

# Deluge and the Rise of Civilizations: From the Neolithic to Early States



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## Abstract

The legends of almost all ancient civilizations involved catastrophic floods and collective human efforts to recover from the disasters. Using the great deluge of the Yellow River around 1920 BCE as a natural experiment, we show that the deluge accelerated early civilization development from the Neolithic to early states, including class differentiation, public buildings, the use of bronze, writing, and early cities. In a horse race of possible channels, both the cooperation and productivity hypotheses contributed to civilizational development, with no single hypothesis dominating the other. Therefore, the paper highlights the multivariate evolution of civilizational development and state formation.

## Biography

Prof. Chen Shuo is currently a professor in the Department of Economics at Fudan University, with research interests primarily focused on development economics, political economics, economic history, and Chinese economy. His work has been published in journals such as the American Economic Review, American Political Science Review, American Review of Public Administration, American Economic Journal, Journal of Economic Growth, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Corporate Finance, and Journal of International Business Studies, among others.