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Narratives and the Communication Gap

10 February 2026 (Tue)
15:30–17:00

WYL314, 3/F, Dorothy Y. L. Wong
Building, Lingnan University



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BIOGRAPHY

Simin He is a Professor in the School of Economics at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. Her research focuses on behavioral and experimental economics, with recent work on belief and narrative formation, cooperation and coordination games, and behavioral mechanism design. Her work has been published in leading journals, including *Management Science*, *Economic Journal*, *AEJ: Micro*, *Journal of Economic Theory*, and *Games and Economic Behavior*.

ABSTRACT

In everyday life, individuals construct narratives by gathering observations and forming mental models to interpret them. As a result, people may arrive at different narratives about the same topic due to differences in either their observations or their mental models. In a laboratory experiment, we examine how individuals can form divergent narratives even when an objective truth exists. We also investigate the role of communication between individuals with differing narratives, varying whether they share their private observations or explain how they construct their narratives. This design allows us to identify why communication may fail to uncover the truth or produce consensus. Our results show that once individuals articulate their mental models, they become less likely to change their narratives.