

XIA Yidan

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Identity formation in cross-state and cross-regional interactions; the historical development of international law and the sovereign state system in comparative perspective; maritime trade networks, state formation, and legal order; nationalism, political thought, and international economic order.

EDUCATION

Duke University

M.A. in Political Science

Cumulative GPA: 4.0/4.0

Coursework: Foundational Scholarship in International Relations; State Formation; Fundamentals of Research; Probability and Regression; Data Science for Social Science

Durham, NC, USA

Aug 2025 – Present

Fudan University

B.A. in Political Science & Public Administration

GPA: 3.73/4.0 | Undergraduate Excellent Student Scholarship, 2022 & 2023

Shanghai, China

Sep 2020 – Jun 2025

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

“Evil” and “Benevolence” in Modern Japanese Asianism: An Analysis from the Dual Perspectives of Sinocentrism and International Law

Independent Research Paper, Fudan University

Jan – May 2024

Examined how the Hua-Yi distinction (the Sinocentric civilizational order) mediated Japan’s reception of modern international law, arguing against the oversimplified view that Sinocentrism simply caused Japan to misunderstand the European order of sovereign equality. Analyzed how European legal standards such as “civilization” and “sovereignty” traveled and were reinterpreted in East Asia, serving to demarcate boundaries between Europe and non-Europe much as the Hua-Yi framework had done in earlier periods. Drawing on Carl Schmitt’s analysis of nineteenth-century international law, demonstrated how the “peace” pursued by the international legal order legitimized expansion, allowing “benevolence” and “aggression” to coexist under formal legality.

Transmission Mechanisms of Economic Nationalism’s Influence on International Economic Policies: A Literature Review

Course Paper, POLSCI 763S Foundational Scholarship in IR, Duke University

Fall 2025

Developed a two-dimensional analytical framework (elite vs. mass mobilization; instrumental vs. affective logics) to organize the fragmented literature on how nationalism shapes trade, FDI, and industrial policy. Synthesized research on securitization and weaponized interdependence, social identity theory and economic preferences, consumer ethnocentrism, and feedback loops between elite framing and mass sentiment.

Preference Mismatch and Policy Implementation: A Public Choice Analysis of China’s Double Reduction Policy Using Nighttime Light Data

Independent Research; accepted for presentation at 2026 PCS Conference

Oct 2025 – Jan 2026

Applied principal-agent theory to analyze incentive misalignment in hierarchical governance. Constructed school-level and community-level panel data from VIIRS satellite nighttime light imagery (2017–2024) across 41 Chinese cities; employed synthetic control methods (SCM) with nested V/W optimization and placebo tests. Documented how COVID-19’s heterogeneous shocks confounded causal identification, as a methodological contribution to policy evaluation under systemic disruption.

Quantitative Research on Political Communication

Course Papers and Provincial Innovation Training Project, Fudan University

Fall 2022 & Fall 2024

Built a dataset of Weibo posts and People’s Daily blog posts; cleaned and tokenized Chinese text;

implemented topic modeling and sentiment analysis; constructed support indicators using principal component analysis (PCA); trained an SVM classifier for automated annotation; estimated regression models of nationalism-related content (Python: web scraping, LDA, SVM classification) with regression modeling (Stata: PCA, OLS) and discourse analysis (framing theory, relevance theory). Applied to state media output and public opinion dynamics.

INDEPENDENT READING & INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

Maritime history, cartography, and spatial politics: Song Nianshen, *Inventing Asia: A History on Maps*; Kang Hao, *Divine Wind and Copper Coins: Island Japan Encounters the World Empire, 1268–1368*; Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*.

Political thought, identity, and international order: Ge Zhaoguang, *Here in “China” I Dwell* (on the disintegration of East Asian cultural commonality after the 17th century); Carl Schmitt on the *Nomos* of the Earth and European international law’s origins; Acharya & Lee on the cartel theory of sovereign states.

Core questions: How group identities are formed and reshaped through cross-state encounters; the role of maritime merchant networks as transnational actors; the “sea-centered” historiographic approach (Ge Zhaoguang) vs. nation-state-centered narratives; origins of international law in comparative perspective; the relationship between cartography, colonialism, and legal order.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Team Leader, Application Group

Rongchang Scholars Global Governance Talent Training Program, Fudan University Mar 2022 – Mar 2023
Coordinated liaison with universities, scholars, and applicants for a global governance talent development program; conducted preliminary review of application materials and organized interviews.

SKILLS & LANGUAGES

Languages: Chinese (native); English (fluent, TOEFL 107)

Technical: Python (web scraping, NLP, ML, geospatial analysis with Rasterio); Stata (regression, PCA); R; Gephi

Other: Reading knowledge of classical Chinese