Sunny Qingyi Wang

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Education

University of Michigan (School of Information) — Ann Arbor, MI
PhD in Information — *expected in 2026*
- Faculty Advisors: Prof. Yan Chen, Prof. Alain Cohn

Tsinghua University (School of Economics and Management) — Beijing, China
Bachelor in Economics — *Aug 2016 – Jun 2020*

University of Zürich (Faculty of Business, Economics and Informatics) — Zürich, Switzerland
Exchange Student — *Fall 2018*

Research

Research Interests: Behavioral Economics, Experimental Economics, Human-AI Interaction

Perceived AI Use and Hiring Penalties: Experimental Evidence (Job Market Paper

with Jingyi Qiu

Abstract: While generative AI is becoming increasingly common in job applications, little is known about how recruiters respond. This study examines how AI use in application materials shapes recruiters' evaluations. We conduct an experiment based on a real hiring process for a research assistant position, using a 2×2 design that exogenously varies perceived AI use in cover letters while controlling for actual use. We find that recruiters penalize applicants when they suspect AI use, regardless of whether AI is actually used: compared to profiles with cover letters perceived as extremely likely human-generated, those perceived as extremely likely AI-generated receive scores 40.7% lower and are ranked 2.28 positions lower (out of four). Importantly, this penalty is applied almost arbitrarily: recruiters' beliefs about AI use are no more accurate than random guesses, and they update conservatively when given informative signals. The penalty is driven primarily by concerns about applicants' ability, while assessments of effort remain unaffected. These findings contribute to the growing literature on AI in hiring and highlight both the risks faced by applicants and the efficiency challenges posed by inaccurate perceptions in the evaluation process.

Privacy With Information Externalities and Complexity

with Eytan Adar and Yan Chen

Abstract: Privacy decisions in social communication are complex in that they often affect not only the decision maker but also those in their social network. This study investigates people's information sharing behavior with the presence of externalities, using an information sharing game in the lab, in real life involving friends, and on a social media platform. We find that participants over-share relative to the Bayesian Nash equilibrium prediction in the game and that externalities increase the likelihood of sharing in both the game and real-life information sharing involving friends. When we exogenously reduce computational complexity in the game by providing an average payoff matrix, participants are 19.4 pp more likely to best respond, leading to a 24.4 pp increase in efficiency. Our results highlight the potential to improve users' welfare by reducing the complexity in their privacy decisions.

Bridging the Partisan Divide: How Stereotype Correction Affects Willingness for Cross-Party Dialogue

with Alain Cohn

Abstract: The widespread affective polarization in the United States has raised concerns about its behavioral consequences in everyday life. While this phenomenon is rooted in social identity and can be explained by social identity theory, less is known about whether a preference-based or belief-based framework better accounts for it. This study presents an experiment to investigate the role of beliefs in affective polarization by examining whether correcting stereotypes about partisan traits reduces affective polarization and its behavioral consequences in social interactions. Our information treatments substantially correct participants' stereotypes about counter-partisans' trustworthiness and intelligence. Although affective polarization remained unchanged, the gap in willingness to chat with co- versus counter-partisans significantly decreases by 29 percent for political topics, with similar reductions observed for personal finance (30 percent) and pop culture (28 percent). These findings indicate that beliefs about partisan traits play an important role in shaping partisan divides and that stereotype correction can foster more cross-partisan dialogue in increasingly polarized democracies.

Awards and Honors

Year of Democracy Grant ($5,000, with Alain Cohn), University of Michigan	2025
IGL Seed Grant (£3,900, with Jingyi Qiu), Innovation Growth Lab	2025
Rackham Travel Grant, University of Michigan	2022, 2023, 2024
UMSI Travel Grant, University of Michigan	2022, 2023, 2025
Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant ($3,000), University of Michigan	2024
Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant ($1,500), University of Michigan	2022
Pre-Candidacy Paper Passed with Distinction (top 10%)	2022

Conference Presentations and Summer Schools

Conferences and Workshops

2025: MIT 'Directions of Polarization (Scheduled), Social Norms & Trust in Societies' Workshop (Scheduled, Poster); CSWEP Mentoring Workshop for Women & Non-Binary Econ PhD Students (Scheduled); Conference on Digital Experimentation (Scheduled); NABE Tech Economics Conference (Scheduled, Poster); INFORMS Annual Meeting (Scheduled); North American ESA Meeting (Scheduled); 3rd Midwest Experimental Economics Meeting; Advances with Field Experiments Conference; Maastricht Behavioral and Experimental Economics Symposium (M-BEES); SABE 2025 Annual Conference; NBER/CEME Decentralization Conference (Poster)

2024: North American ESA Meeting; Caltech Workshop in Theory-based Experiments

2023: North American ESA Meeting; MIT 'Directions of Polarization, Social Norms, and Trust in Societies' Workshop (Poster)

2022: UM Asian American Faculty & Student Accomplishments Symposium (Poster); International Conference of the French Association of Experimental Economics (ASFEE) (Poster)

Summer Schools

2025: Chicago School of Experimental Economics

2023: Caltech Summer School in Theory-based Experiments

2022: Experimental Finance Summer School

Teaching

Graduate Student Instructor, University of Michigan

SI 347: Human-Computer Interaction (Undergraduate Level)	Fall 2025
SI 568: Becoming a Data Scientist (Master Level)	Winter 2025
SI 388: Putting the H in HCI (Undergraduate Level)	Fall 2024
SI 568: Introduction to Applied Data Science (Master Level)	Winter 2022
SI 588: Fundamentals of Human Behavior (Master Level)	Fall 2021

Service

Coordinator, Behavioral and Experimental Economics Lab Group, University of Michigan	2023
Coordinator, SBEE Seminar, University of Michigan	2022

Technical Skills

Tools: Stata, Qualtrics, oTree, LaTeX
Programming: Python, R, HTML
Language: Mandarin (native), English (proficient)