

## **MPSA 2024 Annual Conference**

### Pi Sigma Alpha – Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award

#### **“The Zeal of the Outgroup: Loyalty Signaling, Bureaucratic Compliance, and Variation of State Repression in Authoritarian Regimes”**

Jingyuan Qian, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*  
Steve Bai, *Yale University*

This paper asks a timely question related to state repression in autocracies: Why are some bureaucrats more heavy-handed in their use of force than others? The authors propose an incentive-compatible theory to explain the unevenness of bureaucratic compliance in repressive campaigns. They argue that bureaucrats whose backgrounds are not trusted by the leader tend to implement repressive tasks to credibly display their loyalty to the autocrat. The committee especially liked how this paper offered clear expectations, made a strong case for studying this important question, and analyzed interesting and appropriate data (i.e., China’s Anti-Rightist Campaigns from the late 1950s).

**Award Committee:** Jamie Carson, University of Georgia (chair); Daniel Butler, Washington University of St Louis; Matthew Winters, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign