional Chambers of Commerce and Firm Subsidies in China” With Shenghua Lu. Conditionally accepted. *American Journal of Political Science*

“A Privilege of the Rich? A Duality of Unequal Government Responsiveness in Urban China.” With Jiawei Fu and Haibin Yan. Conditionally accepted. *Comparative Political Studies*

“Favor With Fear: The Distributional Effect of Political Risk on Government Procurement in China.” With Songrui Liu. Under Review

WORK IN PROGRESS How Firms Influence Regulation in Authoritarian Regimes: Evidence from Industrial Standards Formation in China, with Songrui Liu and Linchuan Zhang

Railway and Revolution, with Jun Fang

Trade Turbulence and the Rise of Communist Party in China, with Ting Chen and Jun Fang

BOOK PROJECT **Red Quid Pro Quo: The Political-Business Revolving Door in China**

Abstract: Scholars contend that in a weak institutional context, firms enter the political market-place primarily through bribery or entrepreneurs running for public office. My book project challenges this conventional understanding by arguing that revolving-door channels have become a prevalent means of rent-seeking when within-government career opportunities are rare for public officials and the private sector is profitable. I propose a theoretical framework for understanding the emergence of revolving-door officials in authoritarian regimes and test this framework through a rigorous inquiry of firms in China. The three papers that constitute this work analyze the pattern, formation, and economic outcome of hiring revolving-door officials. I show the distortionary impact of post-government career concerns on public resource allocation, a mixed revolving-door recruitment strategy adopted by firms seeking both political power and regulatory expertise, and the salient signaling effect of revolving-door connections on financial investors.

GRANTS AND AWARDS	Faculty Start-up Grant, National University of Singapore	2023
	NUS HSS Seed Fund, Singapore	2023
	Yale Macmillan Center Research Grant	2021, 2022
	NSF-APSA Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (SPS 257910)	2020
	Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation Dissertation Fellowship	2020
	Duke Asian-Pacific Studies Institute Summer Research Fellowship	2020
	Google Cloud Platform Academic Research Grant	2019
	China Times Cultural Foundation Young Scholar Award	2019
	Hayek Fund for Scholars, Institute for Humane Studies	2019, 2021
	Alona E. Evans Research Grant, Duke University	2018, 2019
	Dissertation Improvement Grant, Duke University	2019
	Graduate School Fellowship, Duke University	2016–2020
	Graduate School Summer Fellowship, Duke University	2016–2018, 2020
	Duke Asian-Pacific Studies Institute Travel Grant	2017, 2018
	Ronald Coase Institute Fellowship	2015
	APSA Travel Grant	2015, 2018
	Hong Kong University of Science & Technology Research Travel Grant	2015
	UCLA Cross-Disciplinary Scholars in Science and Technology Scholarship	2013
	Hong Kong University of Science & Technology Postgraduate Fellowship	2014–2016

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks

2025: University of West Australia

2024: Australian National University; Stanford University; University of Pennsylvania; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

2023: University of California, Berkeley; Yale University; Tsinghua University; East China University of Political Science and Law; Fudan University; Renmin University of China

2022: City University of Hong Kong; Nanyang Technological University; NYU Quantitative Chinese Studies Seminar; Tsinghua University

2021: Massachusetts Institute of Technology; University College London; NYU Shanghai; Northeast Workshop of Empirical Political Science; Asian Online Political Science Seminar Series

2020: University of Washington, Seattle; NYU Quantitative Chinese Studies Seminar; Fudan University; East China University of Political Science and Law

2019: Peking University

2015: Ronald Coase Institute Workshop on Institutional Analysis

Conferences

American Political Science Association Annual Meeting: 2015, 2018, 2021–2024

Academy of Management Annual Meeting, 2023

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting: 2017, 2018, 2022, 2023

Money in Politics Conference, Copenhagen Business School: 2023

Society for Institutional & Organizational Economics Annual Conference: 2021

TEACHING
EXPERIENCE**Political Economy**

Business and Politics, Yale University & National University of Singapore, *Instructor*

Global Business-Government Relations, National University of Singapore, *Instructor*

Political Economy of China, Yale University, *Instructor*

Prisoner's Dilemma and Distributive Justice, Duke University, *Teaching Assistant*

Global Corruption, Duke University, *Teaching Assistant*

World of Politics, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, *Teaching Assistant*

Economics

Introduction to Economics, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, *Teaching Assistant*

Quantitative Methods & Data Science

Unifying Data Science (Data Science Program), Duke University, *Teaching Assistant*

Probability and Linear Regression, Duke University, *Lab Instructor*

Quantitative Analysis in Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, *Lab Instructor*

SERVICE

Reviewer for *American Political Science Review*, *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *China Journal*, *China: An International Journal*, *Chinese Political Science Review*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, *Environmental Politics*, *Fiscal Studies*, *Governance*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Public Policy*, *Political Science Research Methods*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *PLOS One*, *Public Choice*, *Public Performance & Management Review*

Steering Committee Member, Chinese Politics Mini-conference, APSA

2024

Member, Junior Recruitment Committee, NUS

2024

STUDENT ADVISING

Ph.D. Advisee: Caixin Jiang

Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Member: Chitao Yu

Master Students: Harris Amjad; Rui Wang, Zhen Zhang

LANGUAGES AND
SOFTWARE Mandarin Chinese: Native
 Programming Languages: R, Python, git, TensorFlow, SQL
 Software: Stata, ArcGIS, QGIS, Gephi, L^AT_EX

PROFESSIONAL
MEMBERSHIPS American Political Science Association
 Academy of Management
 Midwest Political Science Association

Last updated: March 17, 2025