

Lei Fan

Post-doc Research Fellow

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Centre for the Experimental-Philosophical study of Discrimination (CEPDISC)
Department of Political Science, Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University
Bartholins Allé 7, DK-8000 Aarhus, Denmark

Employments & Academic Experiences

Aarhus University

Post-doc Research Fellow

Centre for the Experimental-Philosophical study of Discrimination (CEPDISC)

01/03/2024 - Present

Aarhus, Denmark

University of Oslo

Guest Research Fellow

Department of Psychology, Social Psychology Research Group

01/04/2024 - Present

Oslo, Norway

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Post-doc Research Fellow

Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology

01/09/2022 - 29/02/2024

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

University of Kent

Visiting Research Fellow

School of Psychology and Centre for the Study of Group Processes

01/03/2022 - 01/04/2022

Canterbury, the U.K.

Beijing Transportation Development Research Institute

Adjunct Behavioral Data Scientist (Freelance)

Non-motorized and Sustainable Transportation Research Group

15/12/2019 - 15/01/2020

Beijing, China

Southwest University

Research Assistant

Faculty of Psychology

01/09/2017 - 31/08/2018

Chongqing, China

Education

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Ph.D. in Social Psychology

Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology

01/09/2018 - 05/09/2023

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Southwest University

M.Sc. in Basic Psychology: Social Psychology

Faculty of Psychology

01/09/2014 - 31/08/2017

Chongqing, China

Valedictorian

Chongqing University

B.Sc. in Applied Psychology

School of Public Policy and Administration

01/09/2010 - 31/08/2014

Chongqing, China

Honored Graduate

Research Interests

My research adopts an **evolutionary and socio-functional perspective** to understand how humans navigate disease threats, coordinate cooperation, and regulate intergroup relations.

Moral Emotions and Social Coordination. I investigate how emotions like anger and disgust function as **communicative signals** that shape punishment, cooperation, and conflict resolution. My work examines how these emotions predict behavioral responses, how their expression influences observers' actions, and how emotion-behavior mappings vary cross-culturally.

Behavioral Immune System and Social Trade-offs. I examine **pathogen avoidance mechanisms** and their effects on social behavior, studying when people relax disease-related avoidance for valued partners. This work integrates **physiological measures**—gut microbiome and blood biomarkers—to understand the interface between immune function and social cognition.

Mental Representations of Social Categories. I investigate how people mentally represent **social class and inequality**, how these representations vary with political ideology, and how they shape discriminatory judgments.

Methodologically, I integrate experimental approaches with computational modeling, meta-analysis, and physiological measurement. I am committed to **open science practices**, including preregistration and registered reports.

Selected Journal Publications

- **Fan, L.**, Molho, C., van Leeuwen, F., Imada, H., & Tybur, J. M. (2025). Anger, disgust, and their link to aggressive punishments in the East: Testing the socio-functional account of condemning moral emotions in Japan. *Cognition and Emotion*, 1–15.
- Sun H., **Fan, L.**, & Tybur, J. M. (2025). Comfort with microbe-sharing contact across the COVID-19 pandemic: Testing behavioral immune system predictions. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 46(5), 106710.
- Merrell W. N.†, **Fan, L.**†, Sheehy-Skeffington, J., & Thomsen, L. (2025) Resource possession in the mind’s eye: Ideological convergence and divergence in perceptions of poor people. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 01461672251371787.
- **Fan, L.**, Molho, C., Kupfer, T. R., & Tybur, J. M. (2024). Moral violations that target more valued victims elicit more anger, but not necessarily more disgust. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 112, 104597.
- **Fan, L.**, Molho, C., Kupfer, T. R., Sauter, D. A., & Tybur, J. M. (2024) Beyond outrage: Observers anticipate different behaviors from expressors of anger versus disgust. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 15(4), 450-460.
- **Fan, L.**, Van Lange, P.A.M., & Tybur, J. M. (2024) Salience of infectious diseases did not increase xenophobia during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 6, e34.
- **Fan, L.**, Tybur, J. M., & Jones, B. C. (2022). Are people more averse to microbe-sharing contact with ethnic outgroup members? A registered report. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 43(6), 490-500.
- Tybur, J. M., **Fan, L.**, Jones, B. C., Holzleitner, I. J., Lee, A. J., & DeBruine, L. M. (2022). Re-evaluating the relationship between pathogen avoidance and preferences for facial symmetry, and sexual dimorphism: A registered report. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 43(3), 212-223.
- Molho, C., Twardawski, M., & **Fan, L.** (2022) What motivates direct and indirect punishment? Extending the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis. *Zeitschrift fur Psychologie*, 230(2)
- Tybur, J. M., Lieberman, D., **Fan, L.**, Kupfer, T. R., & de Vries, R. E. (2020). Behavioral immune trade-offs: Interpersonal value relaxes social pathogen avoidance. *Psychological Science*, 31(10), 1211-1221.

Working Papers

- **Fan, L.**, Wilms, R., & Andrews, W.G. (Under review). Online Charisma Training: Cognitive ability, Narcissism and Charisma-Enhanced Deepfakes. *The Leadership Quarterly*.
- Merrell, W. N., **Fan, L.**, Gothreau, C., & Laustsen, L. (Submitted). Democrats and Republicans hold similarly gendered mental images of ideal politicians. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.
- Merrell, W. N., **Fan, L.**, Sheehy-Skeffington, J., & Thomsen, L. (Submitted, Stage 1 registered report). Revisiting ideological biases in the blatant dehumanization of short groups. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.
- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., Sheehy-Skeffington, J., & Thomsen, L. (Manuscript in preparation). National identity as part of the authoritarian etiological family: A behavior genetics approach using Norwegian twin data.
- **Fan, L.**, Buczny, J., & Karoutchi, S. (Manuscript in preparation). How interchangeable are pathogen-related disgust sensitivities? A psychometric meta-analysis of TDDS, DS-R, and DPSS across the COVID era.
- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., & Sønderskov, K. (Manuscript in preparation). Neighborhood in mind’s eye: Mapping resident needs into perceived urban space.
- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., & Donner, M. R. (Manuscript in preparation). Axis or Interface? Reframing the gut–brain relationship through a behavioral model of immune system tuning.
- **Fan, L.**, Wang, W., Ren, H., Hu, S., & Kang, X. (Manuscript in preparation). Linking behavioral immunity and blood biomarkers in cardiovascular patients.
- **Fan, L.**, Wang, W., Cook, A. S., Ren, H., Hu, S., Kang, X. (Data collection in progress). Linking behavioral immunity and gut microbiome: Evidence from cardiovascular patients.
- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., Acherman, J. M., Donner, M. R., & Tybur, J. M. (Data collection in progress). No bond, no tell: Illness concealment as a socially motivated adaptation for interpersonal value.
- Merrell, W. N., **Fan, L.**, Sheehy-Skeffington, J., & Thomsen, L. (Data collection in progress). Spatial resource patchiness evokes feelings of intergroup discrimination.
- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., Molho, C., van Leeuwen, F., Imada, H., Tybur, J. M. (Data collection in progress). Outgroup discrimination through emotions: The role of moral emotion expression–perception mismatch.

- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., Sabree, K., Shi, W., Nong, R., & Quan, F. (Data collection in progress). Development and validation of the Chinese-America Moral Emotion Nonverbal Vocalization Corpus (CUMEC).

Other Journal Publications

- Long, C., He, M., **Fan, L.**, Qiao, S., Pan, R., Wang, Y., & Yang, Y. (2017) Effect of community group counseling on cognitive ability maintenance in community empty nesters. *Chinese Journal of Modern Nursing*. 23(7), 942-945.
- Liu, H.†, **Fan, L.**†, Wang, L. (2016) The mediating effects of conscientiousness on the relations between tightness and self-esteem. *Psychology: Techniques and Application*, 4(11), 669-675.
- Xia, L., **Fan, L.** (2015). The status and consideration of urban community rejection for peasant-workers. *The Community Psychology Research*, 1, 31-38.

Selected Talks & Presentations

Conference Talks

- Fan, L. (June, 2025). *Extending Behavioral Immune Trade-Offs: Interpersonal Value in Disease Avoidance and Social Interactions*. Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) Annual Conference 2025, Atlantic City, U.S.A..
- Fan, L. (November, 2024). *Social class in the mind's eye: Mental representations, egalitarianism, and discrimination*. Danish Political Science Association (DPSA) Annual Conference 2024, Nyborg, Denmark.
- Fan, L. (October, 2024). *Social class in the mind's eye: Mental representations, egalitarianism, and discrimination*. Evolution Network (CBEN) Annual Conference 2024, Maastricht, the Netherlands.
- Fan, L. (September, 2024). *Outgroup Equals Infectiousness? Re-Evaluating the Pathogen Avoidance Account of Xenophobia*. CEPDISC'24, Aarhus, Denmark.
- Fan, L. (May, 2024). *Outrage in Moral Punishments: The Dual Dynamics of Anger and Disgust in Personal Experience and Social Signaling*. Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) Annual Conference 2024, Aarhus, Denmark.
- Fan, L. (July, 2023). *Beyond outrage: Observers anticipate different behaviors from expressors of anger versus disgust*. European Association of Social Psychology (EASP) General Meeting 2023, Kraków, Poland.
- Fan, L. (June, 2023). *Are people more averse to microbe-sharing contact with ethnic outgroup members?* Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) Annual Conference 2023, Palm Springs, U.S.A..
- Fan, L. (March, 2023). *Are people more averse to microbe-sharing contact with ethnic outgroup members? A registered report*. International Convention of Psychological Science (ICPS) 2023, Brussels, Belgium.
- Fan, L. (October, 2022). *Retesting the Hypothesis of Behavioral Immune System as the Basis of Intergroup Biases during a Pandemic*. The Cognition, Behavior & Evolution Network (CBEN) Annual Conference 2022, Leiden, the Netherlands.
- Fan, L. (June, 2022). *Pathogen Disgust Sensitivity But Not Explicit Disease Concerns Predicts Immigration Attitudes During a Pandemic*. Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) Annual Conference 2022, Online.
- Fan, L. (December, 2021). *People Expect Different Aggressive Motivations from expressors of anger Versus Disgust*. Associatie van Sociaal-Psychologische Onderzoekers (ASPO) Annual Conference 2021, Online.
- Fan, L. (November, 2021). *Different Aggressive Expectations from Expressors of Anger Versus Disgust*. The Cognition, Behavior & Evolution Network (CBEN) Annual Conference 2021, Tilburg, the Netherlands.
- Fan, L. (December, 2019). *Moral Emotions and Aggressive Tactics in Third-Party Punishment: The Effect of Welfare Trade-off Ratio*. Associatie van Sociaal-Psychologische Onderzoekers (ASPO) Annual Conference 2019, Wageningen, the Netherlands.
- Fan, L. (November, 2019). *Moral Emotions and Aggressive Tactics in Third-Party Punishment: The Effect of WTR*. The Cognition, Behavior & Evolution Network Annual (CBEN) Conference 2019, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- Fan, L. (July, 2019). *Moral Emotions and their Impact in Moral Punishment*. Pan-Asian Symposium on Morality, Character and Wisdom, Colombo, Sri Lanka. (*Conference cancelled*.)

Invited Talks

- Fan, L. (September, 2025). *Micro-level Interpersonal Motives and the Dual Dynamics of Behavioral Immunity*. Duxiu Innovation Talk Series, Guangxi Normal University, Guilin, China.
- Fan, L. (September, 2025). *Beyond the Ewww: Micro-level Interpersonal Motives and the Dual Dynamics of Behavioral Immunity*. Department of Psychology Open Talk Series, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway.
- Fan, L. (March, 2022). *Moral Emotions Communicate Aggressions in Moral Punishment*. Social Psychology Talk Series at School of Psychology, University of Kent, Canterbury, the U.K..

- Fan, L. (September, 2021). *Inter-group Conflicts and Polarization: Group, Resource, and Evolution*. InBetweeners, Amstelveen, the Netherlands.

Scholarships, Grants, Awards, & Fundings

Seal of Excellence	2025
<i>Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships.</i> By Horizon Europe, European Union	
DNRF-CEPDISC Research Funding	2025
<i>2025SS Research funding call (joint).</i> CEPDISC, Aarhus University	DKK 100,000
DNRF-CEPDISC Research Funding	2024
<i>2024FW Research funding call (joint).</i> CEPDISC, Aarhus University	DKK 150,000
New Investigator Award Nominee	2023
<i>Top-3 finalist.</i> By Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES)	
Excellence in Research Award	2023
<i>Annual junior researcher award</i> By Section of Social Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	
Doctoral Fellowship	2018 - 2022
<i>Morality and Emotions: Expression, Perception, & Response</i> By China Scholarship Council & Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	EUR 64,800
Visiting Grant for Oversea Study/Research	2022
<i>VU FGB Talent Grant for PhD Candidates</i> By Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	EUR 4,000
SeedCorn Research Grant for PhD Candidates	2021 - 2022
<i>The Moderation of Facemask Wearing on Outgroup Bias in Economic Trust</i> By Kurt Lewin Instituut	EUR 2,800
Conference Travel Grant	2019
<i>Moral Emotions and their Impact in Moral Punishment (Conference cancelled)</i> By Pan-Asian Symposium on Morality, Character and Wisdom	USD 1,000
Provincial Funding for Higher Education Research	2016 - 2020
<i>Undergraduates' Aggressive Cognition and its Educational Countermeasures</i> By Chongqing Academy of Education Science, Chongqing Municipal Government	
Post-graduate Academic Scholarship (1st Class)	2014 - 2017
<i>Post-graduate Scholarship</i> By Southwest University	CNY 24,000
Undergraduate Student Research Training Program, Research Grant	2012 - 2013
<i>Group Decision-making in the Process of Legislation</i> By Chongqing University	CNY 1,000

Academic Services

Program Committee	2024
<i>Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) Annual Conference 2024</i>	
Campus Representative	2021 - 2023
<i>Association for Psychological Science Student Caucus</i>	

Social Psychology Brown-bag Talk Series Host

2022 - 2023

*Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam***Ph.D./Post-Doc Researcher Meeting Organizer**

2019 - 2022

*Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam***Caryl Rusbult Master's Thesis Award Committee Member**

2021 & 2022

*Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam***Memberships & Reviewing**

- Currently a member of: Kurt Lewin Instituut (KLI); Associatie van Sociaal-Psychologische Onderzoekers (ASPO); Open Science Community Amsterdam (OSCA); Cognition, Behavior & Evolution Network (CBEN); Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES); Association for Psychological Science (APS); Danish Political Science Association (DPSA)
- Currently a reviewer of: Journal of Experimental Social Psychology (JESP); Social and Personality Psychology Compass (SPPC); Motivation and Emotion (MOEM); PLOS One; British Journal of Social Psychology (BJSP); Scientific Reports; Group Processes & Intergroup Relations (GPIR); Journal of Individual Differences (JID); BMC Psychology; Philosophers' Imprint; Collabra: Psychology; Journal of Applied Social Psychology; Behavioral Sciences; Social Sciences; Evolutionary Psychological Science; Nature Water; Communications Medicine

Teaching

Courses

- Social Psychology of Inequality: Emotions, Relationships, and Groups.
B.A. Program of Psychology, Aarhus University. 10 ETCs. Developer and Coordinator. (2025 Spring)
- Introduction to R for Behavioral Sciences.
M.A. Program of Social Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 6 ETCs. Guest lecturer.
- Power and Social Influences.
B.A. Program of Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 6 ETCs. Co-developer.
- Open Science and LMER in Social and Behavioral Sciences. (Cancelled due to COVID-19)
Winter/Summer School, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 3 ETCs. Developer and Coordinator.
- Degree Theses Evaluation & Assessing.
M.A. Programs of Social Psychology & Organizational Psychology; B.A. Program of Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Second Assessor.

Workshops

- Linear Mixed-effect Regression and its Power Analysis. (April, 2022). *PhD Workshop. School of Psychology, University of Kent.*
- Linear Mixed-effect Regression and its Power Analysis with SimR. (October, 2021). *PhD Workshop. Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*
- Structural Equation Modeling and Growth Curve Modeling for Cross-sectional and Longitudinal Data. (October, 2016). *Post-graduate Workshop. Faculty of Psychology, Southwest University.*

Theses Supervision

- Exploring the Distinct Function of Moral Disgust: Disease Susceptibility, Agreeableness, Disgust & Third Party Punishment Outcomes. (July, 2020). *Jeroen Kolster. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*
- Morality Stepping in: The Role of Moral Disgust, Honesty-Humility and Sex on the Third Party Punisher. (June, 2020). *Maaïke Dirkse. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*
- The Effects of the Corona-Pandemic: An increase in Moral Disgust and Perceived Vulnerability to Disease. (July, 2020). *David Noordberg. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*
- Perceived vulnerability to disease, education levels, and ethnocentrism. (July, 2023). *Dilara Bilgiç. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*
- Political Ideology predicts Xenophobia. (July, 2023). *David Mukantagengwa. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*
- Outgroup Disgust: The Relation with Vulnerability to Disease and Sex Differences. (July, 2023). *Lieke Jagt. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*
- The Mediating Effect Of Age On The Relationship Between Perceived Vulnerability to Disease And Inter Group Disgust. (July, 2023). *Allard Buffing. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*