# Claire Shi

cshi@g.harvard.edu
617-852-4196
claireshi.com

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Littauer Center 315 | Placement Director: Myrto Kalouptsidi | myrto@fas.harvard.edu | 617-495-2144 |
| 1805 Cambridge St | Placement Director: Oleg Itskhoki | itskhoki@fas.harvard.edu | 617-495-2144 |
| Cambridge, MA 02138 | Administrative Director: Brenda Piquet | bpiquet@harvard.edu | 617-495-8927 |


**Education**

**Harvard University**
Ph.D. Business Economics, 2021 to 2027 (expected)
A.M. Business Economics, 2023
A.B. Applied Mathematics/Economics (secondary in Statistics), *summa cum laude*, 2021

**Fields**

Household Finance
Behavioral Economics

**References**

Adi Sunderam
Harvard Business School
asunderam@hbs.edu

Andrei Shleifer
Harvard University
shleifer@fas.harvard.edu

John Campbell
Harvard University
john_campbell@harvard.edu

Sam Hanson
Harvard Business School
shanson@hbs.edu

Nathan Hendren
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
nhendren@mit.edu

**Fellowships & Awards**

| | |
|---|---|
| NBER Dissertation Fellowship on Consumer Financial Management | 2025-27 |
| Thomas Temple Hoopes Prize | 2021 |
| Dunlop Prize in Business and Government | 2021 |
| Phi Beta Kappa (Junior 24) | 2020 |
| John Harvard Scholar (top 5% of class) | 2020 |

**Job Market Paper**

**Who Borrows on Credit Cards? The Economic and Social Determinants of Consumer Debt**, with Trevor Bakker and Dominic Russel

Using linked credit bureau and Census data, we show that revolving credit card debt is highly persistent, insensitive to income growth, and negatively predicts future earnings. Standard rational or behavioral consumption-smoothing models cannot generate these facts without heterogeneous types. We study the sources of this heterogeneity and show that it is shaped in part by the behavior of one's parents. Exploiting variation in the age of children at parental separation, we document a causal effect of parental exposure. Parents transmit specific repayment behaviors, such as overpaying installment debt while revolving credit card debt, as well as broader cultural attitudes from their country of origin. Our findings suggest that learned norms are an important determinant of consumer debt outcomes.

**Working Papers**

**The Supply Side of Consumer Debt Repayment**, with Justin Katz and Dominic Russel

We study how lender responses to consumer biases affect credit card debt. Using account-level credit bureau data, we document a new fact: many consumers make near-minimum credit card repayments while also overpaying lower-interest installment debt. We estimate an empirical model in which lenders optimally set minimum payments given this behavior. Because some liquid consumers make near-minimum payments, lenders lower minimums to slow repayment, increasing high-interest debt balances and interest revenue. Our model implies that this lender response increases revolving debt by $46 billion. This finding illustrates how optimizing lenders can amplify the effects of consumer biases in equilibrium.

**Revenue-Based Financing**, with Rowan Clarke and Dominic Russel
***Revise & Resubmit, Review of Financial Studies***

We study revenue-based financing, an emerging capital source for small firms in low- and middle-income countries. Using transaction-level data from a South African payment platform, we show firms that take financing process 16% less revenue through the platform than observably similar non-takers after eight months, slowing repayment. Two natural experiments show this reflects moral hazard from firms diverting revenue and adverse selection. Repayment improves when firms use the platform's other services (e.g., inventory management tools), and screening improves with longer histories and repeat financing. Our results highlight the frictions with flexible repayment models in developing economies, and how providers mitigate them.

**Gambling for Goals**, with Costas Arkolakis, Spencer Kwon, Dominic Russel, and Hyunjoo Yang

As young adults in advanced economies have become increasingly pessimistic about their economic prospects in recent years, gambling-like financial activities have proliferated. We link these trends through a Friedman-Savage (1948) motive: when life goals such as homeownership or marriage seem out of reach, individuals turn to financial gambles. We test the theory using an original survey combined with millions of linked records from Korea's leading credit bureau, telecom provider, and credit card issuer. Consistent with the theory, individuals who place greater importance on hard-to-reach financial goals are more likely to exhibit risk-seeking preferences and to engage in high-risk investment. Conversely, when goals become attainable, risk-taking declines: exploiting Korea's housing lottery, which quasi-randomly allocates subsidies for home purchase, we show that attaining homeownership reduces interest in cryptocurrency. We conclude with a stylized calibration that shows how goal-driven risk preferences can amplify the welfare costs of overoptimism.

**Behavioral Cross-Selling: Evidence from Retail Credit Cards**, with Sarah Robinson and Dominic Russel

Why do some non-financial firms rely on revenue from consumer financial products? At several large U.S. retailers, direct revenues from credit card partnerships exceed total operating income. This paper proposes a theory of *behavioral cross-selling*, in which firms use their access to customers to cross-sell products that capitalize on behavioral biases, such as inattention or forgetfulness. We test our theory in the retail credit card market using data from a major credit bureau. Although retail cards account for only 17% of balances in our sample, they generate 45% of missed minimum payments, triggering late fees. Liquidity constraints cannot fully explain missed minimums: among individuals with multiple cards, nearly half of missed payments on retail cards could have been avoided by reallocating excess payments from other cards. Consistent with the theory, firms in locations with more avoidable missed payments are more likely to offer retail cards and provide larger sign-up incentives. We discuss how behavioral cross-selling can help explain practices in industries such as airlines, auto dealerships, tax preparation services, and sports entertainment.

**Papers in Progress**

**Consumer Adoption of Generative AI: Evidence from Transaction-Level Data**, with Mark Egan, Dominic Russel, and Vincent Yao

**Seminars & Conferences**

| | |
|---|---|
| WEFIDEV-RFS-CEPR Conference, e61 Institute | 2026 |
| Opportunity Insights | 2025 |
| SFS Cavalcade | 2024 |

**Teaching**

Investment Management and Capital Markets (MBA 1446) 2023
Harvard Business School, Luis Viceira and Emil Siriwardane

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Intermediate Microeconomics: Advanced (ECON 1011a)<br>Harvard University, Edward Glaeser and Giacomo Ponzetto | 2018-20, 2022 |
| | Probability (STAT 110)<br>Harvard University, Joe Blitzstein | 2019-20 |
| **Affiliations & Research Positions** | Graduate Student Affiliate, Opportunity Insights | 2021-27 |
| | Graduate Associate, Harvard Center for History and Economics | 2021-27 |
| | Visiting Fellow, University of New South Wales | 2023-26 |
| | Research Assistant for John Campbell, Harvard University | 2022-24 |
| | Research Assistant for Edward Glaeser and Andrei Shleifer, Harvard University | 2022 |
| **Academic Service** | Referee: *Quarterly Journal of Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics* | |
| | Co-organizer: Harvard Doctoral Finance Workshop | 2023-25 |
| | Co-chair: Harvard Center for History and Economics Undergraduate Prize Program | 2021 |
| **Research Grants** | Innovations for Poverty Action (Digital Payments and Credit for Firms) | 2025 |
| | South African Reserve Bank (FinTech and Small Firms) | 2024 |
| | Chae Family Economics Research Fund | 2023 |
| **Invited Workshops** | FTG Summer School, briq Summer School in Behavioral Economics | 2023 |
| | Yale Summer School in Behavioral Finance, NBER Behavioral Public Economics Bootcamp | 2022 |
| **Other Activities** | Macro Trading Intern, D.E. Shaw & Co. | 2020 |
| **Languages** | English (native), Chinese (intermediate), French (beginner) | |
| **Software** | Python, Stata, R, Fortran, SQL | |