

# Yifan ZHANG

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## Current Position

Postdoctoral Fellow at Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, 2025 -

## Education

Ph.D. in Economics, Toulouse School of Economics, 2020 - 2025  
Thesis: Essays on Economic History and Political Economy  
Advisors: Victor Gay, Paul Seabright, Mohamed Saleh (first two years)

Visiting scholar, Department of Economics, Northwestern University, April-July 2024  
Host: Joel Mokyr

M.A. in Economic Theory and Econometrics, Toulouse School of Economics, 2020

B.B.A. in Economics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, 2018

## Research Interest

Economic History, Political Economy, Development Economics

## Working Papers

### **The Transmission of Son Preference**

*Abstract* This paper jointly identifies and compares the horizontal and vertical transmission of son preference. I measure son preference using ancestor worship, a cultural trait that emphasizes the need for sons. I exploit the Kuomintang (KMT) Retreat to Taiwan (1945-1954) as a historical experiment that exposed local Taiwanese to migrants with markedly different beliefs and behaviors. A difference-in-differences design, combined with the legalization of abortion in 1985, isolates cultural transmission from institutions and examines effects on the sex of children at birth along three margins: from migrants to locals, through paternal lines, and within migrant communities. Horizontal transmission is stronger among locals culturally closer to migrants and with greater interaction exposure. Migrants ancestor worship durably shifted local beliefs about ancestors, family, and sons. Quantitatively, one standard deviation increase in migrants' ancestor worship raises the missing women by about 5 percent per year. Although vertical transmission has the largest marginal effect, its total impact is smaller than that of horizontal transmission.

### **Radio Propaganda and Job Choice**

*Abstract* Drawing on individual-level data from the 2000-15 population censuses and 2010-20 social surveys, I analyze the consequences of radio propaganda from Taiwan on mainland China. My preliminary results suggest that individuals who lived in areas with better exposure to the Voice of Free China during adolescence are less likely to join the bureaucratic system and the Chinese Communist Party. Besides, they have lower trust to the local government but are more likely to start their own business.

## 1 Work in Progress

**The Determinants of Taiwanese Support for Reunification with the Mainland** with Nancy Qian and Marco Tabellini

## Teaching Experience

Teaching assistant for Microeconomics (First-year Bachelor), TSE. Instructors: Lucie BOTTEGA, Sébastien PARENTY, and Vincent REBEYROL, spring 2024

Teaching assistant for Macroeconomics (Second-year Bachelor), TSE. Instructors: Lucie BOTTEGA, Patrick FEVE, and Isabella PECHOUX, fall 2023

Teaching assistant for Program Evaluation (First-year Master), TSE. Instructors: Thierry MAGNAC and Vishal KAMAT, spring 2023

Teaching assistant for Industrial Organization (Third-year Bachelor), TSE. Instructors: Farid GASMI and Isabelle DUBEC, spring 2022

## Grants & Awards

Final Year Fellowship, Toulouse School of Economics	2024-2025
Conference Bursary, Economic History Society	2024
Mobility Grant (7,180 EUR), Toulouse School of Economics	2024
Doctoral Fellowship, French Ministry of Education	2021-2024
First-year Ph.D. Student Fellowship, Toulouse School of Economics	2020
The Galaxy World Student Entrepreneur Fund (80,000 CNY)	2015
Half Tuition Scholarship, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen	2014-2018

## Seminars & Conferences

2025 Institutional and Organizational Economics Academy, Northwestern University x 2

2024 ASREC Annual Conference, Annual Symposium on Quantitative History, Cliometric Annual Conference, Econometric Society European Meeting, Economic History Society Annual Conference, Stockholm School of Economics, London School of Economics (Economic History), Northwestern University

2021-2023 Quantitative History Workshop, ENTER Jamboree, Toulouse School of Economics (BID Workshop x2, PhD Workshop x2, Empirical Micro Workshop), ENTER Jamboree webinar (discussant)

## Referee Service

*Economics of Transition and Institutional Change*

## Others

Languages: Mandarin Chinese (native), Cantonese (fluent), English (fluent), French (basic)

IT skills: ArcGIS, Matlab, Python, R, Stata

Last updated: October 13, 2025