

Si Chen

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Personal Information

Citizenship: Chinese
Date of Birth: August 8th 1991

Fields of Interest

Primary: Behavioral Economics, Applied Microeconomics;
Secondary: Experimental Economics, Microeconomic Theory.

Education and Affiliations

2018-present	research fellow, <i>Collaborative Research Center (CRC) TR 224</i>
2014-present	Ph.D candidate in Economics, <i>University of Bonn</i> , Germany Expected completion: spring 2020
2017-2018	Visiting assistant in research, <i>Yale University</i> , the USA
2014-2018	M.Sc in Economics, <i>University of Bonn</i> , Germany
2012-2014	B.Sc in Economics, <i>Otto-von-Guericke Universität Magdeburg</i> , Germany
2009-2014	B.Sc in Economics, <i>Xiamen University</i> , China

Awards and Grants

2019	<i>Econ Job Market Best Paper Award</i> <i>European Economic Association and UniCredit Foundation</i>
2019	36,000 EUR research funding for project ‘Stress and Risk Taking’, <i>The Diligentia Foundation for Empirical Research</i> (joined with Thomas Dohmen and Elena Shvartsman).
2018	7,200 EUR research funding for project ‘Motivated Information Acquisition in Social Decisions’ Collaborative Research Center (CRC) TR 224 through project A1
2016	3,500 EUR research funding for project ‘Looking at the Bright Side’ Bonn Graduate School of Economics
2015-2018	doctoral scholarship, <i>German Research Foundation (DFG)</i> ;
2014-2015	doctoral scholarship, <i>Research Training Group 1707</i> ,

Publications

Looking at the Bright Side: The Motivational Value of Confidence.
with Hannah Schildberg-Hörisch, European Economic Review (2019): 103302.

Job Market Paper

Motivated Information Acquisition in Social Decisions (with Carl Heese)

Econ Job Market Best Paper Award (European Economic Association & UniCredit Foundation)

Individuals can often inquire about how their decisions would affect others. When do they stop the inquiry if one of their options is preferred based on a selfish motive but is potentially in conflict with social motives? We provide causal evidence, using a laboratory experiment, that having a selfishly preferred option makes individuals more likely to *continue* the inquiry when the dominant information received up to that point suggests that selfish behavior harms others. In contrast, when the dominant information up to that point suggests that being selfish harms nobody, individuals become more likely to *stop* acquiring information. We propose a theoretical model drawing on the Bayesian persuasion model of Kamenica and Gentzkow (2011). The model shows that the information acquisition strategy documented in our experiment can be optimal for a Bayesian agent who values the belief of herself not harming others but attempts to persuade herself to behave self-interestedly. The model predicts that strategic information acquisition motivated by self-interest can *reduce* the decisions' resulting negative externalities and *improve* the welfare of the affected others. Our laboratory experiment indeed confirms this prediction.

Work in Progress

The Impact of Stress on Risk Taking (with Thomas Dohmen and Elena Shvartsman)

funded by Diligentia Foundation for Empirical Research

In a laboratory experiment, we study the effect of acute and chronic stress on individual risk-taking behavior. We exogenously induce acute stress using the Trier Social Stress Test for Groups developed by von Dawans, Kirschbaum, and Heinrichs (2011). We measure subjects' acute stress by their heart rate, saliva cortisol levels, and their chronic stress by their hair cortisol levels. We elicit the subjects' risk-taking tendency by using randomized lottery pairs. Employing a within-subject design, i.e., eliciting each subject's risk-taking propensity both with and without the exogenous acute stress, we aim to shed light on individuals' heterogeneous responses to acute stress in terms of risk-taking. It thereby contributes to the inconclusive literature on the causal effect of acute stress on risk-taking. It will also be among the first to study the impact of chronic stress and the interactive effect between chronic and acute stress on individual risk-taking behavior.

A Non-Parametric Elicitation of Probability Weights (with Carl Heese)

We propose a non-parametric method to elicit probability weights based on the assumptions of time separability and symmetric probability weighting function. This method trades off risky rewards and delayed ones to extract probability weights. It has the following two features: first, it imposes no functional form assumption on the utility function, and it does not elicit the utility function; second, it is compatible with monetary or non-monetary incentives. It also requires only a small number of measurements to implement.

Presentations

Workshop on Belief-Dependent Preferences, *University of Copenhagen*, 2019;
Workshop on Behavioural Game Theory, *University of East Anglia*, 2019;
2nd Japanese-German Workshop on Contracts and Incentives, *University of Munich*, 2019;
10th theme on Social Preferences, *University of Konstanz*, 2019;
TIBER Symposium, *Tilburg University*, 2019;
M-BEES, *Maastricht University*, 2019;
CRC Young Researchers' Workshop, Mainz, 2019;
Bonn Applied Micro Workshop, 2019, 2016.
European Doctoral Program Annual Jamboree, *European University Institute*, 2018.
Bonn-Mannheim PhD Workshop, 2017;
International Workshop on Experimental Economics, *Beijing Normal University*, 2016;
International Workshop on Experimental Economics, *Xiamen University*, 2016.

Summer Schools

Spring School in Behavioral Economics, *UC San Diego and NHH Bergen*, 2018;
Summer School in Social Inequality, *briq*, 2016.

Teaching Experience

spring 2018	Yale, Introductory Macroeconomics (undergrad), Teaching Fellow
fall 2017	Yale, Game Theory (undergrad), Teaching Fellow
summer 2017	Bonn, Labor Economics (grad), Teaching Assistant

Skills

Languages: Chinese (native), English (proficient), German (proficient).
Programming: STATA, pandas, z-Tree, o-Tree, \LaTeX .

References

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