Historical Traumas, Revolution Participation, and State-building

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1. Introduction and Background

A growing literature argues that social conflicts have deep historical roots (Voigtländer and Voth 2012; Grosjean 2014; Fearon and Laitin 2014). Taking China as the case, I study the impact of historical traumas in the mid-17th century, which were made by the Manchus that ruled China for two and a half centuries, on the revolution in the early 20th century. The mechanism is that revolutionary propagandists adopted historical traumas to dis-identify Manchus from the Chinese and mobilize the anti-Manchu revolutionary campaign.

The Manchu's conquest and ruling of China (1644-1911) brought massive traumas to the Han Chinese, the major ethnic group in East Asia. The modern concept of nation-states did not emerge in the ideology of Chinese people in the 17th century. To many native Chinese of the 17th century, the Manchus came as barbarian invaders. Though the Manchus easily defeated the peasant rebellions and occupied North China in 1644, they met fierce resistance in the south. Ming loyalists fled to Nanjing, enthroned the royal

family members as emperors, and organized resistance in hopes of restoring the Ming dynasty.

As an alien race, the Manchus lacked legitimacy in ruling China when they invaded China in 1644. Along with its military campaign, the Manchu troops carried out several massacres to punish and terrify the residents who resisted Manchu's ruling. In Yangzhou, the armies under the Manchus' command killed 800,000 people, along with rape, murder, and pillage. The massacre is described in a contemporary account, *A Record of Ten Days in Yangzhou*. In the book, the author documented, ``*Several dozen people were herded like sheep or goats. Any who lagged were flogged or killed outright. The organs of those trampled like turf under horses' hooves or people's feet were smeared in the dirt, and the crying of those still alive filled the whole outdoors*.''

After establishing its government in Beijing, the Manchu rulers were particularly persistent in molding Han people's ideology. From 1644 to 1790, the government prosecuted Han intellectuals if suspecting their disloyalty toward the emperor or state in their writings intentionally or unintentionally, in what would be called the Literary Inquisition. Hundreds of scholars and their relatives were killed or exiled, and some were even posthumously executed.[2]

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[2] Posthumous execution is the ritual or ceremonial mutilation of an already dead body as a punishment. It is typically performed to show that even in death, one cannot escape justice.

Following the collapse of resistance efforts, thousands of scholar-officials fled to mountains, became monks to avoid the Queue Order, or fled to Japan and Korea, refusing to serve under a ``barbarian'' dynasty. These people were called ``yimin'', which means loyalists of a former dynasty. Some of them collected documents, compiled historical books, and wrote poems to record the history of the perished Ming and Southern Ming resistance through the power of personal memory.

Throughout the Qing dynasty, the government banned publications regarding massacres and resistance in the Manchu's conquest. People who wrote the history on these topics received harsh punishments. *Qu Dajun* (1630-1696), a Ming loyalist, wrote a book called *Huang Ming Si Chao Cheng Ren Lu* to record heroes in the resistance against the Manchus. In 1730, the government banned all of Qu's books and exiled his family. Though the Qing government tried to control collective memory via book bans and the Literary Inquisitions, private collectors still secretly preserved the literature on these sensitive issues. During Daoguang's reign (1821-1850), the book documenting the Yangzhou massacre, *A Record of Ten Days in Yangzhou*, was publicly published (Wang 2013). In another case in 1867, the top official *Zeng Guofan* and his staff discussed the massacres and questioned the Manchu regime's legitimacy.

At the end of the 20th century, led by *Sun Yat-sen*, the Anti-Manchu revolutionary movement took shape in Honolulu in 1894 with the first organization, *the Revive China Society*. As the revolutionary movement gained momentum, increasingly more young

intellectuals joined the movement. The revolutionary movement's significant change took place in 1903, making it more organizational and ideological (Gasster 1969). Several new groups were founded from 1903 to 1906, and three of them unified into *the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance* in 1905. The revolutionaries launched uprisings in few cities and assassinated senior officials who held office in the Qing government. Besides, the revolutionaries adopted ethnic-based anti-Manchuism slogans for propaganda to attract more students and the new army to join the revolutionary movement. *The Chinese Revolutionary Alliance* drafted their political manifesto: ``*to expel the Manchu people, revive China, establish a Republic, and distribute land equally among the people*.'' Among all goals, the first task for revolutionaries was to overturn the Manchu-led Qing government.

Among the propaganda, historical traumas were widely propagated and expounded to stir up national emotion against the Manchu's ruling. The revolution propagandists borrowed the modern theories about ethnicity and nation from the Western countries and announced that Manchus were foreigners who colonized China. Since the Manchu could not save China from foreign aggression, they should return the regime to Han Chinese (Wang 1905). The propagandists wrote articles and pamphlets to express their theories and adopted historical traumas to arouse the Han people's anti-Manchu sentiment.

Taking the Literary inquisition as another case, in a pamphlet, *The Revolutionary Army*, the authors wrote, ``*China has been subjugated by the Manchus for 260 years! Our Han*

Chinese suffer cruel lives at the Manchus' hands, so everyone has the responsibility to overturn the Manchu regime. Since the Qianlong reign, people of conscience such as Lv Liuliang, Zeng Jing and Qi Zhouhua [victims of the Literary Inquisition] upheld the value of ``Hua'' to enlighten the mass...... The Manchus use the literary inquisition to torture Han Chinese and tell them to shut up."

In one newspaper founded by revolutionaries, *Zhong Guo Bai Hua Bao*, it used eight volumes to reprint the book *A Record of Ten Days in Yangzhou*. In two additional newspapers, *Jiangsu* and *Zhejiang Chao*, editors published biographies of Ming heroes. They praised their brave deeds, including *Shi Kefa*'s defending in Yangzhou and *Huang Chunyao*'s resistance in Jiading. The propagandists also highly complemented the work of Ming loyalists. They compare the philosopher *Huang Zongxi* to *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, and pointed out that China could evolve into a democratic nation following Huang's theory without the Manchus' invasion.

Was the propaganda effective in mobilizing the anti-Manchu campaign? According to *Qiu Ao*, a member of *Huaxinghui* and *Guangfuhui* from Hunan province, he had already read books written by *Wang Fuzhi,* a Ming loyalist from Hunan province. He later studied the massacres and the Literary Inquisition from pamphlets issued by revolutionary propagandists. Boosted by these readings, he held a hostile attitude to the Qing government. In 1904 when he had the chance to study in Japan, he made friends with revolutionaries there and joined *Huaxinghui* (Qiu 1981). In Short, the propaganda

successfully dis-identified the Manchus from the Han Chinese and facilitated the Han people's self-identification (Wang 2013).

2. Data and Results

2.1 data

The primary dependent variable is the number of revolutionaries in each prefecture and year between 1900 and 1906, which comes from Chang (1975) and Luo (1958).

I adopt four variables to measure historical traumas, two about the Manchu's harsh repression, and two on Han people's resistance. For simplicity, I transform all four traumas into dummies and sum up them to produce a general index of historical traumas.

The newspaper data is from The Full-text of Journals in the Late Qing Database (FJLQ), which collects around 2.7 million articles from 300 newspapers published between 1853 and 1911, nearly all journals in the late Qing. For each journal or newspaper, the database gives a brief introduction, such as the head office, founders, and topics.

Based on the introduction of each newspaper, revolutionary propagandists founded 19 newspapers, which contain 9995 articles. Followed the method in Baker et al. (2016), I read all these 9995 articles and select articles with anti-Manchu sentiment by the following

criteria: 1) contain the word ``Manchu'' or ``Han'' and dis-identify the Manchus from Han Chinese; 2) on massacres in early Qing; 3) on the Literary Inquisition; 4) on Ming heroes who fought against the Manchu's conquest; 5) on Ming loyalists; 6) on Song loyalists. Like Fouka and Voth (2016), I use the average share of anti-Manchu items to measure the anti-Manchu sentiment. In the following equation, I first calculate the percentage of anti-Manchu articles in newspaper j in year t and then take an average to get the prefecture-year level index.

2.2 results

By reading about 10000 newspaper articles and using deep learning to analyze 0.3 million newspaper article titles, I produce two indexes to measure the anti-Manchu sentiment. Adopting a difference-in-difference design, I find that prefectures with historical traumas responded more actively to the anti-Manchu propaganda and contributed to the development of more revolutionaries. The result was not an outcome of the traumas' persistent effect. Instead, the revolutionary propagandists fitted the historical traumas into the rising nationalism propaganda and effectively achieved its goal of mobilizing the revolution.

I conduct several robustness checks to which the current studies have alluded in accounting for the revolution participation in the study period. The alternative hypotheses include abolishing exam quotas, anti-missionary conflicts, modernization, secret societies,

and Manchu-Han conflicts. Though the checks do not challenge the other two main ideas, the abolition of exam quotas from Bai and Jia (2016) and missionary conflicts from Mattingly and Chen (2020), this paper's central argument keeps consistent with different checks and specifications.

One concern that may threaten the understanding of the result above is that the historical traumas always drive Chinese people to resist the Qing government's ruling instead of via the nationalism propaganda in the late Qing. To alleviate this concern, I conduct two placebo tests. The first is to examine if historical traumas are related to rebellions during the whole period of the Qing dynasty. The second is to use the Boxer rebellion to test if the uprising in 1899 had already reflected historical traumas' revival. The placebo test shows that though the Manchus committed a number of heinous crimes against the Han Chinese, particularly in their conquest of China in the mid-seventeenth century, the historical traumas did not produce an area that was difficult to control during the 250 years. To construct political legitimacy and maintain social stability, the Manchus made efforts to dissipate the Han people's opposition, including inheriting the exam system to choose Han officials. Coming back to the context of the revolution campaign in the early 20th century, it was not an outcome of the traumas' persistent effect. Instead, the revolutionary propagandists fitted the historical traumas into the rising nationalism theory and effectively achieved its goal of mobilizing the revolution.

2.3 position in literature

Recently, there's a debate on the origins of the Revolution of 1911 in China, which terminated China's imperial system. Bai and Jia (2016) argued that the revolution was a product of abolishing the exam system, which provided a social mobility channel. Mattingly and Chen (2020) showed that local elites used nationalism to mobilize anti-foreign protests and to found nationalist political organizations. Kung and Wang (2020) found that foreign education, especially Chinese students in Japan, played a crucial role in the political transformation. While these factors all contributed to the revolution in the early 20th century, the literature has not explored anti-Manchu propaganda's role in much detail. Given the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance's manifesto was ``To expel the barbaric Manchus, To revive China,'' the revolution's first task was to overturn the Manchu-led government. Hence, the role of ethnic identity has been long overlooked in the current debate.

This paper contributes to the small but rising literature regarding how media and propaganda mobilize social conflicts (Yanagizawa-Drott 2014 ; Adena et al. 2015). However, the current literature only utilized information on radio stations' locations. I exploit a more detailed variation of the propaganda content via analyzing millions of newspaper article titles.

This paper also contributes to the pioneering work on identity and violence by Amartya Sen (Sen 2007). In the book, Sen asked, ``Is it because violence creates an identity as

much as identity creates violence? " In this paper, I show that historical violence stimulated political identity under a specific circumstance, and then the political identity caused social conflicts or revolution. Akerlof and Kranton (2000) incorporate identity into an economic model to explain gender discrimination and social exclusion. This paper broadens the outcome of identity to social conflicts.

This paper is also related to extensive literature concerning the persistent influence of culture and politics. Fukua and Voth (2016) found that during the Euro crisis, German car sell experienced a more considerable market share decline in areas where the Germans carried out massacres in WWII. Che et al. (2015) showed that Japan's invasion of China from 1937 to 1945 had a long-term impact on cross-border trade and investment. Belmonte and Rochlitz (2019) examined the collective memory of the traumatic transition from the Soviet Union on political attitudes. They found that the government-led recollection campaign raised the support for the government. Ochsner and Roesel (2019) found that the rise of anti-Muslim sentiments and far-right voting in Austria resulted from Turkish troops' killing in the 16th century.

This paper may also relate to state-building literature (Dell and Pablo 2018; Bazzi et al. 2019). After the revolution's success, political elites in the Kuomintang party were more likely to come from areas with historical traumas. This pattern suggests that revolutionaries who were mobilized by nationalism in the early days were also crucial roles in building modern China's political system.

The field of computational linguistics has made tremendous progress in processing various massive amounts of text data. Borrowed the wisdom, economists have applied machine learning methods to broaden our understanding of related areas (Varian 2014; Gentzkow et al. 2019), for instance, estimate political slant (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010), predict economic outcomes (Jean et al. 2016; Glaeser et al. 2016), and causal inference (Mullainathan and Spiess 2017; Athey 2018). This paper compares the precision of different classification models in deep learning and chooses a neural network model LSMT to classify millions of text data.