ZIWEN (GARY) ZU

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

zzu@utk.edu ziwenzu.com

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of Tennessee, Knoxville *2026–Present*
Assistant Professor of Political Science

RESEARCH AREAS

Law and Society; Public Opinion, Media, and Ideology; Political Economy; AI-Human Interaction.

BOOK PROJECT

Brokers of Authoritarian Legality: State, Professionals, and Law in China.
Manuscript in preparation.

EDUCATION

University of California, San Diego *2026*
Ph.D. in Political Science (specialization: Computational Social Science)
Dissertation: *"Professional Origins of Authoritarian Rule of Law"*

Duke University *2020*
M.A. in Political Science

Sun Yat-Sen University *2018*
B.A. in Public Administration

ARTICLES

- *Trade-Offs in Authoritarian Participatory Digital Surveillance: Evidence From China's Sharp Eyes Project*. ***Comparative Political Studies***, 2026. Advance online publication.
- *How Much Should We Trust Instrumental Variable Estimates in Political Science? Practical Advice Based on 67 Replicated Studies*. With Apoorva Lal, Mackenzie Lockhart and Yiqing Xu. ***Political Analysis***, 32(4): 521–540, 2024. Editors' Choice.

REVISE & RESUBMIT

- *Mobilizing Civic Engagement under Autocracy: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Rural China*. Job Market Paper. R&R. Pre-analysis plan.
- *Fiscal Origin of Selective Enforcement: Evidence from China's Administrative Penalties*. With Shengqiao Lin. R&R at ***American Journal of Political Science***.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- **Translation**: Imai, K. (2020). *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction* (Y. Xu and Z. Zu, Trans.). Shanghai University of Finance & Economics Press. (Original work published 2018.)
- **Book Chapter**: Zheng, Y., Zheng, Z., Ma, M., and Zu, Z. (2019). Improving Usability. In *E-Government and Information Technology Management: Concepts and Best Practices*, 43–66. Melvin & Leigh.

WORKING PAPERS

- *Moving Officials, Moving Access: The Distributive Effects of Bureaucratic Rotation*.
  Political Economy
- *Building State Capacity from Below: Grassroots Organization and Preemptive Social Control in China*. With Yuge Wang.
  Law and Society
- *Collaborative Competition? The Efficiency–Security Dilemma and Public Preferences for International Technological Transfer*. With Yujin Zhang. Pre-analysis plan.
  Political Economy
- *Talking Politics with Artificial Intelligence*.
  Public Opinion, Media, and Ideology; AI
- *Professional Gatekeepers of Authoritarian Legality: Evidence from China's Legal Aid Hotlines*. Slides. Pre-analysis plan.
  Law and Society
- *Professional Brokerage of Limited Legality under Authoritarianism*. Pre-analysis plan.
  Law and Society
- *Rethinking Backlash against Trade Openness: Import–Export Preferences in Two Dimensions*. With Yujin Zhang. Pre-analysis plan.
  Political Economy
- *How Governments Respond to Trade Shocks: Evidence from China's Trade War Policies*. With Paul-Emile Bernard and Jie Li.
  Political Economy

WORK IN PROGRESS

Law and Society

- *How Markets Finance Authoritarian Cooptation of Professional Elites*.
- *Repression and Cooptation in the Autocratic Judiciary: A Field Experiment with Chinese Lawyers*. Pre-analysis plan.
- *Rule of Law or Rule by Law: Political Origins of Legislation in Autocracy*.
- *Testing Tocqueville: Lawyers, Democracy, and the Rule of Law in Global Elections*.

Public Opinion, Media, and Ideology

- *How Does Foreign Media Exposure Affect Authoritarian Legitimacy? A Field Experiment in China*. Pre-analysis plan.
- *Social Image and Political Expression under Authoritarian Rule*.
- *What Autocrats Know and What They Say: Evidence from China's Classified Internal Press, 1949–1964*.
- *From Marx to the Masses: Global Diffusion and the Revision of Communism*. With Weixiao Guo.
- *The Pen Against the Sword: How Wars Reshape Media Control*. With Weixiao Guo, Erik Wang and Weiwen Yin.

Political Economy

- *Red Credentials: The Private Nomenklatura in China's Labor Market*.
- *Sorting into the Authoritarian State: Civil-Service Recruitment, Candidate Psychology, and Elite Selection in China*. With Hanzhang Liu.
- *Strategic Non-Regulation as Industrial Policy: Evidence from Made in China 2025 Initiative*. With Shengqiao Lin and Lizhi Liu.
- *Going Global, Hiring Local*. With Yueyi Li and Lizhi Liu.

AI-Human Interaction

- *Can AI Support Critical Thinking and Political Expression under Authoritarianism?*
- *Does AI Mitigate or Amplify Judicial Bias? A Field Experiment with Chinese Lawyers*.
- *Crowding Out Collaboration? Generative AI, Task Interdependence, and the Formation of Social Ties*.

SELECTED GRANTS & AWARDS

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, startup funding ($30,000)	2026
Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation Research Fellowship ($20,000)	2025
Honorable Mention, Best Poster, Rebecca B. Morton Conference	2025
Institute for Humane Studies Research Grants (2 awards; $7,000 total)	2024–2025
Columbia University Comparative Political Economy Grant (Co-PI; $7,000)	2024
UC San Diego Research Awards (3 awards; approximately $5,300 total)	2023–2024

SELECTED CONFERENCES & TALKS

University of Wisconsin–Madison (2026); UC San Diego (2026); UC Davis (2025); University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2025); CUHK, Shenzhen (2025); APSA (2018–2019, 2023–2026); IPES (2025); Money in Politics Conference (2024); MPSA (2017–2019, 2023–2026); PolMeth (2023, 2026); Rebecca B. Morton Conference on Experimental Political Science (2025); SIOE (2024); SPSA (2024); WPSA (2026); Young China Scholars Conference (2023–2024, 2026); Association of Chinese Political Studies Annual Conference (2026).

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor

- *Politics in China and Japan* (POLS 454), University of Tennessee, Knoxville — Fall 2026

Teaching Assistant (Selected)

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, University of California, San Diego — 2022–2024
- *Causal Inference and Applications*, University of California, San Diego — Summer 2024
- *Analyzing Politics*, University of California, San Diego — 2022
- *Corruption in Developing Countries*, University of California, San Diego — 2023
- *Advanced Statistical Applications*, University of California, San Diego — 2024

SERVICE & AFFILIATIONS

Journal Referee: *British Journal of Political Science*; *China Economic Review*; *Comparative Politics*; *Comparative Political Studies*; *Global Studies Quarterly*; *Journal of Public Policy*; *Political Science Research and Methods*; *Political Studies*.
Affiliate: 21st Century China Center, UC San Diego (2022–2026).
Undergraduate Honors Thesis Supervisor: UC San Diego (2022–2024).

SKILLS & LANGUAGES

Programming & Data: Python, R (tidyverse, fixest), Stata, Julia, GIS, Git.
Languages: Mandarin (native); English (fluent).

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Certificate in Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM), ICPSR Summer Program, University of Michigan.

REFERENCES

Margaret E. Roberts
Professor of Political Science
Chancellor's Associates Chair
Director, 21st Century China Center
University of California, San Diego
Social Sciences Building 301, 9500 Gilman Drive, #0521
La Jolla, CA 92093-0521
Primary Email: meroberts@ucsd.edu

Victor C. Shih
Professor and Ho Miu Lam Chair
in China and Pacific Relations
School of Global Policy and Strategy
University of California, San Diego
RBC 1319, 9500 Gilman Drive, #0519
La Jolla, CA 92093-0519
Primary Email: vcshih@ucsd.edu

Yiqing Xu
Associate Professor of Political Science
Stanford University
Encina Hall West, Room 409, 616 Serra Mall
Stanford, CA 94305
Primary Email: yiqingxu@stanford.edu

Stephan Haggard
Research Professor
Lawrence and Sallye Krause
Distinguished Professor Emeritus
School of Global Policy and Strategy, UC San Diego
RBC 1425, 9500 Gilman Drive, #0519
La Jolla, CA 92093-0519
Primary Email: shaggard@ucsd.edu