

# Melanie Meng Xue

Department of Economics  
Brown University  
64 Waterman Street, Box B  
Providence, RI 02912

Phone: +1 (401)863-6973  
Email: [melanie.xue@brown.edu](mailto:melanie.xue@brown.edu)  
Homepage: <http://melaniexue.bo1.ucla.edu/>

## ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

January 2017— Brown University  
Department of Economics, Visiting Scholar & Postdoctoral Fellow  
August 2015—January 2017 University of California, Los Angeles  
Anderson School of Management, Postdoctoral Fellow

## EDUCATION

2010–2015 PhD in Economics, George Mason University  
2009–2010 MA in Finance, Claremont McKenna College  
2007–2008 Educational Abroad Program in Economics, UC Davis  
2005–2009 BA in International Economics, Fudan University

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Economic History, Cultural Economics, Development Economics, Economics of Gender

## CURRENT RESEARCH PAPERS

High-Value Work and the Rise of Women: The Cotton Revolution and Gender Equality in China

This paper examines the relationship between gender-specific work opportunities and gender equality in China. Due to the use of new technology after 1300 AD, cotton textile production enabled women to earn high incomes while working at home. Using historical gazetteers, I exploit variation in premodern cotton textile production (1300-1840) across 1,489 counties and establish a robust negative relationship between high-value work opportunities for women in the past and sex ratio at birth in contemporary China. To overcome potential endogeneity in location, I instrument cotton textile production with a relative humidity index specific to suitability for cotton weaving. I find strong evidence that cotton textile production changed cultural beliefs about women's value, and its effects have persisted well beyond 1840 and endured under different political and economic regimes. The pattern of widow survival rates implies that an initial transition in beliefs about women can be traced back to at least 1600 AD. In addition, a history of cotton textile production leads to higher female labor force participation in pre-socialist China, more wives heading the household in socialist China, as well as less biased gender attitudes today.

Autocratic Rule and Social Capital: Evidence from Imperial China, with Mark Koyama

Abstract: How does autocratic rule shape social capital? To address this question, we study the impact of political persecutions in imperial China. Between 1660–1788, individuals were persecuted if they were suspected of possessing subversive attitudes towards the ruler. Using a difference-in-differences approach, we find that these persecutions led to an average decline of 38% in the number of charitable organizations in each subsequent decade. To investigate the long-run effect of persecutions, we analyze the impact they had on contemporary social capital. We find that persecutions are associated with lower levels of trust and greater

political apathy. Examining the provision of local public goods in twentieth century China, we find that persecutions reduced social capital in both the short and the long-run. These results provide evidence of a vicious cycle whereby autocratic rule becomes entrenched through a permanent decline in social capital.

Friends from Afar: The Taiping Rebellion, Cultural Proximity and Primary Schooling in the Lower Yangzi, 1850-1949, with Yu Hao, *Explorations in Economic History* 2017, 62 (1).

Raising Dragons, with John Nye.

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Conference Participation and Seminar Presentations (including scheduled)

- 2017 All-UC Economic History Conference (Caltech), ASREC, ASSA (3), Brown (invited seminar), Brown Applied Micro Lunch, Brown Growth Breakfast, Harvard Political Economy of Modern Capitalism Seminar (invited), NBER Summer Institute Income Distribution and Macroeconomics, Northwestern (invited seminar), NYU Stern (invited seminar), UC Irvine (invited seminar), Williams College Brown Bag
- 2016 All-UC Economic History Conference (UC Davis), ASREC, Bologna (invited seminar), Bonn (invited seminar), Chapman (invited seminar), Economic History Association Annual Conference, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (invited Seminar), IOEA, Monash (invited seminar), NBER Summer Institute (DAE), NUS Business School (invited seminar), Pacific Conference for Development Economics (PacDev), Historical Economics and Development Group (HEDG), Toulouse (invited seminar), UC Davis (invited seminar), UCLA Anderson Brown Bag, UCLA Economic History Proseminar, University of Arizona (invited seminar), University of New South Wales (invited seminar)
- 2015 All-UC Economic History Conference (UC Berkeley), ASREC, IRES, NBER Chinese Economy Meeting (discussant), Northeast Universities Development Consortium Conference (NEUDC), World Economic History Conference (WEHC)
- 2014 APEE, “Deep Causes of Economic Development” Conference (Utrecht), Economic History Association Annual Conference, Economic History Society Annual Conference, HKEA, ISNIE, Southern Economic Association Annual Conference (SEA), Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (invited seminar), Washington Area Development Economics Symposium (WADES)
- 2013 ASREC, Workshop on Economic Analysis of Institutions (Xiamen), World Congress of Cliometrics Society
- 2012 GMU-AU Economic History Workshop, GMU Graduate Student Conference

### Refereeing

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, Journal of the European Economic Association, Journal of Economic Growth, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Comparative Economics, Journal of Economic History, Explorations in Economic History, Australian Economic History Review, Palgrave Macmillan

### Membership

American Economic Association, Economic History Association

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

2017	Northwestern's Center for Economic History Postdoctoral Fellowship
2017	IAST Visiting Fellowship
2015	Dan Searle Fellowship in Economics
2015	Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation Doctoral Fellowship (declined)
2014	George Mason University International Travel Fund
2014	IHS Conference and Research Grant
2013	NSF Graduate Student Travel Grant
2013	APEE Young Scholar Award
2013–2014	George Mason University Graduate Research Assistantship
2011–2013	George Mason University Graduate Teaching Assistantship
2010, 2012, 2015	George Mason University Graduate Lectureship
2007, 2008	UC Davis Dean's List
2006, 2008, 2009	Fudan University Renmin (People's) Scholarship

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Topics in Economic History (Northwestern, 2017 Fall); Topics in Economic History (GMU); Money and Banking (GMU).

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2014	Economic Research Services, United States Department of Agriculture, Economist
2013	Center for Health Policy, George Mason University, Research Assistant
2012	C4i Center, George Mason University, Research Assistant

## OTHER EXPERIENCE

2009	IBM, Blue Pathway Summer Internship Program
2009	ZS Associates, Part-time Research Associate
2008	Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, Consulting Intern
2008	General Electric-NBC Universal, Assistant to the Director of Business Development
2008	National Foreign Trade Council, Research Intern

## SKILLS

**Computer skills:** LaTeX, ArcGIS, Stata, SQL

**Language skills:** Mandarin (native), English (fluent), Japanese (basic)