

# Si Chen

University of Bonn

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## Office Contact

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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, Labor Economics, Microeconomic Theory.

## Education and Affiliations

2018-present research fellow, *Collaborative Research Center (CRC) TR 224*

2014-present Ph.D candidate in Economics, *University of Bonn*, Germany

Expected completion: spring 2020

2017-2018 Visiting assistant in research, *Yale University*, the USA

2014-2018 M.Sc in Economics, *University of Bonn*, Germany

2012-2014 B.Sc in Economics, *Otto-von-Guericke Universität Magdeburg*, Germany

2009-2014 B.Sc in Economics, *Xiamen University*, China

## Awards and Grants

2019 *Econ Job Market Best Paper Award*

*European Economic Association and UniCredit Foundation*

2019 36,000 EUR research funding for project ‘Stress and Risk Taking’,

*The Diligentia Foundation for Empirical Research*

(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, *German Research Foundation (DFG)*;

2014-2015 doctoral scholarship, *Research Training Group 1707*,

## 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 they prefer one of their options for selfish reasons? We present causal evidence 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 behaving selfishly 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. Drawing on the Bayesian persuasion model of Kamenica and Gentzkow (2011), we propose a theoretical model showing that this information acquisition strategy can be optimal for a Bayesian agent who values the belief of herself doing no harm on 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. This is indeed found to be the case in our laboratory experiment.

## Work in Progress

*Stress and 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 risk taking. We exogenously induce acute stress using the Trier Social Stress Test for Groups developed by von Dawans, Kirschbaum and Heinrichs. We measure subjects' acute stress by their saliva cortisol levels and chronic stress by their hair cortisol levels. We elicit the subjects' risk taking tendency by randomized lottery pairs. Using a within-subject design, i.e. eliciting each subject's risk taking tendency both with and without acute stress, this project sheds light on individuals' heterogeneous responses to acute stress in terms of risk taking and thereby contributes to the inconclusive literature on the causal effect of acute stress on risk taking. It will also be the first to study the interactive effect between chronic and acute stress on risk taking.

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

We propose a non-parametric method to elicit probability weights. This method trades off risky rewards and delayed ones. It has the following two features: first, it does not require functional form assumptions on the utility function, nor its elicitation; second, it is compatible with both monetary and non-monetary incentives. Requiring only few measurements, it is also easy 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,  $\text{\LaTeX}$ .

## **References**

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