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WHEN SOCIAL SCIENCE MEETS COMPUTER SCIENCE...

Webinar of Computational Social Science Laboratory (CSSL@CUHK)

Explaining the Evolution of Gossip

20 January 2025 (Monday), 09:30 - 11:00 (UTC+8, HKT)

Venue: Rm 422, Sino Building, CUHK and Zoom (Mixed Mode)

Abstract

Gossip, the exchange of personal information about absent third parties, is ubiquitous in human societies. However, the evolution of gossip remains a puzzle. The current article proposes an evolutionary cycle of gossip and uses an agent-based evolutionary game-theoretic model to assess it. We argue that the evolution of gossip is the joint consequence of its reputation dissemination and selfishness deterrence functions. Specifically, the dissemination of information about individuals' reputations leads more individuals to condition their behavior on others' reputations. This induces individuals to behave more cooperatively toward gossipers in order to improve their reputations. As a result, gossiping has an evolutionary advantage that leads to its proliferation. The evolution of gossip further facilitates these two functions of gossip and sustains the evolutionary cycle.



Biography

Xinyue Pan is an assistant professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. She gained her Ph.D. degree in psychology from the University of Maryland. Before that, she gained two bachelor's degrees in psychology and in economics from Peking University. Her research uses computational and empirical methods to understand the formation, maintenance, and change of social norms.

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Registration
(non-CSS fellows only)



Zoom Link



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