

## Features of this study

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- Appointment as an official and subsequent career attainment is the key outcome.
  - Directly via linkage to a database of civil service personnel records (CGED-Q).
- Larger sample of *juren* and *jinshi* degree holders than any recent study.
  - Family background information from exam classmate records (同年齒錄) for *juren* and *jinshi*.
- Comparison of role of family background in shaping careers for *juren* and *jinshi*
- Consideration of multiple career outcomes
  - Time to appointment, career length, highest rank attained

## Data on careers

### *China Government Employee Database – Qing*

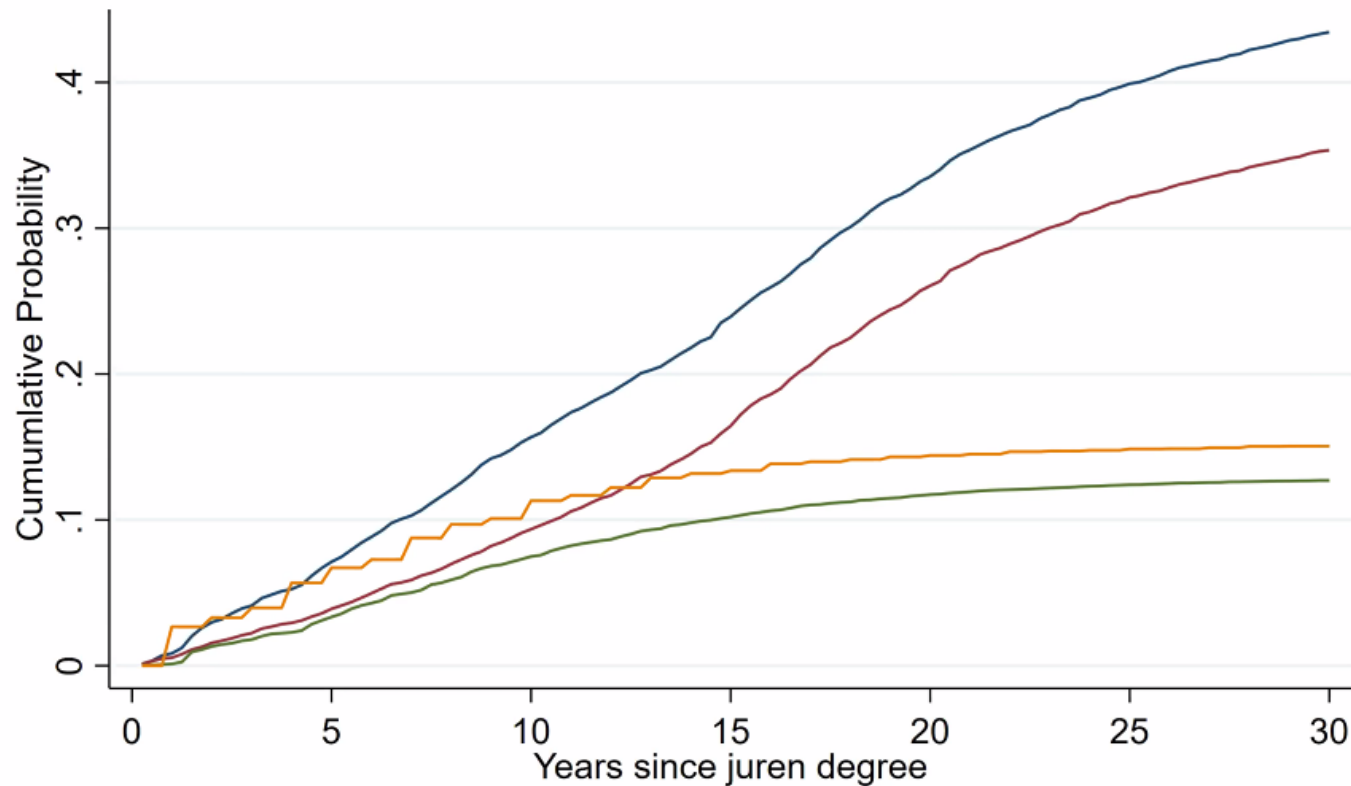
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- Transcribed from *Jinshenlu* (縉紳錄)
- Quarterly roster of nearly all civil officials holding regular appointments
  - Originally compiled by the government, but editions also sold by commercial publishers
  - Typically 12,000-13,000 regular in any official edition
- For non-Banner officials, surname, name, province and county of origin, position, qualification, and other details
- Career information comes from nominative linkage of non-Banner officials based on surname, name, province and county of origin are unique
- 4,195,280 records of 347,053 officials, 1760 to 1912
- See Chen Bijia, Cameron Campbell, Yuxue Ren, and James Lee. 2020. Big Data for the Study of Qing Officialdom: The China Government Employee Database-Qing (CGED-Q). *The Journal of Chinese History*. 4(Special Issue 2):431-460. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jch.2020.15>

## Data used in this analysis

- Career information
  - 260,926 records of 6,265 *jinshi* and 552,398 records of 40,095 *juren*
  - Between 1830 and 1912
  - Non-Banner
- Family background information for exam degree holders
  - Alumni yearbooks (*Tongnian Chilü* 同年齒錄) for specific exam sittings
  - Three generations of patrilineal ancestors
  - 12,308 Provincial Exam (*xiangshi* 鄉試) graduates (*juren* 舉人)
    - Jiangnan data contributed by Huang Yifei (Huang 2016)
  - 2,892 National Exam (*huishi* 會試) degree holders (*jinshi* 進士) from 12 sittings of the exam between 1830 and 1905
- For some descriptive statistics, we also use basic information from Provincial Examination rosters (*xiangshilu* 鄉試錄) and a comprehensive Metropolitan Examination roster (*tinginglu* 題名錄).

## Time to *jinshi* degree or appointment for *juren*



More than 40% of *juren* eventually were appointed

35% without *jinshi*

10% with *jinshi*

The gap between the *juren* and the *jinshi* or a position could be long.

Based on 29904 *juren* who earned degrees between 1816 and 1890 2 Nov 2020 155047

## Summary

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- Following on Jiang and Kung (2016) and Huang (2016), these results highlight the importance of various aspects of family background not only to obtaining exam degrees, but to being appointed.
- For *juren*, a family history of purchased degrees and father's official position were most important.
  - Performance on the Provincial Exam had little effect on appointment and wasn't sensitive to family background.
- Family background was much more influential for performance on the Metropolitan Exam than for the Provincial Exam
  - Opposite of Mare (1980)
- Family background effects on the appointment and subsequent careers of Jinshi operated mostly through its effect on their exam performance.
  - Some direct effect on the chances of appointment

## Implications for how we think about the examination system

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- Much of the argument about the examination system conceptualizes it as a tournament in which each level is progressively more selective on exam performance.
- Discussions also tend to conflate holding an exam degree with being an official.
- In fact, family background seemed to matter more for Metropolitan Exam than the Provincial Exam.
- Family background had strong effects on the appointment and promotion chances of both *juren* and *jinshi*, even after controlling for their exam performance.