



香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



性別研究中心
Gender Research Centre, CUHK



Gender Studies
Programme
性別研究課程



CUHK
SOCIOLOGY
中大社會系

Research Centre on
Migration and Mobility

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**WOMEN'S MOBILITY:
NEGOTIATING WORK AND
FAMILY SPHERES
IN ASIA**

DATE: 30-31 JULY, 2019

**VENUE: ROOM 422, SINO BUILDING ,
THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**

Register at bit.ly/WUNCUHK2019



International Conference

Women's Mobility: Negotiating Work and Family Spheres in Asia

Date: 30-31 July, 2019

Venue: Room 422, Sino Building

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)

Co-Organizers:

Gender Studies Programme, CUHK

Gender Research Centre, CUHK

**Research Centre on Migration and Mobility, Department of Sociology,
CUHK**

Supported by:

Worldwide Universities Network

<https://wun.ac.uk/wun/research/view/womens-mobility>

Academic Lead: Prof. Jing Song jingsong@cuhk.edu.hk

Participating Universities

Auburn University

CUHK

Shanghai University

The University of Sydney

University of Massachusetts Amherst

University of Oxford

University of Sussex

University of York

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Zhejiang University

Conference Schedule

Day 1: 30 July 2019

Reception & Registration		09:00-09:20
Welcome		
Prof. Fanny M. Cheung Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Vice-President Choh-Ming Li Professor of Psychology CUHK		09:20-09:25
Prof. Sara Zhong Director, Gender Studies Programme CUHK		09:25-09:30
Group photo taking		09:30-09:40
Panel 1: Transnationalism		09:50-12:10
Chair: Prof. Jing Song (CUHK)		
Gender, Heterosexuality and Migration in East and South-East Asia: A Theoretical Framework	Stevi Jackson (University of York) 09:50-10:10 Discussant: Shawna Tang 10:10-10:20	
Making A Life Out of “Unintended Transnationalism”: Thai Women’s Experiences of Transnational Living by Partnering Westerners as A Strategy for A Better Life	Paul Statham (University of Sussex) 10:20-10:40 Discussant: Jing Song 10:40-10:50	
Mental Health and Contact with Family Members Back Home among Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong.	Eric Fong, Yingtong Lai, and Kumiko Shibuya. (CUHK) 10:50-11:10 Discussant: Arianne Gaetano 11:10-11:20	

Significant Life Events and Timing of Emigration among Female Workers: A Case Study of Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong	Jing Song, Weiwen Lai and Eric Fong (CUHK) 11:20-11:40 Discussant: Paul Statham 11:40-11:50
Discussion:	11:50-12:10
Lunch Venue: Room 422, Sino Building	12:20-14:00
Panel 2: Fluid Family, Flexible Citizenship Chair: Prof. Yuying Tong (CUHK)	14:00-16:30
Transnational Families of Queer Diasporic Women: Between Singapore and Sydney	Shawna Tang (The University of Sydney) 14:00-14:20 Discussant: Eric Fong 14:20-14:30
Marriage Satisfaction of Migrant Workers: Labor and Love	Wenrong Qian (Zhejiang University) Yu Song (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University) 14:30-14:50 Discussant: Yingchun Ji 14:50-15:00
Mingle Modernity with Tradition: Women Providing for the Elderly in Transitional China	Yingchun Ji and Ruonan Xu (Shanghai University) 15:00-15:20 Discussant: Hsunhui Tseng 15:20-15:30
Moral Hierarchy and Maternal Citizenship: Marriage Migrant Women and Their Businesses in Taiwan	Hsunhui Tseng (CUHK)

	15:30-15:50 Discussant: Yuying Tong 15:50-16:00
Discussion:	16:00-16:30
Dinner: CC Staff Canteen	17:00-19:00

Day 2: 31 July 2019

Panel 3: Women's Mobility and Immobility Chair: Prof. Eric Fong (CUHK)	09:30-12:00
Glass Ceilings + Iron Rice Bowls = Glass Bowls: Public Sector Jobs in South Korea as Protected but Still Unequal Gendered Employment Niches	Miliann Kang, Juyeon Park, and C.N. Le (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) 9:30-9:50 Discussant: Stevi Jackson 9:50-10:00
Challenges of Social Mobility: Career Women in Urban China Contemplating Marriage and Cultivating Autonomous Selves	Arianne Gaetano (Auburn University) 10:00-10:20 Discussant: Yu Song 10:20-10:30
Local School Systems and Rural Chinese Families' Gendered Migration Strategies	Rachel Murphy (University of Oxford) 10:30-10:50 Discussant: Arianne Gaetano 10:50-11:00
Being Single and Doing Business: Fluid Womanhood in China's Market Reform and Rising Entrepreneurship	Jing Song (CUHK) Lulu Li

	(CUHK) 11:00-11:20 Discussant: Rachel Murphy 11:20-11:30
Discussion	11:30-11:50
Focused Discussion: building on the conference themes for future research collaboration	11:50-12:30
Lunch: The Stage Venue: LG3, Cheng Yu Tung Building	13:00-15:00
Focused Discussion: building on the conference themes for future meeting and publication plans	15:20-17:00
Dinner: CC Staff Canteen	17:00-19:00

Abstracts

Panel 1: Transnationalism

Chair: Prof. Jing Song (CUHK)

Gender, Heterosexuality and Migration in East and South-East Asia: A Theoretical Framework

Stevi Jackson, University of York

Abstract:

It is now well established that migration is structured by gender. In this paper, I will argue for the explicit recognition of the heterosexual ordering of gender relations in migration processes, focusing specifically on gendered patterns of migration in East and South-East Asia. I will outline the analytical framework I use to address the relationship between gender, sexuality and heterosexuality within a multi-dimensional view of the social that recognizes that heterosexuality is not monolithic (Jackson 2006; 2018). While heterosexuality is a ubiquitous feature of social life, there is no invariant heterosexual order, but rather particular orderings of heterosexuality in any given place at any given time, affected by the organization of kinship, family practices, material economic circumstances and local cultural beliefs. I suggest that attention to heterosexuality within multiple dimension of sociality might facilitate more nuanced, less polarized approaches to questions of agency and structure (or agency versus exploitation) in understanding gendered migration including labour migration, transnational marriage, sex worker migration and the employment of migrant domestic workers. Such an approach also pays attention to the ways in which the heterosexual ordering of gender intersects with class and with relations between richer and poorer regions within and beyond Asia.

Making A Life Out of “Unintended Transnationalism”: Thai Women’s Experiences of Transnational Living by Partnering Westerners as A Strategy for A Better Life

Paul Statham

Sussex Centre for Migration Research (SCMR)

University of Sussex

Abstract:

This article provides an insightful contextualized analysis of what transnational living means for Thai women in long-term partnerships with Western men. We start from an understanding of this form of transnational living as ‘unintended transnationalism’, i.e., that living a life defined by dependent intercultural exchanges with a foreigner was a by-product, not an aspiration of her strategy for a better life. We study how her relative access to rights, cultural differences, and positioning in social space and place, resulting from her decision to share a home with a Westerner, constitutes a specific form of ‘transnational living’. Then we examine how this transnational living impacts upon her individual wellbeing, social relations and life-trajectory over the long-term. The empirical analysis examines her negotiated exchanges with her partner (in a context of dependency) in three domains: setting up home with him (access to rights); interpersonal relations at home (cultural differences); and re-making home in Thailand (social space and place). The study draws from twenty biographical interviews with women in partnerships (between 7 and 30 years) with Westerners, who currently reside in Thailand. We find that ‘transnational living’ is a challenging experience even for women who make material gains. First, her access to rights and property, healthcare etc. is formally dependent on maintaining her ‘marriage’. Second, she faces strong pressures to acculturate towards his Western tastes, language and values in the home, leading to conflicts. Third, her partnership defines her natal family relations, that can be challenging, while she faces stigmatization by Thai society. Overall, living a life of ‘unintended transnationalism’ can lead to relative isolation, dissociation from family, and dissimulation from belonging in Thailand. This case study counters some of the positive normative views of transnational living in the transnational migration literature that emphasizes the relative ease and benefits of living ‘here’ and ‘there’.

Mental Health and Contact with Family Members Back Home among Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong

Eric Fong, Yingtong Lai, Kumiko Shibuya

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Abstract:

A large number of migrants from Indonesia and the Philippines are working as domestic helpers in various East and Southeast Asian countries. Many of them are married women who left their spouses and children in the home country to work temporarily in other countries as migrant workers. The working environment of these domestic helpers is non-conventional. As they live with their employers, they are practically on duty almost 24 hours a day. The boundary between their workplace and private space gets blurred may create insecurity feeling. Due to the long working hours and social isolation stemming from the live-in requirements, some of these migrant domestic helpers develop physical and emotional problems. In this paper, we explore how their workload, physical health, and emotional problems are related to the frequency of contact with their families in the home country. One can expect that those who experience such difficulties may actively contact their family members to seek help and emotional support. On the other hand, one can also expect that they may not seek help and support from their families as they do not expect their families in the home country to understand their situation. Using data on foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong, collected in 2017, we explore the frequency and nature of their contact with their families. Our analysis suggests that migrant domestic helpers with their own room and better mental health maintain higher level of contact with their family members. This pattern, however, does not apply to their spouses and mothers. Implications of our findings will be discussed.

Significant Life Events and Timing of Emigration Among Female Workers: A Case Study of Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

Jing Song, Weiwen Lai, Eric Fong

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Female migrant workers are on the rise in the world. How significant life events are related to their timing of emigration? Drawing the Survey of Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong we address how life events and family status are related to migration patterns of female migrant workers. The discrete-time model uses the pooled person-year data (N=22,676) to examine how the chance of the first international migration varies by (1) the occurrence of marriage, divorce and childbirth (2) the lagged effect of such life events (3) the sociodemographic status as a result of such life events (4) human capital and market positions. The marriage “events” (in the current year or in the previous year) reduce the chance of international migration but the effect of the marriage “status” is not significant; there are also different effects by the birth events, the “lagged” birth events, and the number of children. The findings also suggest that people with higher education and better market positions are more likely to conduct international migration earlier. The logistic regression model (N=1879) uses the individual respondents’ life course patterns, human capital and market positions to examine the chance of foreign domestic workers to carry out single or multiple times of international migration. Respondents who are never married or those who were not married at the time of their first move are more likely to have conducted multiple times of international migration. The more prestigious employment status prior to migration is also positively associated with their propensity to conduct international migration for multiple times.

Panel 2: Fluid Family, Flexible Citizenship

Chair: Prof. Yuying Tong (CUHK)

Transnational Families of Queer Diasporic Women: Between Singapore and Sydney

Shawna Tang, The University of Sydney

Abstract:

East Asian marriage migration, as a field of study, has been almost entirely preoccupied with heterosexual cross-border marriages, with specific concerns for vulnerable female migrants in hypergamous unions with citizen-husbands. This paper takes up the critical feminist concerns of the existing scholarship but makes a queer and inclusive turn by focusing on same-sex female marriage migrants from East Asia, specifically, Singapore, who have moved to Australia in search of a family life. In the context of East Asia, queer marriage migration is almost unheard of and often overlooked, even within the body of family migration scholarship that takes to task the heteronormative state-family nexus. Yet, discrete work in queer research reveals increasing numbers of Asian same-sex migrations since a decade ago, particularly to Australia (Yue 2008, Smith 2012). In this paper, I maintain the gender lens on East Asian marriage migration by considering the case of Singaporean lesbians who have crossed borders in order to form families. The paper theorizes the “transnational” from sexual, queer and critical trans studies to analyze the ways in which queer diasporic women take on the double burden of familial citizenship in both host and home country: forming their same-sex families across borders in Sydney while at the same time practicing a gendered mode of familial citizenship in Singapore, where queer women are rendered as ‘single daughters’ and continue to provide caregiving for elderly parents from afar. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork, including interviews and a critical autoethnography, the paper tracks the lives of Chinese and mixed-race lesbian households to provide insights into how familial migration is lived out along queer, racial and gendered lines.

Marriage Satisfaction of Migrant Workers: Labor and Love

Wenrong Qian, Zhejiang University

Yu Song, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Abstract:

The research drew on a questionnaire survey of 904 married migrant workers in Zhejiang province in 2009 to examine the impacts of migration on migrant workers' marriage satisfaction. The results indicated that the majority of migrant workers migrated to cities with their spouses. Although 87.7 per cent of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with their marriage, the marriage satisfaction of migrant workers were affected by various personal and social factors including their gender, employment status, income level, daily working hours, health, distance of migration, local people's attitudes towards migrant workers. Male respondents were more satisfied with their marriage than their female counterparts. Migrant workers with a comparatively stable job, higher income level, fewer daily working hours, better health, shorter distance of migration, and experience of local people's discrimination had higher marriage satisfaction.

Mingle Modernity with Tradition: Women Providing for the Elderly in Transitional China

Yingchun Ji, Ruonan Xu

Shanghai University

Abstract:

As the number of new births continues to decline for a second consecutive year after the implementation of the comprehensive two child family policy, the increase of aging population is also unprecedented in China. Old age support has become an impending social issue in China. With the still developing social welfare system, family support for the elderly has been the norm. Scholars have increasingly investigated the new phenomena of daughter providing for the elderly in spite of the Confucian patriarchal tradition of raising sons for old age support. Yet, most focusing on daughter's support for and caregiving to the parents, but did not look into how they interact, especially how parents support and provide for daughters. While more and more research studies daughters caring for their parents, they pay less attention to daughters-in-law. This research intends to understand daughter's old age support in the context

of daughter-parents' daily interaction and married women's dual role of being daughter and daughter-in-law. Using participant observation and semi-structured interviews, we interviewed 20 women in a urban-rural integrated region in the Yangtze Delta. Our results showed that for many women, their parents' support continue after their marriage. The bonded intimacy is strengthened during the daily mutual support featured by a combination of money, emotion and duty. These women are practicing a modern norm of daughter supporting elderly parents out of the patriarchal tradition with not much scripts. Being somebody's daughters, these women are also somebody else' daughters-in-law. When obeying the patriarchal expectation to fulfil their duties, they are selecting a modern minimalist norm. They support and care their parents-in-law as expected, but lack the bonding and intimacy with their in-laws, or hire helpers to substitute themselves, or divide the roles with their husbands.

Moral Hierarchy and Maternal Citizenship: Marriage Migrant Women and Their Businesses in Taiwan

Hsunhui Tseng, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract:

With an influx of marriage migrant women to Taiwan from China and Southeast Asia, there have been a considerable number of businesses, such as snack restaurants, nail shops, massage parlors, or karaoke bars, run by migrant women. Some of these women initiating a small business to support the family economy are portrayed by the mass media and authorities as successful migrant women, the role model of the mothers of the second generation born to transnational married couples; while those landing up in the sex entertainment industry are considered agents of Jiajiehun zhenmai yin (fake marriage/real prostitution), who should be responsible for Taiwan's moral and social disorder. In fact, many of these foreign spouses involved in the entertainment industry are also mothers who struggle for a better life for their children. Based on findings from two projects on marriage migrants as entrepreneurs and sex workers respectively, this paper explores the moral hierarchy of these businesses and their association with these migrant women's maternal citizenship, which, according to Kymlicka and Norman (1994), emphasizes mothering responsibility and virtue as the principles of women's political and social rights acquirement. Through interviews with 80 women involved in various businesses and ethnography conducted at an entertainment place, this paper

compares the approaches the two groups of women adopt to acquire their maternal citizenship and see how this citizenship is moralized and racialized for immigrants.

Panel 3: Women's Mobility and Immobility

Chair: Prof. Eric Fong (CUHK)

Glass Ceilings + Iron Rice Bowls = Glass Bowls: Public Sector Jobs in South Korea as Protected but Still Unequal Gendered Employment Niches

Miliann Kang, Juyeon Park, C.N. Le

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Abstract:

In developing the theoretical concept of “glass bowls,” this study draws upon two sets of literatures regarding “glass ceilings” and “iron rice bowls” to show how public sector employment simultaneously provides a protected labor market for women but still is characterized by persistent obstacles to gender equality and advancement. The “iron rice bowls” term is most often used to study post-socialist societies and their transition to market economies. However, it is also commonly used--but less studied--in highly industrialized capitalist economies such as South Korea, particular to refer to how workers negotiate the tradeoffs between security and mobility in high status but relatively low paying and unstimulating public sector jobs. We build on the “glass” concept to designate gendered labor processes in employment sectors, but employ it more broadly to include not just barriers to promotion but also gender, work and family concerns. Specifically, while the glass ceiling has been used as a metaphor for impenetrability and imperviousness, we invoke the qualities of glass as fragile and unstable to show how women's gains in public employment in South Korea, while significant, are still precarious. By focusing on public officials, we show the variation in different “glass bowl” sectors and how women confront multiple tradeoffs in negotiating issues of hiring, promotion, long-term labor force participation and work and family responsibilities.

Challenges of Social Mobility: Career Women in Urban China Contemplating Marriage and Cultivating Autonomous Selves

Arienne M. Gaetano, Auburn University

Abstract:

In numerous ways, young urban Chinese women have been the privileged beneficiaries of post-socialist reform and opening policies that have increased urban household incomes,

mandated smaller family size, and improved public and higher education access for girls. Compared with past generations of Chinese women as well as with their rural and migrant counterparts, urban Chinese women today are highly “upwardly mobile” by measures of education and income. They also enjoy much personal autonomy and exercise consumer choice. Yet their socioeconomic advancement as well as individualization and well-being are hampered by gender segmentation and discrimination in the labor market, as well as by pressure to conform to neotraditional gender roles and norms regarding marriage and family, all of which reinforce a broader resurgence of societal gender inequality. For example, highly educated career women are disadvantaged in the “marriage market” due to hypergamy, a traditional gendered norm and a contemporary strategy to manage precarity, which dictates that women should marry above their social station and men should not. Particularly in large cities of China, some women otherwise considered successful are unwittingly postponing marriage beyond the expected age of 27, and potentially in perpetuity. That such women have been categorically and derogatorily labeled as “leftover women” by news and social media reflects societal discomfort with their (however temporary) non-normative gender role. In this presentation, I focus on the experiences and narratives of single women, drawing upon ethnographic research conducted intermittently in Shanghai during the summer months of 2012, 2015, and 2017. Through this research, I illuminate shifting gender roles and norms of personhood, structural and ideological inequalities that shape such gendered predicaments, and the potential for single women to forge new identities, expand their social roles, and overtly or subtly transform hegemonic gender norms and structures in urban China.

Local School Systems and Rural Chinese Families’ Gendered Migration Strategies

Rachel Murphy, University of Oxford

Abstract:

This paper draws on interviews and ethnographic observation to examine how regional variations in school systems impact on families’ gendered migration strategies and on families’ strategies for supporting their children’s education. It compares how school systems in two counties in China’s rural south interior intersect with local migration patterns to influence prevailing ideas about mothers’ and fathers’ obligations to contribute to their children’s educational futures, which migration ostensibly serves. Key axes of difference in the school systems across the two counties include extent of school consolidation and boarding,

prevalence of private schools, and availability of decent vocational training. By means of attention to school systems, the paper offers fresh insights into the concept of ‘local infrastructures of care’ (Parvati, 2012) and the implications for families’ gendered and generational divisions of labour, parenting identities, and the meaning of ‘care’ in highly migratory contexts.

Being Single and Doing Business: Fluid Womanhood in China’s Market Reform and Rising Entrepreneurship

Jing Song, Lulu Li, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract:

This study investigates how single women entrepreneurs have experienced and negotiated their career development and private lives. Under the market-oriented economy and the rise of private sectors, it is to be examined whether women’s economic success goes hand in hand with greater autonomy in intimate and family relations. Drawing on in-depth interviews as well as online observation of single female entrepreneurs in China, this study finds that their market achievements in private businesses do not necessarily empower them in their private lives but may add to new complications in their intimate and family relations. Their career development may provide chances and excuses to escape family obligations but also add to pressures that they are “too successful” to be ideal wives and become the “other” as a single woman as well as a woman in the business sphere. The double “othering” process has led to women’s dilemmas and strategies of selective transgression and selective compliance with conventional norms. They have learned to use emotional leverages and fallback positions to continuously negotiate their public and domestic roles (such as being filial daughters) with their parents, partners and colleagues. Their heterogeneous material and discursive practices have contributed to their fluid womanhood.

Transportation

There are multiple means of transportation for you to commute between the Hong Kong International Airport and the CUHK campus, where the conference venue is located. The conference location is Sino Building at CUHK. The recommended hotel is Hyatt. Both are near the MTR station of University.

You may choose to buy an Octopus Card for your own convenience. It can be used in most of the transportation, including buses, MTR, ferry, and some of the minibuses; it can also be used in most of the vending machines, convenient stores, and fast food shops. Octopus cards can be bought at the Customer Service Centres in the Airport Express Line and in all MTR stations.

By taxi

The trip from the airport to the CUHK campus is approximately 45 minutes with a fare of around HK\$300. Most taxi drivers in Hong Kong understand some English. You can show the following text (English and Chinese names of the destination) to the driver:

To the conference location:

Sino Building, The Chinese University of Hong Kong 香港中文大學信和樓

To the hotel:

Hyatt Regency, Shatin 香港沙田凱悅酒店

By MTR train

Information on MTR service can be found at <http://mtr.com.hk/en/customer/main/index.html>.

There are three exits at University Station amongst which two are connected to the CUHK campus (Exits A and C). The CUHK campus map is accessible online at www.cuhk.edu.hk/english/campus/cuhk-campus-map.htm

CUHK Campus Map



Campus Map
校園地圖

➤ From University MTR Station to Sino Building: 8 minutes on foot.

