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CONTACT INFORMATION:

Department of Economics
University of Pittsburgh
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, University of Pittsburgh,
Thesis Title: “Essays on Theoretical and Applied Behavioral Economics”
Thesis Committee: Prof. David Huffman(chair), Prof. Stephanie Wang, Prof. Tymofiy Mylovanov, Prof. Onur Kesten

B.A. in Economics with honors, Peking University, Beijing, China, 2007-2011.

RESEARCH INTEREST

Primary Fields: Behavioral Economics, Experimental Economics

Secondary Fields: Applied Micro Theory, Development Economics

PUBLICATIONS

[“The Crowding-out Effect of Formal Insurance on Informal Risk Sharing: An Experimental Study”](#), *Games and Economic Behavior*, 2014. (joint with Wanchuan Lin and Juanjuan Meng.)

WORKING PAPERS

[“Optimal Goal-setting with Present Bias: Theory and Experiment” \(Job Market Paper\)](#)

[“Responsibility-shifting through Delegation: Evidence from China's One Child Policy”](#) (joint with Yi Han)

“Income Inequality and Political Polarization”

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS:

“Correspondence Bias” (joint with Yi Han, George Lowenstein)

“Performance Self-assessment and Matching Outcomes in a High-stakes Environment: Evidence from Chinese Entrance Exams” (joint with Stephanie Wang)

“Track Choice in the Chinese Education System” (joint with Stephanie Wang)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Teaching Assistant (undergraduate courses): Intro to Microeconomics, Teaching Assistant to Professor Svitlana Maksymenko, Fall 2013; Intro to Macroeconomics, Teaching Assistant to Professor Jim Kenkel, Spring 2014

Teaching Assistant (graduate courses): Microeconomics II, Teaching Assistant to Professor Tymofiy Mylovanov, Spring 2016.

Instructor: Intro to Microeconomics, Summer 2016, 2017; overall teaching effectiveness score (out of 5): 4.40 (2016), 4.41 (2017)

WORKING PAPERS ABSTRACTS

[“Optimal Goal-setting with Present Bias: Theory and Experiment” \(Job Market Paper\)](#)

This paper develops a theory of optimal goal bracketing with present bias and tests the predictions of the model in an online real-effort experiment. In our multi-selves model, the long-run self who faces a self-control problem caused by present bias sets goals as reference points to motivate the short-run selves. Narrow bracketing is defined as setting one goal for each short-run self and broad goal-setting is defined as setting one broad goal for several short-run selves to jointly achieve. The main trade-off is between commitment and flexibility. Narrow goal-setting provides more commitment but broad goal-setting is better in terms of flexibility. In line with the predictions of the model, the results of our online experiment show that 1) “Nudging” subjects to set narrow goals facilitates self-control. 2) The assumption that goals work as reference points is supported by empirical evidence. 3) Subjects who are more present-biased benefit more from goal-setting. 4) Broad goal-setting does not work. It also causes procrastination: subjects exert more efforts on the later date under broad goal-setting. 5) Surprisingly, but consistent with the model, we find that narrow goal-setting always outperforms broad goal-setting from the long-run self’s perspective regardless of the degree of present bias. However, the gap between the two bracketing methods shrinks as present bias decreases, indicating that the trade-off between commitment and flexibility does exist.

[“Responsibility-shifting through Delegation: Evidence from China's One Child Policy”](#) (joint with Yi Han)

There is a growing body of experimental evidence indicating that delegation can foster the shifting of responsibility for unpopular actions from a principal to an agent. Using the well-known episode of the one-child policy in China (OCP), we provide field evidence for

responsibility shifting through delegation. We compare the impact of the OCP on parents who experienced OCP during 1979-1990 (Phase I) when local governments were the primary enforcer versus 1991-2015 (Phase II) when the enforcement of the policy was delegated to the civilians, by incentivizing them to report their neighbors' violations of the policy. Building on Li and Wu (2011) and Wei and Zhang (2011a), our identification strategy exploits the exogeneity of the gender of first-born children and argues that parents whose first-born is a girl are more likely to violate the OCP because of traditional Chinese "at least one son" preference. Consistent with the predictions of responsibility-shifting theory, we find that parents who were more exposed to OCP in Phase II currently trust their neighbors less and, this effect is exacerbated for those parents whose first-born was a girl. The OCP exposure does not undermine trust in local governments. However, parents strongly exposed to OCP in Phase I currently trust their local governments less and, again, it is the parents whose first child was a girl who are more strongly impacted. The OCP exposure does not matter for trust in neighbors in that phase. We explore three alternative interpretations of the results, none of them can account for these findings.

"Income Inequality and Political Polarization"

In last four decades, party polarization and income inequality have experienced rising comovement. In this paper, I build a link between the two. I consider a Spatial model of redistribution with heterogeneity in voters' wealth. Two *ex ante* identical candidates compete for a public office by proposing redistributive taxes. Voters care about taxes and candidates' valence. Valence is endogenously determined by campaign spending financed by voter's individual contributions. Rich voters have the strongest incentive to contribute, because they are mostly affected by taxes. In equilibrium, policy polarization arises when income inequality level is high enough. In this case, median voter's ideal tax is defeated by a lower tax that can attract enough campaign contributions from the rich. In contrast, when inequality level is low, median voter theorem holds. With low inequality, the ideal tax rates of the rich and the poor are not that different. The candidate who deviates from the median voter's ideal tax cannot collect enough funding from the rich because their incentives to change the election result are too weak.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS:

"Correspondence Bias" (joint with Yi Han, George Lowenstein)

We designed a lab experiment to investigate the idea that people often draw inferences about others' enduring characteristics from behaviors that can be entirely explained by the incentives that induce them.

"Performance Self-assessment and Matching Outcomes in a High-stakes Environment: Evidence from Chinese Entrance Exams" (joint with Stephanie Wang)

It has been well documented that human beings have tendency to be overconfident. However, we find that in a high-stakes environment, there is no under- or over-confidence in the overall sample. The results suggest that people enjoy the consumption utility of optimism to the extent that the mistakes caused by it are not too costly (Brunnermeier and

Parker, 2005).

“Track Choice in the Chinese Education System” (joint with Stephanie Wang)

Students in China need to choose their academic track (STEM vs Non-STEM) in the freshman year of high school. Using a unique administrative data from 4 large high schools over two provinces from 2014-2016, we find that women are more responsive to relative strengths than men, which leads more women who have good grades in science choose the Non-STEM track. A counterfactual analysis using machine learning reveals that being “too responsive” decrease the chance that a female student will be admitted by elite universities.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

“The Crowding-out Effect of Formal Insurance on Informal Risk Sharing: Chinese Evidence”, *Journal of Financial Research (Chinese)*, 2014. (joint with Wanchuan Lin and Juanjuan Meng.)

“Micro-insurance Decision-making and Information Availability: An Experimental Study”, *Insurance Studies (Chinese)*, 2010. (joint with Yu Duan and Zhao Li)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods (Bonn), 2018
MobLab Inc., 2018

SEMINAR AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

Stony Brook Game Theory Conference, 2015
Penn Theory Conference, 2016, 2017
Conference of Public Choice Society, 2016
5th World Congress of the Game Theory Society, 2016

HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS:

SSDD Fellowship of University of Pittsburgh, Economics Department, 2016-2017
Yearly Outstanding Article in *Journal of Financial Research (Chinese)*, 2014
Outstanding Graduate of Peking University, 2011
No.2 in Hebei Province in National Higher Education Entrance Examination, 2007

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MEMBERSHIPS:

Journal referee for: *Review of Economic Design*

LANGUAGES:

Mother Tongue: Chinese

English: Fluent

REFERENCES:

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