Lei Fan

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Academic Appointments & Affiliations

Karolinska Institutet *01/11/2026–Present*
Postdoctoral Research Fellow *Stockholm, Sweden*
Division of Psychology, Department of Clinical Neuroscience (CNS)

Aarhus University *01/03/2024–31/10/2026*
Postdoctoral Research Fellow *Aarhus, Denmark*
Centre for the Experimental-Philosophical Study of Discrimination (CEPDISC)

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam *01/09/2022–29/02/2024*
Predoctoral/Postdoctoral Research Fellow *Amsterdam, the Netherlands*
Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology

Southwest University *01/09/2017–31/08/2018*
Research Assistant *Chongqing, China*
Faculty of Psychology

Guest affiliations
University of Oslo *01/04/2024–Present*
Guest Research Fellow *Oslo, Norway*
Department of Psychology, Social Psychology Research Group

Aarhus University *01/11/2026–Present*
Guest Research Fellow *Aarhus, Denmark*
Centre for the Experimental-Philosophical Study of Discrimination (CEPDISC)

Research Interests

My research adopts an **evolutionary and socio-functional perspective** to understand how humans navigate survival and social challenges through emotion. I focus especially on **disgust** as a regulatory system connecting biological defense with social behavior—from avoiding infection to communicating rejection—and ask how its operation is shaped by relationships, bodily capacity, ecology, and culture.

Pathogen Disgust and the Social Allocation of Infection Risk. I study how people allocate pathogen risk across relationships: whose microbial risk they tolerate, whom they avoid, and to whom they disclose or conceal illness.

Conditional Immune Tuning. I examine how behavioral and physiological immunity shift among complementary, compensatory, and decoupled modes. My **temporal threat–capacity framework** specifies how these dynamics depend on pathogen threat, resistance capacity, and timescale across biological and ecological levels.

Moral Emotions, Cross-Cultural Recognition, and Discrimination. I investigate how anger and disgust communicate different modes of confrontation, punishment, distancing, and exclusion. My current work focuses on cross-cultural emotion expression and recognition, and on how expression–perception mismatches across group boundaries can produce discrimination.

Hierarchy and Social Representation. An emerging line examines how people mentally represent social class, leadership, and hierarchy, and how resource ecology shapes expectations about social structure.

Education

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam *01/09/2018–05/09/2023*
Ph.D. in Social Psychology *Amsterdam, the Netherlands*
Southwest University *01/09/2014–31/08/2017*
M.Sc. in Basic Psychology: Social Psychology, Valedictorian *Chongqing, China*
Chongqing University *01/09/2010–31/08/2014*
B.Sc. in Applied Psychology, Honored Graduate *Chongqing, China*

Selected Journal Publications

- **Fan, L.**, Molho, C., van Leeuwen, F., Imada, H., & Tybur, J. M. (2025). Linking anger and disgust to motives and anticipations of aggression in the East: Testing a socio-functional account of 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 für 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.

Manuscripts Under Review

- **Fan, L.**, Wang, W., Ren, H., Hu, S., & Kang, X. Behavioral and physiological immunity coupling under constraint: Pathogen disgust sensitivity relates to protein balance in chronic cardiovascular disease patients. *Evolution and Human Behavior*.
- Merrell, W. N., **Fan, L.**, Sheehy-Skeffington, J., & Thomsen, L. Height, hierarchy, and humanity: A registered replication and extension of Kunst et al. (2019). Stage 2 Registered Report under review at *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.
- Merrell, W. N., **Fan, L.**, Gothreau, C., & Laustsen, L. Democrats and Republicans hold similarly gendered mental images of ideal politicians. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*.
- Merrell, W. N., **Fan, L.**, Sheehy-Skeffington, J., & Thomsen, L. The folk psychology of spatial resource patchiness and social hierarchy. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.
- **Fan, L.**, Wilms, R., & Andrews, W. G. Online charisma training: Cognitive ability, narcissism, and charisma-enhanced deepfakes. *Group & Organization Management*.

Selected First-Author Research in Progress

- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., Donner, M. R., Zhao, A., Hlay, J., & Tognetti, A. (Manuscript in preparation). Conditional Immune Tuning: A Temporal Threat–Capacity Framework for Behavioral and Physiological Immunity.
- **Fan, L.**†, Merrell, W. N.†, Ackerman, J. M., Donner, M. R., & Tybur, J. M. (Manuscript in preparation). From whom do we hide our sickness? Interpersonal value and the selective concealment of infectious illness.
- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., Sheehy-Skeffington, J., & Thomsen, L. (Manuscript in preparation). National identity as part of the authoritarian etiological family: A behavioral genetics approach using Norwegian twin data.
- **Fan, L.**, Wang, W., Ren, H., Hu, S., & Kang, X. (Manuscript in preparation). Linking behavioral immunity to gut microbiome: Evidence from cardiovascular patients.
- **Fan, L.**, Merrell, W. N., Hjorth, F., Dinesen, P., & Sønderskov, K. (Manuscript in preparation). Neighborhood in mind's eye: Mapping resident needs into perceived urban space.
- **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 Sino-US Moral Emotion Nonverbal Vocalization Corpus (SUMNEx).

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 Recent Talks & Presentations

Conference Talks

- Fan, L. (May, 2026). *Anger and Disgust Across Borders: Socio-functional Links to Moral Punishments in Western, East Asian, and Cross-Cultural Contexts.* Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) Annual Conference 2026, Rabat, Morocco.
- Fan, L. (April, 2026). *Compensatory Rather Than Complementary: Trait Pathogen Disgust Tracks Immunometabolic Protein–Resource Balance.* European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association (EHBEA) Annual Conference 2026, Leiden, the Netherlands.
- Fan, L. (April, 2026). *National Identity Is Not Purely Social: Heritable Links to RWA in a Norwegian Twin Sample.* Cognition, Behavior & Evolution Network (CBEN) Annual Conference 2026, Leiden, the Netherlands.
- Fan, L. (December, 2025). *Moral Disgust and Anger Across Borders: Linking to Forms of Aggressive Punishment in Western, East Asian, and Cross-Cultural Contexts.* Disgust across Borders: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on a Core Emotion, Toulouse, France.
- Fan, L. (November, 2025). *Neighborhood in Mind's Eye: Mapping Resident Needs into Perceived Urban Space.* Danish Political Science Association (DPSA) Annual Conference 2025, Nyborg, Denmark.
- 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.* Cognition, Behavior & 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.* 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.

Invited Talks

- Fan, L. (August, 2026). *Anger and Disgust Across Borders: Socio-functional Links to Moral Punishments in Western, East Asian, and Cross-Cultural Contexts.* Danish National Research Foundation, Aarhus, Denmark.
- Fan, L. (April, 2026). *National Identity Is Not Purely Social: Heritable Links to RWA in a Norwegian Twin Sample.* Erasmus Global-MINDS Talk Series, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway.
- 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 Ewwwww: 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, School of Psychology, University of Kent, Canterbury, U.K.

Grants, Awards, & Fellowships

DNRF-CEPDISC Research Funding *2026*
2026 Research Funding Call *DKK 76,000*
CEPDISC, Aarhus University & Danish National Research Foundation

Seal of Excellence *2025*
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships
Horizon Europe, European Union

DNRF-CEPDISC Research Funding *2025*
2025 Research Funding Call *DKK 100,000*
CEPDISC, Aarhus University & Danish National Research Foundation

DNRF-CEPDISC Research Funding *2024*
2024 Research Funding Call *DKK 150,000*
CEPDISC, Aarhus University & Danish National Research Foundation

New Investigator Award Nominee *2023*
Top-3 Finalist
Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES)

Excellence in Research Award *2023*
Annual Junior Researcher Award
Section of Social Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Doctoral Fellowship *2018–2022*
Morality and Emotions: Expression, Perception, & Response *EUR 64,800*
China Scholarship Council & Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Visiting Grant for Overseas Study/Research *2022*
VU FGB Talent Grant for PhD Candidates *EUR 4,000*
Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

SeedCorn Research Grant for PhD Candidates *2021–2022*
The Moderation of Facemask Wearing on Outgroup Bias in Economic Trust *EUR 2,800*
Kurt Lewin Instituut

Conference Travel Grant *2019*
Moral Emotions and Their Impact in Moral Punishment (conference cancelled) *USD 1,000*
Pan-Asian Symposium on Morality, Character and Wisdom

Provincial Funding for Higher Education Research *2016–2020*
Undergraduates' Aggressive Cognition and Its Educational Countermeasures
Chongqing Academy of Education Science, Chongqing Municipal Government

Postgraduate Academic Scholarship (1st Class) *2014–2017*
Postgraduate Scholarship *CNY 24,000*
Southwest University

Undergraduate Student Research Training Program, Research Grant *2012–2013*
Group Decision-Making in the Process of Legislation *CNY 1,000*
Chongqing University

Academic Service

Program Committee *2024*
Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) Annual Conference 2024

Campus Representative *2021–2023*
Association for Psychological Science Student Caucus

Social Psychology Brown-Bag Talk Series Host *2022–2023*
Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

PhD/Postdoctoral 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

- Member of: Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES); European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association (EHBEA); Association for Psychological Science (APS); Associatie van Sociaal-Psychologische Onderzoekers (ASPO); Cognition, Behavior & Evolution Network (CBEN); Open Science Community Amsterdam (OSCA); Danish Political Science Association (DPSA)
- Ad hoc reviewer for: Journal of Experimental Social Psychology; European Journal of Social Psychology; British Journal of Social Psychology; Group Processes & Intergroup Relations; Motivation and Emotion; Social and Personality Psychology Compass; Journal of Applied Social Psychology; Journal of Individual Differences; Brain, Behavior, and Immunity; Computers in Human Behavior; Evolutionary Psychological Science; Collabra: Psychology; Scientific Reports; PLOS ONE; BMC Psychology; Communications Medicine; Philosophers' Imprint; Nature Water; Behavioral Sciences; Social Sciences

Teaching

Courses

- Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Group and Race in Political Science: A Dialogue between Philosophy and Psychology.
  Ph.D. Program in Political Science, Aarhus University. 3 ECTS. Developer and Coordinator.
- Social Psychology of Inequality: Emotions, Relationships, and Groups.
  B.A. Program in Psychology, Aarhus University. 10 ECTS. Developer and Coordinator.
- Introduction to R for Behavioral Sciences.
  M.A. Program in Social Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 6 ECTS. Guest Lecturer.
- Power and Social Influence.
  B.A. Program in Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 6 ECTS. Co-developer.
- Open Science and LMER in Social and Behavioral Sciences. *(Cancelled due to COVID-19.)*
  Winter/Summer School, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 3 ECTS. Developer and Coordinator.
- Bachelor's and Master's Thesis Assessment.
  M.A. Programs in Social Psychology and Organizational Psychology; B.A. Program in Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Second Assessor.

Workshops

- Linear Mixed-Effects Regression and Power Analysis. (April, 2022). *PhD Workshop.* School of Psychology, University of Kent.
- Linear Mixed-Effects Regression and 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). *Postgraduate Workshop.* Faculty of Psychology, Southwest University.

Thesis Supervision

- 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 Intergroup Disgust. (July, 2023). *Allard Buffing.* Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Exploring the Distinct Function of Moral Disgust: Disease Susceptibility, Agreeableness, Disgust, and 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). *Maaike 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.

References

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