

The 12th Annual CUHK
Anthropology Postgraduate
Student Forum

29 January 2021
30 January 2021



An anthropological investigation into the makings and
unmakings of ordinary life during extraordinary times

Held online via Shindig



Forum Program

Friday, January 29th

0830–0915: Open Shindig Room

0915–0935: Opening Ceremony

- Introduction by PGSF Committee Chair
- Opening remarks by Anthropology Department Chair Prof. Andrew Kipnis
- Keynote introduction by Prof. Teresa Kuan

0935–1105: Keynote Address by **Prof. Cheryl Mattingly (University of Southern California)** and Q&A

1105–1115: Break

1115–1300: Concurrent Panel Session A

- A1 “Rethinking Relations” – Discussant: Prof. Teresa Kuan (CUHK)
- A2 “Uncertain Times, Certain Practices” – Discussant: Prof. Leilah Vevaina (CUHK)

1300–1400: Lunch Break

1400–1530: Concurrent Panel Session B

- B1 “Archaeological Investigations” – Discussant: Prof. Sharon Wong (CUHK)
- B2 “China, Rural & Urban” – Discussant: Prof. Andrew Kipnis (CUHK)
- B3 “Everyday Violence” – Discussant: Prof. Sealing Cheng (CUHK)

1530–1545: Break

1545–1745: Concurrent Panel Session C

- C1 “Hope, Hopelessness and Lives in Crisis” – Discussant: Prof. Gordon Mathews (CUHK)
- C2 “Medical Anthropology” – Discussant: Prof. Hsuan-ying Huang (CUHK)

1745–1830: Open Shindig Room

Saturday, January 30th

1000–1100: Open Shindig Room

11:00–1110: Day 2 Housekeeping

1110–1300: Concurrent Panel Session D

- D1 “The Arts, Precarity and Social Change” – Discussant: Dr. Mark Stevenson (CUHK)
- D2 “Education & Socialization” – Discussant: Prof. Minhua Ling (CUHK)

1300–1400: Lunch Break
1400–1545: Concurrent Panel Session E –E1 “Gender and Health” – Discussant: Dr. Laura Meek (University of Hong Kong) –E2 “Uncertain Economies” – Discussant: Dr. Tim Rosenkranz (CUHK)
1545–1600: Closing Ceremony –Final comments from PGSF Committee Chair –Closing remarks by Anthropology Department Graduate Division Head Prof. Sealing Cheng
1600–1700: Open Shindig Room
<p style="text-align: center;">“Hong Kong, Rural and Urban”</p> <p><u>Sunday, January 31st</u></p>
1100–1200: Virtual Tour of Hong Kong –Virtual walking tour of urban Hong Kong neighborhood Sham Shui Po led by local tour group “Walk in Hong Kong”
1300–1430: Documentary Film Presentation –Ethnographic video screening about rural Hong Kong village New Choi Yuen Village 菜園新村 by local documentary filmmaking group “v-artist 影行者”, which includes CUHK Anthropology postgraduate student Gloria Wing-yee Chaung, as well as other members who engage with issues related to rural Hong Kong. Q&A/discussion will follow the screening.
<p>Important Forum Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All times are in Hong Kong Time/GMT+8. • Registration is required for attending all scheduled events. Information about how to access the forum on Friday the 29th and Saturday the 30th (as well as advice regarding Shindig, and other details such as Q&A protocol) will be both sent to the email address entered when registering for the forum and posted to our website. Information about how to attend the cultural events on Sunday the 31st will only be sent to the email address provided upon registration. • Friday/Saturday events will be held via Shindig. Sunday’s activities will be held via Zoom. • Please consult the following tutorial (https://nomadit.co.uk/resources/shindig) and demo (https://shindig.com/client/client-demo/) to familiarize yourself with Shindig before the event. • Scheduled panel end times are estimates based on the expected length of panelist presentations (20 minutes each), discussant comments (10 minutes) and Q&A (10 minutes). Some panels may be shorter than others during the same session/time block. • Panels scheduled at the same time will run concurrently in separate “Shindigs”, each with their own unique URL and virtual meeting space. Thanks to this, there is no need to immediately vacate panels at the scheduled end time (with the exception of Panel Session E, which will end exactly at 1545), so Q&A may exceed the expected 10 minutes, but this is at the host’s discretion. In any case, we do ask that you arrive to panels on time. Once the forum has commenced each day, there will also be an ongoing “coffee room” – a separate meeting space where attendees can socialize during panels and breaks. • Aside from still images/screenshots taken to commemorate the event, we will not be recording any presentations or discussions (including the keynote address and subsequent Q&A) for later public viewing. Similarly, we ask that attendees do not make any video or audio recordings of the forum for reproduction on social media or other public spaces
<p>More details about the forum (including how to register) can be found on our website:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">https://www.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~ant/pgforum/</p>

ABOUT THE FORUM

COVID-19 has intensified the uncertainty of everyday life for many around the world. Although uneven distribution of precarity is by no means a new phenomenon, current extreme conditions have exacerbated inequality, insecurity and structural violence, and continue to unmake and remake what counts as the “ordinary”.



From classic ethnographies such as Evans-Pritchard's research on Azande divination practices to contemporary studies on middle-class parenting anxieties, anthropological work has long focused on the ways people understand and grapple with uncertainty. In turn, these ways, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, come to constitute modalities of “everyday life”. These can be both predictable and unpredictable, normative and iconoclastic, existing across spheres of human life including the political, the professional and the therapeutic.

It is at this complicated relationship between the ordinary and the extraordinary that our online forum aims its focus. How can an investigation of uncertainty shed light on connections between large-scale social changes and domestic life? To what extent is it ethical, desirable or even possible to conceive of ordinariness during times of flux, crisis and injustice? How do race, class, gender, disability and citizenship (or lack thereof) shape the distribution and everyday management of the uncertain? What does it mean for ordinariness to be an achievement or, conversely, a burden?

Uncertainty serves not only as an anthropological object, but also as a methodological orientation. How are sensibilities of uncertainty during fieldwork productive (or even necessary) for research? What kinds of rhetorical devices can anthropologists deploy to register the uncertainties of a time and place in ethnographic work?

Forum Committee:

Dong, Qiao Ling Rivka
Feng, Yuxuan
Fung, Darren Tsz Hin
McCall, Robert
Nie, Youping
Tan, Yan Zhen Melody
Thebe, Phillip
Xie, Xin

Sponsors:

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Faculty of Arts)
Department of Anthropology, CUHK

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Cheryl Mattingly

Professor of Anthropology

Department of Anthropology, University of Southern California

Cheryl Mattingly's major interests are the anthropology of ethics (especially virtue ethics and the ethics of care), medical anthropology, phenomenology and hermeneutics, philosophical anthropology, narrative, chronic illness and disability, the culture of biomedicine, health disparities, race and minority health. Her primary research has been in the United States.



Some recent awards and honors include an honorary doctorate from Aarhus University, Denmark (2018) a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship (2017–2018), a Dean's Influential Visiting Scholar of Social Science, UCLA (2016) and a Dale T. Mortensen Fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies, Aarhus University (2013–2015). She has been the PI and Co-PI on multiple large federally funded research grants (primarily from NIH) studying minority health in the United States. Most significantly, these enabled a fifteen-year ethnographic study following the lives of African American families raising children with chronic illnesses and disabilities in both clinic and home settings. She has published extensively on this research, including two books: *The Paradox of Hope: Journeys through a Cultural Borderland* (2010), which was awarded the 2011 Stirling Book Prize (Society for Psychological Anthropology) and *Moral Laboratories: Family Peril and the Struggle for a Good Life* (2014), which received the 2015 New Millennium Book Prize (Society for Medical Anthropology).

Her initial research in medical anthropology focused on the culture of biomedical rehabilitation and the clinical treatment of disability and chronic illness from narrative and phenomenological perspectives. She has a longstanding interest in intersections between anthropology and philosophy (especially moral philosophy and phenomenology), and in thinking through a philosophical anthropology deeply informed by ethnography. Currently, she is working on a book provisionally titled *Category Trouble: Stigma and Moral Experience*. This book is both a foray in critical phenomenology and a writing experiment in which she is exploring how to create compelling non-fiction short stories that also have theoretical and existential resonance. Her aspiration is to rethink stigma on multiple levels: as a personal (and intimately interpersonal) lived experience, as a social marker of marginalized groups, and as a feature of the human condition.

PANEL INFORMATION

Panel A1 – “Rethinking Relations” (Friday/1115–1245)

Justin HARUYAMA (University of California, Davis)

Connection, Obligation, Disconcertment: An Ethnographer's Reflections on African Rejections of Equality

In this paper I consider an episode of my fieldwork that I experienced as profoundly disconcerting. My good friend Amos, an activist leader in the local miners' union, related to me the historical account of the Curse of Ham, which describes how Africans have been rightfully destined by God to forever be the servants of Europeans as a result of their historical forbearer Ham's sins against his father, Noah. Amos used this account to explain to me why it was that “white men,” including me, came to Africa seeking to help Africans, while Chinese seemed to refuse this kind of social connection. Caught in my disconcertment, I mumbled that surely, we must all be equals, but Amos immediately refuted me by pointing out that though he and I were the same age, I was already close to finishing my PhD and he had barely completed secondary school. Since this was so, he continued, it was incumbent upon me to sponsor him for his education in America after I had finished my degree. In reflecting upon this encounter, I explore how disconcertment can be a crucial site for generating ethnographic insight regarding incommensurable cultural values (Law and Lin 2011; Povinelli 2001; Verran 2001, 2013). In so doing I show how Amos's account refused my liberal attachments to notions of egalitarianism, equality, and independence. As Amos pointed out, my pleadings of equality were given the lie by the very real social disparities that divided us, disparities that were directly related to the violent hierarchies of colonialism. I now understand Amos to have been making a claim for a different kind of connection, one not founded in the separateness that liberal notions of equality presume but, rather, in the obligation that the hierarchies born from colonial and postcolonial encounters compel.

Juliet TEMPEST (Stanford University)

What Pangolins Tell Us about People: Pandemic Representation in US Print Media

The pangolin has captured media attention in the US for mediating between the bodies of others during Covid-19, since a Chinese university research team announced the pangolin as potential intermediary host of the SARS-CoV-2 virus' transmission to humans. The world's most heavily trafficked mammal, the pangolin has thus become a discursive and material site of investigation into the pandemic's origins in China. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, I analyze historical and contemporary depictions of pangolins in US print news media, to reveal trends of scapegoating the charismatic non-Western and non-human Other that affect our ability to apprehend pandemics. In the tradition of science and technology studies, this paper highlights another directionality for the translation of science—from East to West—where studies of flows in the opposite direction have predominated. Media representations of pangolins suggest different treatments of systems of “Chinese science”: biomedical epidemiology as international, even Occidentalized, and only TCM as “Chinese.” Engaging with intersecting levels and theories of

mediation—of viruses between bodies, of knowledge by the news, and of pangolins across both—I propose to show that the pangolin’s material and discursive indeterminacy mediated the US media’s translation of Chinese science about its role as zoonotic intermediary.

Qinglu YIN (The University of Tokyo)

Co-becoming Beautiful: Femininity, Affect and Hope of Contemporary Chinese Women

The re-emergence of gendered desire in neoliberal China has led to a massive increase in the beauty/fashion market. However, Chinese feminists tend to examine beauty as either empowerment of the female agency or oppression of the patriarchal market-state power. Alternative to this dualistic view, I propose we see beauty as affective practices, and women's bodies as a series of relationships with others. Within this perspective, in analyzing the socio-economic situation of my research objects—the Chinese female working elites, we have a new clue to understand their double identities of both professional women in workplace and wives/mothers in family, which are partially connected and multi-layered. Then during the fieldwork in Beijing, I found a clothing boutique to be a “third place” for a group of women which was full of care with beauty as the main theme. Simultaneously, such a care ethic was exactly developed from their ability to care for family as well as their self-discipline. It was in the process of maneuvering between different self-images that they were provided the potentiality for a more beautiful self. By considering beauty as a practice in both aesthetic and ethical ways, I hope we could understand this creative process of redefinition of womanhood in contemporary China.

Panel A2 – “Uncertain Times, Certain Practices” (Friday/1115–1300)

Ina GOEL (CUHK)

Impact of Covid-19 on Hijras, a Third-Gender Community in India

On 24 March 2020, India put its population of 1.38 billion under lockdown to curb community transmission of Covid-19. This sudden announcement was not taken well by many vulnerable groups, including migrant workers, daily wagers including sex workers, and the hijras, a third-gender community. The hijras have an estimated population of half a million in India and are culturally associated with performing music, dance and sex work. As a fieldworker stuck in the lockdown during my doctoral fieldwork, this paper will draw on my observations on the pandemic as it unfolds and its impact on the hijra community in New Delhi, India. More specifically, this paper will highlight the social and cultural implications of the COVID-19 lockdown for a vulnerable group that have a complex order of ritual kinship and care that are not recognized by Indian law and state bureaucracies, and work on a system of informality. In doing so, this paper will also discuss what it meant being on the ground during this unprecedented time as the most unusual and hard lesson in ethnographic empathy, where any anthropology I engaged in was anthropology that broke my heart.

Yingkun HOU (Southern Illinois University Carbondale)

Tasting "Apart Together": Creating Certainty in the Time of Pandemic

After the breakout of Coronavirus, many tea/wine lovers that would regularly meet for tea and/or wine had to cancel all of their tasting events. However, this didn't mean that they stop them meeting and consuming drinks together—only now virtually. As my informant Li Yun, who loves both tea and wine told me, they managed to use the video chat function on WeChat to connect and drink tea and/or wine together in the time of this pandemic. This seemingly impossible measure helped them to maintain in contact and share their sense of taste as much as possible, providing a sense of security through a new form of commensality. This paper looks into these virtual tasting events to investigate these moments that creates a sense of certainty in this unusual time through the lenses of the anthropology of taste in everyday life. How do they share their taste without tasting together? What motivated them to drink together virtually? Most importantly, how does tasting like this help them through the lockdown time?

Amy PHUA (CUHK)

Adab: Personhood and conduct in Sufi and Islamicate India

The idea of India is constantly being contested and negotiated. Mughal India, British India and Hindutva India are different approaches to encapsulating and representing what the South Asian continent of India is about. However, such overarching representations obscure regional identities and cultural uniqueness of former polities in India. Hyderabad was formerly a Muslim princely state in India, which became subsumed under the Indian nation- state in 1948. In its own polity, Hyderabadis have a set of bodily practices tied with moral codes of conduct, based on Sufi and Islamic philosophies, that Hyderabadis adhere to, even in present times. This set of bodily and moral practices is called Adab. I argue that in the light of a changing political and religious climate in India, the performance of Adab is a form of cultural intimacy that gives a person foundation in the habitus that was structured within the Islamicate cosmopolis in India and spanning to the middle east. By this, it provides the person social capital within the Indian Islamicate. In the midst of a shifting national and cultural practices, the idea and enforcement of Adab, I argue, is an everyday practice that roots a person to an identity. This also exemplifies a shift to understanding India as a homogenous category to reading India and also a decolonial understanding of state and national borders.

RAPTI Styliani (University of Ioannina)

Students and Covid-19

The year of 2020 belongs in the past. The protagonist of that year has been COVID- 19. In Greece as well as in the rest of the world, everything closed, and people were locked in their houses to avoid the worst. Among the millions of people in the country, who have been affected by the pandemic, there are also the university students. They were banned from going to the establishment, to the libraries, to cafes and clubs. They were simply called not to be young students. This research following the quantitative design, has tried to enlighten the relationship between university students and Covid, and

how it has affected their lives and careers. It also examines how students cope with distance learning and what they think about the new way of learning. The research involved 250 students from all universities in the country.”

Panel B1 – “Archaeological Investigations” (Friday/1400–1530)

Yingshan GUO (Nanjing University)

Study on the Decoration and Connotation of Figurines in Neolithic Mesopotamia

Figurines in Neolithic Mesopotamia have rich body decorations and indicate detailed features. Headgear, bandeaux, belts and chest bands on clay figurines can be traced back to the upper Paleolithic period. The incisions and paintings on parts of the body or all over the body can be interpreted as tattoos or garments of prehistoric people. As well as the discussion of social contexts and ethnography data, it is obviously to find that these characters not only reflect personal preferences, but also show the living customs and aesthetic consciousness of prehistoric people. Various forms of figurines in prehistoric times probably relate to genders, different social groups, and also a symbol of social identity and status.

TAN Yan Zhen Melody (CUHK)

Interactions: A Brief Overview on the Transmission of Central Vietnam’s Monochrome Stoneware

This paper aims to provide a brief overview of current archaeological evidence – both land and maritime – to analyse the development of Central Vietnam’s (Binh Dinh) monochrome stoneware as well as their export position in maritime trade between the 14th – 16th centuries, in comparison with their counterparts of Southern China. This paper is built upon the assumption that Binh Dinh monochrome stoneware, specifically the green- and brown- glazed wares has a close relationship with their South Chinese counterpart parts. The kilns of Binh Dinh attempted to build a monochrome stoneware market competing alongside their Chinese competitors with their port-lined coast.

ZOU Yuqi (CUHK)

Regional Circulation and Production of Bronze Mirrors in Han Dynasty: focusing on Guanzhong and ancient Jingzhou area

The previous study of Han bronze mirrors mainly concerned about the diachronic change, such as the overall development in typology and the main component formula. Although there is only one Han bronze mirrors workshop found in North China at present, the regional diversity was still deserved further investigation. Based on a new comprehensive typology, this paper tries to count the Han bronze mirrors which excavated in the North-South intersection of Guanzhong, Central Plain and ancient Jingzhou area, to explore the differences of the product features and suppliers among these three regions.

Panel B2 – “China, Rural and Urban” (Friday/1400–1530)

Lu CHEN (University of Oslo)

Place Matters: Sprawl of Stones, Water and Plants from Mountains in Perceiving Unimaginable Disaster and Relocation

This presentation is intended to explore the (un)certainities in perceiving and adapting to disaster and relocation. In coastal provinces, though people have been experiencing relocation out of different reasons such as urbanization, there are also increasing cases of relocation due to environmental change. In anthropology of climate change, climate refugees has been one core research topic (Baer and Singer 2018). In the context of China, ecological refugees have been explored who are relocated due to environmental deterioration especially in northwestern area (Li 2009). However, accompanied by extreme weather, there are also people relocated in populous eastern area. Some places experience the impact of typhoon annually. However, when the heavy storm was compounded by landslide, it could produce unimaginable damages on tangible properties and human life. One village was decided to be relocated to the land in the town. At present, over two thirds of the villagers have moved to the new place. People still residing in the village, around 100 out of 500, most of them decide not to move. Even among the villagers living in the new place, some still prefer to come back when they are permitted to build house on their home land. The official discourse definition of the disaster was natural disaster (*tian zai* 天灾). However, villagers have different claims though suppressed. In interpreting the disaster and decision of relocation, villagers have developed several arguments. Nonetheless, mostly argue that the construction of highway and tunnels undermined either the stones on the mountains or the waterways. The uncertainties over life leaving behind or in new place are set in contrast to ordinary village life following the past rhythm.

Yifei FANG (Beijing Language and Culture University)

Discourse Power and Rural Society in Present China -- A Case Study of Grassroot Governance under the Covid-19 Pandemic in Henan Province

In the history of mankind, epidemics have always played a nonnegligible role and have gradually become a focused issue of our time. 2020 witnessed a massive global outbreak of Covid-19 Pandemic, with fears and dangers spreading both in daily life and social media. The initial outbreak of the epidemic coincided with the Chinese New Year. To prevent the spread of the epidemic, persuasive and didactic slogans are making a comeback to provide a unique discursive context for rural Chinese governance. In rural China, where customs and rituals are still prevalent in modern times, these slogans, which are of "one-way transmission" nature and widely popular during Covid-19 Pandemic, become a tool for mobilizing the masses as well as realizing the cadres' daily governance and even serve as a kind of repository of discourse power. Foucault argues that those people have power are using their words to construct corresponding societies. As we can see, against the backdrop of Covid-19 Pandemic, only China can quickly mobilize people to wear masks and even seal off cities in a short period of time. This

is closely related to the discursive power implemented by Chinese government. This article focuses on village chief Li, the village branch secretary of Dazhancheng Village in Henan Province, whose shouts to his villagers once became a hotspot of netizens' attention in the face of epidemic pressure. In the era of social media, he has appropriately changed the old propaganda methods, acting as what Fei Xiaotong called a "cultural hero" in the local society, and dominating the villagers by integrating new discourse methods with the characteristics of the times. These metaphorical catchphrases and shouting, to some extent, achieved the goal of preventing and controlling the epidemic and, on the other hand, acted as the role of highlighting the status of rural cadres.

Shaoyu TANG (New York University)

Chenggong Subjectification: Values and Moralities in Everyday Conversations among Chinese Middle-Class Urban Youth

The translation of an anthropological jargon involution (内卷) has recently piqued a large public debate in China, because of its transition to a buzzword depicting harsh and inexorable peer competitions among young generations. Such debate reveals young people's strong senses of uncertainty and struggle in accumulating wealth and pursuing successful social mobility, as well as seeking personal well-beings and happiness. To better understand how such everyday uncertainty has engaged in reshaping social values and moral landscapes, this paper focuses on the word chenggong (success) which embodies and objectifies China's post-reform modernity and neoliberal market values. The word seems to appear with a clear meaning of wealth, fame and reputation in broad society. But actually, chenggong has multiple meanings and functions in urban young people's daily conversations. Based on a short-term fieldwork in Dalian and some online interviews during the Covid-19 period, this paper inquiries into how middle-class urban youth talk and act in response to daily conversations about chenggong. An ethnographic analysis reveals that the word chenggong often extracts young people from their everyday lives and positioned them in the context of an imaginative future. Based on that, this paper further argues that those young urban middle-class individuals' participations in constructing the discourse of chenggong is so far an expressive performance through which they create subjectivities in negotiating social values and moralities with party-state's expectations and educational desires. The research joins a group of anthropologists such as Yunxiang Yan and Andrew Kipnis in picturing ways through which young people build subjectivities, and thus provokes a rethinking of citizens' agencies in facing everyday uncertainties in a fast-changed society. It provides lens for discussions over the remaking of the relationship between ordinary and the extraordinary, as well as social ideals, in middle-class everyday practices.

Panel B3 – “Everyday Violence” (Friday/1400–1530)

Emma Mengzhu AN (CUHK)

Suspended Life and Vulnerable Care: Moral Perils of “Guan” in Autistic Youths’ Life

“Guan”(care/control) in autistic youths’ families was criticized by disability-rights advocates for its paternalist feature that infantilizes the autistic youths as objects of control. Yet such individualist criticism turns a blind eye to the context of “guan” and its internal moral tragedy. In this paper, I attempt to continue the anthropological discussions of “guan” as intimate practice with political implications and further reveal the inherent contradiction between the commitment and the means of family care. I consider “guan” as parental struggles to re-inhabit their autistic children through mediating their relations with significant others in their lifeworlds, but could turn home, supposed to be the last shelter, into an even more uninhabitable place. The haunting image at the edge of inhabiting not only represents the precarity of autistic individuals, but also the perilous condition of their parents as moral agents.

Sojung KIM (Johns Hopkins University)

When Words Evaporate: Everyday life of North Korean migrant women in South Korea

This paper explores how the Partition of Korea is absorbed into everyday life through North Korean migrant women’s ritual for traditional holidays in Korea. In national holidays called myungjul, Koreans traditionally visit their paternal ancestor’s hometowns to hold jesa, the rites for the ancestors, at the graves and home. Due to the physical gaps in the kinship networks, marked by the kin left behind in North Korea and China, North Korean migrants gather among themselves in the neighborhood in South Korea as if they make the myungjul ritual of the family gatherings. This impossibility of the proper practice of the rites insinuates the violence of the Partition refracted into the family relations between those in the South and those in the North. Yet, the myungjul gathering creates a kind of collective hometown, beside one’s genealogical hometown, where they can express lamentation and guilt over not being able to visit their parents and ancestors in their hometowns, which they are traditionally required to do. In this as-if ritual, myungjul is re-created for and by the women and for others in the community. Yet, the texture of this ritual is marked by discontent and dissatisfaction. Attending to fostering discontents that seep into the collective events, this paper aims to seek ways to study the violence permeated in everyday life in the partitioned Korea.

Yanping NI (Duke University)

COVID-19 Diary as a Genre: The Everydayness and the Exceptionality

The COVID-19 pandemic has witnessed explosive production of diaries characterized by first-person, spontaneous expressions and contents filled with daily experiences in the context marking the virus as the new norm. The city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus infection first emerged and robust medical practices were first implemented, is no exception in this regard. During the 76-day Wuhan quarantine,

numerous diaries of various presentation forms were created on Chinese social media platforms by Wuhan ordinary residents, forming a unique set of data for scholarly consultation from a micro perspective. This essay argues for the necessity of examining this particular body of literature, and on this premise, offers reflections and observations through both existing scholarship and evidence found in those diaries. An overlapping relationship between the ordinary and the extraordinary, created by the quotidian everyday life and the exceptionality of the situation in Wuhan respectively, is particularly noted and carried along to showcase the “slow violence” caused by the pandemic and quarantine policy to Wuhan residents’ daily life. Critically, this essay also argues that the activity of creating diaries per se functions as an outlet of “dis-ease” emotions via communication between diary producers and audience in a shared temporality.

Panel C1 – “Hope, Hopelessness and Lives in Crisis” (Friday/15:45–17:45)

Sakari MESIMÄKI (University of Cambridge)

Locating Japan in Post-Democracy: Can Reiwa Shinsengumi politicise hopelessness?

My research is about investigating political subjectivities in Japan through the politics of Reiwa Shinsengumi, a new left-wing populist political party that emerged in the spring of 2019 and contested the year’s Upper House elections to modest, but unexpected success. This research project is very much in its early stages, however, so what I plan to share today is some of my foundational thinking about how the challenge posed by Reiwa Shinsengumi ought to be located with regard to existing theories and its empirical context. The main argument I will present today, is that in order to productively understand the Reiwa Shinsengumi phenomenon, we need to place Japan within the conceptual frameworks of ‘post-democracy’ and ‘post-politics’ – analytical and polemic terms that, since the new millennium, have been used to critically question the degree to which the nominally democratic societies of the developed world really are very democratic, and to what extent the apparently vibrant politics played out in public spheres really is a contest between actually meaningful differences. I will contend that Reiwa Shinsengumi, like some other populist, anti-establishment political movements, can be seen as an attempt to denaturalise the post-democratic hegemony and draw a political frontier where its heretofore taken-for-granted assumptions might be contested. I will begin with a discussion of the post-democracy and post-politics concepts, followed by an overview of the development of post-democracy and post-politics in post-war and post-bubble Japan. I then discuss Reiwa Shinsengumi’s intervention against post-politics as one of politicising experiences of precarity and hopelessness; and espousing a new way of relating to politics. I suggest that ‘populism’ as both an analytical tool and an ethnographic object helps us locate the frontier upon which the party confronts the post-political hegemony.

Antonia MISERKA & Sebastian POLAK-ROTTMANN (University of Vienna)

Uncertainty as a Crossroads for Reinterpreting Subjective Well-Being – The Case of the Aso Region in Japan

Rural Japan is a common subject of urban nostalgia, but also a frequent topic of popular and academic discussions on depopulation and ageing (cf. Masuda, 2014; Ōno, 2007; Tokuno, 2011, 2014, 2015). While local traditions are increasingly challenged by the shrinking number of people able to engage in their preservation or continuation, migrants from other parts of Japan conceive the rural lifestyle as an attractive alternative to their previous everyday life (Miserka, 2019, p. 19). These different conceptions of the rural space are thus closely linked to perceptions of well-being or *ikigai*. What makes life worth living is a major aspect of well-being resulting from everyday life practices. The everyday, however, is not an apolitical realm that can be neatly disconnected from society as a whole. It is an ambivalent space which both empowers subjects and at the same time is a space where power structures are present and active (Bargetz, 2016, p. 27). Without the everyday and its private dimension, a conception of the public cannot be argued (Sauer, 2001, p. 184), thus pointing out how perceptions of private and public are related to each other. How life – and arguably also well-being – is structured and interpreted in the everyday lives is thus both subject to individual (and potentially subversive) decisions and hegemonic structures (cf. Opratko, 2014). In the everyday, people have to make decisions between different options, leading to the ambivalent nature of the everyday, but also its susceptibility to change (Bargetz, 2016, p. 116). In terms of well-being, the everyday is thus a space where different conceptions of how to lead a good life are interpreted against the background of social norms of desirability. What happens, however, when its repetitive nature becomes disrupted by disasters? Our paper tackles this issue by asking how conceptions of subjective well-being might (or might not) be re-interpreted in times of uncertainty in rural Japan. We base our analysis on qualitative interviews conducted in 2017, 2018 and 2020 in the Aso region in Kumamoto Prefecture in Japan.

Zhuo NIU (KU Leuven)

Practice hope during COVID-19: routinize crisis as new dailiness

COVID-19 marks the year 2020. The global pandemic challenges the healthcare systems of every country in the world. Meanwhile, it reminds us that we are living in a risk society where crises might penetrate all aspects of living, and constantly bring about insecurities and fears for individuals. Crisis is inevitable, and, thus, is not something that we could overcome, but that we have to learn to live with. The co-existence of crisis and dailiness catalyzes the transformation between certainties and uncertainties and forges a new perspective to look into the coronavirus pandemic. However, COVID-19 is not the monster of our times. It is even not the source of all these social bad that we recognize and complain about. It only awakens the pre-existing but dormant monsters of the current world and makes them explicit. On the other hand, COVID-19 has indeed challenged people's lifestyle, but it also opens up possibilities to routinize crisis as new dailiness, whose manifestations might include on-line class, long-distance working, social distancing, good hygienic habits, etc. From the newly-built dailiness, hope is stimulated as a seminal human agency and hovers over different temporalities. Hope, as a discourse

concept, has various names in multiple contexts, and it always functions to confirm human agency and cultivate human rationality at the same time. The fact that we are practicing hope grants those in the global pandemic a chance to contest the risk society, as if we will finally relocate our being-in-the-world.

Siyu WANG (Nanjing University)

Being towards Self in the Dissatisfied Society

This article focus on Agnes Heller's theory of humanism. The concept of modernity as the "dissatisfied society" has long held a central place within Heller's post-Marxist thinking. Through it Heller signifies her indebtedness to not only the tradition of historian, Western Marxism but the early diagnosticians of modernity. At the same time, it is through a historical examination of changing forms of her engagement with this problem. COVID-19, which results from this dissatisfied society and adds the uncertainty in return, is just one of those characteristics of modernity. In this essay we take up the problem of "the dissatisfied society" against the backdrop of Heller's explicit treatment. In so doing, the discussions which follow not only seek to situate and explicate Heller's return to the conception of existential choice as a response to the dissatisfaction of modern life but also to establish and confront the questions that this rehabilitation poses for the possibility, and meaning.

YAN Tianyi (University of Hong Kong)

Hope and Hoping Unified in Serving: Volunteers' Experience in Pediatric Hospice Care in Mainland China

This article explores some mainland Chinese volunteers' service-related hopes and hoping and serving practice in pediatric hospice care. Based on participant observation and follow-up interviews, it shows how volunteers experienced and got themselves out of failure-caused hopelessness by keeping serving, which unified their hoping practice and hope realization—a pair of "not yet" and "already". This article shows also how life being uncertain and unpredictable conditioned volunteers' serving and hoping practice, and how personal and organizational factors leveraged that condition to help them realize their hope and get out of hopelessness. This is no exhaustive research covering all possible sorts of hope and hopelessness in pediatric hospice care, but does catch a glimpse thereof and may contribute to changing outsiders' misunderstanding of how hopeless pediatric hospice care service is.

Panel C2 – "Medical Anthropology" (Friday/15:45–17:15)

Isabel BRIZ HERNÁNDEZ (CUHK)

Miscellaneous Care: Bridging the In-Between of Translational Science

Based on 15 months of ethnographic research on clinical trials for immunotherapy for cancer treatment in China, in this paper I explore the work of translators, drivers, and other personnel employed to assist

foreign patients that travel to this country to become clinical subjects. Their tasks are very heterogeneous: they pick up patients from the airport, document their health condition, accompany them to do the groceries, hold their hand in moments of despair, or collect the follow-up data. In other words, they do 'whatever is needed', or as I have framed it 'miscellaneous care practices'. Even though these practices fall out of the scope of clinical research or health care and will most likely be rendered invisible in future protocols, in this paper I will show their relevance in translational science. 'Miscellaneous care givers' are cultural brokers between China and the world, the lab and the clinic, and, what is probably most challenging, between the hype around biotech and the reality of the bedside. I delve into the multilayered nature of care, by presenting 'miscellaneous care practices' as performative in technoscience and also as 'emotional labor'.

Sitian QUAN (National Taiwan University)

Care Boundary Uncertainty: Between the Insiders and the Outsiders of COVID-19

COVID-19 divided people into two groups: the ones heavily infected and on lockdown were insiders, the rest were outsiders. Unlike the past, we have many techniques to build a bridge of communication between insiders and outsiders, such as social media, instant messaging software, and video calls. Since we have these techniques, it seems to the outsider that caring for the insider becomes a duty and an obligation. Nevertheless, because the situation is entirely different, it is difficult for an outsider to really understand what kind of care an insider needs, and may even hurt an insider with improper care. In contrast, insiders deliberately avoid asking concerned questions (such as how are you these days? Are you okay now?), because they can empathize with each other. When outsiders make such inquiries, there is pressure on insiders to answer. Sometimes they do not want to answer because the questions are too general to answer or are too frequently asked by outsiders. From the past to the present, insiders and outsiders seem to be in totally different realities because of the epidemic's isolation. Technology has not bridged the huge understanding gap created by this disparate reality. In the absence of mutual understanding, the boundary of care became blurred and uncertain. This article uses the personal experiences of several insiders in Wuhan during the worst period in March 2020 to demonstrate and analyze the uncertain care-boundary between insiders and outsiders during epidemic periods.

Jinzhixie XIE (University College London)

Relocating the relation between doctor and patient: An explanation for medical disturbance in contemporary China illustrated by an ethnography at primary hospital in Jiangsu

It is recognized that doctors, along with judge have been the most dangerous professions in China comparing with other Asian countries. In the conflicting medical practice, how does the daily dynamic between doctors and patients present? By analyzing how doctors and patients understand and cope with the disease in cultural context, I try to interpret the conflict in the doctor-patient relationship in mainland China. Therefore, based on two-month fieldwork, this paper analyses the diagnosis and

treatment practice of an internal medicine department in a primary hospital in southern Jiangsu province.

Panel D1 – “The Arts, Precarity and Social Change” (Saturday/1110-1300)

Jonathan CHAN (CUHK)

Rolling With The Punches: Indie Music as a Performance of Precarity in Hong Kong

This paper examines musical activities of the Hong Kong indie scene as performances of precarity. I discuss previous literature on precarity (Butler 1988, Butler 2009), in relation to the Hong Kong indie scene, and argue that precarity is one element that constitutes and differentiates the indie scene. Understanding ‘indie’ as a mode of production that self-consciously demarcates itself from and challenges major record labels, using ‘radical, alternative and more sincere way[s] of producing music’ (Negus 1999). I explore performances of precarity through the continual struggle of balancing livelihood needs and musical activities. This is often a path that is proactively chosen by members of the scene who forgo ‘stable’ lives—full time employment and social mobility—for the freedom and flexibility to pursue their music. The indie scene has gone through turbulent times, especially since the start of the Anti-ELAB movement in June 2019, when mass protests and the subsequent pandemic caused many performances and other activities to be cancelled. This has resulted in a drastic drop in income for members of the scene and venue owners, causing even more precarity in their livelihoods. While theorizations of precarity often foreground economic factors such as informal employment, precarity may encompass other forms of marginalisation of individuals in society (Han 2018). I suggest that when applied to the Hong Kong indie scene, the marginalisation implied in precarity is not only economic or social marginalisation, but also a cultural marginalisation. I also propose that the way members deal with the degree of precarity enacts how ‘indie’ one may be. I contest that current conceptions of precarity are insufficient for understanding contemporary creative industries, and that precarity should be conceived of in terms beyond the economic.

Jia LI (University of Tokyo)

Artistic Practice in Urban China

This research examines a new emerged way of artistic practice in mainland China since the 1990s. It particularly refers to experimental efforts by artists, social organizations, scholars and urban citizens who react to social realities through art activities. The artistic practice which is examined in this research is neither object-based creation nor artist-center practice; rather, it is experience-oriented social activity which brings social changes into daily life through communicative and dialogic interactions in an aesthetic way. Based on analysis of previous artworks, interviews with artists and ethnographic fieldwork in an independent art space, this research proposes the idea of ‘artistic participation’ to argue that artistic practice, which reacts to and makes conversations with social

realities, transform daily experience on the ground into various artistic narratives; at the same time, such artistic practice enables individuals to shape their own ways to dwell in the chaotic urbanism through communal aesthetic experience.

PENG Yaqi (Minzu University of China)

Narrating Domestic Crisis during the Lockdown: Interpreting a Soap Opera, Romance of Our Parents (《父母爱情》/fumu aiqing), Aired during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Urban China

During 2020, people around the globe had to withdraw from many of their activities in public spaces due to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. Family sphere has thus become the primary arena for their “social” lives. In urban China, soap operas provided residents one of the major domestic entertainments during the lockdown. In this essay I examine a soap opera, *Romance of Our Parents*, which became highly popular in China in 2020. I aim to unpack how the narratives of this TV show in a time of fear and uncertainty corresponded to urban Chinese residents’ effort to normalize the unexpected public health crisis. *Romance of Our Parents* voiced an apolitical yet highly moralistic account of everyday life, a narrative genre that is reminiscent of a Chinese traditional drama called *sanxiaoxi* (drama composed of “three little characters”). In *sanxiaoxi*, actions, dialogues and sentiments are all articulated in drastically contrastive ways to those in solemn, “grand dramas” (*daxi*) with a series of special performing tactics to evoke audiences’ affective response to elicit their empathic senses of a shared moral-and-emotional community. Adopting a similar narrative strategy, *Romance of Our Parents* embedded its apolitical moralistic story into a virtually political account of contemporary Chinese history. It suggested that, through mutual love and patience from family members and friends, life could not only be protected from uncontrollable public crises, it could also be perfectly sustained. Inspired by Bakhtin’s theory of dialogical imagination, in my analysis I explore how narratives are used, developed and interpreted in different social and historical contexts, thus constructing communicative actions for people stuck in ethical dilemmas. From this perspective, the underlying narratives articulated in *Romance of Our Parents* during the Covid-19 pandemic provided a discursive metaphor to understand how urban Chinese residents tried to legitimate their involuntary, confined family life.

Jennifer W.Y. TANG (Independent Scholar)

Thinking through dance: for an ethical and political otherwise in Hong Kong, after 2019

In the midst of a tropical cyclone and a shower of rubber bullets cloaked in clouds of tear gas, professional ballet and contemporary dancers in Hong Kong continue commuting across the city’s many districts to conduct their regular classes, rehearsals, and performances—their work, which cannot be postponed. The persistence in pursuing their vocation, despite ongoing social unrest in the summer of 2019, suggests not their refusal to participate in politics but, rather, their commitment to making and moving their lives on their own terms: a will ‘not to be governed *like that*’. Engaging with anthropological debates on freedom, ethics, and politics and Roy Wagner’s convention/invention dialectic, this paper

uses professional dance practice as an ethnographic resource for reconceptualising resistance in an exhausted governmental space. Situated at a moment of sociopolitical upheaval, the independent contemporary dancers not only move their bodies in their studios but also move their lives amid great uncertainties. Existing in 'pericapitalist' spaces, these dancers make 'entrepreneurial uses' of neoliberal conditions that would otherwise be experienced as 'precarious'. As such, they exemplify a way of living 'otherwise' through positive constructions of mutual care instead of antagonistic opposition premised upon rejecting an essentialised and emnified Other.

Panel D2 – "Education and Socialization" (Saturday/1110-1300)

HUANG Yan (Guangdong University of Foreign Studies)

Social representations of Motherhood in the Cross-cultural Context

The social representations of motherhood change with social factors such as economic and cultural development. As the gender equality in public sphere has been emphasized since the 1949, the employment rate after marriage of Chinese women has been at a relatively high level for decades, parts of the traditional motherhood have been shared by socialized childcare institutions and the previous generation. Although this parenting model is adopted by most Chinese families, it has always been criticized for many reasons. Under the multiple influences of Chinese social stratification, family planning policies and Western images, the current popular parenting model demands a high level of mother's emotional involvement and intellectual investment. Therefore, in recent years, even some highly educated Chinese women have chosen to return to families and reduce the participation of grandparents in childcare. With the covid-19 making the socialized childcare institutions less effective, the motherhood has to return from the large socialized unit to the small family unit, the ideal parenting model is also reconsidered. However, all recent changes in the social representations of motherhood suggest an elevation of the motherhood's value that has been underestimated.

Ling LU (Xiamen University)

Back to the Nature: the Discourse and Practice of Nature Education among New Middle Class in Bishan

Nature education has been witnessed rapid growth in China since 2010, more than 400 institutions were "self- defined" as Nature Education by 2018(China Nature Education Network, 2018). Under the same term, their forms are actually multiple. Various activities and institutions, such as nature experience programs, summer/winter schools, nature museum tours, nature crafts, environmental education, and other educational practices that involve more or less exposure to nature, are all called "Nature Education". Based on four-month fieldwork in Bishan, Anhui, where the experiment of natural education has thrived, I found that an increasing number of "new middle class" participated in this movement. Here, I attempt to address the following questions: why a plethora of organizations claim themselves as "nature education; in what ways the nature education differs from the quality education;

how to understand the new middle class's enthusiasm for this form of education. I will discuss how different parties have formulated the discourse and practice of nature education in China, and propose that the rise of nature education has a corresponding relationship with the cultivation of the "ideal person" in parents' eyes.

Jue WANG (Pennsylvania State University, University Park)

Delving into Online Spaces through Embodied Activities: COVID-19 and Popular Media

In this presentation, a study will be shared that was motivated by learning of the challenges that girls are experiencing during the pandemic caused by COVID-19 and how they use short video platforms, like TikTok not only to navigate and negotiate the environment in uncertainties but also to open possibilities for a moment of peace, indulging in joy, and to enable others to share their pleasure. This study is motivated by challenges faced by rural "left-behind" girls, children whose parent(s) seek work in urban areas and leave them in their hometowns (Yang & Ma, 2017), during the pandemic as home and school are collapsed into one space. The impact of remote instruction has intensified their situations since they must complete heavy school workloads while negotiating pandemic realities that have aggravated physical punishments, social norms and gender inequalities. To navigate and negotiate their pandemic environment and uncertainties of virtual immersion in multimodal literacy, left-behind girls are performing on TikTok through short videos of dance, song, and rhyming. They created a "safe" virtual homespace not only to entertain themselves during the challenging times but also to express their agency and subjectivity. Drawing from Mitchell and Reid-Walsh (2005) and Jenkin's (1998) perspectives on children's virtual immersion and critical media literacy, this study explores left-behind girls' use of multimodal literacy in spaces of childhood to discuss how the girls' use of TikTok demonstrates embodied, felt, and expressed opportunities to be creators and inventors in the imagined and real world. Songs, dances, creative performances practiced via video platforms are not only the carriers of popular culture, but the embodiment of culture.

Wanru YAN (East China Normal University)

Articulating 'Masculine Exemplars': Role Practice and Identity Politics among Male Teachers in China's Primary Schools

This article examines the tension between male teachers' articulation of 'masculine role models' and multiple expectations from different stakeholders in and outside primary schools. Drawing on participant observation and in-depth interviews with ten primary teachers in Fujian Province, it highlights why these male teachers choose to be a primary school teacher, what roles and responsibilities they need to shoulder and how such cultural politics of role practice influence their professional development. Inspired by role theories and gender studies, this article argues that the role-sets of being a male teacher in primary school have become a contested space within which policy makers, leaders, and teachers' families create an aspirational type of becoming and being masculine.

Panel E1 – “Gender and Health” (Saturday/1400–1545)

Jingwen CUI (SOAS, University of London)

To pain as females every month: dysmenorrhea in the contemporary China

Dysmenorrhea, or the menstrual pain, is widespread among women, although it has not been largely discussed in anthropology. This paper is an ethnography on how young Chinese females experience and interpret dysmenorrhea. In this changing country, while traditional Chinese medicine and modern biomedicine have attempted to explain, treat, mitigate, and cure this quotidian pain, their competitive relationship has made every individual medical choice, especially those about treating incurable and untypical disease like dysmenorrhea, to be complicated and paradoxical. Today, with the continuing and strong enchantment of China in science and modernity, pain killers, a biomedical treatment for dysmenorrhea, is highly welcomed and celebrated, but in the meantime, traditional treatment for this pain is critiqued as not efficacious, valid, reliable and scientific. On the one hand, this paper starts with individual experiences of dysmenorrhea to trace how these medical debates emerge in the transforming social history; on the other, I will also explore how such medical intervention means to every female sufferer in the daily life. Still, medicine nevertheless plays a significant role in transforming the painful bodies and re-embedding female sufferers into the normal way of living. In this process, pain killers act excellently to conceal the menstrual pain, control female bodies, and frame them to be both ideal consumers and laborers in the modern Chinese society. As such, to pain or not, females with dysmenorrhea remain to be misfit when their pain is ignored, normalized and concealed in social institutions. And this paper aims to explore and question this misfit.

Tianqi HUANG (University of Cambridge)

Feeling the Uncertainty: A study of IVF Decision-Making within Chinese Families

In vitro fertilisation (IVF) has been regarded as “hope technology” (Franklin, 1997). However, the IVF treatment in practice is a complex experience where hope and anxiety coexist (Yu, et al, 2020). The process is not only reproducing a child, but also reproducing new uncertainties (Franklin, 1997). Uncertainty associated with IVF treatment processes and its potential consequences are considered by intended parents before they undertake an IVF cycle. However, the uncertainty in this specific pre-IVF period has not been explored by previous scholarship. In this paper, I argue that the uncertainty inherent in the pre-IVF process influences the specific practice of decision-making, including understanding the technology, visions of the future, planning IVF (the choice of hospital, the timing, financial considerations), and risk consideration etc. I carried out a qualitative study in Beijing to study the IVF decision-making process in the Chinese context. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 29 women who were in the IVF process. Interviews were recorded with the consent of participants. I transcribed interviews verbatim and then adopted thematic analysis. Pseudonyms are used and the information presented in the paper is carefully checked to avoid any recognition of individuals through inference. In this paper, I present the specific consideration process of IVF in practice. Specifically, I

discuss the factors that participants take into account and I analyse the uncertainty revealed through the decision-making processes. I also document how participants perceive this uncertainty associated with IVF during their decision-making processes. I further show how they balance their pursuits of certainty and the uncertain possibilities associated with IVF. In conclusion, I discuss what factors have framed the intersectional model of participants' consideration and how these factors help understand the broader struggles that the current Chinese confront with. Their choices about IVF can help map the larger social forces and contribute to understanding uncertainties and the corresponding solutions in the rapidly transforming Chinese society.

WU Yuehan (CUHK)

Coping with Risk, Living with Uncertainty: How women understand HPV in mainland China

As one of the oldest virus strains, human papillomavirus (HPV) has a long history of symbiosis with human beings, and most sexually active women and men will be infected at some point in their lives. Although most HPV infections do not cause health problems, a small proportion of infections with high-risk HPV strains can persist and progress to cervical cancer. By far, cervical cancer is the most common HPV-related disease. Nearly all cases of cervical cancer can be attributable to HPV infection. Therefore, preventing HPV infections is one of the keys to preventing cervical cancer, and HPV vaccination is the primary prevention in comprehensive cervical cancer control. By 2020, 3 HPV vaccines were prequalified globally. In May 2016, the CFDA approved the bivalent HPV vaccine to enter the mainland market. In the following two years, 4-valent and 9-valent HPV vaccines were also respectively approved. Since then, scientific popularization of HPV has started to emerge on the Chinese Internet. Information about who and where can have HPV vaccination has become a recurrent topic on healthcare-related social media and e-commercial platforms. Many Chinese women have heard about HPV for the first time in their lives. This presentation aims to explain how women understand HPV according to the recent popularization and commercialization of HPV vaccination in mainland China. Concerning ethnographic examples, I argue that Chinese women regard HPV not only as a risk for cervical cancer but also as a risk for their reputations, intimacy, and personhood.

Wenjia ZHOU (University of Turku)

Three Shots for Preventing Cancer? An Ethnographic Study of Chinese Women's Embodied Experiences of HPV Vaccination

In the name of preventing cervical cancer, the World Health Organization promotes the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. More than one hundred countries have included the vaccine in their national vaccination program. The number of individuals taking the vaccination continues to increase, and as a result, policymakers, researchers, and citizens are showing growing interest. However, the lived experiences and politics of the HPV vaccine remain under-explored to date. To shed light on HPV and health politics, I will investigate Chinese women's consumption of the HPV vaccination. The motivation for focusing on HPV vaccination in China is three-fold: the vaccination is highly commercialized, its target customers are mainly adult women, and the public actively embraces the

vaccine with little hesitancy. I ask what roles do individual agency, market power, and state authority play in Chinese women's pursuit of the HPV vaccination in post-socialist China? Theoretically, this research utilizes the Foucauldian concepts of biopolitics and the bioeconomy with feminist technoscience studies. Methodologically, this research draws on archival research, online ethnography, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. Starting from a feminist standpoint, this project will add to the knowledge of Chinese women's lived experiences concerning their bodies, identities, and health. More theoretically, I will elaborate on the entangled relationship between Chinese women, the market, and the state in contemporary China.

Panel E2 – "Uncertain Economies" (Saturday 1400-1545)

Gloria DOU (University of Hong Kong)

Risk, profit, and neoliberal entrepreneurialism in Hong Kong's late capitalist market: stancetaking about meet-up trades in mediated communication on Carousell during COVID- 19

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has affected commercial activities on a large scale and brought about unprecedented constraints on and changes to people's lifestyle. In face of the limitations to individuals' mobility as well as the uncertainty of health risk, nevertheless, amateur entrepreneurs on Carousell, an online classified platform in Hong Kong, have turned to local couriers and post services to ensure their business is still running smoothly during this time. Drawing upon methods of digital ethnography and linguistic anthropology, this study explores how Carousellers engage in a variety of discursive practices in the online-offline nexus and mediate social relations and transactions in a time of uncertainty. It is argued that as a contestation and negotiation of the structural constraints, Carousellers construct neoliberal selfhoods in their engagement of online business during the pandemic. By actively commodifying language and other semiotic means, these sellers exploit opportunities offered by a late capitalist market in Hong Kong.

Deborah FROMM (University of Campinas)

Protecting markets and the 'economization of uncertainty' in times of pandemic: a look at the insurance industry in Brazil

The new coronavirus pandemic has created a scenario of uncertainty and indeterminacy, consolidating an unprecedented global crisis. The anthropology of finance, however, has already taught us that instability and crisis characterize the culture of the global financial market elites, who, through their ideologies and practices daily life, produce economic crises in various ways and increase the levels of inequalities. Over the past two decades, social scientists concerned with the advances of neoliberalism have drawn attention to processes of "economization of uncertainty" central to the reproduction of global financial capitalism. There are two sides to these processes. On the one hand, there are a whole series of technical and political apparatuses aimed at reducing uncertainty and selling security

(insurance policies and risk management technologies, etc.). On the other hand, and at the same time, social studies of the financial sector have pointed to a reverse side of statistical risk and probability technologies that are concerned not only with reducing uncertainties, but also with creating earnings opportunities in the uncertain future. With a certain level of control, it is desirable to assume risks for future gains. From the perspective of sectors of the Brazilian financial elites, it is the tension between managing risks and taking risks that is on the agenda. From data produced in ethnographic research on the Brazilian insurance market, a market that is precisely on the frontier of these perspectives, I see how the monetized uncertainty and, in turn, the security of the protection markets, both become valuable commodities. In this context, both the calculation of risk and the protection markets that sell security gain even more prominence and expand into new zones of accumulation.

Rui SUN (CUHK)

Quantifying Uncertainties: decision-making, senses, and timeliness

This paper focuses on the teeny-weeny transactions in the Dounan wholesale fresh-cut flower market. By delineating the everyday practices of flower economy and the processes of bargaining to settle down a dealing price, I strive to present how in face of daily uncertainties flower dealers come to terms with each other. Market in its abstract form is a mechanism to set price, while in concrete contexts, I will argue, is a decision-making process. My ethnographic data indicate the disparities between a 7-yuan per package rose and a 7.5-yuan per package rose are more than a matter of 0.5-yuan business. What is involved in between the 0.5-yuan is for one an effort of the flower dealers to quantify uncertainties, and for another an entangled network among calculating agents, calculable goods and calculative spaces. Michel Callon (1998) asserts what is essential to market exchange is culturally-bounded entanglements can be reduced to the objects of instrumental calculation in a framed market event. Pulling on and meanwhile taking issue with Callon's formulation on markets, I devote to inquire how the "reduction" process is materialized. My ethnographic stories will show how listening to the market, observing the flow of crowds, chit-chatting over weather forecast and so forth converge to the bargaining of prices and eventually reduce to a decision of final price. Uncertainties have always been the main rhythm in a market setting long before Covid-19 took the reign of the globe. What is conducive to contemplate on is more than taking uncertainties as an epidemic, but rather discern a chaotic flux of ephemeral sensations and unstable networks which result in an uncertainty as nuanced as 0.5-yuan RMB.

David TSOI (CUHK)

Structurally Induced Vulnerabilities: An Economic Perspective

To escape from a sensationalized victimhood narrative which portrays masseurs as young boys being lured into gay prostitution (see Lam and Lai 2018; Lau 2018; Apple Daily 2018), I seek to understand the forms of exploitation faced by masseurs, namely labor exploitation and sexual violence, in their working process as MSM (males who have sex with males) sex workers as the structural vulnerabilities induced by the legal, economic, and moral systems in Hong Kong, I mainly adopt the notions of

precariousness and precarity in my analysis. Butler (2016: 20–21) theorizes the intertwining relationship between precariousness as “[the] vulnerable experiences of social and economic deprivation,” and precarity as the “the failures and inequalities of socioeconomic and political institutions.” Following Butler, I connect the vulnerable experiences embodied by masseurs to the legal, economic, and moral structures which distribute these vulnerabilities differentially along the social hierarchies of sex, class, and different forms of labor. Legally, masseurs are bound by legal constraints targeting sex workers, which highly limit their access to labor rights. Economically, the nature of gay massage business as a part of the informal economy enforces a self-employed working model, in which masseurs bear most of their financial risks, whilst spa owners attempt to maximize profiting off masseurs’ labor, sometimes to a point of exploitation as evidenced by ethnographic data. Morally, masseurs are shrouded in multiple levels of constraints around sexual morals, to which masseurs are compelled to respond with some degree of psychosocial disengagement. These three forms of structural constraints sometimes intersect, and sometimes work on their own, in forming the state of precariousness for masseurs. Due to the time constraints on presentation, I will mainly focus on the economic facet of structural violence endured by my informants.