

Erdong Xu

exu02@gwu.edu

exu-econ.github.io

Education

The George Washington University	2020–2026
<i>Ph.D. in Economics</i>	
Tufts University	2018–2020
<i>M.S. in Economics</i>	
Xiamen University	
<i>B.A. in Economics</i>	2013–2017
<i>B.A. in Philosophy (Second Degree)</i>	2015–2017

Research Fields

Political Economy; Economic History; Applied Microeconomics; Development Economics

Research

Printing Morality: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Antebellum Political Realignment Job Market Paper

This paper shows how a widely circulated cultural work, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, shaped presidential voting patterns and contributed to the political realignment of the 1850s. Using advertisement records extracted from digitized historical newspapers, I construct county-level exposure to the novel based on travel times along the 1850 transportation network. Difference-in-differences estimates show that counties with greater exposure experienced larger declines in Democratic vote shares and stronger movement toward the emerging Republican Party during the 1850s. Evidence from naming patterns, Union Army enlistment, newspaper discourse, and Republican campaign rhetoric suggests that the novel reshaped moral attitudes toward slavery, amplified antislavery discussion, and helped translate moral response into partisan mobilization.

When Local Police Become Immigration Agents Working Paper

Since 2025, the federal government has rapidly expanded agreements that deputize local police to enforce immigration law. Using county-level ICE arrest data and the staggered adoption of 287(g) Task Force Model agreements, I show that deputization substantially increases custodial immigration arrests without crowding out ICE's own at-large arrests. Despite this expansion, I find no detectable response in city and county council discussions.

Tariff Interests and Political Realignment after the Panic of 1857 Working Paper

Using the Panic of 1857 as an exogenous shock, this paper examines how local tariff interests reshaped voting behavior. Counties with greater exposure to tariff-protected industries shifted more strongly away from the Democratic Party and toward the emerging Republican coalition. The findings illuminate the interaction among trade policy, industrial interests, and electoral politics.

Annual Data from Boston City Directories: Construction and Applications Work in Progress

This project constructs a new dataset from Boston city directories covering individuals, firms, occupations, and urban economic networks between 1830 and 1860. The annual records provide a high-frequency view of occupational change, business dynamics, and the nineteenth-century urban information economy.

Experience

Instructor, The George Washington University <i>Principles of Mathematics for Economics</i>	2024
Research Assistant, The George Washington University <i>Advisor: Prof. Maggie X. Chen</i>	2021–2023
Teaching Assistant, The George Washington University <i>International Economics; Principles of Mathematics for Economics</i>	2022–2023
Instructor, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Tufts University <i>Introduction to Chinese Philosophy</i>	2020
Instructor, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Tufts University <i>Why Shenzhen Rose</i>	2019

Conferences and Presentations

AEA/ASSA Annual Meeting (Poster; accepted)	Washington, DC, 2027
International Conference on Empirical Political Economy, Xiamen University	Xiamen, 2026
Workshop on History, Institutions, and Economic Development, Xiamen University	Xiamen, 2026
ASREC Annual Meeting	Los Angeles, 2026
Washington Area International Trade Symposium (Poster)	Washington, DC, 2026
World Economic History Congress	Lund, 2025
Economic History Association Annual Meeting (Poster)	Pittsburgh, 2023
ACES Political Economy Summer School	San Francisco, 2023
Warwick CAGE PhD Summer School	Coventry, 2023

Skills

Software: Python, Stata, QGIS
Languages: English (fluent), Chinese (native)

References

Maggie X. Chen

Professor of Economics, The George Washington University
Email: xchen@gwu.edu

Alessandra Fenizia

Assistant Professor of Economics, The George Washington University
Email: afenizia@gwu.edu

Yingyan Zhao

Assistant Professor of Economics, The George Washington University
Email: yingyan.zhao@gwu.edu