YIFEI LUO

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EDUCATION

Toulouse School of Economics, Toulouse, France 2023 to 2025 (expected)
Master in Applied Economics
M1 thesis: Immigrants selection and consequences

Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, USA 2019 to 2023
MS in Mathematics Qualification exam in Analysis and MS exam in Matrix Analysis, and Topology.
BS in Mathematics with minor in history
BA in Economics with honor

RESEARCH INTERESTS

I am particularly interested in labor economics, political risk of AI, behavioral economics (theory), economic history, economics of religion, economics of identity, plus minor labor economics intersection with above mentioned elements. Currently I am working on identity factors determining immigrants' destination choice, learning process and return to migration.
I am also interested in intersection between behavioral economics and economics of religion since I am not generally satisfied with current club model interpretations.

ONGOING RESEARCH

Persistent Shadows of the 1932–34 Ukrainian Famine: Trade Disruption, Inequality, and Identity Formation

Summary: I study the persistent effects of the 1932–34 famine in Ukraine. Exploiting exogenous weather shocks and selecting the strongest predictor of famine intensity, I show that: (i) regions with greater famine exposure are less integrated into international trade and exhibit higher withinregion inequality, with effects on trade more pronounced for exports than imports; (ii) famine exposure significantly reduces import activity with Russia, though the decline is compensated by increased imports from China, the United States, and the European Union; (iii) famine exposure is associated with a more salient Ukrainian identity, often incompatible with al ternative identities such as Russian, Eastern Slavic, or religious affiliations—helping explain the rupture in import ties; (iv) individuals in more severely affected regions remain trapped in poorer economic conditions and are less likely to be politically active, contributing to export underperformance due to reduced economic competitiveness; (v) empirical evidence on intergenerational transmission confirms theoretical predictions, underscoring the role of the political environment in shaping cultural value persistence; and (vi) education programs are likely among the key mechanisms through which these long-term effects are sustained. The results are robust to classical IV diagnostics, placebo tests, migration correction, and falsifi cation tests using randomly generated outcome variables with identical spatial distribution.

Effects of Armed Conflict on Agricultural Productivity–Evidence from Syrian Civil War

Summary: We investigate the shock suffered by the primary sector in Syria, following the outbreak of the civil war in March 2011. We incorporate remote sensing dataset with machine learning (ML) to surmount the data unavailability in weak government such as Syria to evaluate the agricultural shock when the armed conflict is still under process. We split our analysis locally and at larger area. Using Staggered Difference-in-Differences (SDID) at patch level (local), we find temporary negative war effects on agricultural activities for zones directly affected by the combats, valid only in the short run (5 years). We also note anticipation effects in the form of preventive migration flows. We then adopt a *patch-donuts* strategy to quantify the spillovers in the territories indirectly affected. The externalities are persistently negative, thereby we recommend policymakers to aid both the locality receiving directly the conflict but also the adjacency. We are unable to quantify the maximal spillover effect of conflict due to our insufficient construction. Lastly, at sub-district level we run Two-Way Fixed Effects and IV (using distance to closest city as instrument) to gauge the impact embedding local equilibrium effects. There is suggestive evidence of the

conflict-related damages to agriculture, especially when the Syrian State is involved in threatening military operations.

Elite Ideology and the Dynamics of Cultural Dominance
Summary: I develop a dynamic model to study the interaction between intergenerational cultural value transmission and the elite's choice of regime ideology. The model allows regimes to be stationary, time-varying, and ultimately endogenously chosen by elites. I first show that, under any regime choice, the initial distribution of cultural values will almost surely lead to the extinction of one value. I then analyze a two-period regime sequence, demonstrating that the duration of the initial regime is critical in preventing ideological backlash when institutions change. I characterize the minimum duration required for early-period policymakers to ensure that their preferred cultural value dominates in the long run, regardless of future regime shifts. Finally, I endogenize regime choice by modeling elite preferences, showing how the initial cultural allocation determines whether long-term policy stabilizes or cycles, causing fluctuations in the dominant cultural value.

Behavioral selection of immigrants (in preparation)
Summary: I developed theory explaining the the set of behavioral characteristics that determines one's migration decision from the sending country to the destination country in additional to wage and migration costs. I adapted a method that employs survey data to mark a ranking of individuals within the country and that specific dimension. I use WVS, ESS, Afrobarometer, and EVS to empirically verify the migration decision and quantify how much does the behavioral costs/benefits distorts one's decision relative to pure monetary returns.

RESEARCH IN PREPARATION

Family value transmission under different environment

The wandering continental philosophy and thriving analytic philosophy

A graph algorithmatic approach to religious hierarchy over time, branches, and denominations

Narrative structure under formal and informal power

SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD

Jean-Jacques Laffont Scholarship, TSE 2023 to 2025
Economics achievement award, CWRU 2023

COMPUTER SKILLS

LaTeX, Stata, R, Python (computation, web scraping, plotting, integration with QGIS, phonetic matching, semantic matching, various ML model), ArcGis, QGIS, Mathematica, docker

LANGUAGE

Native in Mandarin, proficient in English, and elementary knowledge in French and Spanish. Russian and Ukrainian symbol and reading.