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Political Repression and Nation-building

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Nations are products of modernity, but they also have historical roots. In the conquest of China in the mid-17th century, the Manchu-led Qing government oppressed the Han Chinese, the native population of China. Two centuries later, when modern newspaper technology became available, revolutionary propagandists exploited these events, reframing the political repression as ethnic conflict to ignite nationalist fervor. Applying machine learning to analyze 0.3 million newspaper article titles, I find that prefectures characterized by repression and resistance responded to the anti-Manchu propaganda by producing more nationalist revolutionaries. Using the historical political cycle as the instrumental variable, I confirm the causal link. The preservation of historical memories—through books, rituals, and secret societies—served as a transmission mechanism. After the 1911 Chinese Revolution, revolutionaries strove to establish a modern nation-state, founding the Kuomintang (Nationalist) party, army, and government. The results indicate that propaganda utilizing historical repression and resistance shaped the political identity and played a pivotal role in the nation-building of modern China.

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Abstract

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Keywords: political repression, newspapers, revolution, nation-building, China.

JEL classification Numbers: D74, N45, P00, Z1

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1 Introduction

Studies on nationalism often view nations as products of the broader modernization process (Anderson 1983; Ranger and Hobsbawm 1983; Gellner 1983). A central element of this perspective is the role of print capitalism—particularly newspapers—in creating a shared sense of identity among geographically dispersed populations. Print media not only enabled communication beyond local communities, but also served as a vehicle for ideological dissemination and political imagination, fostering a sense of nationhood (Anderson 1983). In parallel, a different strand of scholarship emphasizes the pre-modern roots of national identity, highlighting the enduring influence of historical memory, cultural traditions, and collective myths (Armstrong 1982; Smith 1986). This paper bridges these two perspectives by examining how newspapers contributed to the invention of the modern Chinese nation not only by circulating information, but by strategically activating historical narratives rooted in collective trauma. In doing so, it shifts the focus from media as a neutral carrier of information to media as a tool of mobilization and ideological construction. By analyzing the interplay between modern propaganda and historical memory, this study offers new insights into the role of political messaging in shaping national identity during China's transition from empire to nation-state.

On the eve of the 1911 Chinese Revolution, China was ruled by the Manchu-led Qing government. The Manchus, originating in Manchuria, invaded China (where the local people were known as the Han) and governed the country under the name of "Qing" from 1644 to 1911 (see Figure 1). To some extent, the Qing dynasty was a conquest regime, comparable to the Mughal Empire and the Ottoman Empire (Wittfogel 1949). At the time of conquest in the mid-17$^{\text{th}}$ century, the Han population mounted prolonged resistance but was harshly repressed. With the spread of newspaper technology in the early 20$^{\text{th}}$ century, these earlier historical events once again became visible to the public. Revolutionary propagandists used print media to reinterpret political repression as ethnic conflict, inventing a modern Chinese nation while fueling discontent toward the Qing regime. Although the revolutionary ideas examined in this paper were largely articulated and disseminated by elites and had yet to reach most of the population, this study argues that nation-building can begin as an elite-driven process—through the symbolic construction of national identity—even be-

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fore mass participation takes place. The revolutionary campaign ultimately overthrew the Qing empire and established the Republic of China (1912–1949), the first democratic republic in Asia.

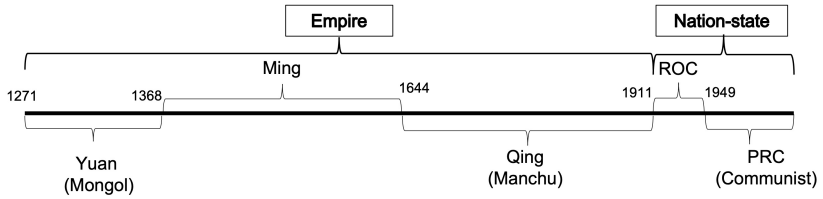


Figure 1: Tha dynastic changes in China from the 13th century to today

Notes: The figure shows the dynastic changes of China. The period around 1911 indicates China's transition from an empire to a modern nation-state.

I begin by constructing a repression and resistance index using newly digitized prefecture-level data on Qing-era massacres, literary inquisitions, resistance leaders, and Ming loyalists. Baseline cross-sectional regressions show that prefectures with more intense histories of repression and resistance were significantly more likely to produce revolutionaries two centuries later. However, this correlation alone does not explain why these legacies translated into political mobilization after such a long delay. I argue that anti-Manchu propaganda acted as a catalyst, reactivating dormant historical memories and triggering revolutionary participation in regions with such legacies.

To test this hypothesis, I draw on a newly developed newspaper database comprising over 500,000 historical documents from 502 periodicals published between 1816 and 1911. Using the newspaper database, I construct measures of anti-Manchu propaganda and examine their intensity across time and regions. I begin by manually coding 9,995 articles from revolutionary newspapers, categorizing their ideological content. To scale up the analysis, I train a machine learning model to predict anti-Manchu sentiment in a broader corpus of 300,000 newspaper articles. I first examine the direct effect of anti-Manchu propaganda on revolutionary participation. The results are mixed, suggesting that propaganda alone was not uniformly effective across regions. I then adopt a difference-in-differences framework that interacts the repression-resistance index with measures of propaganda exposure. The results indicate that propaganda was significantly more effective in prefectures with deeper legacies of repression and resistance, leading to greater revolutionary mobilization. This finding highlights the role of modern media not only in disseminating ideas, but also in strategically reactivating historical trauma to catalyze political action.

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Since the historical events are unlikely to have been randomly allocated among prefectures, I adopt an instrumental variable (IV) strategy based on exogenous shocks to 17$^{\text{th}}$-century elites' political choices to estimate the causal effect. Specifically, I exploit variations in the changing numbers of *Jinshi* degree holders before the Manchus invaded China. Like the grande école in France, China had a civil exam system that was adopted in the 10$^{\text{th}}$ century and was designed to recruit elites into the government. *Jinshi* was the highest qualification in the exam, and most candidates were from rich influential families that controlled local resources. I find that elites who obtained their *Jinshi* degrees later in the mid-17$^{\text{th}}$ century (indicating they were younger) were more likely to serve the new Qing court among different political choices. I expect that if a prefecture produced a higher number of *Jinshi* degree holders in the last few years before the Manchu's invasion, then this prefecture was less likely to organize resistance and be subject to repression. The IV estimation confirms the causal link.

How did repression and resistance from the 17th century become politically salient two centuries later? One mechanism is the preservation of historical memories through books, rituals, and secret societies. These cultural traits helped elites maintain ethnic traditions and group identity (Michalopoulos and Xue 2021), making them more receptive to anti-Manchu propaganda (Wang 2003). I measure this memory preservation using banned books from the 1790s that documented repression and resistance, and find empirical support for this mechanism. Secret societies may have played a similar mnemonic role. A second mechanism is the propaganda's explicit recognition of past repression, which could have incited nationalist sentiment. I read revolutionary newspapers and tracked mentions of historical repression and resistance, but find no significant effect from this recognition alone. These findings contribute to broader research on the long-run impact of historical trauma on belief systems and the formation of durable in- and out-group distinctions (Lowes and Montero 2021; Williams 2022; Ramos-Toro 2023).

I conduct several robustness checks, to which current studies have alluded in accounting for the revolution participation or social conflicts during the study period. Alternative hypotheses include the abolition of the civil exam (Bai and Jia 2016; Hao et al. 2022), anti-missionary conflicts (Mattingly and Chen 2022), access to information and foreign education (Kung and Wang 2020; Zhang 2022), the influence of the Taiping Rebellion and the Boxer Rebellion, and the Manchu-Han

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conflicts. I also incorporate other ideologies, such as anti-imperialism and pro-democracy, as well as a competing ideology called constitutionalism, in the regression. The central argument of this paper remains consistent under different checks and specifications.

In the last main part of the paper, I examine the mobilization and consolidation of the nation-state building after the 1911 Revolution. I regress outcomes of nation-state building, including representatives in the first National Assembly (1913-1925), top leaders (1924-1952), student soldiers (1924-1926) and army generals (1927-1949), and senior officials (1927-1949) of the Kuomintang (KMT, also referred to as the Chinese Nationalist Party), on repression and resistance. All outcomes are positively correlated with repression and resistance. Like the argument in Bai et al. (2023) that elite networks can influence national politics, pioneering revolutionaries (1900-1906) as the core team set out to create a modern nation-state by forming the KMT party, army, and government. The results suggest that the propaganda of repression and resistance had a long-term effect on the modern nation-state building of China.

This paper contributes to the literature on nation-building (Dell and Querubin 2018; Chen and Yang 2019; Bazzi et al. 2019; Blouin and Mukand 2019; Giuliano et al. 2022; Rohner and Zhuravskaya 2023). While most of the nation-building literature emphasizes shaping the national identity of the mass population, this is typically achieved by implementing a unified tax rate, law, and common language (Johnson 2015; Blanc and Kubo 2021), spreading primary education (Cinnirella and Schueler 2018; Alesina et al. 2021), launching war mobilization and redistribution (Scheve and Stasavage 2012; Caprettini and Voth 2022), and promoting secularization (Ansell and Lindvall 2013). The key objective of these efforts is to homogenize the population in terms of preferences or common interests (Assouad 2020; Depetris-Chauvin et al. 2020). Conversely, this paper focuses on the role of elite mobilization in nation-building (Mattingly and Chen 2022), as revolutionaries were a small team of elite intellectuals. Also, nation-building can be initiated by the rebels, not necessarily by the state ruling elites (Chen and Kung 2023). Additionally, nation-building can be path-dependent and can take adaptive strategies.[1]

This paper also adds to the growing body of knowledge about how media and propaganda

[1]The anti-Manchu propaganda was highly strategic, evident in the fact that the revolutionaries switched to embrace the concept of Chinese nationalism to unite non-Han ethnicities after the revolution's success.

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mobilized social movements (Yanagizawa-Drott 2014; Adena et al. 2015; Dippel and Heblich 2021; Wang 2021; Adena et al. 2021; Qin et al. 2021; Ang 2023; Bai et al. 2023). More broadly, this paper should be included with the literature on media and politics (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010; Gentzkow et al. 2011; Enikolopov et al. 2011; Strömberg 2015; Enikolopov et al. 2020). This paper focuses on the period when newspapers, a mature communication technology in Western countries, were first introduced to China. As a result of the "print capitalism", Chinese readers became aware of new theories about nationalism and nations.

The paper is in agreement with the wider literature on the persistent influence of politics and culture (Voigtländer and Voth 2012; Belmonte and Rochlitz 2019; Cantoni et al. 2019; Fouka and Voth 2023). However, it differs from most studies in this literature, which usually examine the long-term effect of certain historical events on current political and economic outcomes. In this sense, only my paper and Ochsner and Roesel (2024) explored the long-lasting impact of historical events that transpired centuries ago. In line with these studies, I find that hidden memories and beliefs are the basis for this persistent impact. In a novel finding, this paper stresses the role of intellectuals in both preserving historical memories and mobilizing social movements, which could be applied to societies with strong traditional legacies such as China, Japan, and Ukraine(Rozenas et al. 2017; Rubin and Ma 2024).[2]

A recent discussion has surfaced regarding the cause of the 1911 Chinese Revolution, which brought China from an autocratic system to a republic institution. The pioneering study by Bai and Jia (2016) was among the first to investigate the 1911 Chinese Revolution. They looked at how the abolition of the civil exams in China affected the revolution. Two other works (Mattingly and Chen 2022; Kung and Wang 2020) focused on the role of foreign intervention in the political transition. The literature has not explored the revolution through the lens of nation-building (shown in Figure 1). Anti-Manchu propaganda as a nation-building effort is an important phase of a long-lasting and path-dependent nation-building process from 1850 to 1949. It was not the first one (the self-strengthening movement and the Boxer rebellion), yet not the last one (KMT's effort in the 1920s, and Communists' effort during the Sino-Japanese war), but it serves as the turning

[2] A similar case would be Meiji Japan which restored the rule of the Emperor to mobilize elite consensus (Rubin and Ma 2024). Rozenas et al. (2017) shows that communities subjected to a greater intensity of deportation in the 1940s are now significantly less likely to vote for "pro-Russian" parties.

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point from empires to nation-states.

The remainder of this paper is as follows. Section 2 provides the relevant historical background. Section 3 introduces the data examined in this study. The main regression findings and the instrumental variables estimation are shown in Section 4 and the mechanism is further discussed in Section 5. Section 6 provides robustness checks. Section 7 discusses the role that revolutionaries played in the further consolidation of the nation-state building. Finally, the last section concludes the paper.

2 Historical Background

2.1 The Manchu Conquest of China in the Mid-17th Century

China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), originated in Manchuria (today Northeast China) and was founded by the Manchus (see a map in Appendix A). It was preceded by the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), whose ruling groups were Han Chinese, the native ethnicity of China. When peasant rebels defeated Beijing in April 1644, the Ming emperor hung himself. As a result of the civil unrest, the Qing empire conquered China. The local Han people organized long-lasting resistance but were harshly repressed by the Qing government. The next paragraphs list two types of repression and two types of resistance in a one-to-one correspondence. The Qing government employed massacres to suppress the military resistance, while literary inquisitions were used to repress intellectuals who refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Manchu rulers.

Resistance: Although the Manchus defeated the peasants and occupied North China in 1644, they encountered fierce resistance in the South. The Ming officials fled to Nanjing, enthroned the royal family members as emperors, and organized resistance in hopes of restoring the Ming dynasty. For instance, Shi Kefa (1602-1645), a senior official in the Ming dynasty, served as the Minister of War for the Nanjing court and established defenses between the Huai River and Yangtze River to defend against the Manchu invasion. Despite this, Yangzhou, the last defense city north of the Yangtze River, fell in May 1645, and the Nanjing court surrendered without a fight in June. The

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Manchus held all of China until 1661.

Massacres: To punish the residents who resisted Manchu's rule and warn the rest of the population, the Manchus committed massacres along with their military campaigns. There were massacres in at least 18 prefectures, killing about two million Han Chinese people (Cao 2000). One of the most notorious massacres is known as the Ten Days in Yangzhou. Shi Kefa defended the city to the death, and then the Manchu armies massacred the population in May, 1645, killing 800,000 people in ten days and subjecting many more to rape and looting.[3]

The Manchu government also attempted to conquer China by changing the Han people's habits and culture. Traditionally, adult Han Chinese did not cut their hair for cultural and philosophical reasons.[4] In 1645, the Qing government ordered male Han Chinese to shave their foreheads and braid the rest of their hair in a queue identical to those worn by the Manchus. The Qing government adopted the slogan "Cut the hair and keep the head, or keep the hair and cut the head," and massacred people who refused to comply with this edict. Residents in Jiading revolted against the Queue Order, and the Manchu troops killed approximately 30,000 people. Three to four days later, another resistance broke out in the city, followed by a second massacre. A month later, the Manchu committed a third massacre (Dennerline 1981).

Loyalists: With the successful execution of military operations, the Qing court transferred its focus to the political control over elites. Thousands of scholars fled to mountains, became monks in defiance of the Queue Order, or fled to Japan and Korea, refusing to serve under the Qing dynasty. They were called *yimin*, which means loyalists of a former dynasty. A number of them collected documents, compiled history books, and wrote poetry documenting the defeated Ming and Southern Ming resistance through the power of personal memory. For example, the scholar Lv Liuliang (1629-1683) was active in the anti-Manchu military movement. After the resistance failed, he became a hermit. In his books, he argued that the Manchus, as a foreign race, should not rule China (Zelin 2002). After Lv passed away, his books came to the government's attention.

[3]The massacre is described in a contemporary account, *Yangzhou Shiri Ji (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."

[4]See Figure K.1 for the discussion on the politics of men's hair in Chinese history.

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His corpse and that of his son were exhumed and mutilated, and all his works were forbidden.

Inquisitions: Manchu rulers were particularly persistent in molding the Han people's ideology. From 1644 to 1790, the government prosecuted Han intellectuals if they were suspected of inciting disloyalty toward the emperor or state with their writings, in what has become known as the literary inquisition. Hundreds of scholars were killed or exiled, and some were even posthumously executed.[5] Their publications were banned by the Qing government, and their readers were punished as well. In one instance, a scholar was executed for putting the word *zhuo* (murky) before the word *qing* (clean) in a poem because the emperor thought he was using homonyms to disparage the Qing government (Archive of the Museum of the Forbidden City 1934). Xue (2021) first investigated the impact of the inquisition and found that it degraded social capital in Qing China and even lowered political interest and community engagement in the modern era. Li (2023) found that the inquisition altered intellectuals' writing styles in Qing dynasty. Bai et al. (2024) revealed that books subjected to stricter censorship experienced significant declines in publication.

2.2 The Rise of Nationalism in the Early 20th Century

After the failures in the first and second Opium Wars, between 1850 and 1895, Chinese political elites endeavored to reconcile traditional Confucian values with Western instrumental rationality, as reflected in Western technologies and institutions. They reached a consensus to launch self-strengthening enterprises by incorporating Western technologies while maintaining traditional ownership structures and managerial styles (Keller and Shiue 2021; Kung 2022). However, this approach proved ineffective, culminating in the 1895 defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. Following 1895, Chinese commoners attempted to mobilize anti-Christian uprisings by invoking folk religion and rituals (Esherick 1988). This grassroots mobilization also failed, as evidenced by the disastrous outcomes of the Boxer Rebellion.

Consequently, pioneering revolutionaries deliberately adopted a strategy of narrow Han (anti-Manchu) nationalism to mobilize elites—including urban literati, overseas-returned students, mer-

[5] Posthumous execution consists in the ritual mutilation of an already dead body in order to demonstrate that even in death one cannot escape punishment. See the case of Lv Liuliang above.

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chants, secret society members, and disaffected military officers. There were four reasons for this strategy: First, since the Qing state was responsible for the recent failures, its legitimacy was already weakened, making it easy to blame the Manchu rulers and their ethnicity for these failures. Second, the Boxer Rebellion had demonstrated that mass grassroots mobilization was too costly and risky. Thus, revolutionaries chose to mobilize elites instead of the masses to overthrow the Manchu rulers. Third, anti-Manchu propaganda turned out be effective to mobilize elites who were discontent with Manchu's political repression such as literate inquisition, and who were quite familiar with the books of Ming loyalists. Finally, lacking a broad power base, revolutionaries had to rely on secret societies that had advocated anti-Manchu slogans for centuries to establish networks and initiate military actions (Esherick 1976).

The anti-Manchu revolutionary movement, led by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), took shape in Honolulu in 1894 with its first organization, the Revive China Society. In 1903, the revolutionary movement became more organized and ideological (Gasster 1969). Five new groups were founded between 1903 and 1906; two groups merged with the Revive China Society to form the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance in 1905.[6] Revolutionaries launched uprisings in several cities and assassinated senior officials in the Qing government. On the ideological side, to generate more interest in the revolutionary movement, revolutionaries created ethnically anti-Manchuism slogans for propaganda. The Chinese Revolutionary Alliance drafted its political manifesto: "To expel the Manchus, to revive China," and the revolutionaries' first objective was to overthrow the Manchu-led Qing government. In a pamphlet titled *The Revolutionary Army*, the propagandists 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."

As the newspaper industry matured and readers' numbers increased (Zhang 2022), the propagandists borrowed modern theories about ethnicity and nation from Western countries and claimed that Manchus were foreigners who colonized China. The Manchus and the Han people had different ancestries, dialects, homelands, habits, religions, and temperaments. As a ruling class enjoying political privilege, the Manchus refused to mix with the majority Han people. Unless the Manchu

[6] See Appendix K.

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government was overturned, China would not terminate the autocratic system (Wang 1905).[7] The propagandists wrote articles and pamphlets to express their views and used historical repression and resistance to arouse the Han people's anti-Manchu sentiment. Figure 2 plots the prevalence of keywords related to nation, ethnicity, repression, and resistance in newspaper headlines between 1833 and 1906. The data suggest that, beginning in the early 20th century, the propaganda machine echoed memories of historical repression and resistance.

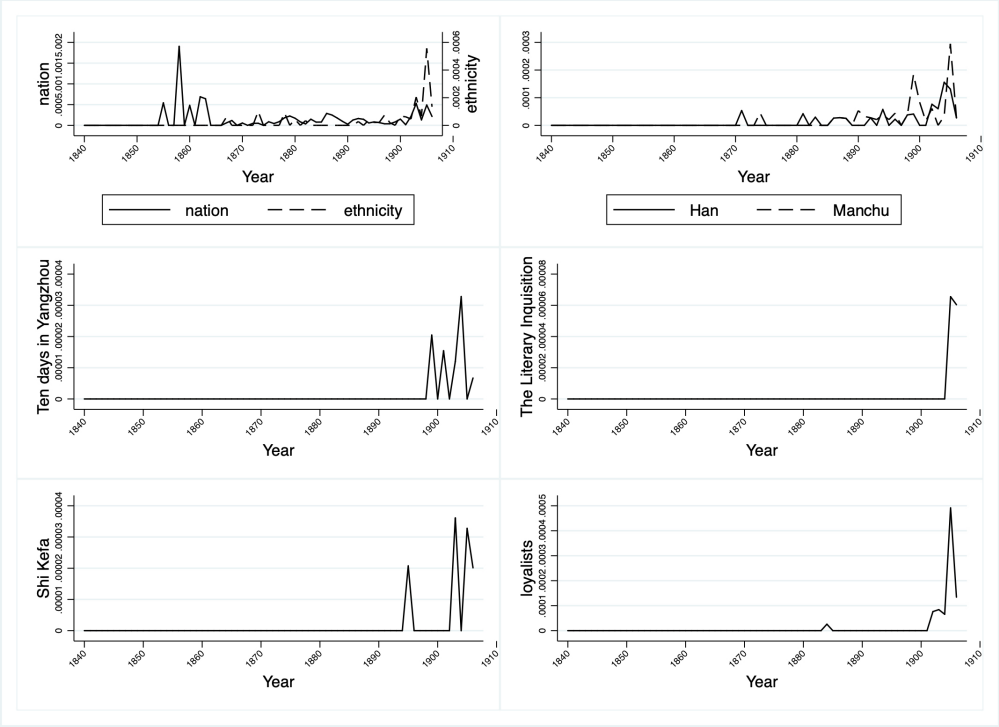


Figure 2: The frequencies of keywords in the Full-text of Journals in the Late Qing Dynasty Database by year

Notes: The figure above shows the shares of headlines containing related keywords in the Full-text of Journals in the Late Qing Dynasty Database. The upper-left one plots the frequency of the word "nation" as well as that of the word "ethnicity". The word nation is translated as "民族" in Chinese, and the word ethnicity is translated as "种族". The upper-right one shows the frequency of the word "Manchu" and that of "Han". I search the word "满人" and "汉人" in the database, which refer to Manchu people and Han people. The middle-left is for the the word "ten days in Yangzhou" by searching "扬州十日", which refers to the Yangzhou massacre. The middle-right is the frequency of the word "the literary inquisition" (by searching "文字狱") and the name "吕留良" who was a well-known victim of the literary inquisition. The bottom-left one is the frequency of the Ming martyr "Shi Kefa (史可法)" by directly searching his name as well as his official title "Shi Gebu (史阁部)". The bottom-right one is the frequency of three famous Ming loyalists and their courtesy names. They are Gu Yanwu (顾炎武, 1613-1682, also Gu Tinglin, 顾亭林), Huang Zongxi (黄宗羲, 1610-1695, also Huang Lizhou, 黄梨洲), and Wang Fuzi (王夫之, also Wang Chuanshan, 王船山).

It is worth pointing out that the revolutionaries exploited a retelling of the history to fan the

[7] Wang's theory was largely based on the book *The Theory of the State* by Johann Kaspar Bluntschli (1808-1881).

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flames of discontent. While the massacres in the mid-17th century were indeed carried out under Manchu orders, most of the troops involved were led by Han Chinese, not Manchus.[8] Moreover, the Qing emperors' use of literary inquisitions to suppress dissent was not specifically targeted at Han Chinese culture or ethnicity, but rather at perceived threats to their rule, regardless of ethnic origin.[9] And some Ming loyalists who refused to serve the Qing did so based on Confucianist values rather than ethnic considerations.[10] Contrary to the revolutionaries' narrative, the Qing government had taken steps towards ethnic integration, abolishing the ban on Manchu-Han intermarriage in 1901 and asserting that they had never discriminated against Han Chinese. However, revolutionary propaganda painted a starkly different picture. They attributed all crimes against the Han people to the Manchu court, claimed that China had ceased to exist two centuries earlier, and portrayed the Qing as a foreign entity distinct from China.[11] In these narratives, political repression in the 17th century was exaggerated and invented as a new story of ethnic conflict.

Was the propaganda effective in mobilizing the anti-Manchu campaign? Qiu Ao (1879-1970), a revolutionary from the Hunan province, said that he had read books written by Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692), a Ming loyalist who also lived in the Hunan province. Later, he learned of the massacres and the literary inquisition from pamphlets issued by revolutionary propagandists. From these readings, he developed an anti-Manchu attitude. While studying in Japan in 1904, he met revolutionaries there and joined them (Qiu 1981). In summary, the propaganda influenced the Han Chinese people to view themselves as the representatives of China by distinguishing them from the Manchus (Wang 2013).

3 Data

The summary statistics of all variables are presented in Appendix C.

[8] Li Chengdong (?-1649), who commanded the Jiading massacre, and Shang Kexi (1604-1676), who carried out the Guangzhou massacre were all Han Chinese.

[9] In the case of Wang Jingqi (1672-1726), he was executed because he was a follower of emperor Yongzheng's enemy Nian Gengyao (1680-1726). Besides, we could also see that a Manchu official, Echang (1691-1755), was killed because he was involved into a literary inquisition case.

[10] Among Ming loyalists, Wang Fuzhi and Lv Liuliang stressed the ethnic differences between the Manchus and the Han, while Huang Zongxi and Gu Yanwu did not.

[11] Although this argument remains controversial, most Chinese and Western historians recognize that the Qing dynasty is a Chinese dynasty.

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3.1 Dependent Variable

The primary dependent variable is the number of newly recruited members of six revolutionary groups in each prefecture and year between 1900 and 1906, which comes from Chang (1975) and Luo (1958). This period from 1900-1906 is when the revolution spread in China and among overseas Chinese.[12] Chang (1975) gives the origins of the members of five revolutionary groups, and Luo (1958) provides the roster of the largest group, the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance. Bai and Jia (2016) used the same sources, and I collected the data again from the original sources for further studies. In total, there are 1,404 recorded revolutionaries with origins from 157 prefectures (Figure 3).

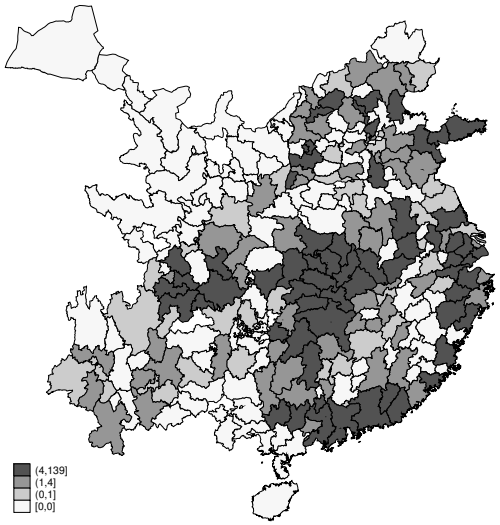


Figure 3: The distribution of revolutionaries, 1900-1906

Notes: This map illustrates the geographic distribution of revolutionaries' places of origin.

3.2 Repression and Resistance

The first type of repression is massacre. Information about massacres is taken from Cao (2000), which is based on official records of the Qing court, *Qing Shi Lu*. The second type of repression is literary inquisition. Based on research done at the Qing Imperial Archives in the 1930s, historians compiled 86 cases of the literary inquisition (Archive of the Museum of the Forbidden City 1934).

[12] 1906 is chosen as the last year since the roster of the biggest group, *the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance*, is no longer complete after that year.

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The first type of resistance involves the "martyrs" of the Ming dynasty in resistance against the Manchus' conquest.[13] Qu (1690) collected 385 leading figures who fought the Manchu invasion. The second type of resistance is that of Ming loyalists in the early Qing period. Sun (1912) collected the stories of approximately 520 Ming loyalists as well as their origins.[14] I convert all four measures into z-scores and sum them to produce a general index of the repression and resistance (Figure 4).

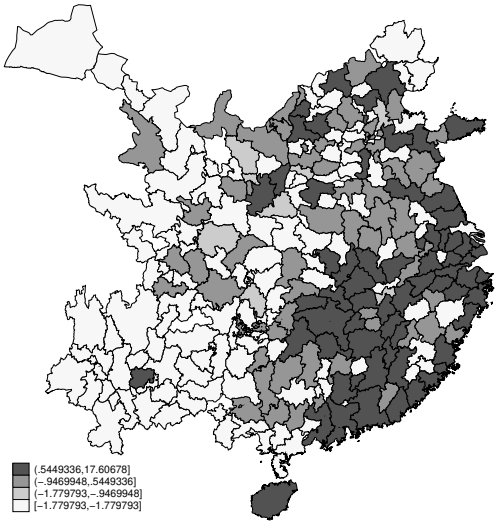


Figure 4: The distribution of repression and resistance

Notes: The map shows the regional distribution of repression and resistance, measured using the sum of z-scores.

3.3 The Anti-Manchu Propaganda in Newspapers

The newspaper articles are derived from the Full-text of Journals in the Late Qing Dynasty Database, which collects roughly 500,000 articles from 502 newspapers published between 1853 and 1911. The database contains a brief description of each journal, including the head office, founders, and topics.[15] For the purpose of this study, the database contains 315,725 articles from

[13] "Martyrs" here mean leading figures who died in the battles against the Manchu's invasion. Although the Qing government forbade books from discussing these "martyrs,"; later in 1766 emperor Qianlong ordered officials to write a book to honor these Ming martyrs and praise their loyalty.

[14] The sample selection problem rises if the historical events were compiled or edited by revolutionaries. Among four main sources, the work of Cao (2001) and Archives of the Museum of the Forbidden City (1934) were all based on archives of the Qing court. Qu Dajun compiled his book in the 1690s. Only Sun (1912) can bring such correlation. Because of this, the correlation problem of coding is not an issue. I also provide results using alternative measures in Appendix E.2.

[15] Articles are in Chinese traditional characters in a vertical direction, which is contained in a PDF document. The current technology cannot convert these texts into digital format using optical character recognition. Therefore, it is difficult to search for keywords or analyze the entire text of each article.

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136 newspapers published between 1899 and 1906.[16]

Index from Reading The database contains 9,995 articles from 19 newspapers that were founded by revolutionaries. Following the method of Baker et al. (2016), I read all 9,995 articles and selected articles with an anti-Manchu sentiment using keywords and topics. The detailed criteria are as follows: 1) contains the word "Manchu" or "Han" and identifies the Manchus as different from Han Chinese; 2) mentions massacres in the early Qing period; 3) introduces the literary inquisition; 4) involves leading figures who fought against the Manchu's conquest; 5) discusses Ming loyalists; 6) discusses other topics aimed at arousing the anti-Manchu sentiment.[17] An article is considered anti-Manchu if it meets at least one of the criteria. Similar to Fouka and Voth (2023), I use the average proportion of anti-Manchu articles to gauge the level of anti-Manchu sentiment in each newspaper. Based on the methods of Cagé and Rueda (2016) and Wang (2023) in which distance is an appropriate measure of newspaper coverage, I then divide the anti-Manchu sentiment by the distance from the newspaper's headquarters to prefecture p to assess the prefecture's exposure from newspaper j.[18] Finally, the average exposure from all newspapers is used to calculate the overall strength of the propaganda in each prefecture.

$$Propaganda_{pt} = \frac{1}{J}\sum_{j=1}^{J} \frac{[anti{-}Manchu\ articles_{jt}/articles_{jt}]}{1+ln(1+dis_{pj})} \tag{1}$$

Index from Machine Learning Two methodological concerns may affect the validity of the anti-Manchu sentiment measure above. First, the reading-based approach may be subjective. Second, propagandists may have published their articles in newspapers beyond the 19 revolutionary-founded outlets I initially analyzed. To address these concerns, I employ machine learning to process all 0.3 million newspaper articles and identify those containing anti-Manchu sentiment. Because the

[16] I exclude newspapers founded by governments and churches, pictorials, professional newspapers, and newspapers written in English, and thus 136 among 211 newspapers are left.

[17] Other topics include heroes and loyalists of Song dynasty who fought against foreign invasions such as Yue Fei (1103-1142) and Wen Tianxiang (1236-1283), the first emperor of Ming dynasty Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398) who ended the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty, and traitors to the Ming dynasty like Wu Sangui (1612-1678) and Hong Chengchou (1593-1665).

[18] More evidence to support this design could be found in appendix B. Newspapers in Japan were first sent to Shanghai via Japan's postal system, and from there distributed to other parts of China. Therefore, the distance for newspapers originating in Japan is calculated based on the location of Shanghai.

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full texts are not digitally available, I rely on article titles instead. As detailed in Appendix D, the machine learning models achieve an accuracy rate of approximately 93% in predicting article content based on titles. After classifying the full corpus, I apply Equation (1) to construct a propaganda exposure measure. This machine learning-based measure is highly correlated with the reading-based measure, with a correlation coefficient of 0.94. Appendix B maps the geographic spread of propaganda across China. Importantly, I find no evidence that the recruitment of revolutionaries influenced the distribution of propaganda, nor that areas with historical repression and resistance were more likely to be exposed to it.

3.4 Additional Variables

I draw on main control variables from Bai and Jia (2016). First, I control for demographic and geographical factors such as the population in 1880, area size, coast area, main rivers, basin Herfindahl-Hirschman Index and climate shocks. Second, state capacity as measured by the land tax per capita in 1820 is included. Social capital is also considered, such as the language fragmentation index. Additionally, I include human capital measures proxed by *Jinshi* density (Jiang 2007). The inclusion of distance in the propaganda measures raises the concern that the results may be confounded by proximity to major urban centers. To mitigate this, I control for newspaper density (Shi et al. 1991) and include distance to Shanghai as an additional control in the robustness checks reported in section 6.1.2.

4 Empirical Analysis

4.1 Baseline Correlation: Historical Repression and Revolutionary Participation

Before introducing variation in propaganda exposure, I first examine the cross-sectional correlation between historical repression and revolutionary participation. Table 1 presents regressions of the number of revolutionaries in each prefecture (1900-1906) on the repression and resistance index.

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Column (1) reports a strong positive association, suggesting that prefectures that experienced more repression and resistance in the 17th century produced more revolutionaries two centuries later. This result remains robust after including province fixed effects (Column 2) and a full set of controls (Column 3). However, these findings do not explain why such historical legacies translated into revolutionary mobilization specifically during the period 1900-1906. The next subsection further distinguishes between mere persistence and context-dependent ideological activation.

Table 1: The correlation between revolutionaries 1900-1906 and historical repression and resistance

VARIABLES	$revolutionaries1900-1906$		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Repression	2.399***	2.907***	2.786**
	(0.840)	(0.972)	(1.114)
ProvinceFE	N	Y	Y
Controls	N	N	Y
Observations	262	262	256
R-squared	0.269	0.437	0.477

Notes: The dependent variable is the number of revolutionaries in a prefecture between 1900 and 1906. The controls include population in 1880, area size, coast area, main rivers, Basin HHI, climate shocks, tax per capita in 1820, language fragmentation, Jinshi density and newspaper density. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. I cluster standard errors at the prefecture level.

4.2 Main Result: Repression, Propaganda, and Revolutionary Mobilization

How much more remarkable was the increase in revolutionary participation in areas with historical repression and resistance following exposure to anti-Manchu propaganda? I adopt a generalized difference-in-differences approach; the specification is as follows:

$$R_{pt} = \alpha + \beta Repression_p * Propaganda_{p,t-1} + \rho Propaganda_{p,t-1} + X_p * \theta_t' \Gamma + \delta_{prov} * \theta_t + \lambda_p + \epsilon_{pt} \quad (2)$$

Where R_{pt} is the number of revolutionaries in prefecture p and year t, and $Propaganda_{p,t-1}$ is the propaganda exposure in prefecture p and t derived from Equation (1). To avoid reverse

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causality, I choose $t-1$ because most of the newspapers that published anti-Manchu articles were founded by people who had joined the revolutionary groups.[19] $Repression_p$ refers to the index of repression and resistance. X_p includes prefecture-level control variables listed in Section 3.4. The specification also includes the prefecture fixed effect λ_p and year fixed effect γ_t. To control for provincial-specific trends, I add the interaction of the province fixed effect and year fixed effect $\delta_{prov} * \theta_t$.

The main results are presented in Table 2. Panel A reports regressions that include only the propaganda measure. When using the anti-Manchu sentiment index constructed from a small sample of 19 revolutionary newspapers, the coefficient on propaganda remains significantly positive. However, in Column (6), which uses a machine learning-based index derived from a larger corpus of newspapers, the coefficient becomes statistically insignificant. Since the machine learning index exhibits relatively smaller regional variation (see Appendix B), this suggests that anti-Manchu propaganda was not uniformly effective across regions—it had impact only when embedded in specific historical contexts. Panel B introduces an interaction between propaganda and the repression-resistance index. Across all specifications, the interaction term is consistently and significantly positive, supporting the hypothesis that propaganda was most effective in regions with deeper historical repression and resistance. In Column (3), a one-standard-deviation increase in repression strengthens the effect of propaganda by 0.266 additional revolutionaries per prefecture; the corresponding estimate in Column (6), using the machine learning-based index, is 0.274.

[19] For example, *Min Bao*, was the official newspaper of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance.

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Table 2: Main Results

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A						
Propaganda	0.936***	0.999***	0.524**	0.916***	1.011***	0.322
	(0.190)	(0.177)	(0.246)	(0.228)	(0.244)	(0.210)
R-squared	0.124	0.294	0.365	0.122	0.292	0.363
Panel B						
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.116	0.190*	0.266**	0.162	0.260**	0.274**
	(0.101)	(0.107)	(0.130)	(0.112)	(0.119)	(0.133)
Propaganda	0.467	0.329	0.021	0.424	0.392	-0.187
	(0.368)	(0.390)	(0.348)	(0.341)	(0.348)	(0.416)
R-squared	0.135	0.321	0.405	0.142	0.338	0.407
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
$Controls * Year\ FE$	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

Notes: The dependent variable is the number of revolutionaries in a prefecture in one year. Columns 1-3 use the manually coded sentiment index, while Columns 4-6 use the machine learning-based index. Columns 1 and 4 include prefecture and year fixed effects; Columns 2 and 5 additionally control for province-specific linear trends; and Columns 3 and 6 further include interactions between year fixed effects and control variables. The control variables include population in 1880, area size, coast area, main rivers, Basin HHI, climate shocks, tax per capita in 1820, language fragmentation, *Jinshi* density, and newspaper density. For brevity, the results of *Propaganda* will not be reported in the subsequent tables. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. I cluster standard errors at the prefecture level (same below).

To ensure that the conclusion is solid, I conduct a few checks on the main result in Appendix E. First, since I employ dynamic panel data and the unobserved panel-level effects are correlated with the lags of the dependent variable, I thus adopt the Arellano-Bond estimator. Second, to alleviate the concern that the elite network played a key role in recruitment, I convert the dependent variable into a dummy variable indicating if a prefecture contributed more than one member (Appendix E.1). Third, for the measurement error problem, I provide results using alternative measures of repression and resistance (Appendix E.2).[20] Lastly, I separate the repression and resistance measure into four continuous variables and find that the result for resistance is significant while that for repression measure is not (Appendix E.3). I explain that the distinction comes about because literary works about resistance were well preserved since they were not as frequently subject to censorship. The pattern strengthens the argument for the main mechanism and will be

[20] One concern about the measurement error is that sources like inquisition were collected from official archives. To alleviate this, I adopt other sources compiled by independent scholars. See Appendix E.2.

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discussed further in Appendix G.4.

4.3 Qualitative Evidence

The anti-Manchu propaganda was also used to inspire uprisings during the 1911 Revolution. In the wake of the victory of the revolution in Wuchang, mass killings of the Manchu civilians began across Chinese cities. This included what happened at Wuchang, where some 10,000 Manchus were butchered, and in Xi'an, with the slaughter of 20,000 Manchus (Rhoads 2015). The revolutionaries proclaimed, "Now to seek our revenge, we rightly ought to exterminate Manchus with all our might and so dissipate our compatriots' pent-up hatred." To inspire the uprising, the revolutionaries cited historical repression. They circulated flyers warning that the Manchu authorities would massacre the Han people if the revolution failed, just as they had done two hundred years ago (Jia 2011).

4.4 Instrumental Variable Estimation

4.4.1 Change in *Jinshis* as the Instrumental Variable

The historical events were unlikely to have been randomly allocated among prefectures. People in some locations, for example, may have been more loyal to the Han-Chinese authorities, as seen by their resistance in the mid-17$^{\text{th}}$ century and active participation in revolution in the early 20$^{\text{th}}$ century. As a result, the omitted variable is one problem concerning endogeneity, and an instrumental variable is required.

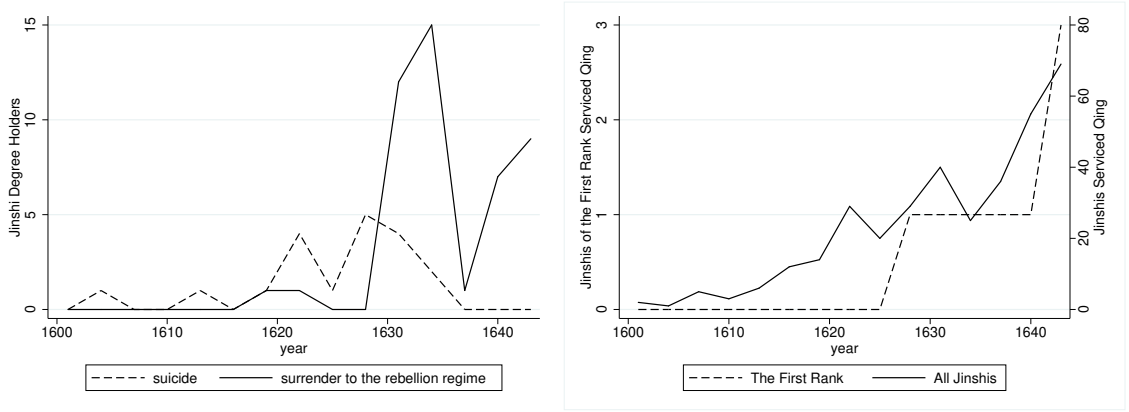
Like the grande école in France, China had a civil exam system that was designed to select elites for its administration since the 10$^{\text{th}}$ century. *Jinshi* was the the highest qualification in the exam, and the degree holders were promised they would be nominated to a position in the government (Ho 1962; Chen et al. 2020). When reading the stories of repression and resistance, I find that senior intellectuals, specifically *Jinshi* degree holders, played a key role in the conflicts of the mid-17$^{\text{th}}$ century.[21] The regional distribution of *Jinshis*, on the other hand, may be endogenous and

[21] For instance, Shi Kefa, who received *Jinshi* in 1628, organized Yangzhou's defense. Qu Shisi (1590-1651), who obtained his *Jinshi* degree in 1616, served for the Southern Ming's Yongli court and led the military resistance against

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strongly correlated with several confounding variables, including human capital and elite culture. As a result, I trace each *Jinshi*'s political choices and check for systematic patterns.

In the book *The Great Enterprises* (Wakeman Jr 1985), historian Frederic Wakeman compared *Jinshis*' political choices in the fall of Beijing to peasant rebellions in April 1644. He wrote, " Recent degree-graduates who had not yet had an opportunity to hold office for very long were the most likely to join the rebel regime." Figure 5 (a) supports Wakeman's statement. When Beijing fell in 1644, the young *Jinshi* cohort (1628 - 1643) was more likely to surrender to the rebellion regime.



(a) Whether to serve the rebellion regime

(b) Whether to serve the Qing court

Figure 5: *Jinshis*' political choices around 1644

Notes: In (a), to suicide means that the *Jinshi* kept loyalty to the Ming dynasty. In (b), the first rank means the top three candidates in the exam.

Since most *Jinshi* degree holders were from wealthy families and controlled local resources (Ho 1962), their political decisions impacted whether a region could mobilize resistance and, as a result, whether it became a target of repression. Based on Wakeman's observation, was the young cohort more likely to give up resistance and serve the Qing court? And did they bring less repression to their hometowns? To answer this question, I draw on biographies of 1,417 *Jinshis* who received degrees between 1601 and 1643, and collect information about their characteristics and political choices.[22] Figure 5 (b) shows that *Jinshis* were more likely to work for the Qing court if they received

the Manchus.

[22]In the final 44 years of Ming dynasty, the government nominated 5,104 *Jinshis*. From biographies on Wiki, I can only know that 1,417 of them were still alive in 1644.

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their degrees later.[23] In Appendix F.1, I regress a dummy variable on whether to serve the Qing court on the exam year, and find that the argument is statistically significant. In Appendix F.2, I also check the incentives making young *Jinshis* more likely to serve the Qing court. I find that age, a proxy of *Jinshi*'s lifelong concern with career, was the driving force.

If a prefecture produced more *Jinshis* in the last few years before the Manchu's invasion, those *Jinshis* were more likely to surrender to the new regime; correspondingly, there would be less resistance and repression in this prefecture.[24] Based on this, I formulate the instrumental variable as the difference between *Jinshis* from the reign of the last emperor (1628-1643) and that from the early period (1601-1625), $\Delta Jinshi_p = \sum_{t=1628}^{1643} Jinshi_{pt} - \sum_{t=1601}^{1625} Jinshi_{pt}$.[25] The IV design's logic chain is shown in Figure 6.

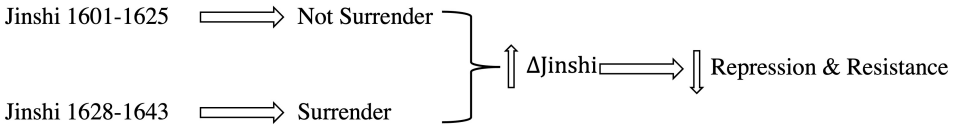


Figure 6: The logic chain of the IV design

The table below confirms that the IV is negatively correlated with the repression and resistance measures.

	Repression	Massacre	Inquisition	ln(martyrs+1)	ln(loyalists+1)
$\Delta Jinshi$	-0.34	-0.16	-0.24	-0.28	-0.36

4.4.2 Exclusion Restrictions

A unique advantage of the IV is that the variation resulting from political cycles is exogenous to *Jinshis*' political choices later in 1644. A concern regarding the exclusion restriction of the IV is

[23] Given each exam year, around 300 candidates would be nominated as *Jinshis*, a high number means a higher ratio.

[24] Some *Jinshis* participated in the conflicts while they were in their hometowns. For instance, Chen Zizhuang (1596–1647), who earned his *Jinshi* degree in 1619, was responsible for organizing the resistance in his hometown Guangzhou. Some *Jinshis* weren't in their hometowns, yet they had the power to influence the locals.

[25] I use 1628 as the cutoff year to ensure a balanced distribution of jinshi degree holders before and after this date. This year is particularly significant as it marks the ascension of the Chongzhen Emperor, the last Ming ruler, whose reign inaugurated a distinct political era.

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that in the final years of the Ming dynasty, elites in certain areas became less supportive of the Ming empire, did not take the exam, and consequently produced fewer *Jinshis*. If that is the case, the IV may have been related to other omitted variables like loyalty culture, which correlates with the independent variable and the outcome variable. For two reasons, this may not be a major issue. First, before the year 1644, the regime change was unanticipated. To climb the social ladder, it might have been a unique approach to take the exam and earn a degree. Second, I reject this hypothesis in Appendix F.1 by demonstrating that, after controlling for the prefecture fixed effect, the results show the young cohort was still more likely to surrender to the Qing court.

While the IV is pre-determined and exogenous to the conflicts in 1644, I confirm that it is not correlated with other omitted variables. In the Appendix F.3, I regress several variables, including weather conditions, drought and plague in the late Ming period, and the number of post stations, on the IV. Those factors are thought to contribute to the outbreak of the peasant rebellions that overturned the Ming empire and afterwards had an impact on the Ming-Qing warfare (Wakeman Jr 1985). All the factors seem to have been unrelated to the IV. In addition, the IV has no relationship with whether a prefecture had ever been attacked by a peasant uprising, the depopulation brought on by natural disasters and war, the distance to princedoms that would organize resistance, or the distance to Nanjing which served as the second capital of the Ming empire and the capital of South Ming.

4.4.3 Results of Instrumental Variable Estimation

In Table 3, I present the results using change in *Jinshis* as an IV for the repression and resistance. Column 1 displays the result from Table 2 for comparison. The reduced-form result is in Column 2. Columns 3 and 4 present the findings from the first stage and the second stage. The propaganda's estimated effect using IV is similar to the OLS estimate.

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Table 3: Instrumental Variable Estimation

	Table 1	Reduced-form	First Stage	Second Stage
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	*revolutionaries*	*revolutionaries*	*Repression*	*revolutionaries*
Panel A. 19 revolutionary newspapers				
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.266**			0.203**
	(0.130)			(0.090)
$\Delta Jinshi \times Propaganda$		-0.039**		
		(0.015)		
$\Delta Jinshi$			-0.113***	
			(0.036)	
Propaganda	0.021	0.038		0.139
	(0.348)	(0.307)		(0.288)
R-squared	0.405	0.378	0.594	0.403
Kleibergen-Paap rk Wald F statistic				46.326
Panel B. all newspapers (machine learning)				
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.274**			0.370**
	(0.133)			(0.183)
$\Delta Jinshi \times Propaganda$		-0.051***		
		(0.019)		
$\Delta Jinshi$			-0.113***	
			(0.036)	
Propaganda	-0.187	0.058		-0.361
	(0.133)	(0.215)		(0.594)
R-squared	0.407	0.380	0.594	0.402
Kleibergen-Paap rk Wald F statistic				11.942
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Controls * Year\ FE$	Y	Y	Y	Y
Number of prefectures	256	256	256	256

Notes: Column 1 is drawn from Table 1. Column 2 is the reduced-form result by regressing the number of revolutionaries on the interaction between the IV and the propaganda. Column 3 is the first stage of the IV estimation, and column 4 is the second stage.

5 Mechanism

5.1 Mediums of Memory Transmission

Why did areas with historical repression and resistance respond more actively to the anti-Manchu propaganda? A possible explanation is that these locations preserved memories of repression and resistance via books, folktales, dramas, rituals, and secret societies.[26]

[26]The historical drama *The Peach Blossom Fan* (Taohuashan) published in 1699 retelled for common theatre-goers a romantic love-story but also documented the collapse of the Ming dynasty, as well as repression and resistance such as Shi Kefa's defence in Yangzhou and the Yangzhou Massacre.

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Books: Although the Qing government sought to control collective memory through book bans and literary inquisitions, private collectors still secretly preserved literature on these sensitive issues. The banned book depicting the Yangzhou massacre, *A Record of Ten Days in Yangzhou*, was reprinted during Daoguang's reign 1821-1850 (Wang 2013). Another instance in 1867 saw top official Zeng Guofan (1811-1872) and his staff discussing about the massacres and questioning the legitimacy of the Qing empire. The evidence suggests that books documenting repression and resistance survived under the harsh censorship campaign for over one hundred years.

History books helped to preserve memories of repression and resistance and may have influenced local culture. The case of the Ming loyalist Wang Fuzhi suggests that Wang's family made efforts to preserve his works and reprinted his books in 1839 (Platt 2007). Wang's works influenced elites in his hometown, Hunan province. Zeng Guofan, also from Hunan, funded the large-scale reprint of Wang's books in 1865. Wang's theory of ethnicity and legitimacy was popularized through this reprinting activity, which was even praised by revolutionaries in 1906.

Rituals: According to Zhang Taiyan's autobiography, since it was forbidden to wear Ming-style clothing while they were alive, his forefathers wore it when they passed away. His clan maintained this tradition for nine generations after establishing it in the mid-17$^{\text{th}}$ century. In another instance, a family retained an article of Ming-style clothing for two hundred years (Wang 2003).

The preservation of history books and the Ming clothing does not necessarily imply that these families always held the anti-Manchu sentiments. Appendix G.1 shows that the repression and resistance did not produce an area that was difficult for the Qing government to control. Later generations may have even worked for the Qing court to further their professional ambitions and safeguard their families' interests (He 1991). And average citizens might not have been aware of the distinction between the Manchus and Han.[27] As a result, cultural traits such as books and rituals helped local elites to preserve the ethnic traditions that distinguished them from the Manchus. Once anti-Manchu propaganda gained strength, those people were readily persuaded to identify as Han Chinese (Wang 2003).

[27] After the success of the 1911 Revolution, when the republic government demanded that every male citizen cut the braids that had been forcibly ordered by the Qing court since 1644, many people resisted. This example implies that Han commoners did not have a clear ethnic consciousness between the Manchus and the Han.

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How might we gauge how well the historical memories have been preserved? Systematic evidence of rituals and dramas may no longer exist. In 1782, the Qing government completed a book-collection project, *Siku Quanshu* (the Complete Library of the Four Treasuries), which aimed to collect all important books. In this project, the emperor ordered editors to compile a list of books that should be banned, including some writings by Ming loyalists as well as publications by scholars who lived in the 18th century.[28] These publications provided historical documents of the Manchu invasion, together with repression and resistance (Appendix G.2). If these publications were still being written, retained, or printed in the 18th century, we can assume that the authors' hometowns preserved related historical memories. To assess the variance in historical memories, I gather information from The Committee for the Compilation of the Banned Books in the Four Treasurie (1997) about banned books and the hometowns of authors.[29] Panels A and Panel B of Table 4 demonstrate that the impact of propaganda is noticeably stronger in regions with a greater number of banned books and banned-book authors. However, it is worth noting that historical memories may also have been preserved in uncensored books—though often too dispersed to identify clearly—and that banned books likely addressed not only political repression but also a broader array of sensitive topics. Thus, the findings presented here should be viewed as offering a tentative mechanism underlying the main result.

[28] This is a different measure from the Ming loyalists. Some of the authors of these forbidden works may not be Ming loyalists, and a proportion of them were born in the eighteenth century. And unlike the Ming loyalists who lived in the period around 1644, these publications might circulate for centuries (see Figure G.2).

[29] One concern is that because these books have been banned since 1782, readers may not have had access to them between that year and 1900. This casts doubt on the efficacy of the preservation of historical memories. Fortunately, the source I use (The Committee for the Compilation of the Banned Books in the Four Treasuries 1997) only includes banned books that the printed copies still exist today. Therefore, if we can access these banned publications, so should someone who lived between 1782 and 1900.

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Table 4: The effect of memory transmission: books

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A Books						
$ln(Banned\ books+1) \times Propaganda$	0.260	0.489**	0.678***	0.437*	0.723***	0.729***
	(0.223)	(0.238)	(0.226)	(0.255)	(0.272)	(0.271)
$Propaganda$	0.540*	0.277	-0.212	0.404	0.216	-0.373
	(0.279)	(0.306)	(0.340)	(0.276)	(0.293)	(0.346)
R-squared	0.129	0.307	0.405	0.133	0.319	0.405
Panel B Authors						
$ln(Authors+1) \times Propaganda$	0.293	0.582**	0.505**	0.626*	1.006***	0.653**
	(0.270)	(0.294)	(0.218)	(0.328)	(0.357)	(0.289)
$Propaganda$	0.554*	0.259	-0.006	0.379	0.218	-0.083
	(0.286)	(0.312)	(0.309)	(0.272)	(0.266)	(0.254)
R-squared	0.128	0.307	0.446	0.138	0.326	0.447
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
$Controls * Year\ FE$	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

Notes: This table examines the interaction between the preservation of deep culture—proxied by books—and exposure to propaganda in shaping revolutionary participation. I trace the location of banned books using the authors' hometowns. Panel A uses the logged number of banned books in each prefecture to measure the preservation of collective memory related to repression and resistance, while Panel B uses the logged number of banned-book authors. Control variables are the same as those used in table 2. To account for literati-related factors, I also control for the interaction terms between the number of existing books and years dummies (Library 2025).

Secret Societies: In pre-modern communities, religion was one of the main sources of broader collective identity (Gat 2012). One of the secret societies, *Tiandihui*, or The Heaven and Earth Society, founded in 1761, was a fraternal organization and historically, a secretive folk religious sect in the vein of the Ming loyalists. Its members vowed to devote themselves to the mission of "Destroy the Qing, restore the Ming" (Appendix G.3). Throughout the 19th century, the society trained its members and launched 85 uprisings in southeast China.

I collect secret societies' activities during the Qing dynasty from Liu and Zhang (2006) and construct a prefecture-level measure. Panels A and B in table 5 show that the results for secret societies are significantly positive at the 10% significance level while the results for the Heaven and Earth Society are not significant. Secret societies may perpetuate a deeply ingrained culture of repression, but they can also be driven by diverse agendas or economic incentives (Cao and Chen 2022). For instance, the Luodao, a secret society along the Grand Canal, considered themselves

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a religious group without any intention of overthrowing the government. Therefore, it is likely that only secret societies emerging from regions with a history of repression sought to preserve the repression memory. Panels C and D include triple interaction terms combining the repression measure, secret society presence, and propaganda exposure. The results indicate that the propaganda's effects were significantly stronger in regions with both secret societies and a history of repression and resistance. This suggests that secret societies served as critical transmission mechanisms for sustaining collective memories of repression and resistance.

Table 5: The effect of memory transmission: secret societies

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A Secret Societies						
Secret societies × Propaganda	0.193	0.250*	0.246*	0.301*	0.342*	0.280*
	(0.153)	(0.148)	(0.143)	(0.182)	(0.177)	(0.157)
Propaganda	0.620**	0.605**	0.223	0.591**	0.686***	0.123
	(0.288)	(0.282)	(0.335)	(0.245)	(0.244)	(0.257)
R-squared	0.129	0.304	0.377	0.136	0.312	0.378
Panel B The Heaven and Earth Society						
Tiandihui × Propaganda	0.287	0.367	0.310	0.331	0.384	0.347
	(0.333)	(0.331)	(0.301)	(0.370)	(0.373)	(0.336)
Propaganda	0.866***	0.933***	0.457	0.838***	0.958***	0.238
	(0.187)	(0.176)	(0.278)	(0.255)	(0.271)	(0.245)
R-squared	0.129	0.303	0.375	0.129	0.304	0.375
Panel C Secret Societies						
Repression × Secret societies × Propaganda	0.083*	0.095**	0.114***	0.120***	0.131***	0.137***
	(0.043)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.039)	(0.037)	(0.040)
Secret societies × Propaganda	-0.133	-0.139	-0.168	-0.118	-0.142	-0.161
	(0.136)	(0.145)	(0.150)	(0.146)	(0.151)	(0.147)
Propaganda	0.523	0.487	0.363	0.599***	0.691***	0.402*
	(0.325)	(0.316)	(0.274)	(0.230)	(0.225)	(0.227)
R-squared	0.152	0.328	0.404	0.184	0.360	0.421
Panel D The Heaven and Earth Society						
Repression × Tiandihui × Propaganda	0.113***	0.107***	0.095***	0.133***	0.129***	0.115***
	(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.027)
Tiandihui × Propaganda	-0.293	-0.222	-0.225	-0.305*	-0.264	-0.234
	(0.180)	(0.199)	(0.206)	(0.170)	(0.179)	(0.190)
Propaganda	0.945***	0.998***	0.638***	0.922***	1.009***	0.432**
	(0.196)	(0.177)	(0.232)	(0.234)	(0.246)	(0.215)
R-squared	0.149	0.315	0.380	0.160	0.327	0.388
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
$Controls * Year\ FE$	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

Notes: This table explores the interaction between the memory transmission—proxied by secret society activity—and exposure to propaganda in shaping revolutionary participation. Panel A includes the total number of secret society activities in each prefecture from 1644 to 1900, while Panel B focuses solely on activities associated with the Tiandihui. Panels C and D present triple interaction terms incorporating the repression measure, secret society presence, and exposure to propaganda. Control variables are the same as those used in table 2.

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5.2 Recognition of Repression and Resistance by the Propaganda Machine

A second possible explanation is that local populations lacked prior awareness of historical repression and resistance, and the propaganda served to reveal these suppressed truths. If this hypothesis holds, we should observe stronger propaganda effects in areas where historical repression and resistance were explicitly referenced in the propaganda. To test this, I identify mentions of repression and resistance across the 19 newspapers, classifying events that appeared in these sources as "recognized" repression and those that did not as "unrecognized" repression. I then estimate the main specification using these measures. Table 6 presents the results. Panel A shows that prefectures with higher levels of recognized repression and resistance did not generate significantly more revolutionaries in response to propaganda. Instead, Columns (3) and (6) indicate that prefectures with greater unrecognized repression and resistance did exhibit a stronger revolutionary response. This suggests that propaganda's explicit acknowledgment of historical repression did not, by itself, drive mobilization.

Panel B further examines this dynamic by partitioning prefectures based on whether their repression and resistance were mentioned in newspapers. The propaganda effect is significantly larger in prefectures where repression had not been documented in newspapers. These findings imply that propaganda's recognition of historical repression and resistance had limited influence on revolutionary participation. One possible explanation is that local elites in prefectures with recognized repression were already familiar with these historical grievances, diminishing the marginal impact of newspaper coverage. Taken together, the results indicate that the propaganda's primary role was not to uncover forgotten history but rather to weaponize latent narratives in service of Han nationalist mobilization. This supports a mechanism in which propaganda amplifies enduring historical memory rather than creating new awareness, underscoring its role in shaping collective identity during nation-building.

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Table 6: The effect of recognition by newspapers

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A						
Recognized Repression × *Propaganda*	-0.176	-0.124	-0.111	-0.078	-0.026	-0.028
	(0.178)	(0.161)	(0.148)	(0.173)	(0.153)	(0.148)
Unrecognized Repression × *Propaganda*	0.297	0.310	0.380*	0.255	0.298	0.311*
	(0.214)	(0.198)	(0.199)	(0.201)	(0.182)	(0.183)
Propaganda	0.396	0.251	0.003	0.349	0.321	-0.187
	(0.341)	(0.375)	(0.335)	(0.325)	(0.328)	(0.404)
R-squared	0.158	0.330	0.411	0.155	0.339	0.405
Panel B						
Recognized Pref × *Repression* × *Propaganda*	-0.046	0.031	0.074	-0.016	0.085	0.074
	(0.062)	(0.067)	(0.090)	(0.078)	(0.086)	(0.106)
Unrecognized Pref × *Repression* × *Propaganda*	0.752***	0.745***	0.725***	0.740***	0.732***	0.707***
	(0.255)	(0.232)	(0.236)	(0.239)	(0.215)	(0.221)
Propaganda	1.168***	0.993***	0.709*	1.046***	0.930***	0.521
	(0.322)	(0.325)	(0.393)	(0.321)	(0.320)	(0.396)
R-squared	0.224	0.381	0.443	0.227	0.388	0.444
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province ∗ *Year FE*	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Controls ∗ *Year FE*	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

Notes: The table examines the effect of recognition by the propaganda machine on revolutionary participation. In Panel A, "Recognized Repression" refers to repression documented in newspapers founded by revolutionaries, while "Unrecognized Repression" refers to repression not mentioned in these newspapers but documented in other sources I collected. In Panel B, the dummy variable "Recognized Pref" is equal to 1 if revolutionary-supported newspapers have documented a prefecture where repression occurred, and "Unrecognized Pref" is equal to 1 if these newspapers have not documented a prefecture where repression occurred.

6 Robustness Checks

6.1 Alternative Hypotheses

Another key concern regarding the main findings is that the observed effects of propaganda could coincide with other contemporaneous shocks. To address this issue, I control for additional explanatory factors in the empirical specification. Potential alternative hypotheses include the abolition of the imperial examination system, differential access to information, ethnic tensions between Han and Manchu populations, anti-missionary movements, and the broader societal impacts of the Taiping Rebellion and the Boxer Rebellion. For brevity, this section focuses on two of these alternative explanations; the remaining hypotheses are examined in Appendix H.

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6.1.1 The Abolition of the Exam System

The exam system, which gave commoners a chance to ascend the social ladder, was one of the most important institutions in Chinese history (Ho 1962; Chen et al. 2020; Hao et al. 2022). The Qing government abruptly terminated the exam system in 1905 so that it could swiftly adopt a modern education system. Bai and Jia (2016) pointed out that abolishing the exam system resulted in intellectuals joining the revolutionary campaign to change their social status. They found that the greater the exam quota in a prefecture prior to abolishing the exam, the greater the prefecture's participation in the revolutionary groups between 1905 and 1906.

To test if the exam quotas hypothesis negates the effect of repression and resistance, I use two different specifications. First, in Panel A of Table 7, I add an interaction term between the exam quota per capita and the propaganda measure.[30] Further, in Panel B, I include an interaction term between the post-1905 dummy and quotas per capita, which is the same as the primary specification in Bai and Jia (2016). After adding all controls, the coefficients of the interaction between repression and propaganda remain significantly positive in both panels.

[30] I draw on the exam quotas data from Bai and Jia (2016).

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Table 7: Alternative hypothesis: the abolition of the exam system

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A						
$Repression \times Propaganda$	0.120	0.186*	0.260**	0.176	0.263**	0.269**
	(0.102)	(0.106)	(0.129)	(0.111)	(0.116)	(0.132)
$ln(\frac{quota}{pop}) \times Propaganda$	-0.872***	-0.801**	-0.529	-1.078***	-0.973***	-0.595*
	(0.308)	(0.310)	(0.352)	(0.353)	(0.326)	(0.353)
$Propaganda$	2.300***	2.052**	1.239	2.772***	2.544***	1.216
	(0.732)	(0.814)	(0.874)	(0.745)	(0.770)	(0.905)
R-squared	0.147	0.329	0.407	0.161	0.350	0.409
Panel B						
$Repression \times Propaganda$	0.133	0.197*	0.263**	0.177	0.265**	0.274**
	(0.102)	(0.106)	(0.130)	(0.112)	(0.118)	(0.132)
$ln(\frac{quota}{pop}) \times post05$	-1.055***	-0.816**	0.932**	-1.083***	-0.775**	1.097**
	(0.340)	(0.357)	(0.440)	(0.334)	(0.345)	(0.445)
$Propaganda$	0.297	0.284	-0.072	0.266	0.347	-0.270
	(0.390)	(0.394)	(0.347)	(0.356)	(0.354)	(0.409)
R-squared	0.150	0.327	0.408	0.158	0.343	0.411
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
$Controls * FE$	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	261	261	256	261	261	256

Notes: This table examines whether controlling for an alternative hypothesis related to revolutionary participation affects the baseline results in table 2. In Panel A, I include an interaction between the logged exam quota-to-population ratio and propaganda exposure. In Panel B, I interact the logged exam quota-to-population ratio with a post-1905 dummy variable. Control variables are the same as those used in table 2.

6.1.2 Access to Information

To operationalize foreign influence and information access, I employ five distinct measures: (1) treaty port presence, (2) post office density, (3) telegraph station density, (4) the count of Chinese students studying in Japan, and (5) geographic distance to Shanghai. Additionally, high urbanization may indicate a large population capable of reading newspapers. Table 8 shows neither of those factors has a consistently significant effect on revolutionary participation, along with propaganda. Across all specifications, the coefficients of the interaction between repression and propaganda remain robust.

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Table 8: Alternative hypothesis: access to information

VARIABLES	*revolutionaries*						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A. 19 revolutionary newspapers							
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.273*	0.261**	0.259**	0.257**	0.305*	0.229*	0.282*
	(0.139)	(0.132)	(0.130)	(0.128)	(0.161)	(0.130)	(0.169)
Treaty × *Propaganda*	-0.446						-0.280
	(0.696)						(0.710)
Post office × *Propaganda*		0.489					0.603
		(0.771)					(0.821)
Telegraph × *Propaganda*			0.795				0.253
			(1.181)				(1.457)
Japan students × *Propaganda*				-1.903			-18.583
				(59.359)			(57.172)
Dis_Shanghai × *Propaganda*					0.001		0.001
					(0.001)		(0.001)
Urbanization × *Propaganda*						-0.202	-0.200
						(0.155)	(0.154)
Propaganda	0.182	-0.041	0.025	0.062	-0.557	1.260	0.728
	(0.338)	(0.434)	(0.353)	(0.362)	(0.737)	(0.973)	(1.102)
R-squared	0.400	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.402	0.402	0.405
Panel A. all newspapers (machine learning)							
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.258*	0.262**	0.262**	0.262**	0.314**	0.231*	0.285*
	(0.131)	(0.129)	(0.129)	(0.129)	(0.154)	(0.128)	(0.159)
Treaty × *Propaganda*	0.238						0.249
	(0.668)						(0.698)
Post office × *Propaganda*		-0.959					-0.183
		(1.161)					(1.038)
Telegraph × *Propaganda*			-0.879				-1.038
			(1.277)				(1.568)
Japan students × *Propaganda*				-12.992			-21.930
				(44.569)			(47.199)
Dis_Shanghai × *Propaganda*					0.001		0.001
					(0.001)		(0.001)
Urbanization × *Propaganda*						-0.250*	-0.218
						(0.151)	(0.148)
Propaganda	-0.121	0.159	-0.037	-0.074	-0.837	1.433	0.655
	(0.380)	(0.410)	(0.358)	(0.398)	(0.783)	(0.920)	(1.060)
R-squared	0.400	0.401	0.400	0.399	0.404	0.405	0.409
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * YearFE$	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Controls * YearFE$	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Number of prefectures	256	256	256	256	256	256	256

Notes: This table tests the robustness of the baseline results in table 2 by controlling for additional alternative hypotheses related to revolutionary participation. Specifically, I sequentially interact propaganda exposure with measures of information transmission, including the presence of treaty ports, post offices, and telegraph stations; the number of Chinese students studying in Japan; distance to Shanghai; and the urbanization rate. Panel A uses propaganda exposure based on reading 19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries, while Panel B uses the machine learning-derived measure. Control variables are the same as those in table 2.

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6.2 Other Sentiments, and the Competitive Propaganda

In the propaganda, revolutionaries also adopted other stances to question the legitimacy of the Qing government, including anti-imperialism and pro-democracy. In the meantime, another elite faction known as the constitutionalists strove to achieve constitutional reform by following the Meiji Restoration in Japan in the hopes of helping the Manchu monarchy maintain power. Revolutionaries were forced to compete with constitutionalists for influence in and money from overseas Chinese communities.

Table 9: Other sentiments in the propaganda, and the competitive propaganda

VARIABLES	*revolutionaries*							
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries				all newspapers (machine learning)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Repression ∗ *Propaganda*	0.278**	0.255**	0.266**	0.285**	0.218**	0.274**	0.240**	0.243**
	(0.131)	(0.128)	(0.130)	(0.134)	(0.103)	(0.133)	(0.118)	(0.112)
Propaganda(*anti* − *Manchu*)	0.016	0.062	0.035	-0.014	-0.162	-0.134	-0.184	-0.261
	(0.374)	(0.333)	(0.351)	(0.403)	(0.330)	(0.390)	(0.377)	(0.371)
Repression ∗ *Anti* − *imperialism*	-0.032			-0.027	0.100			0.033
	(0.036)			(0.071)	(0.065)			(0.056)
Anti − *imperialism*	0.037			0.069	0.226			0.215
	(0.129)			(0.341)	(0.159)			(0.267)
Repression ∗ *Democracy*		-0.077**		-0.093***		-0.063**		-0.070**
		(0.031)		(0.036)		(0.031)		(0.032)
Democracy		0.079		0.098		0.147		0.128
		(0.094)		(0.112)		(0.111)		(0.125)
Repression ∗ *Constitutionalism*			-0.139	-0.213			0.123	0.115
			(0.110)	(0.270)			(0.095)	(0.078)
Constitutionalism			0.137	-0.061			0.371*	0.161
			(0.654)	(1.603)			(0.195)	(0.307)
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province ∗ *Year FE*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Controls ∗ *FE*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.400	0.406	0.399	0.409	0.405	0.403	0.402	0.408
Number of prefectures	256	256	256	256	256	256	256	256

Notes: This table examines whether accounting for competing ideologies affects the baseline results in table 2. I calculate the strength of each ideology using the same method described in section 3.3. Anti-imperialism refers to the belief that China should maintain independence and resist intervention or influence from Western powers; democracy advocates for selecting representatives through elections; and constitutionalism refers to support for a constitutional monarchy. Control variables are the same as those used in table 2.

To assess whether alternative themes in revolutionary propaganda are driving the results, I interact indices of other sentiments with the repression-resistance measure.[31] Table 9 shows that, in contrast to anti-Manchuism, other sentiments did not exhibit a comparable effect on revolution-

[31] These indices are constructed using the same methodology as the anti-Manchu sentiment index.

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ary participation in regions with a history of repression. I also examine newspapers founded by constitutionalists, using machine learning to classify articles and quantify the intensity of constitutionalist propaganda. Columns 4 and 8 indicate that this form of propaganda had no significant effect on revolutionary mobilization.

7 From Nation-building to State-building: Consolidation After The 1911 Revolution

Building on the results above, which show that anti-Manchu propaganda successfully mobilized revolutionaries to overthrow the Manchu-led Qing government, this section explores the role of early nationalist revolutionaries (1900–1906) in shaping the post-revolutionary China. It is widely acknowledged that the revolutionaries founded the Kuomintang (KMT, or Chinese Nationalist Party) and pursued the creation of a modern republican nation-state. Appendix I provides a detailed overview of the historical developments following the 1911 Revolution.

I regress several outcomes of nation-state building, including KMT representatives in the first National Assembly (1913-1925), KMT central committee members (1924-1952), student soldiers in the Whampoa Military Academy (1924-1926), army generals (1927-1949), and high-ranking KMT officials (1927-1949), on the measure of repression and resistance. In Panel A of Table 10, I show that the measure of repression and resistance has a positive correlation with all outcomes. Additionally, as a placebo test in Column 2, representatives of other parties in the first National Assembly (1913-1925) were not related to the repression and resistance measure, which suggests that they differed ideologically from KMT members.

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Table 10: The role of revolutionaries in state-building during the republic area (1911-1949)

	1st National assembly		Party leaders	Army		Government
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
VARIABLES	KMT	non-KMT	KMT central committee	student soldiers	army generals	KMT officials
Panel. A						
Repression	0.235***	0.027	0.372***	4.648*	3.747*	3.589***
	(0.075)	(0.047)	(0.107)	(2.811)	(1.998)	(0.970)
R-squared	0.549	0.465	0.516	0.506	0.507	0.668
Panel.B						
Revolutionaries	0.062***	0.000	0.103***	1.415**	1.331***	1.008***
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.019)	(0.614)	(0.364)	(0.090)
R-squared	0.614	0.464	0.669	0.619	0.726	0.853
Panel.C						
Repression	0.104**	0.033	0.150***	1.492	0.626	1.409***
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.052)	(1.176)	(0.732)	(0.259)
Revolutionaries	0.054***	-0.002	0.091***	1.295**	1.281***	0.895***
	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.019)	(0.562)	(0.339)	(0.091)
R-squared	0.623	0.466	0.684	0.624	0.728	0.870
Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations	256	256	256	256	256	256

Notes: Control variables are the same as that in the main regression, but I use newspapers in 1911. I draw on the data of KMT representatives and non-KMT representatives from Bai and Jia (2016). The list of KMT central committee members is from Liu (2014). The source of student soldiers is The Alumni Association of the Whampoa Military Academy (The Alumni Association of the Whampoa Military Academy). The data of army generals comes from Liu (1993). The data of KMT officials is from Liu (1995). *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. I cluster standard errors at the prefecture level.

How should we understand the correlation? A possible explanation is that revolutionaries in the late Qing period began their careers from anti-Manchu nationalism; after the 1911 Revolution, they worked to create a republic nation-state while adhering to nationalist ideology. I regress these outcomes on the number of revolutionaries between 1900 and 1906. The results are shown in Panel B. It is not surprising that there is a robust positive relationship between revolutionaries in 1900-1906 and outcomes of nation-state building. The results suggest that the anti-Manchu propaganda of repression and resistance had a long-term effect on the nation-state building of modern China, though the KMT had abandoned the narrow Han Chinese nationalism and embraced a broader Chinese nationalism to unite minorities.[32]

[32]Han Chinese nationalism is an ethnic-centric ideology that identifies the Han Chinese as the sole members of the Chinese nation. In contrast, broader Chinese nationalism encompasses multiple ethnic groups—including Manchus, Mongols, Hui, Tibetans, and others—as integral parts of the Chinese nation.

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A further question emerges regarding the long-term impact: did repression create a lasting cultural legacy that influenced attitudes toward political radicalism, or was it primarily about political patronage, with revolutionaries recruiting supporters from their hometowns after their success in 1911? To explore this, I conducted a regression analysis, examining KMT outcomes in relation to both repression levels and the presence of revolutionaries. The results in Panel C indicate that both factors played significant roles in shaping the bureaucratic and party systems of the KMT, though not in its military system.[33]

8 Conclusion

This paper investigates how newspapers helped invent the modern Chinese nation by exploring the historical roots. In the mid-17th century, the Manchu-led Qing government conquered China. The local Han people organized long-lasting resistance but were subject to harsh repression. These violent conflicts had a persistent influence. Chinese elites secretly preserved their history in books, folktales, dramas, rituals, and secret societies. In 1728, an intellectual attempted to use these historical stories to mobilize uprisings but failed.[34] In numerous cases, however, books, rituals, and secret societies helped local elites preserve the ethnic traditions and create their Han Chinese identities. Coming into the early 20th century, utilizing modern newspaper techniques, revolutionary propagandists retold the repression to ignite nationalist fervor. I find that areas exposed to historical repression and resistance responded more actively to the propaganda and produced more nationalists revolutionaries.

These findings have important implications for our understanding of the collapse of empires and the creation of nation-states. Political repression by empires can be recorded and persist at the community level for centuries, while the creation of nations and nation-states often strategically adopts advanced media technologies to propagate historical narratives of political repression among new citizens. Similar processes can be observed in various historical and contemporary contexts,

[33]The cultural channel may not be significant for the KMT's military system due to its strategic cooperation with the Chinese Communist Party and various warlords.

[34]Zeng Jing (1679-1735), who was motivated by the works of Ming loyalist Lv Liuliang, attempted to overturn the Qing government by persuading a military officer; however, he was reported by this officer and finally was killed.

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such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and nation-building in post-Communist states, the disintegration of Yugoslavia and subsequent nation-building in Balkan states, and ongoing process in Taiwan to foster distinct national consciousness. As Anthony Smith highlighted in *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, "subjugations (or conquests) become the heritage and property of the entire population," forming a central element of the shared culture that unites the members of a nation. This paper argues that such narratives do not always rely on ethnicity; collective memories —whether propagated, reinterpreted, or invented—can powerfully shape shared identities.

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A A Map of East Asia in the Mid-17th Century

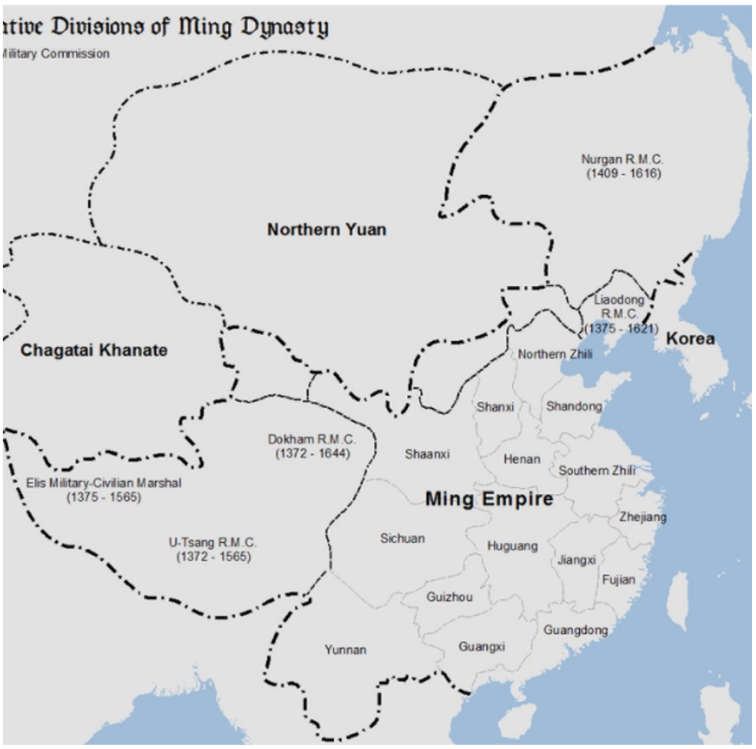


Figure A.1: States in the East Asia in the mid-17th century

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ming_divisions.png

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B Newspaper Industry and Circulation of Newspapers

B.1 Newspaper Industry in China 1833-1906

Figure B.1 shows the number of newspapers founded each year from 1833 to 1906. Although the history of modern newspapers in China can be traced back to the 1830s, only a small number of newspapers were founded between 1833 and 1897. The newspaper business experienced a small boom during the Hundred Days' Reform of 1898 and a dramatic increase in numbers after 1900.

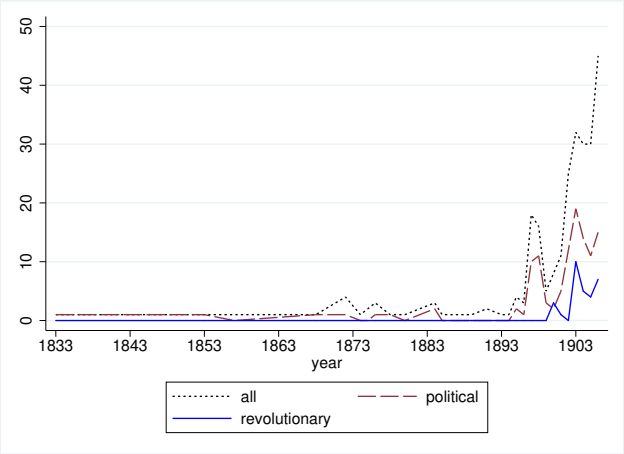


Figure B.1: The number of newly founded newspapers in China 1833-1906

Notes: The figure above shows the number of newly founded newspapers in China from 1833 to 1906. The black dotted line refers to the number of all newspapers. The blue line indicates the number of newspapers founded by revolutionaries and the red dashed one is the number of newspapers focusing on politics. The source is the Full-text of Journals in the Late Qing Dynasty Database.

B.2 How Newspapers Were Circulated

Revolutionaries faced huge risks in selling their ideas and engaging in other "illegal" activities. Foreign intervention, as well as the presence of treaty ports, churches, and missionaries, helped to preserve their safety. Tokyo and Shanghai served as the two print hubs for the revolutionary propaganda, allowing the propagandists to escape the supervision of the Qing authorities. Thirty newspapers were established during the study period by revolutionaries, with 13 being located in Tokyo and 11 in Shanghai.[35] Additionally, these two cities offered revolutionaries access to

[35]The rest were: Yokohama, Anqing, Jinhua, and Suzhou for 1 newspaper respectively, and Hong Kong for 2.

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sophisticated imported printers.

Because the Qing empire threatened the leaders of revolutionary groups with arrest, many of them fled to Japan during this period. Japanese elites also provided significant financial and organizational resources to revolutionaries.[36] Anecdotal evidence in Figure B.2 and Figure B.3 suggests that revolutionaries sent newspapers from abroad via the postal service. According to the agreement between China and Japan (Figure B.4), mail was first shipped to Shanghai and then distributed through China's postal system and the foreign postal systems operating within China.

出版之日无法发行，子与肖钟英……数人将印就之《民报》第 1 期，或包卷，或封皮，或贴邮票，**命女佣用小车推至邮局，不数小时而 3000 份《民报》皆发出，送之中国内地矣。**

On the day of publication, distribution was impossible. Several people, including [my] son and Xiao Zhongying, wrapped or packaged the printed first issue of Minbao, affixed stamps, **and had a maid push the newspapers in a cart to the post office. Within a few hours, all 3,000 copies of** Minbao **were sent out, destined for the interior of China.**

曹亚伯，1930.《革命真史》，中华书局。

Figure B.2: Anecdotal evidence about the spreading of newspaper I

Notes: Cao Yabo (1875-1937) was responsible for the distribution of Minbao.

[36]Revolutionaries received financial aid from Japanese elites who supported Pan-Asianism. These Japanese elites, including Ryōhei Uchida (1873-1937), Tōten Miyazaki (1871-1922), Hirayama Shu (1870-1940), and Tōyama Mitsuru (1855-1944), helped Sun Yat-sen to organize the Revolutionary Alliance, and even joined uprisings in China.

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1905 年 8 月 20 日，中国同盟会在东京正式成立，由丁鼎丞(丁惟汾)介绍，加入同盟会。在此期间，他曾拜见过孙中山，参与商讨工作计划。之后，与丁惟汾、刘冠三等在东京组织成立中国同盟会山东分会，并被选为会长。11 月 26 日，同盟会机关报《民报》在东京创刊，**他与在日留学的临沂籍学生赵保泰、段荫远等人，时常邮寄《民报》 等印刷品至临沂， 宣传孙中山的“三民主义”和民主革命主张。**

On August 20, 1905, the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (Tongmenghui) was officially established in Tokyo. Through the introduction of Ding Dingcheng (Ding Weifen), he joined the Tongmenghui. During this period, he met with Sun Yat-sen and participated in discussions on work plans. Later, along with Ding Weifen, Liu Guansan, and others, he organized and established the Shandong branch of the Tongmenghui in Tokyo, where he was elected as the president. On November 26, the official newspaper of the Tongmenghui, Minbao, was launched in Tokyo. **He, along with Linyi-born students studying in Japan, such as Zhao Baotai and Duan Yinyuan, frequently sent copies of** Minbao **and other printed materials to Linyi, promoting Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People" and democratic revolutionary ideas.**

兰山历史名人（三）. 兰山区人民政府[引用日期 2024-05-31]. http://lyls.gov.cn/info/1181/1265.htm.

Figure B.3: Anecdotal evidence about the spreading of newspaper II

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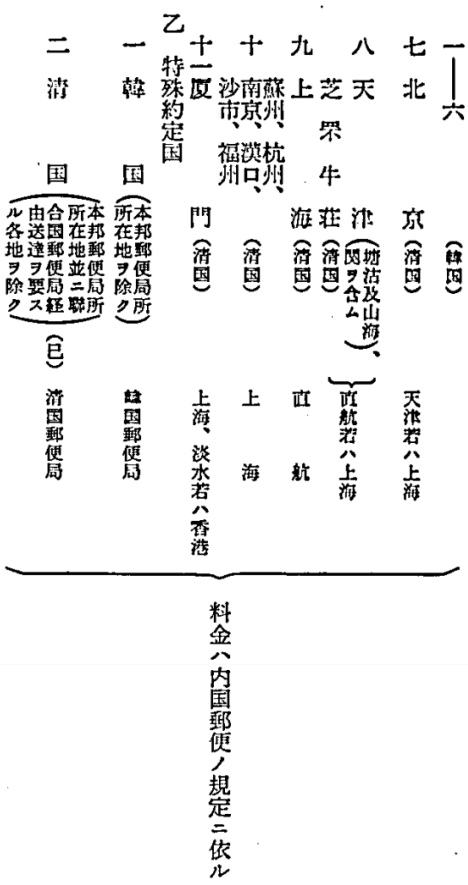


Figure B.4: Postal Agreement between Japan and China, 1910. pp.22.

As a treaty port, Shanghai had legal extraterritorial status (Keller and Shiue 2021). Although it occasionally requested that newspapers be censored by the treaty port authority, the Qing government was powerless to stop these revolutionary newspapers.[37] In 1904 and 1905, more than a hundred revolutionary publications debuted in Shanghai (Li 1956).

Figure B.5 and Figure B.6 illustrate each prefecture's exposure to anti-Manchu propaganda from newspapers. It is evident that Shanghai served as the central hub, with newspapers circulating through China's postal routes. The year 1903 marked a significant surge in the spread of this propaganda.

[37] In the well-known Su Bao case of 1903, the Qing government wanted Shanghai treaty port to execute propagandist Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936) for treason; however, the court only sentenced him to three years jail for defamation. In contrast, without protection of the treaty ports, press freedom was harshly restricted. For instance, a journalist in Beijing, Shen Jin (1872-1903), was hanged in 1903 after leaking information about the Qing government's plan to sign a secret treaty with Russia.

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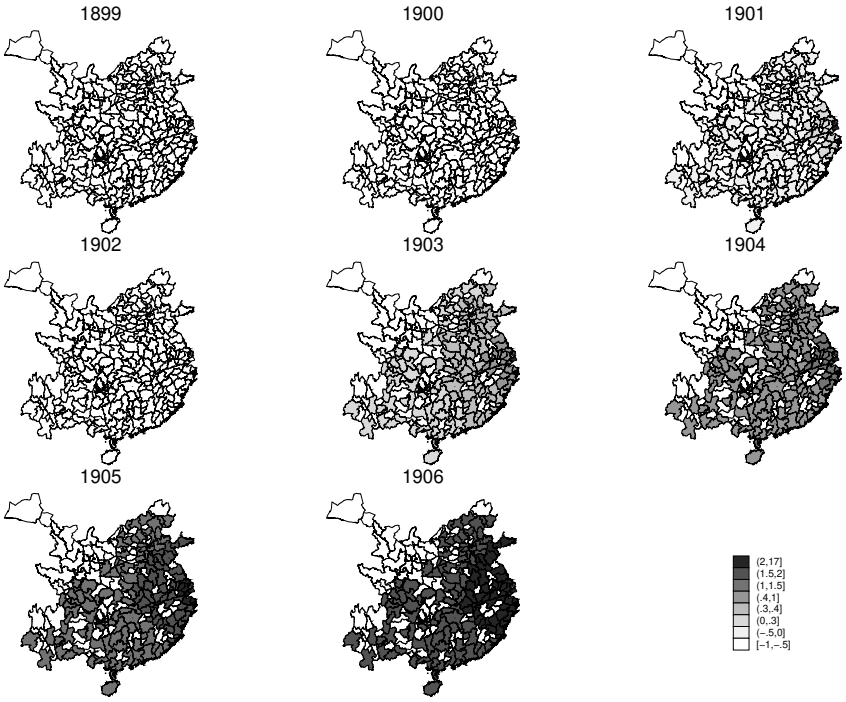


Figure B.5: The Propaganda measure (reading) by year

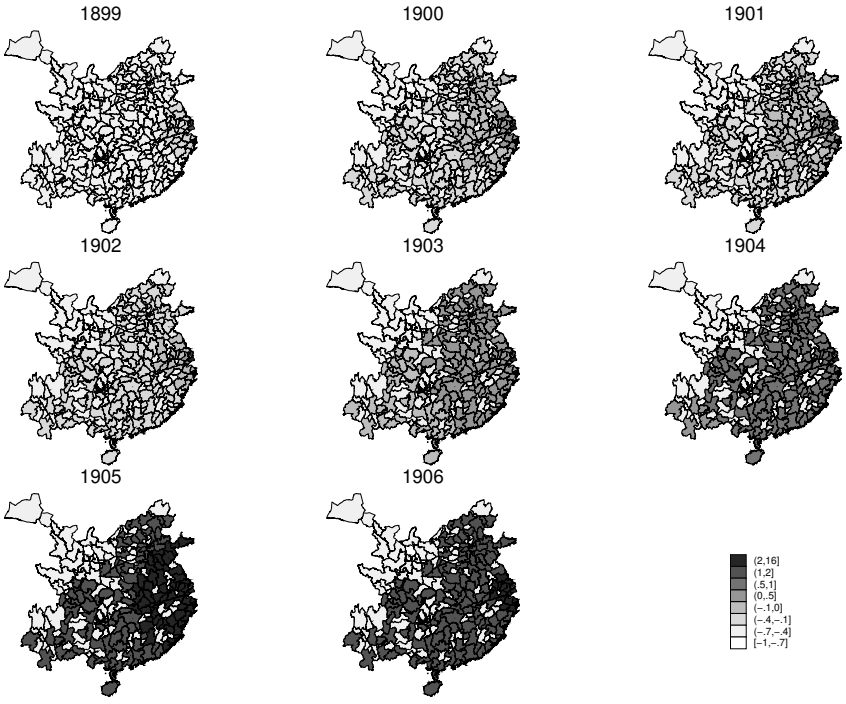


Figure B.6: The Propaganda measure (machine learning) by year

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In Table B1, I examine whether the recruitment of revolutionary group members influenced the spread of propaganda. After controlling for all variables, Panel A shows no significant relationship. Another concern is whether revolutionaries strategically targeted areas with high levels of repression and resistance for member recruitment. In Panel B, I regress the propaganda on the interaction between repression and year dummies. The results do not provide evidence that regions experiencing repression and resistance were more likely to be exposed to the propaganda.

Table B1: The correlation between membership development, repression and the propaganda

VARIABLES	Propaganda (reading)			Propaganda (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A						
revolutionaries	0.045***	0.044***	0.012	0.038***	0.036***	0.007
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.007)
R-squared	0.471	0.584	0.781	0.484	0.599	0.748
Panel B						
Repression × 1900	-0.222***	-0.174***	-0.050	-0.157***	-0.123***	-0.037
	(0.047)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.034)	(0.024)	(0.026)
Repression × 1901	-0.180***	-0.143***	-0.046	-0.157***	-0.123***	-0.039
	(0.038)	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.024)	(0.026)
Repression × 1902	-0.222***	-0.174***	-0.052	-0.162***	-0.126***	-0.040
	(0.047)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.025)	(0.027)
Repression × 1903	-0.148***	-0.118***	-0.042	-0.146***	-0.115***	-0.038
	(0.030)	(0.022)	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.022)	(0.025)
Repression × 1904	-0.103***	-0.084***	-0.030	-0.098***	-0.078***	-0.026
	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.019)
Repression × 1905	-0.049***	-0.043***	-0.021	0.014	0.005	0.003
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.013)	(0.024)
R-squared	0.541	0.605	0.782	0.537	0.622	0.750
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
$Controls * Year\ FE$	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

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C Summary Statistics

Table C1: Summary statistics

	Variables	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
	Revolutionaries	1834	0.766	3.367	0	47
Repression & Resistance	Repression	262	0	3.054	-1.825	17.291
	Massacre	262	.0878	.366	0	3
	Inquisition	262	.328	.700	0	5
	ln(Martyrs+1)	262	.407	.711	0	3.970
	ln(Loyalists+1)	262	.457	.846	0	3.850
	$\Delta Jinshi$	262	-2.366	7.040	-34	30
	"Recognized" Repression	262	0	2.991	-.927	22.516
Propaganda	Propaganda	1,834	0.077	1.047	-0.536	16.472
	Propaganda (ML)	1,834	0.060	1.055	-0.671	15.449
	Anti-imperialism	1,834	0.060	1.056	-0.418	19.886
	Anti-imperialism (ML)	1,834	0.021	1.065	-0.855	11.851
	Democracy	1,834	0.044	1.062	-0.309	24.821
	Democracy (ML)	1,834	0.067	1.052	-0.468	22.095
	Constitutionalism	1,834	0.011	1.068	-0.336	24.878
	Constitutionalism (ML)	1,834	0.039	1.059	-0.966	11.327
Additional Variables	lnPop	262	13.636	1.056	10.452	15.739
	lnArea	262	9.347	0.784	7.147	12.166
	Coast	262	0.134	0.341	0.000	1.000
	Main River	262	0.618	0.487	0.000	1.000
	Tax Per Capita 1820	256	0.081	0.083	0.000	0.672
	Basin HHI	261	0.609	0.243	0.161	1.000
	Language Fragmentation	261	0.087	0.164	-0.000	0.699
	Climate Shock	262	0.063	0.092	-0.268	0.477
	Jinshi Per 1000	262	0.081	0.112	0.000	1.048
	Newspaper Per 1000	262	0.081	0.112	0	1.048
	ln(Banned books+1)	262	0.369	0.761	0	3.738
	ln(Authors+1)	262	0.315	0.634	0	3.091
	Secret Society	262	0.912	1.657	0	14
	Tiandihui	262	0.305	1.144	0	9
	ln(Quota/Pop)	261	2.331	0.701	-0.144	5.138
	Treaty Port	262	0.115	0.319	0	1
	Post Agency Per 100 Thousand	262	0.106	0.159	0	1.703
	Telegraph Station Per 100 Thousand	262	0.040	0.093	0	0.801
	Students in Japan Per Million	262	0.003	0.036	0	0.545
	$ln(1 + bannermen)$	262	0.622	2.073	0	8.786
	Banner Garrison	262	0.153	0.812	0	11
Other Outcomes	KMT Representatives	261	1.655	1.964	0	15
	Non-KMT Representatives	261	1.031	1.358	0	6
	KMT Central Committee	262	0.992	2.199	0	23
	Student Soldiers	262	17.256	37.141	0	423
	Army Generals	262	16.347	26.920	0	296
	KMT Officials	262	11.149	19.655	0	193

Notes: ML means machine learning.

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D Machine Learning

Propagandists might well have their works published in other newspapers. I list two articles that introduced Ming martyrs and loyalists in Table D1. These two newspapers, *Youxi Shijie* and *Shibao*, were neither founded by revolutionaries nor ever expressed their interests on this topic. As a result, it's necessary to analyze all newspaper articles in the database.

Table D1: The propaganda on newspapers which were not founded by revolutionaries

Article	Newspaper	Year
读张苍水诗:[诗词]	游戏世界（杭州）	1900
采王船山成说证中国有尚武之民族（续）	时报	1904

Recursive neural networks (RNN) and long-short-term memory networks (LSTM) are two widely used frontier neural network models for the task of text categorization. The RNN method is a generalization of feedforward neural networks that has internal memory. RNN is recurrent as it performs the same function for every input of data, while the current information's output depends on the past computation. After the output is produced, it is copied and sent back into the recurrent network. It considers the current input, as well as the outcome that it learned from previous inputs, for making a decision. However, as the gap between the relevant information and the place it's needed becomes wider, RNN cannot learn to connect the information (long-term dependencies). Long Short Term Memory networks are a special type of RNN designed explicitly to avoid the long-term dependency problem (Hochreiter and Schmidhuber 1997). I compared the accuracy of the two models and adopt the model with higher precision, which is the LSTM model.

The whole process is as follows. I first employ the Word2Vec model and separate each article title into short texts as vectors. Second, I randomly split the embedded matrix into two parts: 80% training and the rest testing; Thirdly, an LSTM model is used for sentiment classification. Fourth, I use the trained model to predict each item's category in the training set and the test set to get loss and accuracy rates. The accuracy rate is 93.26% in the training set and 92.65% in the test set. Finally, the trained model is used to predict whether an article title among the 0.3 million items contains anti-Manchu sentiment.

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Table D2: The result of LSTM

	loss	accuracy
training set	0.1606	0.9326
test set	0.1941	0.9265

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E Robustness

E.1 Arellano-Bond Estimation

Table E1: Arellano-Bond estimation

	revolutionaries			
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries		all newspapers (machine learning)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.124*	0.182**	0.111*	0.158*
	(0.070)	(0.084)	(0.060)	(0.092)
Propaganda	0.180**	0.283	(0.060)	(0.092)
	(0.079)	(0.230)	0.387**	0.216
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province ∗ *Year FE*	N	Y	N	Y
Controls ∗ *Year FE*	N	Y	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	256	262	256
AR(1)	0.042	0.054	0.058	0.056
AR(2)	0.129	0.197	0.173	0.211
Chi-Square (Hansen over-id test)	0.001	0.375	0.006	0.371

Table E2: Arellano-Bond estimation: making the dependent variable as a dummy variable

	$Dummy[revolutionaries = 1]$			
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries		all newspapers (machine learning)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.012**	0.014***	0.011***	0.012***
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Propaganda	0.050***	0.019	0.043**	0.011
	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.018)	(0.014)
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province ∗ *Year FE*	N	Y	N	Y
Controls ∗ *Year FE*	N	Y	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	256	262	256
AR(1)	0	0	0	0
AR(2)	0.188	0.546	0.252	0.540
Chi-Square (Hansen over-id test)	1.02e-07	0.473	9.24e-08	0.599

E.2 Measurement Error

In terms of measurement error of repression and resistance, I've found additional sources to replace the existing measures (Table E3). For massacres, I use battles between Ming and Qing troops

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instead. For Ming martyrs, I use an official document by Shu (1775), which lists martyrs defending to death in the Ming-Qing transition. I substitute Sun's (1912) source for loyalists with Xie and Fan's (1995), which includes more Ming loyalists. I replace the archive source with Zhang and Du (1991) for inquisition. Table E4 shows that the main results are unaffected by alternative measures.

Table E3: Comparison of the repression and resistance measures

Measure	**Source**	**Type**	**Alternative Measure**	**Type**
Massacre	Cao (2001)	Official	The Editing Committee of China's Military History (1985)	Various
Inquisition	Archives of the Museum of the Forbidden City (1934)	Official	Zhang and Du (1991)	Various
Martyrs	Qu (1690s)	Independent	Shu (1775)	Official
Loyalists	Sun (1912)	Independent	Xie and Fan (1995)	Independent

Notes: "Independent" refers to independent studies. "Official" means that it's an official source. And "Various" means that the document may include both sources.

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Table E4: Main Result: alternative measure of repression and resistance

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A. Repression: replace massacres with battles						
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.080	0.134*	0.239**	0.167*	0.256***	0.315**
	(0.069)	(0.074)	(0.094)	(0.090)	(0.097)	(0.121)
Propaganda	0.531*	0.377	-0.077	0.440*	0.461*	-0.010
	(0.279)	(0.315)	(0.347)	(0.265)	(0.259)	(0.275)
R-squared	0.130	0.312	0.400	0.145	0.339	0.410
Panel B. Repression: replace martyrs (Qu) with martyrs (Shu)						
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.089	0.169*	0.222*	0.129	0.232**	0.235**
	(0.092)	(0.099)	(0.116)	(0.101)	(0.111)	(0.119)
Propaganda	0.491	0.267	-0.101	0.412	0.283	-0.317
	(0.408)	(0.422)	(0.413)	(0.383)	(0.383)	(0.451)
R-squared	0.131	0.318	0.399	0.136	0.333	0.401
Panel C. Repression: replace loyalists (Sun) with loyalists (Xie & Fan)						
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.144	0.219*	0.287**	0.162	0.244*	0.252*
	(0.118)	(0.120)	(0.137)	(0.121)	(0.125)	(0.130)
Propaganda	0.423	0.304	0.022	0.413	0.375	-0.280
	(0.392)	(0.405)	(0.348)	(0.352)	(0.361)	(0.460)
R-squared	0.120	0.271	0.405	0.123	0.277	0.402
Panel D. Repression: replace inquisitions (Archive) with inquisitions (Zhang & Du)						
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.139	0.218*	0.295**	0.183	0.286**	0.299**
	(0.108)	(0.115)	(0.138)	(0.119)	(0.126)	(0.140)
Propaganda	0.412	0.282	0.033	0.377	0.351	-0.194
	(0.371)	(0.396)	(0.335)	(0.343)	(0.352)	(0.419)
R-squared	0.138	0.325	0.409	0.146	0.342	0.410
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province ∗ *Year FE*	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Controls ∗ *Year FE*	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

E.3 Measuring Repression and Resistance By Continuous Variables

Here, I run the main specification using continuous variables of repression and resistance. The first variable is the number of massacres in each prefecture during the Manchu's conquest (1644-1649). A massacre is defined as a large-scale killing committed by the Qing troops against residents of a conquered city. The second variable is the number of literary inquisition cases in each prefecture between 1661 and 1788. The third one is the logged number of Ming martyrs in resistance against the Manchus' conquest. A final measure is the logged number of Ming loyalists in the early Qing period from Sun (1912). The regional distribution of these four events is depicted in Figure E.7.

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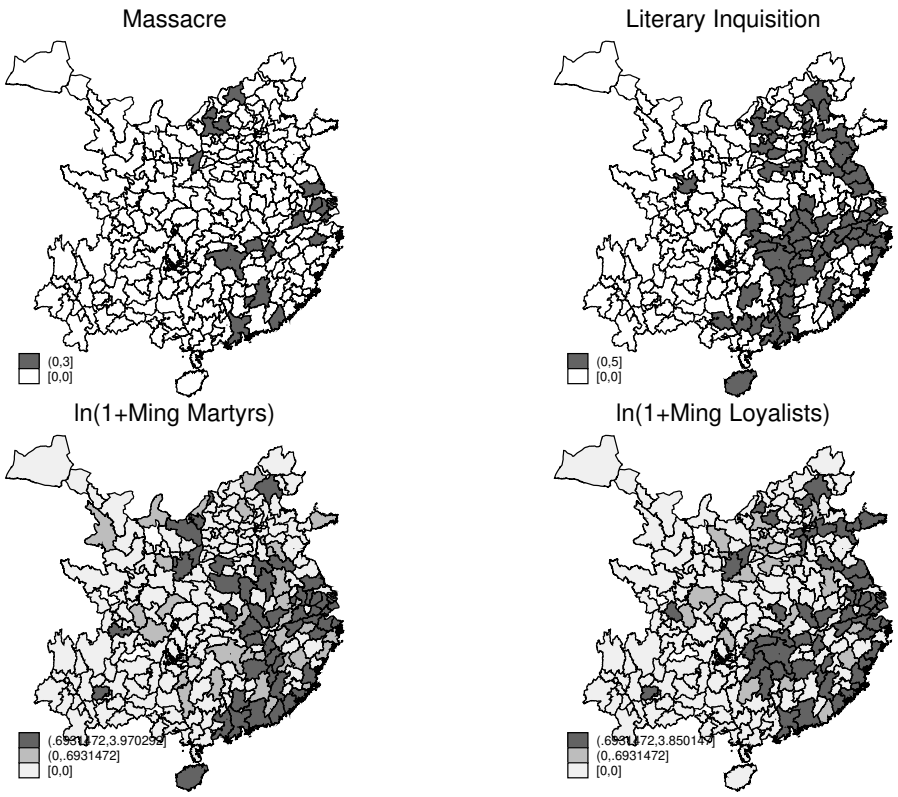


Figure E.7: Distribution of Repression and Resistance

Panel A and B of Table E5 show that coefficients of repression measures are not significant or robust, while panel C and D demonstrate that the resistance has a strong positive effect on revolution participation. The results imply that the main conclusion is driven by the resistance measure. How should we interpret this difference? The reason could be because the repression measures come from official records, and locals might have forgotten about them over the past 200 years. In the newspapers, I find that propagandists only frequently mentioned three massacres —the ones in Yangzhou, Jiading, and Jiangyin. The mechanism section shows that the main channel why the historical repression and resistance worked for the early 20^{th} century resulted from historical memories. Only a few repression-related incidents were recorded by independent scholars and remembered by civilians. However, the resistance were documented by the works of Ming loyalists, and later generations continued to write about this topic.

The second reason might be that resistance was less sensitive to the Qing government, and thus

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suffered less censorship. In 1776, emperor Qianlong commanded officials to compile a book called *Qin Ding Sheng Chao Xun Jie Zhu Chen Lu*, to honor Ming martyrs, including those who defended the Manchu's invasion. The emperor thought that it had been 130 years since the Manchu took over China, therefore to mourn Ming martyrs would not only assist to keep the authorities faithful to him but also not pose any dangers. Consequently, it was far safer for intellectuals to write Ming martyrs and loyalists than to write anything about massacres and inquisitions, and stories of resistance were preserved.

Table E5: Main Result: using continuous variables of repression and resistance

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A. Massacre						
$Massacre * Propaganda$	1.603	1.872	1.705	0.967	1.170	1.329
	(1.375)	(1.248)	(1.242)	(1.166)	(1.102)	(0.998)
$Propaganda$	0.769***	0.889***	0.392	0.630*	0.706*	-0.181
	(0.167)	(0.161)	(0.283)	(0.368)	(0.390)	(0.500)
R-squared	0.148	0.328	0.394	0.134	0.313	0.389
Panel B. Inquisition						
$Inquisition * Propaganda$	0.686	0.764	1.001	0.681	0.805	0.814
	(0.597)	(0.542)	(0.649)	(0.600)	(0.537)	(0.597)
$Propaganda$	0.395	0.476	0.204	0.430	0.559	-0.044
	(0.430)	(0.370)	(0.320)	(0.404)	(0.353)	(0.384)
R-squared	0.140	0.315	0.393	0.138	0.317	0.386
Panel C. Martyr						
$Ln(1 + Martyrs) * Propaganda$	0.120	0.325	0.668***	0.448	0.808***	0.955***
	(0.207)	(0.225)	(0.252)	(0.281)	(0.311)	(0.354)
$Propaganda$	0.730**	0.498	-0.232	0.422	0.262	-0.401
	(0.313)	(0.340)	(0.404)	(0.342)	(0.336)	(0.375)
R-squared	0.124	0.302	0.385	0.131	0.320	0.392
Panel D. Loyalist						
$Ln(1 + Loyalists) * Propaganda$	0.127	0.347*	0.583**	0.353	0.699***	0.735**
	(0.184)	(0.198)	(0.234)	(0.223)	(0.246)	(0.285)
$Propaganda$	0.701**	0.423	-0.203	0.490	0.310	-0.286
	(0.302)	(0.311)	(0.398)	(0.316)	(0.297)	(0.343)
R-squared	0.124	0.304	0.385	0.129	0.320	0.388
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
$Controls * Year\ FE$	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

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F Instrumental Variable Estimation

F.1 Political Choices Made by *Jinshis* in 1644

In Table F1, I regress dummy variables regarding *Jinshis*' political choices on the exam year. These choices include to serve the new Qing court, to serve the South Ming courts (Hongguang 1644-1645, Longwu 1645-1646, and Yongli 1623-1662), to defend the Manchu's invasion, and to serve the peasant rebellion. In the first two columns, I discover that the coefficient of exam year is significantly positive, which suggests that *Jinshis* were more inclined to submit to the Qing court if they obtained their degrees later. However, There is no relationship between the exam year and other political choices.

Table F1: Political choices made by Jinshis in 1644

VARIABLES	serve Qing		serve South Ming		defend Ming to death		serve peasant rebellion	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Exam Year	0.002**	0.002**	0.001	0.002	0.0001	0.0003	0.0003	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Prefecture FE	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Observations	1,417	1,415	1,414	1,413	1,413	1,412	1,414	1,413
R-squared	0.003	0.313	0.001	0.276	0.000	0.118	0.000	0.191

Notes: The dependent variable is equal to 1 if a *Jinshi* made corresponding decision. The independent variable is the exam year. The control variables are rank in the exam, faction ties (Donglin Dang-a party of scholars and officials who attempted to combat the moral laxity; Yan Dang-a party of followers to court eunuch Wei Zhongxian; or non-affiliates), and whether a *Jinshi* surrendered to peasant rebellion. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

F.2 Why Did Young *Jinshis* Choose to Serve the Qing Court?

Why did *Jinshis* who received degrees later choose to surrender to the new Qing court? There might be three hypotheses. First off, joining the new court would have far greater political and economic benefits for younger people than for older people. Based Wakeman's observation, while younger officials could still advance in their careers, older ones had reached the peak. Second, some *Jinshis* were not nominated for positions in the Ming government in 1644; as a result, if they joined the Qing court, they were given positions. For instance, Feng Quan (1595-1672), used to serve as co-minister of Rites in Ming, but was dismissed by emperor Chongzhen. He joined the Qing court

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in 1644 and was appointed minister of Rites shortly after. Third, low-ranked officials aspired to go up the career ladder. Figure F.1 confirms the correlation between the exam year and these three factors.

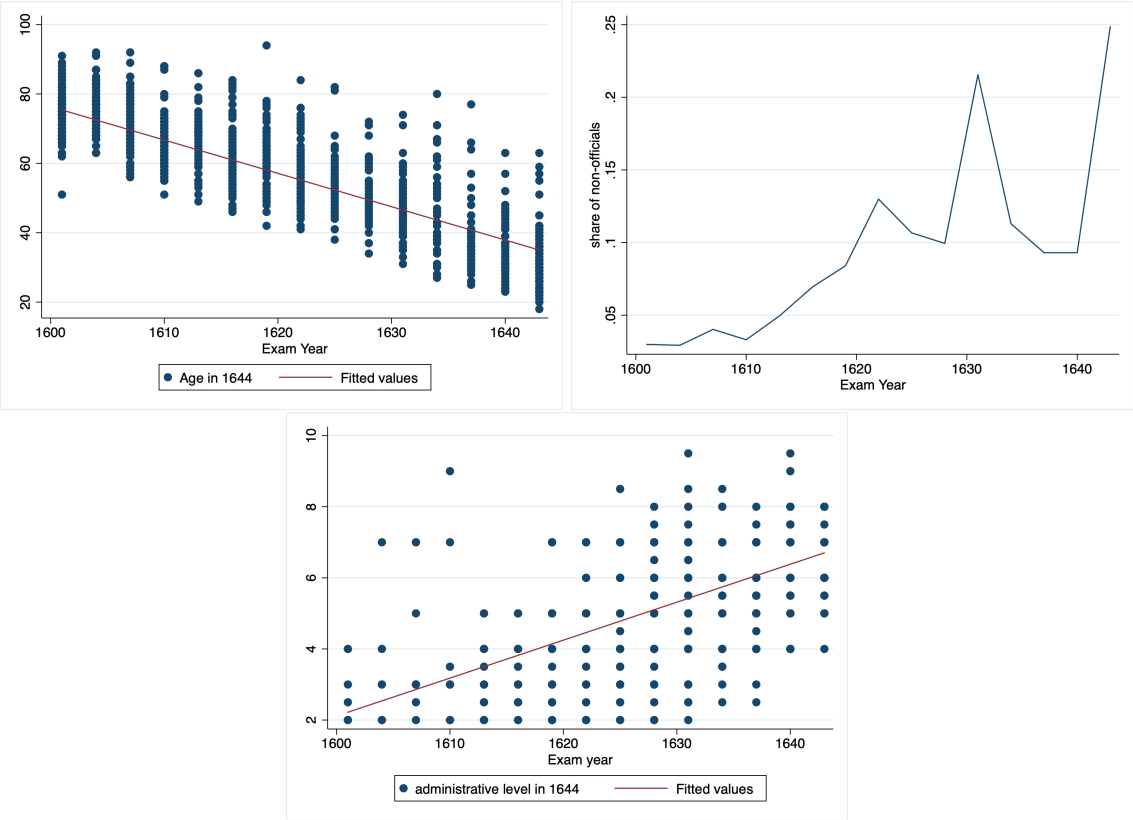


Figure F.1: age & the share of non-officials & administrative level based on exam year

Notes: The subfigure in the upper left illustrates the age of *Jinshis* in 1644 based on the exam year, demonstrating the strict positive correlation between exam year and birth year. The upper right one shows that a higher proportion of *Jinshis* from the young cohort were not nominated for any positions in the administration in 1644. The below one shows that the young cohort remained in low-ranked positions in government. 9.5 refers to the lowest level *Zong Jiu Pin*, and 1 is the top level *Zheng Yi Pin*. I calculate each official's administrative rank using their positions.

In Table F2 I regress the dummy variable about whether to join the Qing court on three factors-age, whether a *Jinshi* held office, and his administrative level in 1644. The first two columns confirms that young cohort were more likely to surrender. Coefficients in Columns 3-4 are significantly negative, implying that the political choice was not driven by outsiders of the Ming court. In the last two columns, I find that low-ranked officials, rather than senior officials were less likely to surrender. As a result, hypotheses about non-officials and administrative ranks are denied, and age is the main factor in *Jinshis*' political choices.

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Table F2: The incentives why young *Jinshis* chose to serve the Qing court

VARIABLES	serve the Qing court					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age in 1644	-0.004***	-0.005***				
	(0.001)	(0.001)				
Non-Officials			-0.090***	-0.075***		
			(0.024)	(0.023)		
Administrative Level in 1644					-0.031***	-0.021**
					(0.009)	(0.009)
Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Prefecture FE	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Observations	467	466	1,417	1,415	900	899
R-squared	0.017	0.464	0.010	0.314	0.013	0.391

Notes: The control variables are the exam rank, faction ties (Donglin Dang, Yandang, or none), and whether a *Jinshi* surrendered to peasant rebellion. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

F.3 Exclusion Restrictions

In Table F3, I regress several variables on the instrumental variable. The first group is thought to contribute to the outbreak of the peasant rebellions which overturned the Ming government and afterwards had an impact on the Ming-Qing warfare. The first is the average of the weather index between 1637 and 1644, a period of peasant uprising and widespread starvation. The second factor is the variation in weather, measured by the standard deviation of the weather index. The weather data comes from State Meteorological Society (1981). The following two factors are drought (Cao 2000) and plague (Cao 1997). The fifth one is the number of post stations in Ming (Yang 2006). Li Zicheng (1606-1645), the rebellious peasants' leader who overturned the Ming court finally, worked as a postman. However, when the post stations were abolished by Emperor Chongzhen in 1629, Li Zicheng lost his job and decided to join the uprising.

The second panel directly examines the correlation between the instrumental variable and measures related with repression and resistance. The first variable is the number of battles between the Ming troops and peasant rebels (The Editing Committee of China's Military History 1985). The second is the percentage of population loss caused by conflicts and natural disasters (Cao 2000). The final two are distance to princedoms and Nanjing, which served as bases of resistance against the Manchu's invasion around 1644. It appears that there is no correlation between all factors and

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Table F3: Exclusion restrictions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	weather	s.d weather	drought	plague	post stations
$\Delta Jinshi$	-0.004	-0.000	-0.007	-0.050	-0.000
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.010)	(0.042)	(0.004)
Province FE	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Observations	262	262	275	262	262
R-squared	0.724	0.376	0.002	0.066	0.324
VARIABLES	farmer rebellion	depopulation	dis to princedoms	dis to Nanjing	
$\Delta Jinshi$	-0.009	-0.029	-0.196	-1.070	
	(0.010)	(0.249)	(0.662)	(1.876)	
Province FE	Y	N	Y	Y	
Observations	262	275	262	262	
R-squared	0.265	0.000	0.700	0.849	

Notes: Variation in drought and population loss comes from province level.

the instrumental variable.

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G Mechanism

G.1 Persistent Resistance?

The question that concerns the understanding of the result is whether repression and resistance led Han Chinese people to resist the Qing government's rule over the entire 265 years. This would suggest that the nationalism propaganda in the late Qing played a weaker role in mobilizing revolutionary participation. To alleviate this concern, I examine if the repression measure is related to rebellions in the Qing dynasty.

The data on rebellions from 1681 to 1899 is drawn on a book entitled *Chronology of Warfare in Dynastic China* (The Editing Committee of China's Military History 1985).[38] This book provides comprehensive information on all military conflicts in China, including both internal strife and external military activities. The data source has been widely utilized in economic studies, such as those by Bai and Kung (2011) and Jia (2014). Among 411 instances of warfare during the Qing period, I identify 74 uprisings and gather information on the locations of these revolts. In Table G1, I do not find a positive relationship between the measure of repression and resistance and the occurrence of rebellions between 1681 and 1899. This finding suggests that, despite the Manchus committing numerous heinous acts against the Han Chinese, particularly during their conquest of China in the mid-17th century, this historical repression and resistance did not create regions that were persistently difficult to control over the following 250 years.

[38] I choose a starting year of 1681 instead of 1644 since that year marked the Qing court put down the Revolt of the Three Feudatories, which indicated the Qing regime was strengthened.

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Table G1: Persistent resistance?

VARIABLES	Incidence of rebellions 1681-1899				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Repression	-0.001				
	(0.016)				
Massacre		-0.013			
		(0.093)			
Inquisition			-0.105		
			(0.070)		
$ln(1 + Martyrs)$				0.022	
				(0.062)	
$ln(1 + Loyalists)$					0.106
					(0.068)
Observations	256	256	256	256	256
R-squared	0.208	0.208	0.216	0.209	0.217

Notes: The dependent variables are the number of rebellions between 1681 and 1899. Controls include population in 1880, area size, coast area, main rivers, Basin HHI, climate shocks, tax per capita in 1820, language fragmentation, and *Jinshi* density.

G.2 Books

Below is an example of the banned book from *Siku Quanshu*. This book, *Jia Shen Chuan Xin Lu*, documents that the South Ming's representative Zuo Maodi（1601-1645）went to Beijing for the negotiation with the Manchu court, but finally was killed.

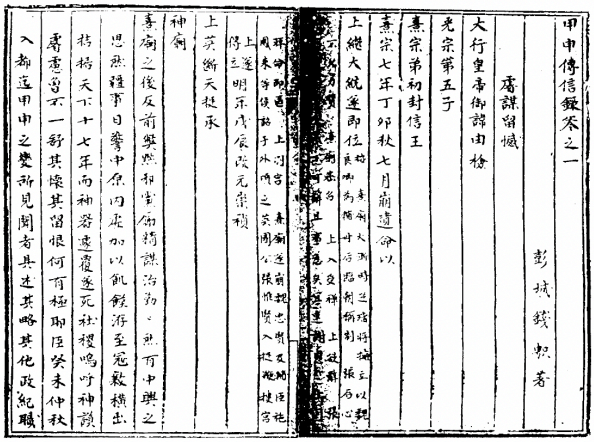


Figure G.1: One of the banned books, *Jia Shen Chuan Xin Lu*

The *Siku Quanshu* lists 1054 banned books, with 402 were written by scholars in the Qing

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dynasty. It also provides the information about print years of 86 books. Figure G.2 shows that these sensitive books were preserved and printed over the first 150 years of the Qing era.

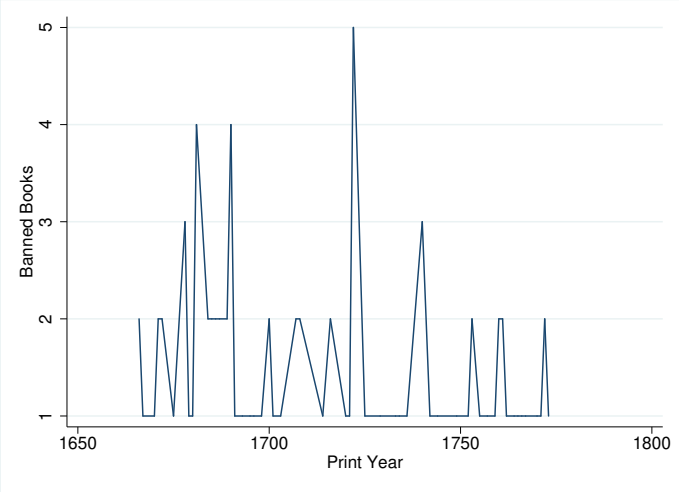
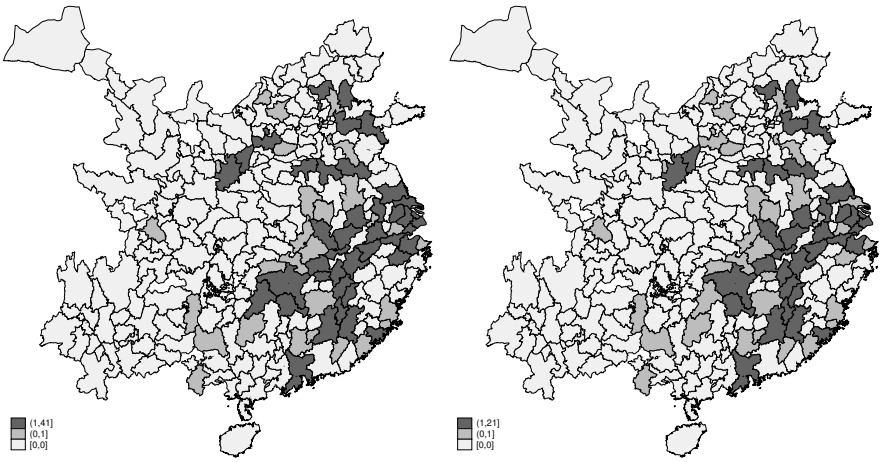


Figure G.2: 86 banned books based on print years

Figure G.3 depicts the regional distribution of banned books (a, left) and their authors (b, right). These literary works appear to have been widely distributed throughout prefectures.



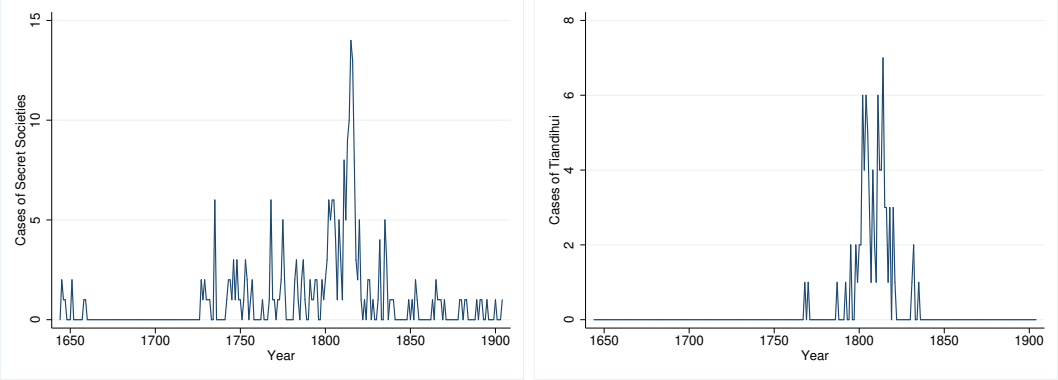
(a) Banned Books (b) Authors of Banned Books

Figure G.3: Regional distribution of banned books and authors

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G.3 Secret Societies

Figure G.4 shows the number of investigated cases involving secret societies and *Tiandihui* each year. Based on archives works, Liu and Zhang (2006) compiled cases that the Qing government had investigated into and in which secret societies were involved. I quantify the impact of secret societies' activities using the number of cases. According to Figure G.4, secret societies continued to exist during the Qing dynasty, and the *Tiandihui* thrived between 1790 and 1840. After several uprisings of the the *Tiandihui* were suppressed, members fled abroad and formed branches, notably in the United States, Canada, Singapore, and Australia. Later in the 1911 Revolution, secret societies provided financial and military support to revolutionaries.

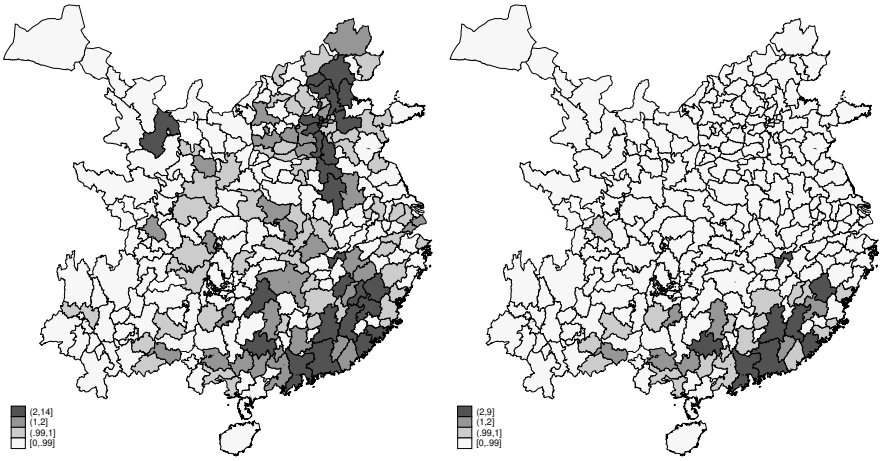


(a) Secret Societies (b) Tiandihui

Figure G.4: Time trend of investigated cases involving secret societies and *Tiandihui*

Figure G.5 depicts the regional distribution of secret societies' activities (a, left) and *Tiandihui*'s activities (b, right) throughout the Qing dynasty. Secret societies did exist throughout China's prefectures, but *Tiandihui*'s activities were centered in the south coastline region.

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(a) Secret Societies (b) Tiandihui

Figure G.5: Regional distribution of secret societies and *Tiandihui*

Tiandihui (The Society of Heaven and Earth) originated in China's Fujian province in 1761. The society was established with the goal of overthrowing the Manchu-ruled Qing government (1644-1912) and restoring the Han-ethnic Chinese Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Figure G.6 shows a censer of joss sticks of the *Tiandihui*, which was placed on the initiation altars of secret societies.



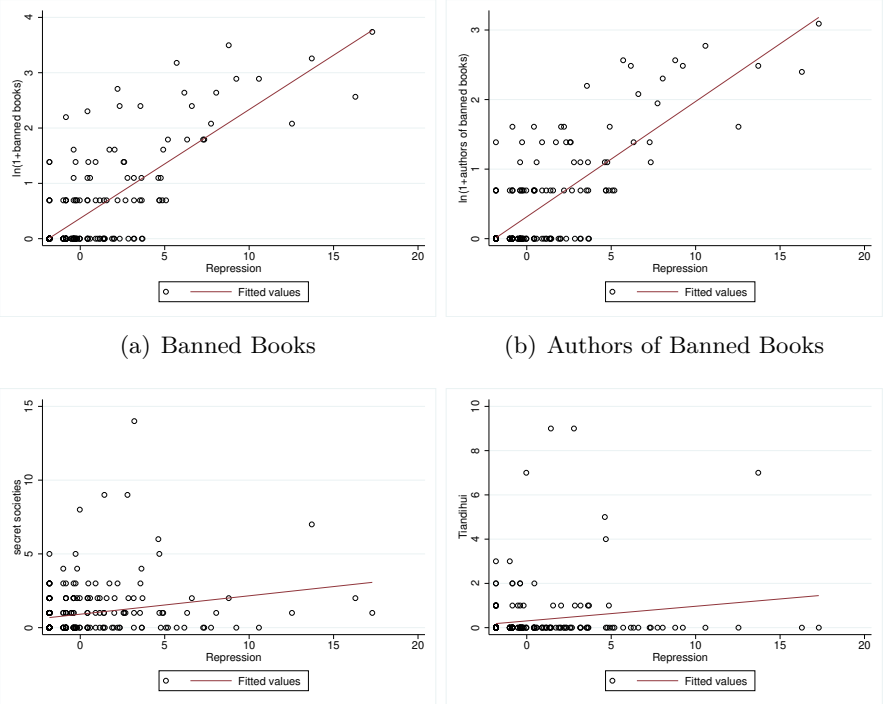
Figure G.6: A censer of joss sticks of the Tiandihui

Notes: The phrase means "Destroy the Qing, restore the Ming". Source: Lim (1999).

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G.4 Correlation Between Ways of Preserving Historical Memories and The Repression and Resistance

Figure G.7 shows that regions experiencing repression and resistance produced more books discussing these themes. However, the correlation with secret societies is not significant. In Table G2, I provide quantitative evidence by regressing banned books and secret societies on the repression measure.



(a) Banned Books (b) Authors of Banned Books

(c) Secret Societies (d) *Tiandihui*

Figure G.7: Correlation between possible ways of preserving historical memories and the repression and resistance

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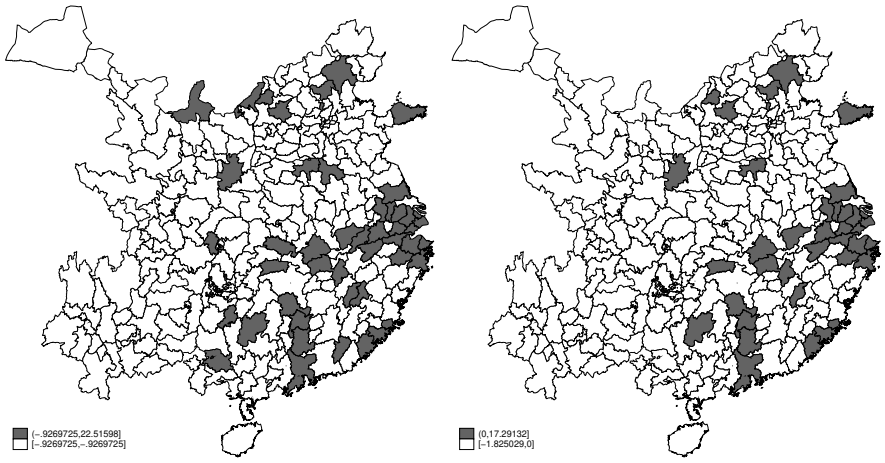
Table G2: The relationship between repression and banned books and secret societies

VARIABLES	(1) $ln(BannedBooks+1)$	(2) $ln(Author+1)$	(3) *Secret societies*	(4) *Tiandihui*
Repression	0.176***	0.149***	0.088*	0.072
	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.046)	(0.049)
Crontrols	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations	256	256	256	256
R-squared	0.670	0.694	0.344	0.311

Notes: Controls include population in 1880, area size, coast area, main rivers, Basin HHI, climate shocks, tax per capita in 1820, language fragmentation, and *Jinshi* density.

G.5 Recognition of Repression and Resistance by the Propaganda Machine

Figure G.8 (left) shows the regional distribution of repression and resistance that were mentioned in newspapers. And Figure G.8 (right) shows the distribution of all repression and resistance from prefectures that were mentioned in newspapers. Compared to the full sample of repression and resistance, the newspapers only introduced a small portion of the historical events to readers, which is confirmed in the scatter plot Figure G.9.



(a) "Recognized" Repression and Resistance

(b) Repression and Resistance in "Recognized" prefectures

Figure G.8: Distribution of repression and resistance recognized by newspapers

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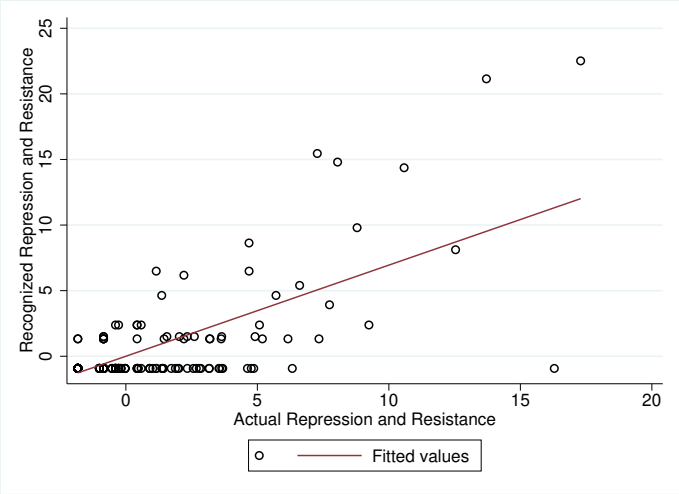


Figure G.9: Actual vs propagandized repression and resistance

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H Alternative Hypotheses

H.0.1 Manchu-Han Conflicts

All throughout the Qing dynasty, the Manchus enjoyed political, economic, social, and legal privileges. First, a disproportionate number of positions in the government, including key positions, were reserved for Manchus (Chen et al. 2023). Second, the Manchu commoners did not need to work but received a stipend from the government. Third, the Han and Manchus lived in separate communities and self-segregated from one other. Manchu-Han marriage was also forbidden by the Qing government (Rhoads 2015). Fourth, the Manchus had special privileges when caught in a judicial dispute (Liu 2019).

It is possible to hypothesize that during the 250 years of Manchu rule, continuous tensions between the Han people and Manchus catalyzed revolution, particularly during periods when anti-Manchu propaganda inflamed Han nationalism. Conflicts between the Manchus and Han are not accessible today. Instead, I use the banner garrisons and the banner people (the core group was Manchus) in each prefecture to proxy for the broader Manchu‐Han conflict (Fu 1796). This is because only when the Manchus lived in a prefecture could there be disputes with the Han people.

In Table H1, I show that the coefficients of interactions between the Manchu-Han conflict measures and the propaganda are not significant, which implies that neither the Manchu-Han conflicts nor the Manchus' presence affected revolution participation. Again, the coefficients of the main variable of interest stay significantly positive.

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Table H1: Alternative hypothesis: Manchu-Han conflicts

	revolutionaries			
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries		all newspapers (machine learning)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Repression × *Propaganda*	0.266**	0.267**	0.274**	0.274**
	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.133)	(0.133)
Banner garrisons × *Propaganda*	-0.057		-0.066	
	(0.109)		(0.131)	
$ln(Bannermen + 1) \times Propaganda$		0.033		0.055
		(0.096)		(0.106)
Propaganda	0.014	0.029	-0.192	-0.182
	(0.353)	(0.348)	(0.418)	(0.416)
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	Y	Y	Y	Y
$Controls * Year\ FE$	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.405	0.405	0.407	0.407
Number of prefectures	256	256	256	256

Notes: This table examines whether accounting for an alternative hypothesis—contemporary Manchu-Han conflicts—affects the baseline results in table 2. I proxy these conflicts using the number of banner garrisons and the number of registered bannermen in each prefecture. Control variables are the same as those used in table 2.

H.1 Missionary Conflicts

According to Mattingly and Chen (2022), if a prefecture had experienced conflict with missionaries, about 20 percentage points were more likely to have produced a founding member of Chinese Revolutionary Alliance. The mechanism undertaken in the mobilization is that local elites fan anti-foreign and anti-Qing sentiment to drive out missionaries that threaten their power.

I collect 362 anti-missionary incidents between 1840 and 1899 from Zhang and Liu (1987). Two different specifications are considered to see if this competing hypothesis challenges the validity of my argument in Table H2. First, in Panel A, I include an interaction between anti-missionary incidents and the anti-Manchu index. Next, in Panel B, I add a series of interaction terms between year dummies and anti-missionary conflicts. In both panels, coefficients of the variable of interests, the interaction between the measure of repression and resistance and the anti-Manchu propaganda, remain significantly positive.

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Table H2: Alternative hypothesis: anti-missionary incidents

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A						
Repression $*$ *Propaganda*	0.095	0.167	0.241*	0.135	0.230**	0.261**
	(0.114)	(0.119)	(0.137)	(0.110)	(0.115)	(0.127)
Mission conflicts $*$ *Propaganda*	0.069	0.069	0.095	0.177**	0.192**	0.185***
	(0.109)	(0.107)	(0.082)	(0.088)	(0.079)	(0.065)
Propaganda	0.252	0.112	-0.210	0.071	0.030	-0.356
	(0.380)	(0.404)	(0.388)	(0.345)	(0.341)	(0.383)
R-squared	0.138	0.324	0.410	0.162	0.359	0.423
Panel B						
Repression $*$ *Propaganda*	0.116	0.187*	0.258**	0.157	0.252**	0.268**
	(0.097)	(0.101)	(0.128)	(0.106)	(0.110)	(0.129)
Propaganda	0.212	0.125	-0.028	0.144	0.167	-0.200
	(0.379)	(0.390)	(0.348)	(0.344)	(0.335)	(0.391)
Mission conflicts $*$ *YearFE*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R-squared	0.183	0.365	0.426	0.189	0.380	0.429
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province $*$ *Year FE*	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Controls $*$ *Year FE*	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

The Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), a notorious anti-missionary campaign, may have sparked a surge of nationalism among the Chinese people. To test this alternative hypothesis, I examine the results in Table H3. In Panel A, I incorporate an interaction term between exposure to the Boxer Rebellion and propaganda, while in Panel B, I include an interaction term between the indemnities paid by each province as a result of the Boxer Rebellion and propaganda. The findings continue to support the main argument: propaganda was more effective in areas subjected to repression, whereas those exposed to the Boxer Rebellion did not experience the same effect.

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Table H3: Alternative hypothesis: Boxer Rebellion

	revolutionaries					
	19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries			all newspapers (machine learning)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A						
Repression $*$ *Propaganda*	0.116	0.185*	0.255**	0.159	0.248**	0.258**
	(0.099)	(0.104)	(0.128)	(0.105)	(0.112)	(0.128)
Boxer conflicts $*$ *Propaganda*	-0.621*	-0.558	-1.048**	-0.523	-0.628	-0.941*
	(0.341)	(0.422)	(0.481)	(0.379)	(0.446)	(0.497)
Propaganda	0.508	0.367	0.113	0.482	0.455	-0.042
	(0.374)	(0.391)	(0.328)	(0.314)	(0.317)	(0.373)
R-squared	0.139	0.320	0.402	0.146	0.336	0.402
Panel B						
Repression $*$ *Propaganda*	0.160	0.215*	0.255*	0.185	0.255**	0.257*
	(0.112)	(0.110)	(0.132)	(0.114)	(0.113)	(0.131)
Indemnity $*$ *Propaganda*	-1.612*	-2.175*	-0.730	-1.242*	-1.421*	-0.581
	(0.901)	(1.133)	(0.852)	(0.724)	(0.758)	(0.703)
Propaganda	1.092***	1.190***	0.422	0.911***	0.932***	0.157
	(0.299)	(0.393)	(0.445)	(0.302)	(0.347)	(0.437)
R-squared	0.152	0.339	0.405	0.154	0.347	0.405
Prefecture FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province $*$ *Year FE*	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Controls $*$ *Year FE*	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Number of prefectures	262	262	256	262	262	256

Notes: Boxerconflicts is equal to 1 if a prefecture was exposed to the Boxer Rebellion. *Indemnity* is the indemnity to be paid per person by each province. The source is Wu (2018).

H.2 The Taiping Rebellion

Another possible channel that might challenge the main argument of this paper is that the Taiping rebellion between 1851 and 1864 fostered irreparable hostilities between Han Chinese and Manchus based on ethnic identity. It was claimed by the Taiping propagandists that the Manchus were the representatives of Satan, and the Taipings were the representatives of God (Crossley 1999). After capturing Nanjing, Taiping soldiers massacred roughly 40,000 Manchu people. Additionally, Sun Yat-sen and other revolutionary leaders were inspired by the Taiping Rebellion and some surviving Taiping veterans even joined the Revive China Society (Jen 1973).

I find little evidence that influenced by the anti-Manchu propaganda, prefectures even occupied by the Taiping armies produced more revolutionaries. This pattern derives from the fact that most revolutionaries in the sample were social elites rather than commoners.

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Table H4: Alternative hypothesis: the influence of Taiping Rebellion

	revolutionaries	
	19 revolutionary newspapers	all newspapers
	(1)	(2)
$Repression * Propaganda$	0.272*	0.299*
	(0.159)	(0.154)
$Taiping\ Rebellion * Propaganda$	-0.114	-0.466
	(0.831)	(0.809)
$Propaganda$	0.064	0.008
	(0.360)	(0.372)
Prefecture FE	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y
$Province * Year\ FE$	Y	Y
$Controls * Year\ FE$	Y	Y
R-squared	0.405	0.408
Number of prefectures	256	256

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I After the 1911 Revolution

After the success of the 1911 Revolution, in 1912, revolutionaries founded the Kuomintang party (KMT, Chinese Nationalist Party) to participate in the first national assembly election, the first nationwide election in Chinese history.[39] As shown in Figure I.10, the KMT won 269 of the 596 seats in the House and 123 of the 274 seats in the Senate. Since the KMT won an overwhelming majority, its executive leader Song Jiaoren (1882-1913) was expected to become premier, but he was assassinated on March 20, 1913. The president Yuan Shikai was suspected of the crime, and he dissolved KMT, expelled adherents of the KMT from the parliament. This event indicated that the parliamentary democracy sought by the revolutionaries was a complete failure. The KMT top leader Sun Yat-sen led a faction to rebel against the president Yuan. However, the Second Revolution （July-September, 1913）failed within two months.

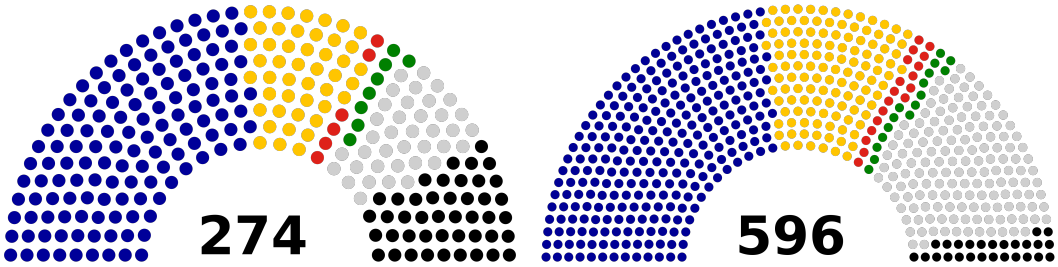


Figure I.10: Result of 1912 Chinese National Assembly Election

Notes: KMT representatives are shown by the blue dots. Yellow dots indicate Republican Party representatives. Democratic Party representatives are in green, while Unity Party representatives are in red. Multi-party candidates are represented by gray dots, while independent candidates are represented by black dots.
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1912_Chinese_National_Assembly_election.

Sun Yat-sen resurrected the KMT as the Nationalist Party of China in 1919 in Guangzhou. Among the 24 members of the first KMT standing committee, 19 had previously been members of *the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance*, and 14 joined it in 1905 or 1906. Additionally, the Whampoa Military Academy was established in Guangzhou in 1924 to augment the military capabilities of the Northern Expedition. Graduates of Whampoa Military Academy (1924-1926) became high-ranking military officers of the KMT government later.

[39]During the 1911 Revolution, the revolutionaries were faced with depleted finances, so they had to compromise with the Qing court in the north. Yuan Shikai (1859-1916), a minister of the Qing court, took advantage of this opportunity to seize power and became the first president of the Republic of China (1912-1916). The revolutionaries at this time pursued parliamentary democracy to check the power of the president.

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The KMT and its Guangzhou government accepted aid from the Soviet Union in 1923 after being denied recognition by Western powers. During the first party congress in Guangzhou in 1924, the KMT adopted Sun's political theory, which included *the Three Principles of the People*——nationalism, democracy, and the well-being of the people. After three years, supported by its own army of the Military Academy, the KMT conquered the southern half of China in nine months with Soviet supplies. In 1927, the KMT established a national government in Nanjing, which ruled China until it was overthrown by the Communist party in 1949.[40]

Though revolutionaries had already given up the anti-Manchu (or Pro-Han) slogan and embraced the concept of broader Chinese nationalism to unite non-Han ethinicities after the revolution's success, most of the core KMT members joined revolutionary groups early. Their early careers were built on the narrow Han (Anti-Manchu) nationalism.

qualitative evidence

After the 1911 Revolution, revolutionaries or the KMT adopted nationalism to establish the official narrative of history. In 1937, the KMT government issued a list of forty national heroes. Among these forty historical figures, six were Ming heroes in the resistance against the Manchu's invasion in the mid-17$^{\text{th}}$ century, and there were no Manchus. The list suggests that the KMT still insisted on its nationalism definition.

[40]Though the KMT government aimed to reunify China, the country remained de facto divided into several realms controlled by military leaders. The border provinces in the north and the west were out of the KMT's control in most periods.

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J Newspaper Database

J.1 Introduction to the Newspaper Database



Figure J.1: the Full-text of Journals in the Late Qing Database

Source: https://www.cnbksy.com/.

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Table J1: The 19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries

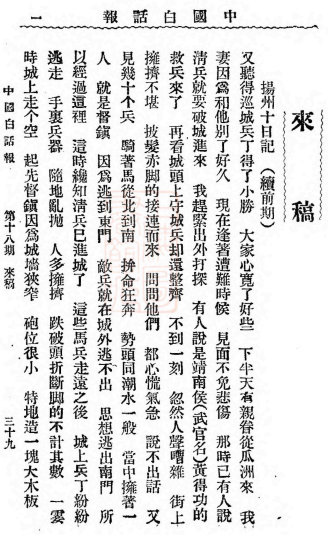
Newspaper	Headquarter	Founded	Closed
国民报	Tokyo, Japan	1901	1901
广益丛报	Chongqing, China	1903	1912
国民日日报	Shanghai, China	1903	1904
湖北学生界 (汉声)	Tokyo, Japan	1903	1903
江苏	Tokyo, Japan	1903	1904
觉民	Shanghai, China	1903	1904
浙江潮	Tokyo, Japan	1903	1903
中国白话报	Shanghai, China	1903	1904
安徽俗话报	Anqing, China	1904	1905
白话	Tokyo, Japan	1904	1904
二十世纪大舞台	Shanghai, China	1904	1904
国粹学报	Shanghai, China	1905	1912
民报	Tokyo, Japan	1905	1908
醒狮	Tokyo, Japan	1905	1905
洞庭波	Tokyo, Japan	1906	1906
复报	Shanghai, China	1906	1907
竞业旬报	Shanghai, China	1906	1909
雁来红丛报	Suzhou, China	1906	1906
云南	Tokyo, Japan	1906	1911

Table J2: The 8 newspapers founded by constitutionalists

Newspaper	Headquarter	Founded	Closed
五洲时事汇报	Shanghai, China	1899	1899
经世文潮	Shanghai, China	1903	1904
蜀报	Chengdu, China	1903	1903
东浙杂志	Jinhua, China	1904	1905
宪报	Shanghai, China	1906	1907
宪政杂识	Shanghai, China	1906	1906
新世界小说社报	Shanghai, China	1906	1907
法政杂志	Tokyo, Japan	1906	1906

J.2 Newspaper Articles About Repression and Resistance

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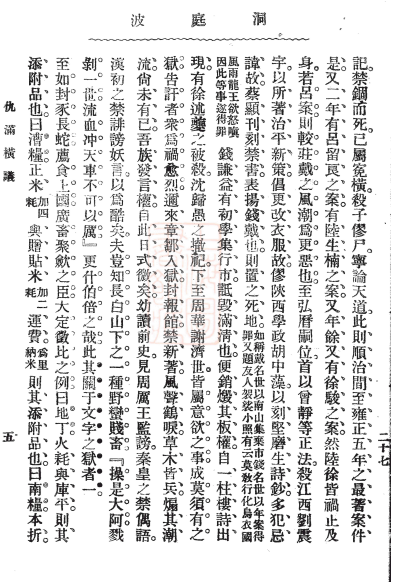

中國白話報 一

來稿

揚州十日記（續前期）

又聽得巡城兵丁得了小勝 大家心寬了好些 下半天有親眷從瓜洲來 我妻因爲和他別了好久 現在逢著這雞時候 見面不免悲傷 那時已有人說清兵就要破城進來 我趕緊出外打探 有人說是靖南侯(武官名)黃得功的救兵來了 再看城頭上守城兵却還緊齊 不到一刻 忽然人聲嘈雜 街上擁擠不堪 披髮赤脚的接連而來 問問他們 都心慌氣急 說不出話 又見幾十个兵 騎著馬從北到南 拚命狂奔 勢頭同潮水一般 當中擁著一人 就是督師 因爲逃到東門 敵兵就在城外逃不出 思想逃出南門 所以經過這裡 這時纔知清兵已進城了 這些馬兵走遠之後 城上兵丁紛紛逃走 手裏兵器 隨地亂拋 人多擁擠 跌破頭折斷脚的不計其數 一霎時城上走个空 起先督師因爲城墻狹窄 砲位很小 特地造一塊大木板

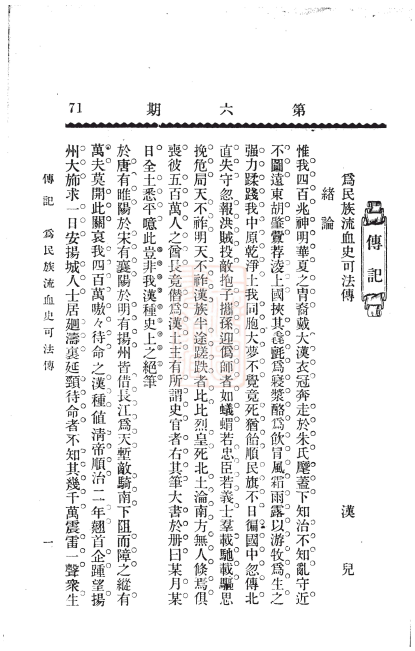
中國白話報 第十八期 來稿 三十九


洞庭波 仇滿橫議 五

記。禁錮而死。已屬冤橫。殺子僇尸。寧論天道。此則順治間至雍正五年之最著案件是。又二年有呂留良之案。有陸生楠之案。又年餘又有徐駿之案。然陸徐皆禍止及身。若呂案則較莊戴之風潮爲更惡也。至弘曆嗣位。首以曾靜等正法。殺江西劉震宇。以所著治平新策。倡更改衣服。故僇陝西學政胡中藻。以刻堅磨生詩鈔。多犯忌諱。故蔡顯刊刻禁書。表揚錢氏。錢氏也。則置之死地。（如稍微名世以南山集案得罪。即又賜入祭。）錢謙益有初學集行市。既毀滿清也。便銷燬其板。獨自一杜樓詩出現。有徐述夔之被殺。沈歸愚之撤配。下至周華謝濟世。皆屬意欲之。事成莫須有之獄。告訐者衆。爲禍愈烈。迄來章鄧入獄。封報館。禁新著。風聲鶴唳。草木皆兵。煽其潮流。俞未有已。吾族發言權。自此日式微矣。幼讀前史。見周厲王監謗。秦皇之禁偶語。漢初之禁誹謗妖言。以爲酷矣。夫豈知長白山下之一種野蠻賤畜。『操』是大阿爨剝一世流血冲天。事不可以厲。更什伯倍之哉。此其關于文字之獄者一。至如封豕長蛇。麋食上國。盧舍聚歛之臣。大定徵比之例曰。地丁火耗。與庫平則其添附品也。曰漕糧正米（加四與贈貼米（加二運費（爲里納米則其添附品也。曰南糧本折。

(a) article on the Yangzhou massacre 扬州十日记 (续前期), 中国白话报,1904.

(b) article on the Literary Inquisition 仇滿橫议, 洞庭波,1906.


第六期 71 漢兒

傳記

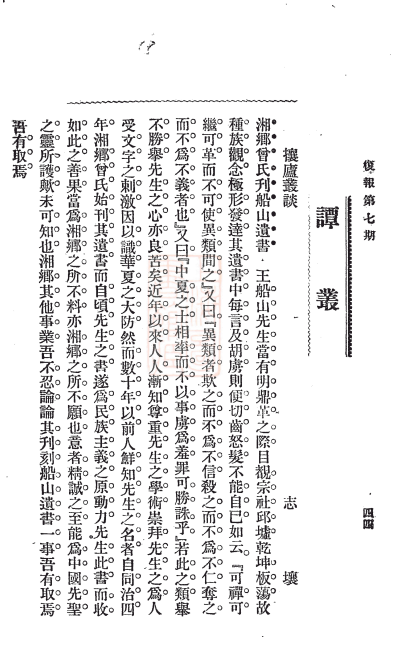
爲民族流血史可法傳

緒論

惟我四百兆神明華夏之胄。姦戮大漢衣冠奔走。於朱氏靡蓋下。知治不知亂。守近不圖遠。東胡蹙蹙。荐凌上國。挾其毳氈。爲綏緊酪。爲飲骨風。霜雨露。以游牧爲生之强力。蹂躪我中原。乾淨土。我司馬大夢不覺。竟死矣。胎順民旗。不日徧國中。忽傳北直失守。忽報洪賊投敵。抱子擁孫。迎僞師者。如蟻蝟若忠臣若義士。墓戮馳戮。驅思挽危局。天不祚明。天不祚漢。族生途蹉跌者。比比烈皇死北。士論南方。無人。倏焉俱喪。彼五百萬人之酋長。竟僭爲漢士主有所謂史官者。右其筆。大書於册。曰某月某日。全士悉平。噫。此豈非我漢種史上之絕筆。

於唐有睢陽。於宋有襄陽。於明有揚州。皆借長江爲天塹。敵騎南下。阻而障之。縱有萬夫莫開。此關哀我四百萬嗷々待命之漢種。值清帝順治二年。翹首企踵。望揚州大旆。求一日安。揚城人士。居廻濤。冀延頸待命者。不知其幾千萬。震雷一聲。衆生

傳記 爲民族流血史可法傳 一


復報第七期 四 譚叢 攘廬叢談 志攘

湘鄉曾氏刊船山遺書 王船山先生當有明鼎革之際。目覩宗社邱墟。乾坤板蕩。故種族觀念。極形發達。其遺書中每言及胡虜則僅切齒怒髮。不能自已。如云。『可禪可繼。可革而不可使。異類間之。又曰。『異類者。欺之而不爲不信。殺之而不爲不仁。奪之而不爲不義者也。』又曰。『中夏之士相率而不以事虜爲羞。畢可勝誅乎。』若此之類。舉不勝舉。先生之心。亦良苦矣。近年以來。人人漸知發揚先生之爲人。受文字之刺激。因以識華夏之大防。然而數十年以前。人鮮知先生之名者。自同治四年湘鄉曾氏始刊其遺書而自頃。先生之書。遂爲民族主義之原動力。先生此書而收如此之善果。當爲湘鄉之所不料。亦湘鄉之所不願也。意者。精誠之至。能爲中國先聖之靈所譴歟。未可知。也。湘鄉其他事業。吾不忍論。論其刊刻船山遺書一事。吾有取焉吾有取焉。

(c) article on Shi Kefa, a martyr of the Ming dynasty who resisted the Manchu's invasion 传记为民族流血史可法传, 江苏,1903, vol 6.

(d) article on Ming loyalists 攘庐丛谈：湘乡曾氏刊船山遗书, 复报,1906, vol 7.

Figure J.2: Newspaper articles about repression and resistance

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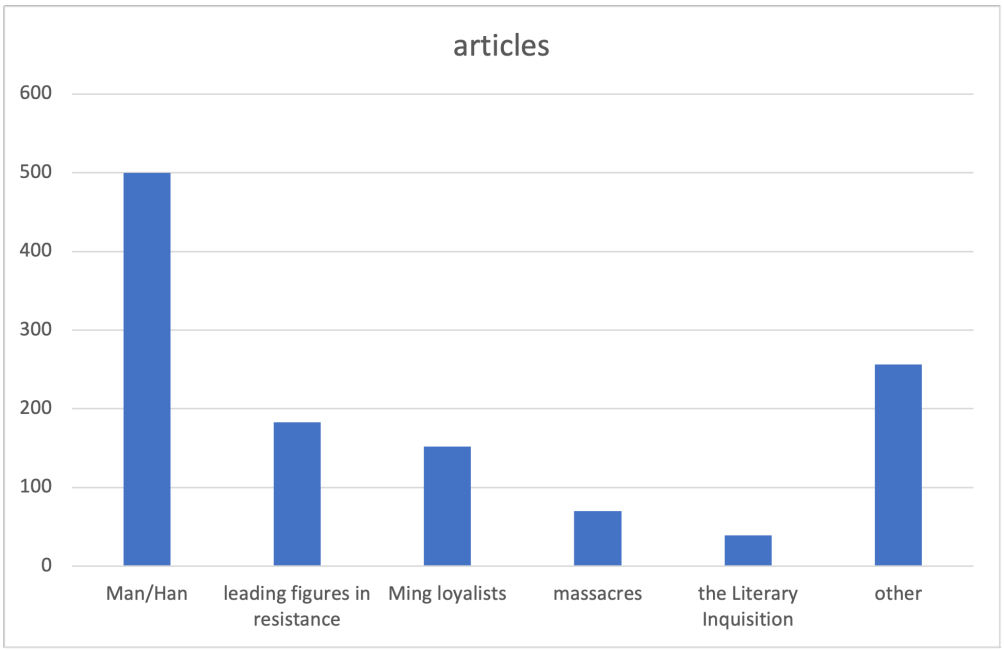
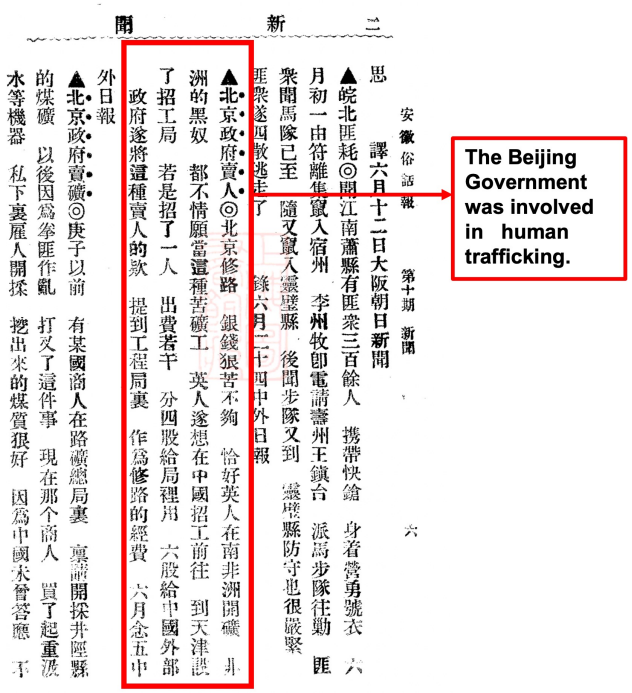


Figure J.3: 908 anti-Manchu articles among 9,995 articles from 19 newspapers founded by revolutionaries

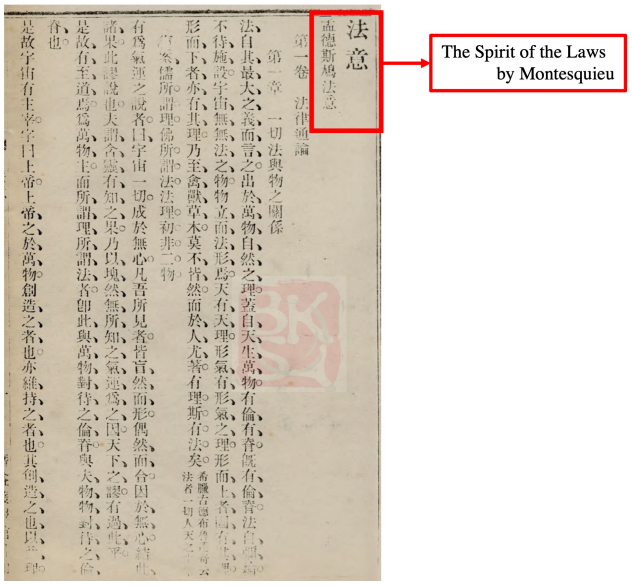
Notes: The figure above shows the distribution of the types of anti-Manchu articles. The first bar on the left gives the number of articles that contained the word "Manchu" or "Han", and claimed that the Manchus were not Chinese. The next four bars show the number of articles that discussed corresponding topics. The last bar, other, refers to other topics that aimed to arouse the anti-Manchu sentiment. Other topics include martyrs and loyalists of Song dynasty who fought against foreign invasions such as Yuefei (1103-1142) and Wen Tianxiang (1236-1283), the first emperor of Ming dynasty Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398) who ended the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty, and traitors to the Ming dynasty like Wu Sangui (1612-1678) and Hong Chengchou (1593-1665).

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J.3 Newspaper Articles on Other Sentiments



(a) article on anti-imperialism
北京政府卖人, 安徽俗话报,1904.



(b) The Spirit of Laws by Montesquieu
法意, 广益丛报,1906.

Figure J.4: Newspaper articles on other sentiments

Figure J.5 shows the time trends of different sentiments in the revolutionary propaganda, in-

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cluding anti-Manchuism, anti-imperialism, and pro-democracy. All sentiments were deliberately crafted by revolutionary propagandists to demonstrate that the Qing court had no right to rule China because it had failed to save the state from the deepening crisis. We could see that the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War caused the anti-imperialism index to surge in 1903 and 1904. Also, we can observe the trend of the competing propaganda, constitutionalism, in newspapers.



Figure J.5: Other sentiments in the propaganda in Shanghai (Songjiang Prefecture), left (19 newspapers), right (all newspapers, machine learning)

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K Miscellaneous Objects

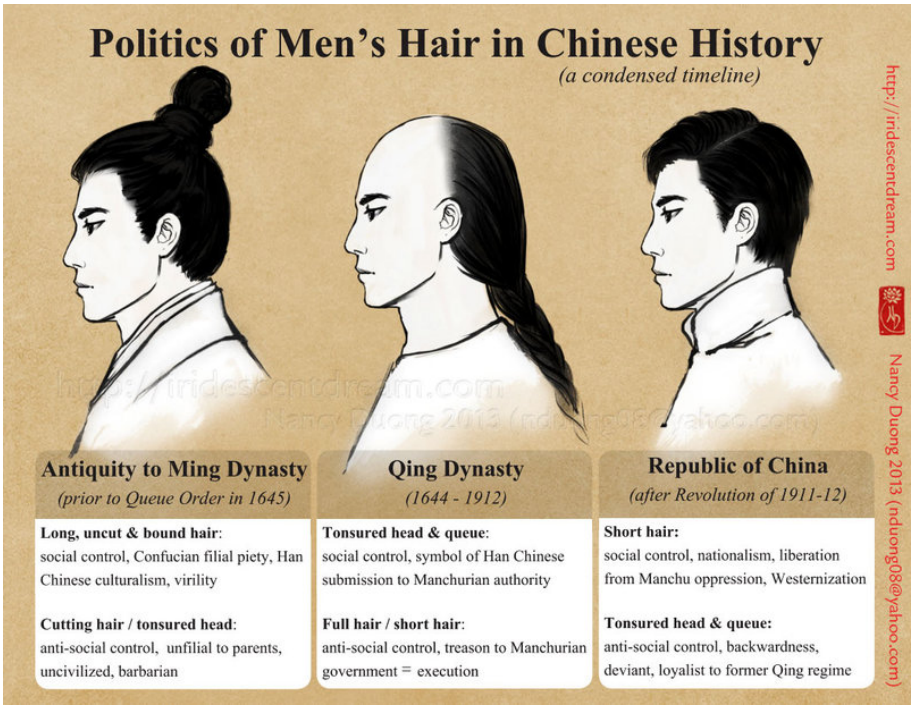


Figure K.1: Politics of men's hair in Chinese history

Source: https://nannaia.tumblr.com/post/58470045079/politics-of-mens-hair-in-chinese-history-a.

Table K1: The Revolutionary Groups between 1894 and 1906

Revolutionary Group	Time of Establishment	Origin
(i) *Xingzhonghui* (The Revive China Society)	November 1894	Honolulu, Hawaii
(ii) *Junguomin Jiaoyuhui* (The Society of National Military Education)	May 1903	Tokyo, Japan
(iii) *Huaxinghui* (The China Rise Society)	April 1903	Changsha, China
(iv) *Guangfuhui* (The Restoration Society)	Octomber 1904	Shanghai, China
(v) *Tongmenghui* (The Chinese Revolutionary Alliance)	August 1905	Tokyo, Japan
(vi) *Rizhihui* (The Society for Daily Improvement)	January 1906	Wuhan, China

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