HONG KONG
SOCIOLGICAL
ASSOCIATION
18th Annual Conference

Coming of Age:
Sociology through the Generations

3/F Centennial Campus
The University of Hong Kong
Come to our book corner to see a variety of titles from local and international publishers who have done much to disseminate sociological research over the past 50 years. There will also be a soft launch of the *Gender, Sexualities and Culture in Asia* series, Palgrave Macmillan, co-edited by Olivia Khoo, Stevi Jackson and Denise Tang.

Recent books from the Department of Sociology, HKU.
It is with great pleasure that our sociology department at the University of Hong Kong is hosting this year’s annual Hong Kong Sociological Association meetings. This year is one of anniversaries. Baptist University’s sociology department celebrates its founding 60 years ago. And HKU is having its half-century birthday! Moreover, the HKSA’s origins began 50 years ago as well - in May 1966 – when it was called the Hong Kong Sociological Society. Professionals in the field such as Professors S.L. Wong, Maurice J. Anderson and Aline Wong were elected to become its Presidents from 1966 to 1969. The Society slumbered for a few years after from 1972, due to the small number of sociologists in Hong Kong at that time. In November 1998, the Society was re-established as the HKSA, and continues to gather each year for sociologists in the region to share research and exchange ideas. This year’s theme on Coming of Age: Sociology through the Generations, celebrates the birth and advancement of sociology in the region.

Professor Karen A. Joe Laidler
President, Hong Kong Sociological Association
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Our focus on “Coming of Age” speaks to the production of sociological knowledge through the generations, and in particular, the changing social context of which knowledge is produced in sociology. Shifting theoretical paradigms, new innovations in methodologies, along with a changing academic culture give rise to the need to explore the connections and disconnections between generations of sociologists and sociological knowledge production. How has theorizing changed? How has this been shaped by the major transformations Hong Kong has experienced? How have these shifts in theory and society been articulated in the classroom? And with what effect? Has there been a “constant” in sociological ideas despite rapid and global changes?

In this panel discussion, Dr. Travis Kong will moderate, and raise a number of questions on the shifts and turns in sociology in Hong Kong and the region.

Biographies:
Dr. Annie Hau-Nung Chan is Associate Professor in Sociology at Lingnan University and incoming HKSA president (2016-2018). Her research interests include Hong Kong culture, gender studies, women’s employment and family issues.

Prof. Cheung Yuet-wah is Distinguished Professor and Academic Head of Sociology Department at Hong Kong Shue Yan University. His research interests are sociology of health, deviance, and drug policy.

Dr. Julian Groves is Associate Professor of Social Science Education at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. His research interests include migrant domestic workers, non-engaged youth, social work, and ethnography in Hong Kong.

Dr. Travis Shiu-Ki Kong is Associate Professor in Sociology at the University of Hong Kong. His research specializes in Chinese homosexuality and masculinity, commercial sex in Hong Kong and China, HIV/AIDS, and transnational Chinese sexuality.

Prof. Maggy S.Y. Lee is Professor in Sociology at the University of Hong Kong. She has published widely in sociology and criminology especially in the field of migration and human trafficking.

Prof. Lui Tai-luk is Chair Professor of Hong Kong Studies with the Department of Asian and Policy Studies and concurrently Vice President (Research and Development) at The Education University of Hong Kong.
Reflections in Celebration
of 50 years of Sociology at HKU

To celebrate 50 years of sociology at HKU, a panel of alumni and staff will share their personal reflections on the department as a place to study, work and play; their intellectual apprenticeship, and the way the(ir) sociological imagination has been shaped by, and in turn responding to, the changing society.

Biographies:
Prof. Diana Khor is Professor and Dean in the Department of Global and Interdisciplinary Studies at Hosei University. Her research interests include sociology of gender and sexualities, curriculum development of women’s studies.

Dr. Agnes Shuk-mei Ku is Associate Professor of Social Science at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Her research interests are cultural sociology, civil society, Hong Kong culture and politics, gender issues, and urban space.

Prof. Karen A. Joe Laidler is Professor of Sociology at HKU. She has had a longtime research interest gender, crime and social control, youth gangs and delinquency, and drug use issues and markets in the USA and Hong Kong.

Dr. Ng Chun Hung is Associate Professor in Sociology at the University of Hong Kong. His research specializes in the sociology of media and popular culture.

Dr. Carmen Ka Man Tong is Lecturer at the Department of Sociology, HKU. She is now researching on human-animal studies and she has a background in sociology of education, media and cultural studies.

Dr. Tommy Ho Lun Tse is Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology, HKU. His research interests range from fashion, gender and sexuality, digital media, cultural industries, and creative labour.
8:15 - 9:00  Registration  CPD 3/F

9:00 - 10:30  Panel Session 1
Panel 1.1 - LABOUR  CPD 3.28
Panel 1.2 - GENDER, KNOWLEDGE & POWER  CPD 3.29
Panel 1.3 - CRIME AND POLICING IN CHINA  CPD 3.16
Panel 1.4 - RELIGION AND ALTRUISM  CPD 4.16
Panel 1.5 - NEW MEDIA  CPD 4.17

10:30 - 10:45  Tea Break  CPD 3/F

10:45 - 12:30  Opening Ceremony and Plenary Panel  CPD 3.28
Welcome Speech by Dr. David Palmer, Head, Department of Sociology, the University of Hong Kong
President's speech by Prof. Karen A. Joe Laidler, Department of Sociology, the University of Hong Kong
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PROGRAMME

PANEL 1.1  LABOUR

Creative Industries in Flux: A Critical Investigation into the Challenges, Agency and Potential of Cultural and Creative Workers in Hong Kong
Tommy Ho Lun Tse  The University of Hong Kong
Anne Peirson-Smith  City University of Hong Kong
Joey Lok Ting Chan  The University of Hong Kong
Grey Hong Yu Liu  The University of Hong Kong

Understanding Rural Migrant Workers in China through a Relational Perspective: Going Beyond the Structure-Agency Dichotomy
Yu Guo  University of Maryland - College Park

Skills and Labor Beyond Borders, Across Cultures: Packaging Identities and Enterprising Self in a Globalized Liquid Freelance Economy
Carljohnson Anacin  University of the Cordilleras

Worker Representative, Sustained Leadership and Clear Goals: How Informal Labor Organizing Structure Affects Strike Outcome in China
Chen Wei  Hong Kong Baptist University

An Analysis of Suicide Cases as Industrial Accidents in South Korea
Rira Song  Chung-Ang University

PANEL 1.2  GENDER, KNOWLEDGE & POWER

In from the Margins? The Place of Gender and Sexuality in the Production of Sociological Knowledge
Stevi Jackson  University of York

Feeling (with) the Field: Rethinking Knowledge Production
Marjo Kolehmainen  University of Tampere

The German Reunification and the Political and Social Status of Women: Perspectives on the Korean Unification
Myung-ah Son  Seoul National University

Negotiating Marriage and Sexual Identity: A Study of Chinese Lala of Different Socioeconomic Statuses
Day Wong  Hong Kong Baptist University

Chairperson: Tommy Ho Lun Tse
Venue: CPD 3.28

Chairperson: Beatrice Lam
Venue: CPD 3.29
PANEL 1.3
CRIME AND POLICING IN CHINA

Unravelling Violence among the Underclass: The Case of Chengguan and Street Vendors in Guangzhou, China
Jianhua Xu   University of Macau
Anli Jiang   University of Macau

The Aftermath of a Crackdown Campaign: Adaptation, Resistance and Crime among Street Vendors in Guangzhou, China
Jianhua Xu   University of Macau
Anli Jiang   University of Macau

(Dis)trust and Self-help among Parents of Missing Children in China
Jianhua Xu   University of Macau
Xuan Niu     University of Macau
Haiyun Zhao  University of Macau

PANEL 1.4
RELIGION AND ALTRUISM

Urban Volunteers in Rural China: Imagining the Nation, Encountering the Other, Transforming the Self
David A. Palmer  The University of Hong Kong
Rundong Ning    Yale University

Genealogy of Confucianism - The Changing Nature of Confucianism through Generations
Du Yi          Hong Kong Baptist University

Development of Transnational Theravada meditation in Contemporary China
Ngar-sze Lau   Lancaster University

PANEL 1.5
NEW MEDIA

Video Games and Social Networks
Kayi Fung       University of Saskatchewan
Gina Lai       Hong Kong Baptist University

The Cultural Reception of Apple in China: Phenomenological Sociology of Encountering and Social Imaginary
Zhang Qing     Hong Kong Baptist University

Social Meaning of Changes in Musical Behavior in the Digital Age
Yunhwa Koh     Yonsei University

From Analogue to Digital: Changes and Constants in Television Studies
Lisa Lin       Royal Holloway, University of London

Chairperson: Jianhua Xu  Venue: CPD 3.16
Chairperson: David A. Palmer  Venue: CPD 4.16
Chairperson: Victor Shin  Venue: CPD 4.17
PROGRAMME

PANEL 2.1
HKU SOCIOLOGY@50

Reflections and Celebration of 50 years of Sociology at HKU
Moderator: Dr. C.H. Ng
Panelists: Prof. Diana Khor, Dr. Agnes S. M. Ku, Prof. Karen A. Joe Laidler, Dr. Carmen Tong, Dr. Tommy Tse

PANEL 2.2
FAMILIES & LIFE COURSES

Prenatal Sex Selection in Contemporary China? Sex Differences in the First/Only Birth Interval under the One Child Policy
Freda Yanrong Wang
Raymond Sin-Kwok Wong
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Grandparenting Migration: Daily Childcare Practices of Rural-Urban Migrant Grandparents and their Agency
Ma Huan
Hong Kong Baptist University

Rethinking Adulthood: The Housing Transition of the Current Younger Generation in Hong Kong
Luk Ka Wing Joanne
The University of Hong Kong

The Intimate Trial: Couple’s Interactions during Premarital Abortions in Shandong, China
Ruby YS Lai
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Coming of Age: Over 40 and Still Skateboarding
Paul O’Connor
Lingnan University

PANEL 2.3
POLITICS

From Empire to Nation-State: Integrating Institutional Logics in Chinese State Legitimation Discourse, 1902-2012
Gregory P. Fairbrother
The Education University of Hong Kong

Forging and Disciplining ‘Rationalized Others’: The Case of Law School in China
Zixi Liu
Xiamen University

Learning the Party-state Ideology: A Sociological Analysis of Newspaper Reading in Guangzhou (1949-1957)
Mian Chen
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Changdong Oh
Yonsei University

Understanding the Trend of Social Cleavages in Hong Kong: Re-analyzing Approval Ratings of the Three Chief Executives of HKSAR
Cheung Ka Lok Adam
The Education University of Hong Kong
PANEL 2.4  GUANXI & SOCIAL CAPITAL
Chairperson:  Cheri S. C. Chan
Venue:  CPD 4.16

Xiao Wang  The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Chong Yao  Nanfang Daily

Bonding, Bridging, and Linking Social Capital and Health: An Empirical Study in Selected Rural and Urban Communities in Ghana
Padmore Adusei Amoah  Lingnan University

Interaction Ritual in Different Closeness of Guanxi
Ji Ruan  Hanshan Normal University

The After Effects of Edgework: ‘Edgework Capital’
Katie Lowe  The University of Hong Kong

Influence of Parental Cultural Capital and Parental Support on Students’ Music Listening: A Comparative Study of Beijing and Hong Kong
Kong Siu Hang  Hong Kong Baptist University

PANEL 2.5  MIGRATION & MOBILITIES
Chairperson:  Julie Ham
Venue:  CPD 4.17

Negotiated Status through Civic Association: Case of Filipino Irregular Migrants in Japan
Anderson Villa  Ateneo de Davao University

Social Ties, Internet Search, and Career Exploration among Rural Migrant and Urban Native College Students in Urban China
Nicole W.T. Cheung  The Chinese University of Hong Kong

In Their Own World: Korean Ethnic Entrepreneurs in Siem Reap, Cambodia
Jeffrey Stark  Yonsei University

Deeping Understandings of Feminised Migration in Asia’s World City
Alexandra Ridgway  The University of Hong Kong

PANEL 2.6  EDUCATION
Chairperson:  David A. Palmer
Venue:  CPD 2.37

Extracurricular Investment and Academic Performance: Evidence from Hong Kong
Liu Wenli  Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Varieties of Educational Inequality Class Reproduction and Meritocracy in the Industrial Societies
Kwang-Yeong Shin  Chung-Ang University
Sooyeon Moon  Chung-Ang University

Gold Spoon and Dirt Spoon? – Inequality Pattern Comparison among East Asian Countries
Wonjeong Jeong  Yonsei University

Citizenship Education in Hong Kong: Its Challenges amid Social Change
Adrian Yan Kin Cheung  The University of Hong Kong

A Sociological Critique of Singapore’s School Music Education: Multiculturalism and Nationalism
Stephanie Hoi Ying Chan  Hong Kong Baptist University
PROGRAMME

PANEL 3.1
MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY & SOCIALITY

Unfriendly Money? Digital Money, Trust and Sociality amongst Rural Migrants in China
Tom McDonald  The University of Hong Kong

Inter-Generational Shifts in the Face of Racism and Terror: Towards a Sociology of Social Media Use by French Muslims
Joseph Downing  LSE and CNRS

Rethinking Echo Chamber: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections
Charles Chi-wai Cheung  Hong Kong Baptist University

Research ‘Subjects’: What’s in it for them?
Olivier Ruelle  Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Chairperson:  Tom McDonald
Venue:   CPD 3.28

PANEL 3.2
IDENTITY & SOCIETY

Rejecting Self-Mortification: Asylum Seekers in Hong Kong
Pui Yan Flora Lau  Hong Kong Shue Yan University
Iulia Gheorghiu  Hong Kong Shue Yan University

Individualization of Chinese Society Revisited: Toward an Approach of Family-Orientated Individualization
Weiwen Lai  The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Self, Unwanted Interaction and Dress: The Worth of Secondhand in Romania
Iulia Gheorghiu  Hong Kong Shue Yan University

Cosplay Comes of Age: An Ethnographic Investigation into a Youth Based Fan Phenomenon
Anne Peirson-Smith  City University of Hong Kong

Chairperson:  Paul Joosse
Venue:   CPD 3.29
PANEL 3.3
GENDER & CULTURE

Early China’s Female Students in the Realm of Republican Period Women Newspapers
Yang Yujie   Shandong University

Gendering Labor: A Case of Sales Promotion Workers in the Cosmetics in South Korea
Eunji Lee   Yonsei University
Jaeyoun Won   Yonsei University

Power, Female Athleticism and Consumption in Social Media: Representations of Female Sporting Bodies in Advertisements on Instagram
Joey Lok Ting Chan   The University of Hong Kong

Gender and Artistic Evaluation : Gendered Legitimation of Korean Female Writers in 1960-2000
Jina Lee   Korean Women’s Development Institute

Analyzing Gendered Conventions, Affect and Power in Mid- to Later-life Women’s Experiences of Heterosexual Relationships with Younger Men
Raisa Jurva   University of Tampere

PANEL 3.4
HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS IN HONG KONG

The Construction of Zoo and Aquarium in the (Post)colonial Hong Kong
Chan Ka Ming   The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Human-Animal Studies in Hong Kong: A Popular Trend or a Missing Piece?
Carmen Tong   The University of Hong Kong

An Outline of the Development of Animal Rights Movement in Hong Kong
Cheung Yuen Man   Animal Earth & Citizens for Animals

PANEL 3.5
CRIME, LABOUR & INDUSTRY

The Chinese Mafia: Organized Crime, Corruption and Extra-legal Protection
Wang Peng   The University of Hong Kong

Humble Comrades: Negotiating the Logics of Anti-Corruption Among the Chinese Business Elites
Lake Lui   The Education University of Hong Kong
Solee Shin   National University of Singapore

Building Social Capital in Prison Social Organization: A Case Study of a Chinese Female Drug Detention Centre
Vincent S. Cheng   The Open University of Hong Kong

Recent Spatial Changes in and Conceptual Redefinition of ‘Red-light Districts’ in South Korea
Lee Ha-Young   Chung-Ang University
Hwang Kyoung-Lan   Seoul Women’s University

Producing Difference, Producing Knowledge
Julie Ham   The University of Hong Kong
Creative Industries in Flux: A Critical Investigation into the Challenges, Agency and Potential of Cultural and Creative Workers in Hong Kong

Tommy Ho Lun Tse  The University of Hong Kong
Anne Peirson-Smith  City University of Hong Kong
Joey Lok Ting Chan  The University of Hong Kong
Grey Hong Yu Liu  The University of Hong Kong

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Abstract

The cultural and creative industries have proven to be a driving force of economic growth in today’s globalised economy. In light of the rising importance of the “knowledge economy”, the SAR government has in the past decade emphasised the economic significance of creative industry development, as evidenced in its extensive coverage in annual policy addresses and continual budget allocations. The Hong Kong’s creative industries seem to have great economic potential and attract considerable young, educated talents given their favourable working conditions. However, globally the real creative work conditions often contradict popular assumptions, such that various difficulties exist in the workplace.

Therefore, it is imperative to rigorously investigate the creative industries policy discourse aiming to boost the local creative economy, thereby matching up with actual experiences and working conditions of creative workers, and resulting in impacts on future creative industry development. This project is expected to inform the direction of the rapidly evolving creative business environment and the most appropriate government policy response to ensure equitable creative labour management.

Focusing on three industries – public relations and advertising, television and print media, qualitative methods including interviews have elicited ethnographic narratives of work experiences, generating data for analysis resulting in policy recommendations.
Understanding Rural Migrant Workers in China through a Relational Perspective: Going Beyond the Structure-Agency Dichotomy

Yu Guo
University of Maryland - College Park
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Abstract

Based on the data from a one-year ethnographic study among the rural migrant workers in two manufacturing factories in Shanghai and Jiangsu, China, I discuss how my theoretical frameworks were transformed by the fieldwork experience and shifted from a Marxist/Neo-Marxist perspective to a perspective of relational sociology. I will demonstrate this theoretical point by focusing on the employment relations in the factories, as part of a much larger dissertation project. Unlike the existing labor studies literature, I argue that the migrant workers do not see themselves as being involved in a one-dimensional capital-labor conflict relationship. Instead, their perceptions of the capitalist production relations are developed towards various concrete authority figures they come into contact with on a daily basis. And their opinions vary, as the data will show, according to their diverse modes of interactions with different figures. Moreover, it is often not a conflictive relationship between the rural migrant workers and the things and people who represent the power of capital. I will argue that a relational approach is needed, if we want to reconcile the rural migrant workers’ complicated subjective experience and perceptions on the one hand, and the structural reality of capitalist domination on the other hand.
Skills and Labor Beyond Borders, Across Cultures: Packaging Identities and Enterprising Self in a Globalized Liquid Freelance Economy

Carljohnson Anacin  University of the Cordilleras
Corresponding Email  carljanacin@yahoo.com

Abstract

The paper presents the phenomenon of online freelancing as a globalized labor in the new global economy (Castells, 1996) and a driver of a liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000). This demonstrates a blurring of geographical boundaries, the cutting across of cultural differences, and the rise of the importance of flexibility in terms of knowledge and skills regardless of time and space. This entails freelancers to package identities to ‘enterprise selves’ in the precarity of this globalized labor market. This conceptual paper elucidates on ideas derived from content analysis of the profiles of freelance workers and their job evaluations, as well as through literature review that focuses on freelance economy in relation to identity and precarity. Despite uncertainties and risks in this knowledge economy, this paper also presents opportunities for individuals and companies beyond borders and across culture, as well as challenges that confront education, lifelong learning, and social service needs of online freelancers.
Worker Representative, Sustained Leadership and Clear Goals: How Informal Labor Organizing Structure Affects Strike Outcome in China

Chen Wei
Hong Kong Baptist University

Corresponding Email lindacctrace@gmail.com

Abstract

Unlike industrial workers in western countries, Chinese workers can hardly rely on the official union. In many cases, workers are normally bypassing the trade unions to stage their resistances. Then, how do they put forward their demands through informal organizing method; and to what extent, will it affect the strike outcomes?

Existing literature has identified the emerging role of worker leaders, yet it is still spontaneous and relied on the individuals. Based on my fieldwork in Guangdong, I argue that migrant workers have roughly developed a semi-formal mechanism in electing worker representatives as their leaders in the strikes. I further contend that, Chinese workers at present stage have also tried diverse ways to sustain effective leadership in order to seek a high chance of success. Furthermore, with a higher level of informal organizational structure, workers are more likely to strive for clear goals. By conducting a comparative study of two large-scale strike cases, this paper intends to figure out under what condition, the informal organizational structure is more likely to facilitate the strike outcome. Examining how workers pursue successful resistance through informal organizing structure provides us a comparative perspective to see how it inspires the emerging labor movement.
Abstract

Since the 2000s, the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance (IACI) system has approved some work-related suicide cases as being defined in terms of industrial accidents. However, IACI is applicable to injuries more than diseases. In the case of work-related diseases, it is almost impossible to discover the reasons for the development of such conditions, given that stress from overwork or industry-related issues are generally the causes of certain mental diseases. In addition, it is even more difficult to determine the suicide as being specifically related to work. Suicide is considered to be an "intentional self-harm" behavior, and the approval criteria of suicide as an industrial accident are ambiguous, including such factors as the judgment being made by "an average person." This paper attempts to analyze the work-related suicide case claims (n=37) issued to the IACI in 2014. Using the method of text analysis, the paper compares three different texts, including the claims of the survivors, the approval judgments from the organization of disease decision committee, and the sentencing of the Korea Worker’s Compensation & Welfare Service. This study reviews the patterns of final approval and argues that there are problems with the execution of the present IACI regarding work-related suicides.
In the last half century, sociological analysis of gender has moved from being a marginal concern to one now deemed of central sociological importance, a field of enquiry in its own right as well as being mainstreamed into many – but not all – areas of sociology. The study of sexuality has been accepted more slowly. Once not considered a fit subject for sociology at all, or addressed only in terms of deviance, it has become a (reasonably) respectable area of specialisation. In this paper I will consider how this has happened in both western/Euro-American contexts and in East Asia and the extent to which barriers to integrating gender and sexuality into mainstream sociology persist. It is impossible to address these issues without also noting the western origins of the terms ‘gender’ and ‘sexuality’, as well as many of the conceptual tools through which they are studied. This raises a number of questions. How applicable are ‘western’ theories to other contexts? What are the impediments to reorienting these fields of enquiry away from a Euro-American focus? To what extent can East Asian scholars’ contributions challenge the established paradigms?
This presentation addresses the possibility to know differently through feeling differently. It draws upon my ongoing ethnographic study on the practices of relationship and sex counselling in Finland, where I focus on the emergence of particular understandings of gender and sexuality in the processes of advice seeking and giving. As a part of the widespread therapeutic cultures, several organizations and professionals from parishes to LGBTQI organizations and from psychologists to sex workers now peddle advice. In the study, I explore various counseling practices targeted at heterosexual, gay and lesbian couples, the singles and the divorced alike; such as events, seminars, online and peer support, advice columns, popular guide books and self-help materials.

I am especially interested in the status of affect in the processes of knowledge production, such as how the similarities/differences between a researcher and the researched are affectively made, unmade and/or remade. Being inspired by post-humanist and post-qualitative inquiry, I seek to analyse my own experiences and feelings in a way that does not rely on a notion of singular human subjects, but rather opens up possibilities to know differently through feeling differently.
The German Reunification and the Political and Social Status of Women: Perspectives on the Korean Unification

Myung-ah, Son  
Seoul National University

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Abstract

This study aims to draw lessons from the German reunification for the political and social status of women in the unified Korea. The East German government has encouraged marriage and childbirth and also supported the employment of women in the context of promoting “socialist families.” The West German government has stated it is the basic law that “a normal family” is one which is formed as the result of marriage. The family policies of the two Germanys are grounded in gender segregation and a patriarchal system. After the reunification in 1990, the German government guaranteed the prohibition of discrimination based on gender. The work-family balance policy, which was legislated in 1986, encourages women to participate in the economic and political spheres. However, East German women still compose almost half of the total unemployment ratio and are suffering from social difficulties after reunification. North Korean women might have similar experiences since the North Korean government has maintained a family state system through social motherhood based on the theory of the Socialist Great Family. The example of the unified Germany implies that policies pertaining to women in the unified Korea should be carefully scrutinized and devised.
Negotiating Marriage and Sexual Identity: A Study of Chinese Lala of Different Socioeconomic Statuses

Day Wong  Hong Kong Baptist University
Corresponding Email  daywong@hkbu.edu.hk

Abstract

China’s market reform and opening up have resulted in the circulation of discourses of sexual rights and coming out, which serve as the building blocks for the construction of sexual identities. At the same time, Chinese individuals continue to subject to the imperative of heterosexual marriage. The marriage pressure faced by men is noticeable since sons bear the filial obligation of having children and carrying on the family bloodline. Daughters, however, do not experience less pressure, for there is a pervasive stigma of “leftover women” and they are socialized to view marriage as part of normative transition to adulthood. Moreover, daughters may find themselves in a relatively disadvantaged position in the job market and hence more difficult to gain financial independence outside marriage. This study will examine how Chinese lala (lesbians, bisexual women and trans-identified people who love women) negotiate marriage and sexual identity in today’s China.

Past studies often conceptualize marriage pressure as the product of traditional Chinese culture. This research goes beyond previous studies by giving attention to the economics or material dimension of the imperative of heterosexual marriage. With the retreat of the state in the provision of social welfare in the post-reform era, the family is seen as an indispensable unit of care. Parental support is relied on for educational attainment, emotional support, establishment of social network, and career investment. In a similar vein, marriage serves pragmatic, economic, emotional and symbolic functions for the younger generation. This research will examine the functions that marriage (including traditional marriage and cooperative marriage) serves for Chinese lala of different social locations, and how socioeconomic status influences their negotiations of marriage and sexual identity. A mixed methods design that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches will be utilized so as to allow for the determination of the influence of socioeconomic status without losing sight of the rich and complex processes of identity construction.
Unravelling Violence among the Underclass: The Case of Chengguan and Street Vendors in Guangzhou, China

Jianhua Xu
Anli Jiang

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Abstract

It is increasingly recognized that violent crime tends to occur among the underclass. Existing literature has explored how subculture contributes to the occurrence of violence among the underclass while social structural factors are under-explored. With data collected from participant observation, systematical social observation, interviews and content analysis of newspaper reports about chengguan and street vendors in Guangzhou, China, this research explores how social structure affects the pattern and production of violence. We found that chengguan assistants were undeniably the majority of perpetrators of violence towards street vendors while the official chengguan seldom directly got involved. While local governments attributed the chengguan violence to the low quality of individual chengguan assistants, we argue that unequal division of labor in chengguan system also affects the pattern of violence between chengguan and street vendors. Since both chengguan assistants and street vendors belong to the urban underclass, this research enriches the understanding of why violence tends to occur among the underclass.
The Aftermath of a Crackdown Campaign: Adaption, Resistance and Crime among Street Vendors in Guangzhou, China

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Abstract

Based on three years of ethnographic work in Guangzhou, this research traces life stories of eight street vendors and examines how a city-wide campaign to crack down on street vending affects their works and lives. We found that while the campaign had no effect on some powerful and well-connected local vendors, it pushed some into even more marginal status and still others into illegal and criminal economic activities. We further explored factors affecting different vendors’ choices after the crackdown campaign, and examined how different choices were shaped by differential social, economic and cultural capital possessed by street vendors. This research contributes to a better understanding of the significance of informal economy and how a criminogenic situation is formed in China.
Abstract

Using data collected from online ethnography, participant observation of parents’ self-help activities to look for missing children, as well as in-depth interviews with over thirty parents, this research aims to explore the reasons behind trust and distrust towards police among missing children’ parents in China. We also examine various strategies and challenges adopted by parents in the prolonged process of looking for missing children. We find that parents generally hold a low trust towards the police. An inactive police force, police corruption and stability preservation (weiwen) ideology further increases the low trust. Although parents have resorted to various self-help strategies to look for their missing children, and have actively worked as claims-makers in constructing the problem of missing children, these strategies are heavily constrained in authoritarian China.
Urban Volunteers in Rural China: Imagining the Nation, Encountering the Other, Transforming the Self

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Abstract

In the past decade, a growing number of urban Chinese, primarily university students and graduates, have gone to rural and ethnic minority regions of Western China to act as volunteer teachers in schools, for periods ranging from a few days to a few years. Based on interviews, field research and media narratives of volunteers, this paper proposes an analysis of this form of volunteering as an Othering encounter in which cosmopolitan and rustic, urban and rural, Han and ethnic minority identities are highlighted and negotiated. This Othering encounter is a process that involves multiple stages, beginning before the volunteers’ departure, unfolding during the period of service in the remote locale, and continuing after the return to urban life. Through this process, concerns with effecting lasting educational change are eclipsed by the frustrations and joys of engaging with local people and their realities. Volunteering becomes an experience of self-reflection and individual transformation; at the same time, it becomes a ritual of solidarity that enacts the unity of the Nation, dramatizing and reconciling the divisions between its people.
Genealogy of Confucianism - The Changing Nature of Confucianism through Generations

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Abstract

Inspired by the revival of Confucianism in contemporary China and contested interpretations among scholars, I want to offer an alternative way to analyze Confucianism. Instead of believing cultural essentialism, I want to view Confucianism as a set of social constructions that constantly respond to the changing social context of different historical periods. So my research question is: What are the discourses of Confucianism constructed by various groups of people in different time periods?

Adopting the concept of paradigm and theories about sociology of knowledge, Confucianism is viewed as a set of distinctive ideas which is open to historical constructions, while still maintains certain features. In this research, I analyze Confucian ideas in three distinctive time periods, which are merchants’ Confucianism in the Qing Dynasty, Kang Youwei’s design in the late nineteenth century, and state’s promotion in contemporary China. By analyzing different constructions of Confucianism in these time periods, I find that Confucianism is not a series of consistent thoughts, but various forms and practices, which are intertwined with historical backgrounds, the status of these social actors, as well as their social and political interests.
Based on ethnographic study in mainland China since 2014, this paper explores how the recent popularity of transnational Theravada meditation practices has been a result of Buddhist modernization in Asia and the West since the early 20th Century. With the influence of globalization and Buddhist modernism in Asia, various meditation practices in Theravada tradition and secularized form, such as satipatthana, samatha, vipassana and mindfulness, have been transmitted to Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and then mainland China in the past two decades. My fieldwork reveals that regular meditation retreats have been organized by monastics and lay people in traditional Han Chinese Buddhist monasteries. This paper examines how the transnational meditation practices have been adapted and localized, especially by lay people, in the modern Chinese social context. I argue that the emergence of Theravada meditation practices not only reflects the dynamics of transition of old-formed institutionalized religion to the resurgence of new forms of religion, but also an active response to Buddhist modernization, promoted by active Buddhist reformer in the early 20th Century, such as Taixu and Yinshun.
Abstract

An emerging research theme related to information and communication technology (ICT) and social networks focuses on video games which connect various players in the same game at the same time. However, existing studies have yielded inconsistent results about whether such games would benefit or harm social networks. These studies have largely employed cross-sectional data to measure changes in social networks and overlooked the dynamic processes involved. This paper thus addresses three research questions. First, how are new social ties created through playing video games? Second, how stable are the friendship ties formed through playing video games? Third, what changes does playing video games bring to pre-existing social ties? Data come from in-depth interviews of 20 NDS players. Video games are found to help create new social ties by providing the platform for stranger-players to meet each other and to foster homophily among them. They also expand the opportunities for social interaction, strengthening the relationships with pre-existing social ties. Further, the personal information provided on fellow players’ Facebook enables virtual friends to get to know one another’s background, facilitating the transformation into actual friendship. In addition, the strength of relationship with fellow players tends to change over time.
The Cultural Reception of Apple in China: Phenomenological Sociology of Encountering and Social Imaginary

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Abstract

Investigations of culture reception emphasize either structure (the background of reader, viewer or user) or agency (active interpretation), or both structure and agency, in the individual level. These theories presuppose the division of structure and agency, or subject and object, and the prior of individual imagination. This study revisits the phenomenological root of cultural reception and examines the cultural reception of Apple in China from the perspective of phenomenological sociology in the societal level. Empirically, I find Apple computer was taken as a symbol of modernization and a tool of work in the 1980s and the 1990s and Apple products, including Apple computer, were taken as devices of consuming and entertainment with the release of iPod, iPhone, iPad and iWatch after 2000. The empirical findings have two theoretical implications. First, cultural reception is the encountering between receivers and Apple products in certain meaning context (1980s and 1990s, or after 2000 in China). The theory of encountering surpasses the division of structure and agency. Second, social imaginary of Apple precedes individual imagination of Apple. The phenomenological sociology of cultural reception surpasses the division of structure and agency, or subject and object, and proposes the prior of social imaginary.
Over the past twenty years, historical perspectives in music sociology have linked music to a wide range of social processes (Tia Denora, 2004). This research is about the behavior on music is changing due to the digitization. And this aims to find the social meaning by the analysis of the phenomenon. Specifically, the following will discuss some topics. 1) Dissolution of the music genres in music listening. It means that the music album (LP, CD) based method listening to music has changed as a unit to listen to the song basis by digital format like MP3. 2) Reproduction and subjectification of the musical object. Original music makes a variety of music variations, and people can easily become a musician in the digital age. 3) Differentiation of the hierarchy of music listening class. In the digital era, the boundaries of high culture and low culture is crumbling. For the discussion of these topics, I will analyze the music listening preferences, patterns and behaviors of online music users in Korea. In addition, For the discussion of the social implications, it will be utilized Adorno and Bourdieu's theory.
From Analogue to Digital: Changes and Constants in Television Studies

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Abstract

Based on the periodisation of television history proposed by John Ellis (ages of scarcity, availability and plenty) and Amanda Lotz (‘network era’, ‘multi-channel era’ and ‘post-network era’), this paper investigates the changes and constants in television studies from the analogue legacy to the digital heyday. Although multiplatform television and online media consumption have become prevalent in urban areas of both the East and West, I argue that it would be inappropriate to over-emphasize the newness. In this presentation, I will discuss the linear legacy the current television players inherited from the analogue age - from TV scheduling, production principles to consumption cultures grounded in the linear past. Constants and changes in media practices and texts will be exemplified in the context of Chinese and British broadcasting systems. The second part of the paper will present empirical findings in contemporary Chinese television aiming at unveiling the reasons behind these constants with a focus on media labour studies. Drawn on the empirical findings, this paper will conclude by discussing the connections and disconnections among generations of television scholars from the analogue legacy to the digital age.
Prenatal Sex Selection in Contemporary China? 
Sex Differences in the First/Only Birth Interval under the One Child Policy

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Abstract

To alleviate socioeconomic problems resulting from population pressure, the Chinese government implemented a family planning policy restricting the majority of the Han Chinese families to having only one child in 1979. As a result, the number of births is decided by the state, not by the couple. Such decision is in the interest of the society and not for the utility of parents. However, people with subjective initiative voiced their fertility intentions in different ways, such as the timing of giving births. The principal contribution of this study is to bridge the research gap in the literature by examining how son preference affects the first birth interval under the one child policy. Results from parametric event history model have shown that the birth interval for an only son is shorter than that it is for an only daughter for Han couples. Furthermore, the results from the difference-in-differences method indicate that compared with non-Han couples, daughters arrived almost 4 months later than sons for Han couples with only one child in the rural areas. This analysis provides us solid evidence on sex selective abortion under the one child policy in China.
Grandparenting Migration: Daily Childcare Practices of Rural-Urban Migrant Grandparents and their Agency

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Abstract

Due to the increasing number of dual labor families and migrant workers, a group of grandparents migrates from rural villages to urban cities cooperating with their adult children to render childcare to grandchildren. Drawing on qualitative data obtained from the rural-urban migrant grandparents in Beijing, the research is guided by the structuration theory to analyze the daily practices of rural-urban migrant grandparents in the childcare cooperation. Different with existing studies, this research emphasizes grandparents’ agency. Previous studies about the childcare cooperation focus on the younger generation and employ the intergenerational perspectives. My research explores the voice of the grandparents and takes the rural-urban differences into account. Rural-urban migrant grandparents generally take care of the grandchild based on their childcare experiences in rural villages. To some extent, they face a different childcare method from the parents of the grandchild, and they define this childcare difference as both the intergenerational difference and rural-urban difference. When grandparents face disagreement from the younger generation on childcare, they are more willing to keep the harmony of the family. However, they also show their agency to negotiate and express the opinion or show their willingness and ability to learn the different method.
Rethinking Adulthood: The Housing Transition of the Current Younger Generation in Hong Kong

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Abstract

Transition to adulthood has become more protracted and non-linear across the world, particularly in relation to the important transitional experience of leaving home and setting up one’s own household. In Hong Kong, a lengthening period of parent-youth coresidence is a prevailing trend, yet this issue is relatively underexplored. While it is common for Chinese youth to live with their parents until one’s marriage transition, other factors, ranging from a variety of practical, emotional and financial concerns between generations to a lack of affordable housing, are key to understand this tendency. This also coincides with recent demographic trends such as late marriage and one’s prolonged participation in education. Informed by the limits of text-based data in conducting household research, this project will experiment with visual techniques to capture this living arrangement among young people. Particularly, the use of task-based methods, such as respondent-produced sketching and photographs, shows the potential to “person-friendly” research that respects one’s individuality and facilitates a two-way interaction in the research process. This study seeks to offer an alternative approach to understand youth issues nowadays, which looks beyond some stereotypical constructs circulated in mainstream discourses. A related issue of generational justice will also be examined.
The Intimate Trial: 
Couple’s Interactions during Premarital Abortions in Shandong, China

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Abstract

Previous researches show ambiguous impacts of abortion on an intimate relationship and often overlook the dynamics of the actual interactions between a couple. Based on 62 in-depth interviews with women who have experienced premarital abortion in a city in Shandong, China, this study explicates the complexity of couple’s interactions during the course of pregnancy termination. The paper demonstrates how women expect, perceive, interpret and respond to their male partners’ actions, and analysing how these interactions may, in turn, reshape the relationships. Conceptualising abortion as the “intimate trial” of romantic relationships, the paper depicts five major events that may generate multiple meanings and interactions during a pregnancy termination: the immediate reaction to pregnancy, decision-making, medical assistance, care-taking and financial contribution. The findings recognise aborting women as autonomous subjects and reify the collaborative role of men in abortion by illustrating how women and men handle and extract meanings from this unpredicted event. The study reveals that couple’s interactions during pregnancy termination are indeed permeated by prevailing gender ideologies and classist preferences, it also mirrors the broad changes in youth sexual and dating culture and the reconfiguration of gender relations under vast socio-economic reconstructions in contemporary China.
Skateboarding has become a mainstream sport and will be included in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. A noticeable feature of skateboarding in recent years has been its popularity with middle-aged participants. Both men and women throughout the world have begun, resumed, or continued to skateboard beyond the age of 40. This research draws on qualitative interviews and ethnographic research with over 30 middle aged skateboarders. It explores why so many people continue to skateboard in their forties and fifties. The findings further challenge the stereotype of skateboarding as a youthful, rebellious, and risk taking activity. In contrast middle-aged skateboarders communicate a passion and enthusiasm about skateboarding the enables them to have exercise, fun, and a sense community. These skateboarders entirely reject criticisms of their activities as a ‘midlife crisis’ and ‘immaturity’ and assert a sense of contentment that they have found through skateboarding. The research contributes to the sociology of ageing and wellbeing and provides insight about meaningful recreation for middle-aged people.
From Empire to Nation-State: Integrating Institutional Logics in Chinese State Legitimation Discourse, 1902-2012

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Abstract

The founding of the Republic of China was announced on January 1, 1912, nominally transforming the Chinese empire into the Chinese nation-state. As this paper will show, however, the process of transforming Chinese paternalistic state legitimation discourse to fully embrace ideas of the nation-state and citizenship has been winding and protracted. To examine this process, the paper draws on Neo-Institutional Theory, treating “paternalism” and “the nation-state” as two contradictory institutional logics, or sets of stable cultural rules linking organizations such as the state with their historical and societal environments and thus contributing to their legitimation. Recent developments in Neo-Institutional Theory have started to examine how different institutional logics in society come to be adapted, reinterpreted, and integrated as organizations seek legitimacy and as institutional logics themselves are further institutionalized. This paper thus has the aim of showing how the institutional logics of paternalism and the nation-state have been integrated in a continuous process crossing Chinese regimes from 1902 to 2012. Specifically, it uses legitimation discourse in state policy directives on moral-political education to reveal the progression of logic integration and to identify and demonstrate the specific mechanisms of integration.
Forging and Disciplining ‘Rationalized Others’: The Case of Law School in China

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Abstract

Using interview and archive data drawn from 15 law schools in China, this article examines how academics interpret and implement global models in their professional life. Unlike the portrait of ‘rationalized others’, I depict a picture of academics having ambivalent attitude and selective responsiveness to world culture and conventions. Drawing from faculties’ own interpretations and repertoires, I explain why they develop certain patterns of buffering and coupling. Not determined by worldwide conventions simultaneously, I argue that these patterns are choreographed by state via five mechanisms: national blueprint of forging world-class universities and disciplines, discriminatory regulation of career security, permeable supervision of political performance, strict control of professional community, and systematic development of nationalistic discourse. The configuration of these four has fundamentally changed the way world culture takes form into practices in universities. The findings also advance organizational theory by unpacking the process in which decoupling is produced, conditioned, and sustained.
Learning the Party-state Ideology: A Sociological Analysis of Newspaper Reading in Guangzhou (1949-1957)

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Abstract

This paper examines the ideology formation in the early years of People’s Republic of China, trying to explain how the state made ordinary people in Guangzhou city accept propaganda by reading newspaper individually and institutionally, and thus explain how propaganda was possible. This paper argues that the grassroots ideology building is not only a process of arbitrary brainwashing, but also a process of learning. In the case of newspaper reading, ordinary people learned the power of the state by creative interpretation and even by appropriating state power following the new propaganda principles; specific state agents such as correspondents and newspaper reading groups, who were bound by “patron-client” relationship with different institutions and the press, also learned to push forward the state’s will. Contrary to existing literature adopting a top-down approach mainly based on newspaper text-analysis and considering the propaganda effect as undoubtedly omnipotent, the author used local archives, memoirs, letters, working records and corresponding periodicals of newspaper reading groups to show the micro-dynamics of ideology building. This paper would strengthen understandings of interplay between agency and ideology in state building.
Abstract

With the arrival of post-industrial society, Korean social scientists have been giving attention to issues of which factors shape cleavage of political parties. Especially, there is a heated controversy over whether and how social values influence the identities of parties and voting behavior. Drawing from Moral Foundation Theory, which approached similar issues by considering the effect of Durkheimian morality on conservative political decision-making of people, this study investigates the role of moral rhetoric in the recent presidential election of South Korea. I collected 7000 official announcements released by the major two parties during the election year, and analyzed the comments by using an automated text analysis algorithms, Word2Vec and Latent Dirichlet Allocation. Results report that the conservative party tends to actively draw on collective morality such as loyalty, authority, purity to differentiate itself. Notably, such moral differentiation strategy is prevalent when they criticize the opposition. In contrast, the liberal party tends to concern with individualistic morality such as fairness. This result indicates that moral cleavage does exist between parties in South Korea. However, since the strategy is merely related to negative campaigns, it is doubtful such moral differentiation among political parties is sustainable and lead to voter’s long-term party identification.
Abstract

The mainstream approach in analyzing public opinion survey data is mean-centric, focusing on the “average” rating (i.e. mean score). Mean score on the approval rating given by citizens is commonly used as a performance indicator of the government. A low score is usually assumed to lead to social instability while a high score is assumed to promote stability. However, mean score is not at all informative about 1) dispersion of rating and 2) skewness of rating, which I argue are crucial factors in understanding social instability.

The aim of this paper is threefold. First, I highlight the importance of different parameters of the distribution of social attitudes in analyzing opinion data (e.g. variance, inter-quantile range, skewness and quantiles). Second, by analyzing the all waves of raw data about the approval rating of the Chief Executives of HKSAR (from 1997 – 2016, from the HKUPOP), I visualize the increasing cleavage in Hong Kong under the rule of our third Chief Executive and explain a paradox – why is the current average rating unresponsive to the politically catastrophic events. Third, I discuss the possibility of a new research agenda in using new methodological tools to reanalysis the existing data for new insights.

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Abstract

Logically corresponding to the pattern of social interaction among Chinese, guanxi refers to “a dyadic, particular and sentimental tie that has potential of facilitating favour exchanges between the parties connected by the tie” (Bian, 2006). The significance of guanxi network has been argued to be either persistent (Granovetter, 1985) or increasing (Nee, 1992; Lin, 1995; Zhou et al., 2003; Guo & Miller, 2010) in contemporary China. In this study, however, we contend that the space for guanxi capital is actually diminishing with the intervention of digital technologies, especially various original features afforded by online platforms. We adopted the journalists’ network shaped by an online working platform Blue Whale (藍靂) as a case, and carried out 17 interviews (8 in Beijing and 9 in Guangzhou) with financial news journalists, preliminarily concluding that (1) the online network is no longer a social extension of family values and ethics that participants become reluctant to inject their collectivism-characterized national personality into career development; (2) the relational particularism is weakened online; (3) the multiplexity of a certain tie which leads to norm-mixing and boundary-blurring is decreasing; (4) the strong, frequent and highly-instrumental obligations among journalist in the past have also been changed by the digitized renqing (人情).
Bonding, Bridging, and Linking Social Capital and Health: An Empirical Study in Selected Rural and Urban Communities in Ghana

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Abstract

Extant researches have differentiated between three major types of social capital namely bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, and their relative impact on health and wellbeing. However, minimal studies have managed to explore these associations in Ghana. Drawing on 779 respondents from 44 rural and urban communities in Ghana, this paper explores the discrete impact of the different types of social capital on health-related quality of life (HRQoL). It was hypothesised that each of these types of social capital will have a positive effect on HRQoL. The results show that bridging social capital positively predicts HRQoL in urban areas. Linking social capital impinges on HRQoL among the general population and in both rural and urban settings. However, bonding social capital does not significantly predict HRQoL. Moreover, aggregate support from all three types of social capital positively predicts HRQoL among rural dwellers and the general population. The findings lend support to the need to recognise the critical role of social capital and to build stronger ties between institutions and people at both micro and macro levels in a bid to promote health and address health inequities.
Interaction Ritual in Different Closeness of guanxi

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Abstract

Although some scholars have brought up the concept of “interaction ritual”, how this is related to the practice of guanxi in different closeness of personal relationship in China remains unknown. The study presented here aims to fill this gap. Data was drawn from two ethnographic studies of school place allocation in two Chinese cities during 2012 and 2013 as well as post fieldwork in 2014. The research finds that the use of interaction ritual in la guanxi could be a profitable social investment, and interaction ritual chain is usually more powerful than a single instance of ritual. Expressive ritual becomes less valued and less frequently happen with distance. However, instrumental ritual is more workable and more frequently happen in moderate guanxi (a relationship neither close nor distant) than close and distant guanxi, following a weak-strong-weak pattern. These findings lead to a hypothesis that instrumental ritual plays more important role than expressive ritual in building a strong social capital due to “the strength of weak ties”.
The concept of “Edgework” (Lyng 1990) explores voluntary risk taking suggesting edgeworker’s gain pleasure from the ability to control and navigate the boundaries (edges) of risk in activities. Two macro sociological theories of edgework have emerged and academia has been confronted with a paradox. In one perspective edgework is seen as a means of freeing oneself from overpowering social regulation and control. In another, society values risk taking tendencies and skills, which are in demand in society. In one view, edgeworker’s seek to escape institutional controls; in the other edgeworker’s use these skills to better integrate and succeed in society.

Drawing upon, data from 14 months of field work in White Collar Boxing competitions. The research focuses on edgework as a process rather than a singular event, highlighting that edgework does not happen in a vacuum. It explores the after effects of edgework and proposes the concept of ‘edgework capital’. Namely, that social capital is gained through participation in edgework events. Furthermore, it discusses how this ‘capital’ is gained, utilized, and appreciated. Moreover, it suggests gender plays a role in shaping edgework capital and how social media can intensify and facilitate this process not only on local but global basis.
Influence of Parental Cultural Capital and Parental Support on Students’ Music Listening: A Comparative Study of Beijing and Hong Kong

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Abstract

Numerous studies have characterised music listening as a social marker and have shown that parental influence is a central influential factor in students’ music listening; however, parental influence on students’ music listening remains under-researched, particular in the Chinese context. Based on Bourdieu’s “cultural capital” theory, this comparative study investigates how parental cultural capital and parental support affect students’ music listening, inside and outside the home, with particular reference to two cosmopolitan cities- Beijing and Hong Kong. To examine the issues, data were obtained from 3,288 completed questionnaires gathered from eight Beijing and nine Hong Kong secondary schools in December, 2015. The findings show that parents’ education and instrumental learning background were predictors of both the quality and quantity of parental support for students’ music listening, in both cities. The study argues that parental cultural capital may be transformed into parental support for students’ music listening, which may in turn facilitate the cultivation of students’ cultural capital, in both cities.
Abstract

This case study focuses on addressing the question, “How do non-state actors deal with the irregular migrants’ precarious status?” The study reveals that an unwanted irregular migrant will certainly seek recognition, not necessarily from mainstream society but from peers, networks, and most of the time from compatriots – establishing links, and building contacts – and thus negotiated their status with the host society. This research also generated an alternative hypothesis which states, “As migration control becomes much stricter, more irregular migrants are seeking assistance from non-state actors and the migration industry.” This paper finds that the collaborative effort of migrant and non-migrant organizations between Filipino-run and Japanese-run NGOs at the local level (including church and non-church based groups) play an immensely indispensable role in sending a message across national boundaries that transnational migration agency (actors forming as collectivities) inadvertently reshapes a new world order for the global migration process.
Social Ties, Internet Search, and Career Exploration among Rural Migrant and Urban Native College Students in Urban China

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Abstract

Occupational attainment outcomes of rural-to-urban migrants have been a central concern to the literature on migration and social stratification in China. However, little is known about their career exploration processes, such as career decision-making self-efficacy and career commitment, which are increasingly recognized in sociology because of its consequences for social mobility and status attainment. Connecting the social network literature and the burgeoning studies of Internet-social stratification, this study examines the relative roles of various forms of social ties (bridging versus bonding ties and Internet social networking) in the career exploration of rural migrant college students in urban China. Bridging ties may be related to a higher level of career exploration and this relationship may be more pronounced for migrant college students than for urban native college students, because migrant students may be more sensitive to the benefits of bridging, weak ties. We further argue that virtual networking, and especially involvement in online bridging activities, may be a useful means of strengthening the networks for migrant students. These propositions are tested with data from a cross-sectional survey of 1,450 rural migrant and urban native college students of eight universities in Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen conducted between 2015 and 2016.
In Their Own World: 
Korean Ethnic Entrepreneurs in Siem Reap, Cambodia

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Abstract

This paper examines the identity, group cohesion, and outsider status of Korean ethnic entrepreneurs who have moved to Siem Reap indefinitely to serve their compatriots who arrive in Cambodia as visitors. The 400,000-plus Koreans who travel to the Angkor Wat area each year overwhelmingly prefer group tours to self-directed tours. When these tour groups visit Cambodia, they invariably take their meals at Korean restaurants and stay in Korean-friendly lodgings.

This preference by Korean travellers for Korean food and the comforts of home has led to the growth of a Korean expatriate community dedicated to providing such amenities. The businesses run by expatriates has a unique character: the enterprises are aimed at serving Korean tourists rather than the local population or tourists in general.

Drawing upon fieldwork conducted in Siem Reap, the paper focuses on three central questions regarding the identity, group cohesion, and outsider status of Korean ethnic entrepreneurs. First, how does this group understand its relationship to the Korean (and other) travellers that it serves? Second, how important is group solidarity to their well-being? How do they balance the demands of group membership with in-group competition? Finally, how do they manage their antagonistic relationship with the large, local population?
Abstract

Who is the migrant woman of Hong Kong? This is a question which requires deep sociological consideration. Research into feminised migration intoAsia’s World City has traditionally centred around particular ‘groups’ of people. In terms of migrant women, it has predominantly focused on the city’s largest populations. These are mostly migrant women from Mainland China who cross the border to reunify with families as well as women who travel to Hong Kong to undertake employment as domestic workers. Yet, migrant women in Hong Kong appear to be much more varied than the literature suggests. The potential complexity and diversity of these women and the opportunities and challenges of exploring their many stories is an issue which needs to be a more central feature of sociological discussion. This presentation provides an overview of what sociological research has discovered about migrant women in Hong Kong. It will consider the research findings along with its limitations and will explore how furthering examinations of Hong Kong’s migrant women has the potential to provide important contributions to our sociological knowledge.
Abstract

This article investigates the relationships between parents’ extracurricular investment and students’ academic performance using data from Hong Kong Panel Study of Social Dynamic. Students who receive investment in either shadow education or interest classes are different from those who do not receive, especially in family background and parental involvement. This endogeneity problem may lead OLS estimates of investment effects to be biased, so propensity score matching (PSM) is adopted as a robustness check. Results of both methods reveal no significantly positive effects of shadow education as students and their parents expect. By contrast, attending interest classes significantly improves students’ mathematics and English performance. Further analysis on the latter investment supports Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory, where students with better family background receive more benefits from their parents’ investment. These findings not only question the effectiveness of expanding shadow education but also indicate an important role of non-academic investment on students’ academic performance.
Abstract

Analyzing PIACC data, including measurement of education, competence and income among OECD countries, this paper explores the family background-education-competence-income nexus from a comparative institutional perspective. An education system works as a core social institution, distributing jobs and economic rewards and justifying the inequality of rewards by meritocracy. Though both meritocracy and class reproduction are two sides of education, we find different patterns of relationship among family background, education, competence and income across industrial societies. Modifying Esping-Andersen’s typology of welfare regime, we report that there are five type of educational system, institutionalizing social stratification and meritocracy; 1) the social democratic system with an emphasis on equal opportunity and the medium level of meritocracy; 2) the corporatist system with the medium level of equal opportunity and the medium level of meritocracy; 3) the liberal market system with the low equal opportunity and the strong association between competence and income; 4) the aristocratic system with the high level of association between family background and the low level of association between competence and income; 5) the credential system with the medium level of association between family background and education and the low level of association between competence and income.
Abstract

Although in some European countries it is suggested that inequalities among different cohorts are a serious problem, it seems like East Asian countries may be placed at a different situation. In South Korea, there is the ‘gold spoon and dirt spoon’ argument. It shows that young generation thinks that which ‘spoon’—in other words, resources such as good education and opportunities—they are given is the main determinant of one’s well-off in Korea. This perception indicates that intra-generational inequalities may be a big problem in South Korea. In this paper, I conduct a research to see whether intergeneration inequality is more of a serious problem than intra-generational inequality in East Asia. Due to their economic history, I expect that unlike conservative welfare states, intra-generational inequality would be worse than inequalities across different cohorts. Also, I additionally perform another analysis that attempts to find out whether differences in objective conditions lead to making chasms in perceptions inside the same cohort. Finally, based on these results, I interpret the institutional differences that may have caused the variances shown in the analyses. These analyses will be helpful in understanding differences in inequality patterns among East Asian countries as well as from other countries.
Abstract

Liberal Studies, a compulsory subject under the New Senior Secondary Curriculum, has constantly been a controversial topic in Hong Kong since its re-introduction in 2009. Despite its emphasis in cultivating critical thinking, the subject is criticized for its lack of subject knowledge and, in particular, its relatively negative portrayal of China, thus leading to failure in strengthening citizenship education, especially in light of the several political debates over the past few years.

Earlier this year, a pilot study involving four pre-service Liberal Studies teachers at a local tertiary institution has been conducted to explore how they cope with the challenges of teaching the subject. Research findings reveal a general decline of criticality among students despite their high exposure to media artifacts, which suggests that citizenship education remains a challenge amid the recently heightened social atmosphere.

This paper aims to explore how Liberal Studies teachers in Hong Kong struggle and negotiate with changes in social atmosphere in school settings. Drawing on Hochschild’s concept of emotional labour and Gordon’s framework of emotion management, it is hoped that this study will shed light on how current secondary school teachers and students understand social norms and respond to social-political issues in Liberal Studies lessons.
Singapore was a British colony from 1867 and became an independent sovereign state in 1965. This city-state, comprising people of Malay, Chinese, India and Eurasian descent, has aroused the writer’s interest in the development of its music education from 1965 to the present in response to multiculturalism and nationalism. A review of the official documents published between the 1980s and 2010s will serve as the background to a content analysis of the approved music textbooks in Singapore. This analysis will deal with the set of eight music textbooks that are the only ones which are official approved, and are currently used in Singapore’s primary and secondary schools. They will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of the song titles and lyrics to explore the importance of multiculturalism and nationalism in Singapore’s music curriculum. This study will also examine how far the music curriculum in Singapore adopts multicultural music education to consolidate the national ideology.
Unfriendly Money? 
Digital Money, Trust and Sociality 
Amongst Rural Migrants in China

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Abstract

China has seen a dramatic proliferation of platforms offering digital monetary services, offering convenient forms of transactions, saving and investment. This has been accompanied by a rise in instances of online fraud, along with attempts by state organ’s and the country’s financial institutes to raise public awareness and prevent such instances. Concerns around the security of new technologies are generally accepted as emerging from the inherent flaws in the platforms themselves, or from unintentional misuse or mistreatment of personal data by users. However, in ethnographic fieldwork conducted amongst migrant workers in Shenzhen, many of these technologically literate workers understood the safety of various forms of monetary management (both online and offline) not through the design and architecture of the platforms, but rather in relation to the kinds of sociality associated with such services. This meant that they tended to attribute greater degree of trust to digital money services that were perceived of as being less, rather than more social. This paper maps out an apparent hierarchy of trustworthiness afforded to China’s new digital many platforms by the participant group. The paper also challenges accepted anthropological understanding of money in China as being an being an especially integrative social artefact.
Abstract

The creation and dissemination of anti-racist and anti-terror narratives in France has historically been dominated by established institutional forms, working in tandem with the central or local state. These primarily involved those with significant social capital, of the first generation of migrants with close links to North African states. However, this paper seeks to sketch an empirical and theoretical picture of a key intergenerational shift, towards the creation of such narratives by young Muslims of the second and third generation, through the democratic means of social media. This paper draws on cutting edge twitter and youtube research to examine the symbolic registers deployed by these individuals and how it represents an empirical and theoretical departure from the previous generation. Themes include the use of the local urban context as a juxtaposition to the national and international, the challenging of existing hierarchies and the use of specific symbols with resonance to the third and second generation of Muslims in France.
Abstract

Some recent research stresses that social media such as Facebook cannot promote democratic deliberation among the public in that they help formulate different ‘echo chambers’, in which various fragmented publics feel ‘complacent’ in reading news that only confirms their existing political outlooks and avoiding counter information. Using Facebook use during the Umbrella Movement as a case, I suggest seven theoretical and methodological problems in the echo chamber thesis: first, the neglect of deliberative texts in Facebook in big data research; second, the ignorance of ideological fractures in Facebook; third, the omission of shared media experiences due to the ‘content’ interaction between Facebook and traditional media; forth, the absence of analysis of the mixed media repertoire of audiences; fifth, reading off audience interpretations from Facebook links; sixth, the inability to reveal how individuals interpret Facebook and other media during social movements in non-longitudinal correlation surveys; seventh, the ignorance of the possible benefits of different echo chambers, if they ever exist in democratic or authoritarian societies. The presentation will discuss some possible ways to address these problems to achieve a better understanding of the relationships among traditional and online media use, audience interpretation, political attitude formation, and democratic deliberation in divided societies.

Rethinking Echo Chamber: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections

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Research 'Subjects':
What's in it for them?

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Abstract

How far do individuals who are the focus of an academic investigation influence that research? What practical benefits can they obtain from this research? In other words, "what's in it for them" and how the consideration of their interests by the researchers might alter the latter’s original objectives? This paper presents concrete examples of such a balancing act. In the course of research related to social network services (SNS) interactions between members of a China-based charity organization, two researchers have attempted to conduct studies that would satisfy their academic curiosity while presenting the researched individuals with practically useful findings. While an equilibrium was achieved for a first project focusing on the discursive construction of collective identity through interactions in one specific WeChat group, a similar result proved more elusive for a second project concentrating on interactions of the same users through, this time, different WeChat groups. This paper describes the process that occurred between researchers and researched. It also discusses why what first appears as a dilemma might actually be a blessing in disguise.
Rejecting Self-Mortification: Asylum Seekers in Hong Kong

Erving Goffman’s analysis of total institutions depicts a self undergoing a series of abasements and dispossessions conceptualized as self-mortification. Within the total institutional context, an inherent and specific moral framework ensues. It transforms individuals into inmates by means of a bureaucratic and egalitarian process irreverent to individual differences and the former identity of members. Based on 25 in-depth interviews with asylum seekers in Hong Kong we aim to look into their moral careers. We suggest that Goffman’s account on asylums can be fruitful in understanding the process of identity construction of individuals in the process of seeking political asylum. Looking at political asylum as a virtually transient phase, we mean to comprehend how its incumbents manage their identity. We contend that asylum seekers are doubly stigmatized in Hong Kong society: grounded in their status as non-citizens and their race. We tease out their strategies for managing their double stigma and liminal status: they are no longer who they used to be, yet they have not become who they expect to. We show that our interviewees hold on tight to a strong sense of selfhood by means of narratives intertwining past and present to project notions of self-worth.
Individualization of Chinese Society Revisited: Toward an Approach of Family-orientated Individualization

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Abstract

The article aims to engage in a theoretical dialogue with the framework of Chinese individualization mainly put forward by Yan Yunxiang. I argue that Chinese society is indeed undergoing the process of individualization, not in a way suggested by Yan but a family-orientated one. First, I begin with discussing the marking characteristics of western individualization which are questionable in China— to what extent has individual in Chinese society disembedded from the traditional social institutions and reembedded into the new ones; plus, it should be taken into consideration ideologies and social constraints that may impede the individualization. Second, I argue that Yan’s framework downplays the centrality of family in contemporary Chinese society. By applying the theoretical perspective of householding (Jacka 2012), I try to bring back family within individualization. I argue that individualization is indeed for more rational and efficient householding and vice versa. Finally, I will take about the implication of gender inequalities under Chinese individualization context, in which I suggest that detraditionalization and disembemlement may loosen rigidly distinctive sex category partly from which gender inequalities are derived, however, in both family-orientated individualization and neo-liberal era, the achieved gender equality may be just a compromise not a standing reality.
Self, Unwanted Interaction and Dress: The Worth of Secondhand in Romania

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Abstract

Positing that dress represents the interface between self and society, thus delivering a socialized persona, and departing from Erving Goffman’s account of rituals for preserving and presenting the self, I discuss the way dress functions as a device for bounding and containing social interaction. Based on 80 interviews with Romanian consumers I argue that the rejection of secondhand dress is not grounded in fear of disease contraction but rather in concerns over the ritually improper encounter between selves and fear of contamination and dilution of one’s self. Secondhand is understood as a transgression of rituals of social interaction. I focus on degrees of rejection spanning across disgust and fear of pollution to indignity and embarrassment all the way to feelings of incomplete ownership and conviction of the lasting presence of the previous owner, a stranger’s presence inside one’s clothes. Dress is endowed with the ability to preserve and contain the self and, once it is used in a ritually improper manner – wearing pre-owned clothes, with the capacity to unleash the self of the prior owner onto the one of the second. We encounter with two entities endowed with the same ontological status and the fear is that the self of the previous owner threatens to spill and take over, to contaminate and dilute the second one.
Cosplay Comes of Age: An Ethnographic Investigation into a Youth Based Fan Phenomenon

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Abstract

The paper will examine the contemporary practice of Cosplay - the trend for young adults in Hong Kong and South East Asia to dress up in themed costumes often assuming the persona of characters from Japanese mediated sources as a means of exploring the motivations behind this activity. Social interaction theory will be used to examine the complexities constructing this rapidly globalizing phenomenon from the players’ own perspectives and further questions why changing appearance is used as a catalyst for escaping the boundaries of self by acquiring multiple identities. The outcomes of an empirical study will be presented based on interviews and focus groups with Cosplayers. Findings will suggest that this tendency to articulate identity, belonging, difference, gender and sexuality can be found in Cosplay activity involving a cast of players in various roles highlighting the sociological theoretical turn in using ethnographic and reputational approaches to generating research data. Research findings suggest that visible, adherence to a tribal collective or fandom seems to fill an affective void offering solace from the pressures of urban life and moral panics. In doing so Cosplay in practice takes on a range of localised cultural appropriations and hybridized agendas across geographic spaces and places.
Early China’s Female Students in the Realm of Republican Period Women Newspapers

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Abstract

In the early 20th century, feminist movement, inspired by western women’s liberation, occurred in China at the first time. In the history of the movement, female students, receiving the modern education and having new ideas, had drawn tremendous attention. Based on profiles of women newspapers of Republican period, according to phenomenology, sociology, feminism and science of journalistic history, the study shows the image construction and spiritual temperament of the female students and discusses the incomparable impression and social expect, vogue, free, westernized, self-liberation and salvation of country, for female students at that time. On contrary, they finally retreated into home as the good wives and kind mothers who were traditional and conservative but the understanding mothers and clever wives with modern knowledge and acquisition. This dramatic shift, owing to completed historic and realistic elements, reflects how the status of modern China’s women forms and changes from the side, and has great importance on the study of China’s women.
Gendering Labor: A Case of Sales Promotion Workers in the Cosmetics in South Korea

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Abstract

This paper examines a new kind of service labor, which promotes commodities like cosmetics in the crowded downtown Seoul, South Korea. Based upon extensive ethnographic research, this paper discusses the lived experiences of non-standard, sales promotion workers who introduce cosmetics in the street to walking pedestrians as potential customers. In order to transform the anonymous pedestrian into the customer, sales promotion workers perform their assumed "gendered" work by mobilizing their supposedly "gendered" traits. Our findings suggest that sales promotion work is ’gendered labor’, in which workers have to utilize young women’s femininity as their basic working skills. At the same time, it is also “gendering labor” where gender stereotype is reproduced, and this kind of labor is degraded, devalued, and underappreciated throughout the labor process. This kind of labor is performed by young female workers who have to suffer from non-standard working conditions, unpredictable, isolated labor relations as well as outside dangers in the streets.
Female sporting bodies, routinely employed by sportswear companies in their marketing endeavour, are increasingly appearing in media, particularly social media. In response to the lack of research on commercial discourses in social media in relation to women’s exercise and bodies, despite the potential health compromising issues that could result from their internalisation of media discourses, this paper investigates how the issues of power and female athleticism are articulated in promotional discourses of female bodily forms and practices made by four sportswear brands on Instagram, through content analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Findings suggested that the young, slim and toned body is predominant at this present moment; and underscored the disciplinary control exercised on the female sporting body, through technologies of anatomo-politics and neoliberal governmentality, such that the female consumer is construed as a postfeminist, self-enterprising individual under the surveillance of herself, peers and the brands. Ultimately, this paper argues that although such channels put the subversive image of the female athlete back into media’s frame, the potential for resistance is undermined by their commercial undertakings.
Abstract

Previous literature show that female writers were underrepresented and devaluated in Korean art history. In nowadays Korean literary field, however, many female writers seem to earn contemporary recognition from critics. If so, does this indicate that female writers are achieving long-term symbolic success in artistic field without being hindered by gender inequality? Pursuing the question, I firstly conduct binary logistic regression to show that female writers are less likely to be included in literary anthologies than male writers. Results indicate that female writers are still less likely to achieve long-term artistic recognition, which is likely to result in underrepresentation of female writers in literary history. Further, I apply content analysis to examine whether and how female writers are depreciated in literary discourse even if they are selected as canonical writers. Results show how critics’ discourse on artists and their artworks differ depending on writers’ gender. Unlike male writers, female writers are more likely to be labeled by their gender and homogenized as members of a group rather than be appreciated as autonomous and creative artists who attain high art quality. Presenting the results, this research calls attention to the issue of gender inequality in contemporary cultural/artistic field.
Analyzing Gendered Conventions, Affect and Power in Mid- to Later-life Women's Experiences of Heterosexual Relationships with Younger Men

Abstract

Having interviewed mid- to later-life women on their heterosexual relationships in general and on relationships with substantially younger men in particular, there is often a tension in women’s narration between their efforts in pursuing equality and the lived everyday life of the relationship. This narration is often affectively intense and includes for example strong regret and self-blame for being stuck in destructive situations or assertive demonstrations of one’s own triumphant resourcefulness in abusive situations.

Even though the increasing disconnection of intimacy from tradition, judicial and economic relations in the West has been interpreted as promising more equal relationships, contemporary research on heterosexual couples in the Nordic countries indicate something else. The everyday experiences of doing heterosexuality still seem to be founded through gendered boundaries and conventions (Magnusson 2008; 2005; Jokinen 2005; 2004).

In order to analyse the gendered power dynamics in the context of heterosexual relationships, I draw on theories on affect (Gregg & Seigworth 2010), which sets new challenges for knowledge production in empirical research. The paper is based on my ongoing PhD research that is part of the research project “Just the Two of Us? Affective inequalities in intimate relationships” funded by the Academy of Finland.
Abstract

Zoo and aquarium are normally thought to be educational site for the public in seeing, touching and even understanding animals. Nevertheless, in animal protection perspective, zoo and aquarium are “prison” to incarcerate animals. In addition, the practice of “displaying” animals inside cages and tanks is a form of (the Western / Colonized) power demonstration and manipulation. This paper will elaborate the very fact of historical background of zoo and aquarium in seeing the western / colonial control over the indigenous. With the cases of the Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens as well as the Hong Kong Ocean Park, this paper will further highlight how zoo and aquarium are not naturally built for public leisure. They are coincidentally having political functions to direct the public attention away from social distress in different eras to colonial / national identification. Animals are not as naturally expected as wildlife but they have “mission” for political pedagogy. This paper thus questions the “love” to animal, as highlighted in many sayings, of Hong Kong society.
Human-animal Studies in Hong Kong: A Popular Trend or a Missing Piece?

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Abstract

The core of sociology has always been about humans - such as human interactions, relationships, meanings, culture and structure of social groups. Society, however, is certainly not exclusive for humans. It is an observable reality that non-humans animals are central to our lives - as food, as goods, as companion, as entertainment, as symbols and as imaginations. Generations of sociologists have used their sociological imagination to question taken-for-granted power imbalance in social relationships such as race, gender and class; yet the majority of them have never questioned human’s domination in human-animal relationships. Until recently, human oppression to other species is naturalised in the social world and human-animal studies (HAS) are marginalised in sociology. After a year’s experience of proposing new course and project of human-animal studies, this paper reviews the constant reminders to remain objective (instead of advocacy) and the mission to benefit human participants (rather than articulating animals’ rights) as examples of anthropocentrism in formal curriculum and sociology. The difficulties and possibilities of developing HAS in Hong Kong will be explored and a central question will be discussed - could HAS fulfil the emancipatory potential of sociology?
An Outline of the Development of Animal Rights Movement in Hong Kong

Abstract

Along with the growing public awareness in the need to care and protect animals, the development and changes of animal rights movements are also unprecedentedly fast. The targets of concern have changed from community animals like cats and dogs, to a much wider spectrum of different types of animals, including wild boars, buffalos and many ocean animals. In terms of civil participation, Hong Kong citizens have expanded their actions from feeding street animals and providing them temporary adoption / foster home, to rallying in large scale demonstration against specific agendas and gathering in public assembly for policy changes. Civil society groups have also proliferated for similar yet different animal welfare / animal rights causes that outshine the role of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). This paper will present the development and diversification of animal rights movement in Hong Kong, and explore future direction and possibilities.

(This presentation will be conducted in Cantonese.)
The Chinese Mafia: Organized Crime, Corruption and Extra-legal Protection

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Abstract

Utilising individual interviews and focus group discussions from two Chinese cities, this paper fills the gap by investigating how extra-legal protectors—corrupt public officials and street gangsters—emerge, evolve and operate in a rapidly changing society. This paper develops the `socio-economic theory of mafia emergence’ by incorporating Granovetter’s argument on social embeddedness into Gambetta’s economic theory of the mafia. It suggests that the rise of the Chinese mafia is due to the negative influence of guanxi (a Chinese version of personal connections) on the effectiveness of the formal legal system. The contradiction between guanxi and the formal legal system has two major consequences. First, it weakens the ability of the formal legal system to supply sufficient and efficient protection for individuals and entrepreneurs, leading to the involvement of street gangsters (‘Black Mafia’) in the provision of private protection and quasi law enforcement. Second, this prevents the formal system from controlling the abuse of power by public officials; as a result, corrupt officials (‘Red Mafia’) sell public appointments, exchange illegal benefits with businesses and protect local gangs.
Humble Comrades: Negotiating the Logics of Anti-corruption among the Chinese Business Elites

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Abstract

In this paper, we utilize ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with 34 Chinese business elites in Guangdong province (and analysis of anti-corruption related news reports) to document the Chinese elites daily negotiation between the world of new political reality where extravagance and private-public gift giving has acquired a new meaning of illegitimacy and where consumption-based guanxi practices remain the normative way of conducting business operations. Focusing on the grey zone, we document the emergent contradictory logics that lead to simultaneous justification of current gift exchange culture but also its modification. The Chinese tradition of “li shang wang lai” is upheld and justified as needed to maintain business status; it is continued to be viewed as proper behavior based on reciprocity. Yet, these behaviors are taking place, often in more stealth “underground” settings. Our documentations together suggest the contextual nature of consumption and its change and reformulation on the one hand through politically-fueled “moral discourses,” yet the resilience of the consumption logics that have taken place over the past decades on the other hand that have married traditional notions of status display, exchange, and reciprocity with organized commercial developments.
Abstract

This paper describes two types of capital that facilitate upward mobility within the social organization in prison-like/total institutions – legitimate capital and illegitimate capital. Based on semi-structural interview with twenty-two former inmates who has been incarcerated because of using illicit drugs, this paper explain how the prison inmates, in particular those at the top of the prison social hierarchy, actively build their social capital through cultivating instrumental and expressive relationship (guanxi) with the prison official authority. Theoretically, this paper debunk the myth that criminal capital like one’s ability in physical combat, skills in the manipulation of underground market, and sources of illegal goods is the key factors that make a prison inmate triumph in the power competition within the prison social organization. Instead, this paper shows that owning and mastering legitimate social capital is seen by prison inmates who reach the top of the prison hierarchy as vital for their success in the prison-like environment.
Recent Spatial Changes in and Conceptual Redefinition of ‘Red-light Districts’ in South Korea

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Abstract

In 1962 former president Jung-Hee Park then legislated the Act on Morally Degrading Behaviors which officially took a prohibitionist stance on prostitution. However, the Korean government has regularly ignored this law in the name of economic development and promoted/condoned various types of prostitution. They also designated 104 regions throughout the country as special districts allowing prostitution. The present red light districts mostly come from these old special districts. These districts consist of brothels, where the primary reason people visit is to buy sex. Other non-brothel prostitution businesses where prostitution is the secondary service or takes place behind the curtain are located around new city centers throughout the country. Nevertheless it more difficult to clearly distinguish different types of prostitution, these non-brothel prostitution businesses are not considered in the anti-prostitution policy. Therefore, we would like to examine the spatial changes taking place in red light districts and assert the need for a conceptual redefinition of ‘red light district’, to help the anti-prostitution policy broaden its focus.
Abstract

The category of the ‘migrant sex worker’ is often used to communicate a range of social difference (e.g. class, race, gender) in immigration, sex work and anti-trafficking discourses. These research, policy, and public discourses have typically focused on the links between social difference, vulnerability and risk. However, the construction and use of social difference by immigrant, migrant and racialised sex workers remains relatively unexamined compared to the social construction of immigrant, migrant and racialised sex workers. This presentation addresses this gap, drawing on data from interviews with 65 immigrant, migrant and racialized sex workers in Melbourne, Australia and Vancouver, Canada. This presentation analyses the role of social difference in sex workers’ decision-making and in their interactions with co-workers and clients. An intersectional theoretical lens is used to examine how social difference offers one mode of creating knowledge or serving as a proxy for knowledge in a context where professional knowledge may otherwise be hard to come by, given the immense stigmatization and frequent criminalization of sex work. This paper will conclude by exploring strategies for dialogue about social difference with sex workers, and the challenges in fostering a nuanced understanding of difference that does not pathologize difference.
The Hong Kong Sociological Association (HKSA) was established in 1998. It aims to promote research and related academic activities, learning and teaching, and professional development in relation to the community of sociologists in Hong Kong. It organizes annual meetings and public seminar series. It also serves as an intellectual platform for the exchange of ideas among sociologists in Hong Kong and the rest of the world, particularly those in China, Taiwan, Macau, and other East and Southeast Asian countries. Members of the HKSA get free online access to Social Transformations in Chinese Societies as part of their annual membership benefits.
Organizing Committee of the 18th Annual Conference of the HKSA

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Mr. Alan Yau (Conference Administrator)
Dr. Paul Joosse
Dr. Julie Ham
Dr. Tom McDonald
Dr. Wang Peng
Prof. Karen A. Joe Laidler
Dr. Victor Shin
Dr. Wang Liping

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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 6, 2016  5:00 – 6:30pm
Jockey Club Tower, Room 929
Magic, Chinese Magic, and the Absent Magic of Reformation Protestantism in Max Weber’s Sociology
Chair Professor Jack Barbalet, Hong Kong Baptist University

December – January 2017
MC3@702 Creative Space
50 Years of Hong Kong, 50 Years of HKU Sociology
Roundtable + Exhibition launch

January 24, 2017 4:30pm
Venue TBC
East Asian Cultural Industries and Creative Management
Dr. Wessie Ling, Northumbria University

February 2017
MC3@702 Creative Space
Visualising the Voices of Migrant Women Workers Exhibition
Co-presented by Vivian Wenli Lin and Department of Sociology, HKU

February 17, 2017 7:00pm
MC3@702 Creative Space
Master of Social Sciences programme in Media, Culture & Creative Cities Information Talk

March 2017
MC3@702 Creative Space
Reflexive Identity Exhibition
Co-presented by Cobo Ceramic Workshop and Department of Sociology, HKU

March 4 – 12, 2017
Dr. Daniel Menchik, Michigan State University

March 31, 2017  4:30 - 6:30pm
11/F  Jockey Club Tower, Social Sciences Chamber
Reflections on the Development and Current State of International Research on Creative and Cultural Labour
Professor David Hesmondhalgh, University of Leeds

April – May 2017
MC3@702 Creative Space
Chinese Dragons, British Lions
Jointly presented by Regent’s University London and Ming-Ai (London) Institute
Co-presented by Department of Sociology, HKU
Supported by National Army Museum, UK and Hong Kong University Archives
Social Transformations in Chinese Societies

Editor:
Prof. Tai-lok Lui

Associate Editors:
Prof. Kin-man Chan
Dr. Siu-keung Cheung
Mr. Kim-ming Lee

Social Transformations in Chinese Societies (STICS), previously known as the Hong Kong Journal of Sociology, is the official journal of The Hong Kong Sociological Association (HKSA). This double-blind peer reviewed journal provides an academic venue for researchers on Chinese societies, from all over the world and from East Asia in particular, to disseminate their research findings and engage in intellectual debate on major issues related to Chinese societies, at a time when these are undergoing rapid and significant social, political, economic, and cultural changes. In so doing, Social Transformations in Chinese Societies aims to become the leading platform within the region to address theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues of a sociological significance about social transformations in Chinese societies.

Social Transformations in Chinese Societies welcomes the submission of quality research articles, research notes, review essays, and book reviews addressing the social, cultural, political and economic aspects of Chinese societies (including China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, and other overseas Chinese communities).

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2/12/2016 (FRI) 7 P.M.
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7/F THE JOCKEY CLUB TOWER
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THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

In order to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of HKU's Department of Sociology, the Department will hold a high-profile roundtable discussion on the evolution of Hong Kong culture and society over the past 50 years, and an exhibition showcasing the story of the Department in parallel with key historical moments in Hong Kong. Speakers who are renowned public voices, thinkers and commentators, and have longstanding association with the Department will participate in the forum. The exhibition will showcase archival documents of the department as well as latest student presentations in a lively and interactive manner.

The public forum and the opening reception of the exhibition will be followed the next day by the Annual Conference of the Hong Kong Sociological Association, which is being hosted by HKU this year.

ROUNDTABLE/
2/12/2016 (FRI), 7:45PM
MC@702 Creative Space
(Registration required)

Roundtable Speakers

Dr. Ng Chee Hong
(梁俊輝)
Associate Professor,
The University of Hong Kong

Prof. Lui Tze-Lok
(廖大樂)
Vice President (Research and Development),
The Education University of Hong Kong

Prof. Stephen Chak Wing-Kiu
(卓永佳)
Professor,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Dr. Agnes K.Y. Shiu-mei
(謝藹美)
Associate Professor,
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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