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**Di Sima**

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**Contact Information:**

Institute of Economics and Finance,  
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Nanjing, 211815, China.  
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**Personal Information:**

Gender: Male  
Citizenship: China

**Employment:**

Assistant Professor, Institute of Economics and Finance, Nanjing Audit University, China. 2019 - Present

**Education:**

**Ph.D.:** School of Economics, Singapore Management University, 2014 - 2019

Thesis Title: "Essays on Human Capital, Growth, and Innovation"

Thesis Committee: Fali Huang (advisor), Madhav S. Aney, and Jungho Lee

**M.A.:** Economics, School of Economics, Huazhong University of Science and Technology (China), 2014

**B.A.:** Applied Psychology, School of Education, Zhengzhou University (China), 2010

**Research Interests:**

Primary Fields: Education Economics, Public Economics, Development Economics, Economic Growth

Secondary Fields: Political Economy

**Publication:**

**"The Long-Term Effects of External Examinations on Entrepreneurship: Evidence from Global Entrepreneurship Monitor"** (Solo Author)

*Journal of Human Capital*, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1086/725061>

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**“Is Democracy Good for Growth?—Development at Political Transition Time Matters”** (First Author, with Fali Huang)

*European Journal of Political Economy*, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2022.102355>

### **Teaching:**

Intermediate Macroeconomics (Instructor), Undergraduate Program, Nanjing Audit University, 2019 Fall - 2024 Spring, Required Course for Economics Majors.

International Economics (Instructor), Undergraduate Program, Nanjing Audit University, 2020 Spring - 2024 Spring, Elective Course for Economics Majors.

Macroeconomics of Income Distribution (Teaching Assistant), Singapore Management University, Fall 2018

Intermediate Microeconomics (Teaching Assistant), Singapore Management University, Spring 2017 - Spring 2018

Labor Economics (Teaching Assistant), Singapore Management University, Fall 2015

### **Conference and Seminar Presentations:**

Chinese Economists Society (CES) China Conference at Zhejiang University 2024

The 2nd Camphor Industry Economics Forum at Jinan University 2024

The 47th Camphor Economics Seminar at University of International Business and Economics 2024

The International Association for Applied Econometrics (IAAE) Annual Conference at Xiamen University 2024

Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Economics Alliance Inaugural Conference at Sun Yat-sen University 2024

The 43rd Middle East Economic Association (MEEA) Annual Meeting Organized by Middle East Economic Association 2023 (Online)

The 14th International Symposium on Human Capital and Labor Markets at Central University of Finance and Economics (CUFE) 2022 (Online)

Nanjing Audit University Research Workshop 2020

International Conference on Economic Theory and Applications at Southwestern University of Finance and Economics 2018

China Meeting of the Econometric Society (CMES) at Fudan University 2018

Annual Australasian Public Choice Conference (APCC) at Deakin University 2017

Singapore Management University Research Workshop 2017

### **Departmental Service:**

Job Market Committee Member at Institute of Economics and Finance, Nanjing Audit University, 2020

### **Working Papers:**

**“Pro Liberalism or Illiberalism? The Nature of Civic Mobilization and Economic Growth”** (with Fali Huang)

**Abstract:** This study investigates the enduring link between the nature of mobilization during democratic transitions and subsequent economic growth. Using dynamic growth regressions with fixed effects, instrumental variable analyses, and event studies with data from 1960 to 2020, we find that Pro-liberalism mobilization, which respects diverse values, boosts post-transition economic growth compared to autocratic countries. In contrast, illiberal mobilization, which imposes a single value system, does not. This distinction leaves strong imprints not only on the formal design of political institutions but also on the prevailing norms of political behavior. It matters more for future economic growth than the violence level during the democratization process.

**“The Impacts of External Examinations on Labor-market Outcomes: The Level of Economic Development Matters”** *submitted*

**Abstract:** External examinations are widely used in school systems, and while they have positive effects on achievement tests, their impacts on labor-market outcomes are mixed. Leveraging

examination system variations across approximately 100 countries, we find that external examinations are positively associated with income and employment status in developing countries. However, the positive effects fade as a country approaches the world technology frontier and becomes richer, indicating a dependency on the country's level of economic development. This pattern is confirmed using an instrumental-variables strategy that employs the jackknifed average of examination systems within regions.

**“The Long-run Effects of Early External Examinations on Eventual Educational Attainment and Labor Market Outcomes”** *submitted*

**Abstract:** This paper investigates the enduring impacts of external assessments conducted at the culmination of primary education, primarily on the adult outcomes of immigrants residing in the United States. Using an epidemiological approach, we exploit variation in examination types within countries of birth and over time to provide the first evidence that external examinations have negative effects on educational achievement, earnings, and career development. Our IV strategy confirms this pattern. Criticisms of external examinations as inhibiting higher-order thinking or soft skills are supported by our findings, which suggest adverse effects may be working through channels such as reduced educational attainment, inhibited creativity in teaching, and promoted obedience formation. These results highlight the importance of reconsidering the widespread use of external examinations as a tool for measuring educational progress and promoting economic success.

**“Curriculum Control and Innovation”**

**Abstract:** This article presents empirical evidence on the impact of curriculum control on a country's innovative capacity, arguing that more centralized curriculum control that includes high-stakes achievement exams leads to homogenous learning experiences that can have negative consequences, such as impairing students' imagination, curiosity, critical thinking, and self-confidence. This approach is also less effective for cultivating creativity and may ultimately weaken a nation's innovativeness. The regression results are robust and reveal a negative correlation between curriculum control and various dimensions of innovation indicators. To establish causality, the study uses exogenous variation in land productivity deviation and the number of native cultures before colonization as instrumental variables. The findings suggest that education reforms aimed at improving test performance through centralized and standardized curriculum and exams could undermine a country's innovative capacity in the long term.

**“Economic Growth and Democratization —The Legacy of State History”**

**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the effects of democracy and state strength on economic growth and democratization. Autocracy with a powerful state provides specific education that improves productivity in mature technologies, while democracy offers general education that enhances productivity in advanced technologies and provides skills to defend the masses' interests in political conflicts. Autocracy with a developed state outperforms democracy in economic growth in the early stages of development, while democracy performs better when general human capital is the main engine of growth. Democratization is needed when an autocratic country becomes rich, but a well-developed state that once brought prosperity may become a stumbling block to political reform, as ruling elites can easily suppress opponents. Democracy has greater effects on growth when the country has a more educated population, while the effect of state strength on growth is stronger when the country has fewer educated people. An inverted U-shaped link exists between state strength and democratization.

**Working in Progress:**

**“Academic Freedom and Labor Market Performance: The Importance of Teaching Capacity in Higher Education”**

**Abstract:** This study explores the lasting effects of academic freedom in higher education on the labor-market outcomes of immigrants in the United States. Through an epidemiological approach, we use variations in academic freedom within countries of origin and over time to demonstrate that academic freedom alone has little impact on immigrants' labor-market performance. However, when

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combined with strong teaching capacity, academic freedom has positive effects on earnings and career development, as supported by our IV strategy. Our findings also suggest that academic freedom may improve higher-order thinking skills and creativity, especially when teaching capacity is strong. The positive effects may be channeled through improved creativity in teaching and reduced obedience formation. Our results underscore the importance of teaching capacity in unleashing the positive influence of academic freedom on labor-market performance and promoting economic success.

**“The Relationship between Exposure to Democracy and Support for Democratic Institutions: An Analysis of Heterogeneity”**

**Abstract:** This study uses large-scale survey data from over 110 countries to investigate the complex relationship between exposure to democracy and support for democratic institutions. By analyzing within-country variation across cohorts and surveys, we find that individuals who were exposed to strong democracy characterized by good conditions during the democratization process tend to demonstrate greater support for democratic institutions. Conversely, we observe no such relationship for those exposed to weak democracy characterized by undesirable conditions during democratization. To strengthen our findings, we employ an instrumental-variables strategy that leverages regional democratization waves and focuses on immigrants’ exposure to democracy prior to migration. Our results support a causal interpretation. Overall, our research provides new insights into the critical role that the democratization process plays in shaping individuals’ attitudes towards democratic institutions.

**“Redefining Initial Conditions: The Key Role of Transition-Time Economic Development Level in Democratic Economic Success”**

**"Stifled Success: How Early Educational Indoctrination Shapes Immigrant Labor Outcomes – Insights from the IPUMS Dataset"**

**Computer Skills:**

Stata, R, Python, Latex

**Languages:**

Chinese (native), English (fluent)