Summary

Name:

Meijia FANG

Contact Information:

Email: meijiafang@connect.hku.hk

Phone No.: +852 94136512

Address: Knowles Building, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong

Affiliation:

Department of Real Estate and Construction

Faculty of Architecture

The University of Hong Kong

Research Interest:

Entrepreneurship;

Social Networks;

Innovation;

Informal Institutions

PhD Program Information:

PhD Program: Urban Economics

Year of Entry: 2024

Expected Year of Completion: 2028

Current Status:

Second-year PhD candidate in a four-year doctoral program at The University of Hong Kong.

Faculty Member Supplying Letter of Recommendation:

Prof. Alex Shuai Shi

Department of Real Estate and Construction

The University of Hong Kong

alexshi@hku.hk

Meijia FANG

E-mail: meijiafang@connect.hku.hk

Affiliation: Department of Real Estate and Construction, Faculty of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong

EDUATION

- **PhD candidate (Urban Economics, 2024/08--present)**

  PhD candidate, *The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, CN*

- **M.S. (Tourism Management, 2024)**

  GPA: 3.92/4; TOP 1%, *Sun Yat-Sen University, Zhuhai, CN ('Project 985')*

- **B.S. (Economics and Management of Exhibitions, Financial Economics (*Double Degree*), 2021)**

  GPA: 3.91/4; TOP 1%, *South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, CN ('Project 985')*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Entrepreneurship; Social networks; Innovation; Informal Institutions

WORKING PAPERS (First author/Corresponding author)

- Walking on Two Legs: Antecedents of Network Capital Ambidexterity (with Alex Shuai Shi), under review at *Journal of Management Studies*
- Raise a Glass and Start a Business? Explore the Impact of Premium Alcohol Consumption on Urban Entrepreneurship (with Alex Shuai Shi), submit to *entrepreneurship and regional development*
- The Third Sphere: The Effect of Chinese Shanghui on Regional Entrepreneurship (with Wanting Xu, Chenghua Guan), R&R at *Economic Modelling*
- Relaxation of Internal Migration Barriers and Entrepreneurship: New Evidence of the Hukou Reform in China (with Wanting Xu, Chenghua Guan), under review at *Cities*

PAPERS IN PROGRESS

- Network Capital Ambidexterity and Entrepreneurship development (with Alex Shuai Shi)
- Unpacking the Effect of Merchant Guilds Diversity on Corporate Exploratory Innovation (with Wanting Xu, Chenghua Guan)
- Artificial Intelligence and Top Inventors: Productivity and Talents Flow

PUBLICATIONS

- Women's Knowledge Empowerment and Elimination of Implicit Gender Discrimination in Chinese Rural Tourism Entrepreneurship (with Yong Rao)

  International Journal of Tourism Research (Q1, IF=5.7), forthcoming

- Memory-based knowledge management in tourism firms (with Yong Rao, Chao Liu)

  Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (Q1, IF=13.761, Category rank-TOP 5%), 2025

- Understanding the process of a new product category from birth to maturity in the restaurant market: a knowledge evolution perspective (with Yong Rao, Chao Liu and Xinying Xu)

  International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (Q1, IF=11.1, ABS: 3, Category rank-TOP 10%), 2023

- Understanding the FLE-based organizational knowledge creation process in hospitality firms (with Yong Rao, Chao Liu)

  Tourism Management (Q1, IF=13.761, ABS: 4, Category rank-TOP 5%, Top Journal), 2022

- Community-based Development Pathways of Rural Tourism and Driving Factors: A Case Study of Longshan Village in Yixing, Jiangsu Province (with Yong Rao)

  Social Scientist (in Chinese). 2025

ACADEMIC PROJECT EXPERIENCE

- Leverage Network Capital for Hong Kong's Carbon Neutrality Goal 2025-present

  Public Policy Research Funding Scheme Co-I: Prof. Alex S. Shi

  Responsibilities: Assisted in drafting the proposal and conducted data collection and processing.

- Development level of 'Beautiful China' and its impact on the change of inbound tourism flow and quality 2020-2021

  National Social Science Foundation Program Co-I: Prof. Weiwei

  Responsibilities: Questionnaire design and collection (533); data processing (SPSS &GIS)

- Mainlanders' experience of gaming tourism in Macau: based on the perspective of consumption space 2019-2020

  School-level student research project Co-I: Prof. Danping Liu

  Responsibilities: Questionnaire collection (421) and interviews (56), analysis (Mplus) and writing of the main part of the final report

SEMINAR and CONFERENCE

- The 3rd Summer Meeting in Urban Economics, Guangdong, China, 2025.
- Regional Studies Association's Annual Conference, Porto, Portugal, 2025.
- Tourism Tribune's Annual Conference, Fujian, China, 2024.
- Tourism Tribune's Annual Conference, Anhui, China, 2023.

HONORS and AWARDS

- **National Scholarship for Postgraduates** (**TOP 1%**, highest scholarship from Ministry of Education of China) 2023
- The First Prize Scholarship of SYSU (Award Amount: ¥ 20000-the same as the national scholarship for postgraduate students) 2022
- The First Prize Scholarship of SYSU (Award Amount: ¥ 20000-the same as the national scholarship for postgraduate students) 2021
- The Sixth China College Students' 'Internet+' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, **Golden award, National level** 2020

  Position: Team leader

  Rank: TOP 110 / 38k teams (Award Amount: ¥ 50,000)

- The 12th 'Challenge Cup' Guangdong Undergraduate Business Plan Competition, **Golden award** 2020

  Position: Team leader

  Rank: TOP 129 / 7.4k teams (Award Amount: ¥ 20,000)

- **National Scholarship** (**TOP 1%**, highest scholarship from Ministry of Education of China) 2020
- **National Scholarship** (**TOP 1%**, highest scholarship from Ministry of Education of China) 2019

WORKING EXPERIENCE

- **The University of Hong Kong,** Research assistant Oct 2023 - Apr 2024

  Responsibilities: Collecting and analyzing data; Assisting in grant application; Assisting in manuscript writing

- **Poly Real Estate,** New media marketing specialist Aug 2023 - Dec 2023

  Responsibilities: Official account operation; Advertising; User research and maintenance; Data monitoring

- **China Foreign Trade Center,** Central Office Intern (Outstanding Internship Award) Oct 2021 - Nov 2021

  Responsibilities: Public opinion monitoring; Market research; Activity follow-up

OTHER EXPERIENCE

- **Teaching assistant experience:** Teaching assistant for Principles of Management
- **Volunteer experience:** Bottle line space environmental protection conference (2021); Kids Utopia Project (2024)
- **Practice Projects:**

Cruise Tourism Cooperation Development across the Taiwan Strait, Hong Kong and Macau 2023-2024

Responsibilities: Conducting field research and writing research reports; Participating in planning a cultural and tourism integration scheme by land and sea

Analysis on the model and path optimization of targeted poverty alleviation 2021-2023

Responsibilities: As the leader of students, conducting field surveys and data collection in Yunnan province; writing the poverty alleviation analysis report; The findings have been adopted by the university's organization department and local companies

SKILLS – Stata, GIS, Nvivo, Ucinet, SPSS, Mplus

HOBBIES - Hiking, Reading, Music

Research Statement and Motivation for the Camp

My research studies entrepreneurship as an individual choice embedded in institutions and space. I began with micro-level evidence from tourism entrepreneurship, asking how knowledge shapes beliefs, decision making, and persistence. In one stream of work, I examine how knowledge empowerment alters expectations and reduces exit among female founders facing implicit discrimination. In another, I analyze how disadvantaged groups use self-employment not merely as subsistence work, but as a pathway from fragile gigs into viable, growth-oriented firms. Together, these studies identify policy-relevant margins for entrepreneurial entry, survival, and early growth, and lead to a broader finding. Entrepreneurial outcomes reflect not only individual effort, but also the surrounding networks, rules, and social infrastructure that condition returns to effort.

Building on this insight, my current agenda connects micro behavior to regional outcomes through three tightly linked questions. First, who are the actors that sustain urban economic growth, with particular focus on startups and innovators, where ideas are translated into firms? Second, what do cities and regions provide that allow these actors to thrive and remain locally embedded, including formal public goods and informal institutions such as household registration system reform and merchant guilds? Third, how are entrepreneurs connected across space, and how do these connections enable access to external resources while transmitting shocks and amplifying regional disparities?

Within this framework, I study network capital ambidexterity and show how balanced portfolios of diverse and cohesive ties shape opportunity recognition, financing access, and firm scaling. I also examine how historically rooted associations influence exploratory innovation and local dynamism, highlighting the persistence of informal institutions. I also treat culture as a critical facilitator for business ventures. In some settings, business socializing and subtle status signals, including premium alcohol consumption at banquets, reduce matching frictions by facilitating trust and coordination, while simultaneously reinforcing exclusion of outsiders.

Methodologically, I use a mixed methods approach that pairs credible econometrics with structured qualitative analysis. Quantitatively, I run regression models, implement difference in differences and event studies, and build robustness with placebo checks and sensitivity tests. Qualitatively, I conduct interviews and case studies, apply qualitative comparative analysis when appropriate, and use thematic coding to analyze across institutional contexts.

The NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp is the right setting at this stage of my doctoral training. By the time of the program, I will have completed my second year of coursework and will be transitioning from skill acquisition to agenda formation. I see this Camp primarily as a learning opportunity to absorb core conceptual frameworks, empirical standards, and open research questions in the entrepreneurship literature. In particular, I hope to deepen my understanding of how leading scholars conceptualize venturing, institutions, and market frictions, how they evaluate identification in settings with spillovers and selection, and how firm-level mechanisms are credibly linked to aggregate and spatial outcomes.

Participation will help me refine how my ongoing projects fit into these broader conversations and how a sequence of related papers can be shaped into a coherent and cumulative research program. I also value informal exchange with researchers, especially exposure to perspectives and empirical settings beyond my own. Coming from the mainland of China and Hong Kong, I can offer a comparative institutional perspective while remaining firmly focused on learning from the Camp's lectures and discussions. The program will play a formative role in sharpening my research questions, empirical instincts, and communication as I progress toward independent scholarship in entrepreneurship.

February 10, 2026

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to recommend **Meijia Fang** for the Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp. I am Alex Shuai Shi from The University of Hong Kong, and I have been Meijia's supervisor since she began her doctoral studies. I have worked with her closely over an extended period and know her well.

Meijia is an exceptionally strong PhD student with a clear research focus and excellent execution ability. Under my supervision, she has developed a coherent research agenda on entrepreneurship, social networks, and informal institutions, with particular attention to how entrepreneurs in emerging market contexts mobilize heterogeneous network ties to support venture creation and growth. She carefully considers mechanisms, institutional context, and identification, and can efficiently move from research questions to empirically testable designs.

We have coauthored multiple papers together. Our main project, "Walking on Two Legs: Antecedents of Network Capital Ambidexterity," develops a new perspective on how entrepreneurs balance different types of network capital. Meijia has made central intellectual contributions to this project, including idea development, empirical strategy, and data analysis. In another joint study on informal social practices and urban entrepreneurship, she again demonstrated strong creativity and solid empirical skills. Across projects, she works independently, responds well to feedback, and consistently improves the quality of her work through revision.

What distinguishes Meijia most is her maturity and reliability as a young researcher. She manages large empirical projects efficiently, is careful with data and interpretation, and does not overstate results. She is highly motivated, organized, and professional. From my experience advising doctoral students, she is clearly among the top of her cohort in terms of research potential.

This Entrepreneurship Program would be an excellent match for Meijia at this stage. Exposure to cutting-edge research and methodological discussions in the community would substantially benefit her development, and I am confident that she would also contribute thoughtfully to the program's intellectual environment.
I recommend Meijia Fang without reservation. Please feel free to contact me if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Prof. Alex Shuai Shi
The University of Hong Kong