

SEMINAR

"How Alliances Form and Conflict Ensues"

(With Lu Dong, Lingbo Huang and Jie Zheng)

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Venue: WYL314

ABSTRACT:

In a social network in which friendly and rival bilateral links can be formed, how do alliances between decision-makers form, and what determines whether a conflict will arise? We study a network formation game between ex-ante symmetric players in the laboratory to examine the dynamics of alliance formation and conflict evolution. A peaceful equilibrium yields the greatest social welfare, while a successful bullying attack transfers the victimized player's resources evenly to the attackers at a cost. Consistently with the theoretical model predictions, peaceful and bullying outcomes are prevalent among the randomly re-matched experimental groups, based on the cost of attack. We further examine the dynamics leading to the final network and find that groups tend to coordinate quickly on a first target for attack, while the first attacker entails a non-negligible risk of successful counter-attack by initiating the coordination. These findings provide insights for understanding social dynamics in group coordination.

BIOGRAPHY:

Prof. Jaimie W. Lien is an Assistant Professor of Business Economics in the Department of Decision Sciences and Managerial Economics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her main research interests are in behavioural and experimental economics, including decisions under uncertainty, social cooperation and competition mechanisms, and consumer finance among other topics. Her research methods include statistical field data analysis, laboratory experiments and collaborations on applied theoretical modeling. Prof. Lien's research has been published in Nature Communications, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Games and Economic Behavior, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Experimental Economics, and American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings, among other academic journals. She was a co-founder of the Economic Science and Policy Experimental Laboratory at Tsinghua University, where she was previously an Assistant Professor from 2010 to 2015.

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