



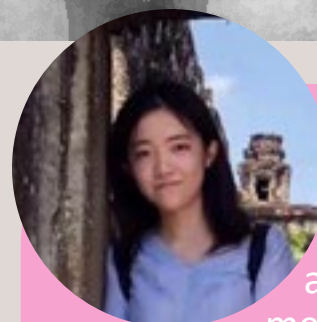
Friday Seminar

Jan 23

1:00 - 2:30PM
NAH 213

IVF Doctors as Moral Pioneers and Moral Guardians in Pronatalist China

Drawing on multifaceted data from 23 months of fieldwork conducted between 2017 and 2023 in reproductive centers, fertility laboratories, and with several families in Guangdong Province, this talk examines how and why national demographic anxiety propagated by the state is, under certain circumstances, rarely translated into IVF doctors' clinical reasoning and practices. My fieldwork reveals that, contrary to portrayals of Chinese biomedical professionals as mere agents of state governance, some IVF doctors paternalistically assume the roles of "moral pioneers," "moral guardians," or both, acting as a counterbalance to pronatalism and rising patriarchal values. Rather than simply promoting assisted reproductive technology (ART), they advise many women of advanced maternal age (AMA) seeking a second child through ART to reconsider or discontinue treatment, believing that their advice is not only medically sound but also morally in the women's best interest. These doctors' reasoning emerges from navigating contradictory regimes of reproductive governance, concerns for women's health, alignment with global reproductive norms, and their own moral and family values. While reinforcing state narratives that position women as the source of declining fertility rates, these doctors also provide medical justifications for forgoing treatment, offering some women an alternative model of femininity.



Ziqi XIE is a sociocultural anthropologist whose specialization in medical and psychological anthropology informs her ethnographic research on reproduction, kinship, biomedical technologies, and medical knowledge. She recently received her PhD in Anthropology from Boston University. Based on her dissertation, *Reproducing the "Ideal Chinese Family" and Technology: IVF Attempts, Reproductive Governance, and Biomedicine in Pronatalist China*, her first book project examines both the "using" and "making" of ART, theorizing assisted reproduction as a site of moral negotiation where the localization, reproduction, and production of clinical medicine and medical knowledge are shaped by tensions among changing family ethics, pronatalist politics, and different forms of authority.