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CONTACT INFORMATION:

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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 INTERESTS

Primary Fields: Behavioral Economics, Experimental Economics

Secondary Fields: Applied Micro Theory, Development Economics, Labor 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

"**Effort Provision under Present Bias: Optimal Goal-Setting as a Commitment Device**" (**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: A Machine Learning Approach" (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

"Effort Provision under Present Bias: Optimal Goal-Setting as a Commitment Device" **(Job Market Paper)**

In economic theory, present-biased preferences can lead to self-control problems, e.g., insufficient effort on a task when costs are immediate but payments are delayed. The paper first develops a model in which a present-biased individual has access to a "psychological commitment device" in the form of self-set goals. These act as reference points, pitting the motive of loss aversion against present bias. In this multiple-selves model, narrow goal setting is defined as setting one goal for each short-run self, whereas broad goal-setting is defined as setting one broad goal for several short-run selves to jointly achieve. In line with the predictions, the results of our online experiment with a real effort task show that: 1) "Nudging" subjects to set narrow goals facilitates self-control when payments are delayed; 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 when payments are delayed and it also causes procrastination; 5) surprisingly, but consistent with the model, narrow goal-setting always outperforms broad goal-setting regardless of the degree of present bias. However, the gap between the two bracketing methods shrinks as present bias decreases, suggesting that there exists a trade-off between commitment and flexibility.

"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 co-movement. 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 the most affected by taxes. In equilibrium, policy polarization arises when income inequality level is high enough. In this case, the 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, the 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 series of lab experiments 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. We first let some people play a benign game in which cooperation is encouraged and let the other people play a malign game in which they are incentivized to harm each other. We then ask them to choose between playing a new game with a benign game player or a malign game player. We find that subjects are willing to pay a positive amount to be matched with their previous benign game partner in the new game. This benign premium is significantly larger when the subjects only observe one of the games compared to the case when they experience both games, suggesting that a rational Bayesian model cannot fully explain our findings as it would predict no

differences between the two situations. We also find that when subjects can observe the "counterfactual" behaviors of their benign (malign) game partner in the malign (benign) game, the benign premium goes away. Our three-stage design also rules out two other potential confounders: subjects choose the benign game player simply to reciprocate; they believe that the institution can shape an individual's kindness and a benign game can make its player a better person.

"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 a 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: A Machine Learning Approach" (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 dataset 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 to 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

"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
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

Professor David Huffman (chair)	Professor Stephanie Wang (advisor)	Professor Tymofiy Mylovanov (advisor)
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