Preis der Prof. Dr. Anna und Prof. Dr. Jörg Jiri Bojanovsky Stiftung 2018

The Prof. Dr. Anna und Prof. Dr. Jörg Jiri Bojanovsky Stiftung honors excellent research work by young researchers of the University of Mannheim with the Bojanovsky Prize. According to the purpose of the foundation, the prize shall be awarded to researchers in the field of "empirical models on social processes". This includes empirical research or modeling of social, inter-individual and cultural processes.

Laudation for Ms. Jing Shen, PhD

The committee has chosen the article "The causal effect of social capital on income: A new analytic strategy" by Jing Shen to be honoured with the Bojanovsky prize 2018. The article was co-authored by Yanjie Bian and recently published in the high-ranking Sociology journal "Social Networks".

Since 2015, Jing Shen is a postdoctoral researcher at the MZES in the project "Inside Integration and Acculturation—Migrants' Life Satisfaction in Europe" led by Prof. Irena Kogan. Ms. Sheng has received her PhD at University of Toronto in 2013 with a work on job search strategies in the Chinese labour market. Over the last years, she has very actively published on topics related to immigrants' well-being, social capital, and labour markets, in the European as well as the Chinese context.

With the honoured article, Jing Shen has made a breakthrough in demonstrating the causal effect of social capital on labour market outcomes. She brings together her profound knowledge of labour market sociology, her excellent abilities in statistical modeling, and her knowledge of the Chinese society, and combines these in an appealing research setting.

The article addresses the research question of what role social capital, meaning the personal network of friends and acquaintances, plays for being successful on the labour market. The causal link is not easy to disentangle since people might be more successful because of their good social contacts *or* might have more beneficial social contacts because they are successful. Previous research lacks empirical evidence of a direct causal link between contact use in job searches and labour market outcomes, such as earnings.

Ms. Shen uses a clever research design to overcome these drawbacks. Based on data from China's socialist stage when a state-control job assignment system was in place, she is able to tackle the key problems of self-selection and unobserved reservation wage in this research strand.

From a Sociological perspective, Jing Shen's article represents the first piece that successfully demonstrates the causal effect of social capital for labour market outcomes. Based on her results, theories in the social capital literature can be further advanced.

The Bojanovsky prize intends to honour and support excellent work in modeling and empirically testing social processes. The prize committee considers Jing Shen's article as a perfect example of this and is happy to announce that she therefore deservedly receives this year's Bojanovsky prize. **Congratulations from the committee and the faculty!**