

Research Workshop in Historical Development and Political Economy

Faculty of Business and Economics
The University of Hong Kong

Fall 2018

Nov. 7, 14, 28 & Dec 5

Wednesday, 2:30-5:20 pm

Web access to readings: <https://www.jameskung.net/>

Instructor: Prof. James Kung

Email: jameskung@hku.hk

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce to the PhD students, especially those who have passed their qualifying exam in economics, to the world of empirical economics. Students are NOT required to give any presentations in this workshop.

The first workshop provides an introduction of three articles that examine the role of institutions and culture in shaping long-run economic development—the Smithian question of why some nations are poor. The pertinent reading list is huge, so I’m merely giving you a taste of it (at least two of these articles are classic in the field of *comparative economic historical development*). If possible I hope you would read them carefully becoming coming to the workshop.

In the second week, I would provide you with some examples of how to come up with research ideas, where to look for data sources, what kind of analytical skills are required, and so forth, on comparative historical development and political economy related to China, using my own previous works as an illustration. As these are not lectures, I won’t go into the details of these papers, but you would certainly benefit more from my presentation if you have a chance to at least browse through them.

In the third and fourth weeks I will share with you some of my *ongoing* research, with an emphasis both on the development of ideas (e.g., how one paper leads to another) and the set of technical skills required for doing the kind of empirical research we do (the latter demonstrated by Dr. Ting Chen of Hong Kong Baptist University). Examples include: Scrapping data from the internet; fuzzy matching of large administrative data using string-distance algorithm; spatial matching of administrative boundaries; generating “spatially matched” samples, constructing (Euclidean or network) distance as instrumental variable, utilizing boundary as regression discontinuity design for identification, etc.

Readings:

Week 1 (November 7)

- [1] Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *The American Economic Review* 91 (5): 1369-1401.
- [2] Alesina, A., P. Giuliano, and N. Nunn. 2013. "On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128 (2): 469-530.
- [3] Nunn, Nathan, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2011. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa." *The American Economic Review* 101 (7): 3221-3252.

Week 2 (November 14)

- [1] Bai, Ying, and James K. Kung. 2011. "Climate Shocks and Sino-nomadic Conflicts." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 93 (3): 970-981.
- [2] Bai, Ying, and James Kung. 2015. "Diffusing Knowledge While Spreading God's Message: Protestantism and Economic Prosperity in China, 1840-1920." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 13 (4): 669-698.
- [3] Chen, Shuo, and James Kung. 2016. "Of Maize and Men: The Effect of a New World Crop on Population and Economic Growth in China." *Journal of Economic Growth* 21: 71-99.
- [4] Chen, Ting, and James Kung. 2016. "Do Land Revenue Windfalls Create a Political Resource Curse? Evidence from China." *Journal of Development Economics* 123: 86-106.
- [5] Kung, James, and Shuo Chen. 2011. "The Tragedy of the Nomenclatura: Career Incentives and Political Radicalism during China's Great Leap Famine." *American Political Science Review* 105 (1): 27-45.

Week 3 (November 28)

- [1] Ting Chen, James Kung, and Chicheng Ma. 2018. "Long Live Keju! The Persistent Effects of China's Imperial Examination System." Working Paper.
- [2] Ting Chen, and James Kung. 2018. "The Origins of Meritocracy." (no paper yet).

Week 4 (December 5)

- [1] Ting Chen, and James Kung. 2018. "Busting the 'Princelings': The Campaign Against Corruption in China's Primary Land Market." Forthcoming, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (February 2019).