

# Re-Worlding

Chinese Transnationalisms

An Online International Symposium

26th – 27th August 2021



## THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 2021

11.45 am **Welcome**

### 12.00pm **RETHINKING CLASS AND HUMAN MOBILITIES**

**Jian Xu and Wanning Sun** – *'Follow me! I Can Teach You How to Come to Australia to Make Money!': Brokering Transnational Chinese Labor Migration Through Kuaishou*

**Qian Gong and Huan Wu** – *Striking a balance in Transnational Living: Chinese Skilled Trade Workers in Western Australia*

**Jin Shuheng** – *Mismatched: Intensive Mothering in Urban Villages of China*

**Fran Martin** – *Making China's Mobile Middle Class: Gender and Subject Production in Transnational Education*

2.45pm **Afternoon Break**

### 3.15pm **REMAKING CITIES AND CITIZENSHIP IN DIASPORA**

**Dallas Rogers, Christina Ho and Jacqueline Nelson** – *'China Anxiety': De-Racialising Debates about Australian Housing and Education*

**Qiuping Pan** – *Strategic Noncitizenship: Mainland Chinese Immigrants as Noncitizens in Australia*

**Shanthi Robertson** – *Sydney as 'Sinoburbia': Patterns of Diversification across Emerging Chinese Ethnoburbs*

**Alexandra Wong** – *Young Chinatown: Chinese Youth Diaspora and Everyday Place-Making in Sydney's Chinatown*

6.00pm **Evening Break**

### 6:30pm **KEYNOTE ADDRESS – PROFESSOR PÁL NYÍRI**

*The Reenchantment of Culture and Flexible Citizenship in a Nativist World*

## FRIDAY 27 AUGUST 2021

### 12.00pm **KEYNOTE ADDRESS – PROFESSOR PUN NGAI**

*Nationalism, Vocational Education and the Mobile Working-Class Subjects*

1.30pm **Afternoon Break**

### 2.00pm **AFFECTS AND TEMPORALITIES OF TRANS-BORDER "CHINESENESS"**

**Calvin Hui** – *A Desire for Hong Kong Popular Cultures: Jia Zhangke's Cinema Revisited*

**Lin Song and Shih-Diing Liu** – *Intimate Strangers: Nei Di Sheng as Emotional Subjects in Recent Hong Kong Protests*

**Justin Haruyama** – *History Written in Advance: The Temporal Politics of Learning Mandarin for Jehovah's Witnesses in Zambia*

**Joyce Cheng** – *'Mobile' Media Memory: Older Chinese Migrants and their Construction of Media Memories Across their Transnational Lives*

4.45pm **Evening Break**

### 5.15pm **MOBILE INSTITUTIONS, MOBILE PLATFORMS**

**Xuefei Shi and Hangwei Li** – *Contemporary Chinese Buddhism in Africa: Context, Thrust and Novelty*

**Ting-Fai Yu** – *Independent Chinese Schools as Sites of Cultural Contestation: Chinese Malaysian Students' Choices for Overseas Studies between Taiwan and China*

**Fan Yang** – *(In)Dependent on the hegemony to be heard: Postcoloniality of Chinese ethnic media in Australia*

**Haiqing Yu** – *Worlding in the Chinese Social Media: The Experience of Mandarin-speaking Migrants*

## The Reenchantment of Culture and Flexible Citizenship in a Nativist World: How the Search for Authenticity Brings Middle-Class Chinese Migrants to Europe's Fortress

*Professor Pál Nyíri*



The quest for a better life that drives global migration flows is usually understood as economic accumulation. Migrants from China have been seen as particularly adept at flexible accumulation and resource maximisation through "flexible citizenship". Yet as the global balance of economic power shifts and as the nature of work and migration governance changes, migration driven by consumption rather than accumulation is becoming more visible. Wealthy Chinese who purchase real estate in North America or Australia are a case in point. A less noticed flow of middle-class Chinese has been targeting Eastern and Southern Europe, attracted by a "European lifestyle" at lower cost.

Europe -- in contradistinction to the "world cities" of liquid, hybrid ultramodernity -- has long been a purveyor of slowness, luxury, "authenticity," and purity in such things as food, cosmetics, or "culture" to the global middle and upper classes. As a new non-Western consumer class emerges in a world racked by a backlash against the liquid and the hybrid and a rising "reenchantment of culture", Europe increasingly becomes the unadulterated Other there to be consumed. In this quest for authenticity, "flexible citizenship" may be more widely practiced than before, yet it may have lost much of its emotional appeal. Middle-class migrants may be flexible citizens, but they want to achieve or recover a sense of tangible cultural citizenship they feel they have lost or never had. In this optics, lifestyle migrations may intersect in unexpected ways with currents of ideologies of environmental, cultural, and racial purity.

My talk, based on research with Beck Fanni, will explore the motivations of some of the 20 thousand Chinese who moved to Hungary between 2013 and 2017 in search of a "European lifestyle" and a healthy, relaxed, and "authentic" environment even as the country's nativist government made global headlines with its supposedly uncompromising opposition to immigration. Our research suggests that nativism can paradoxically be a draw to lifestyle migrants, many of whom seek to move away from societies they perceive as crowded, competitive, polluted, expensive, and materialistic environments and in some cases seek to satisfy a nostalgia for a simpler life and more meaningful human relations.

**Nyíri Pál** studied chemistry and Asian Studies in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and the U.S. before obtaining doctorates in history (Moscow State University) and sociology (Hungarian Academy of Sciences). He is Professor of Global History from an Anthropological Perspective at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. Prior to this appointment, he taught at Macquarie University. His main research area is the international mobility of contemporary Chinese elites. He is also interested in Chinese nationalism, the politics of immigration in Eastern Europe, and comparative approaches to Eastern Europe and China. His recent books include [Reporting for China: How Chinese Correspondents Work with the World](#) and [Southeast Asia: How People, Money, and Ideas from China are Changing a Region](#) (edited with Danielle Tan).

## Nationalism, Vocational Education and the Mobile Working-Class Subjects

*Professor Pun Ngai*



Examining emotions within the studies of mobilities, recent literature has highlighted that migration is an inherently uncertain process shaped by hopes and dreams, as well as feelings of fear and anxiety. More than an individual pursuit for economic advancement or cultural assimilation, we find that migration is also a political project that incessantly creates valuable working-class subjects; a project that often starts in vocational training school, a site generating multiple forms of mobility between learning and work-space. In the context of China, this article explores the emotional reproduction of working-class subjects through schooling and internship experiences, students' sense of belonging to the nation-state, their aspirations and fears for the future. Developing the concept of “emotional authoritarianism”, it examines the ways in which working-class students were influenced by state-engineered nationalistic sentiments, and how it became a conflictual process of subject-making. Emotional governance is a peculiar political strategy that shapes the emotions of working-class students who are expected to serve the growth of the national economy and transnational capitalism. We discover that mixed emotions or “emotions in conflict” are fundamental to the class reproduction of migrant agents, torn among different bodies and desires in “learning to labour”.

**PUN Ngai** is Chair Professor and Head of the Department of Cultural Studies at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. She obtained her Ph.D. from SOAS, University of London. She was honoured as the winner of the C. Wright Mills Award for her first book [Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace](#) (2005). Her co-authored book, [Dying for iPhone: Foxconn and the Lives of Chinese Workers](#) (2020) has also been translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish, Polish and Chinese. She is the sole author of [Migrant Labor in China: Post Socialist Transformation](#) (2016, Polity Press), editor of seven book volumes in Chinese and English. She has published widely in leading international journals such as *Information, Communication and Society*, *Dialectical Anthropology*, *Positions*, *Sociology*, *Sociological Review*, *Work, Employment and Society*, *China Quarterly* and *China Journal*, etc.

### **Follow Me! I Can Teach You How to Come to Australia to Make Money!': Brokering Transnational Chinese Labor Migration Through *Kuaishou***

*Jian Xu and Wanning Sun*

*Kuaishou* (快手) is one of the most popular short-video and live-streaming apps in China with about 200 million daily active users by mid 2019. Different from its archrival Douyin (抖音) that targets at youths and middle-class in the first and second-tier cities, *Kuaishou* is favored by people living in the third and fourth-tier cities and rural areas. The platform is also widely utilised by millions of new Chinese migrants overseas, especially transnational Chinese migrant workers, for the purposes of entertainment, social networking and entrepreneurship, such as 'Daigou' (代购).

The paper investigates an emerging phenomenon on *Kuaishou*, that is, an increasing cohort of transnational Chinese migrant worker broadcasters (主播) in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, the UK, the US and etc, are harnessing the platform to broker transnational labor migration from China's third and fourth-tier cities and rural areas to the targeted countries they work in. These transnational 'personal intermediaries' either work independently or in collaboration with commercial migration agents in China and overseas to cultivate and facilitate legal or illegal transnational labor flow by providing a series of charged service, from visa consultation and application, airport pickup, accommodation to job hunting.

Using online participant observation, critical visual and discourse analysis, in-depth interview as research methods to collect data, we focus on three Australia-based 'personal intermediaries' on *Kuaishou* to examine the following questions. First, we ask how live streamers make profit from facilitating transnational desires; Second, we examine the connection – also possible disjuncture – between transnational imagination and actual transnational mobility; Finally, building on these, and through the prism of class stratification in China, we ask about the implications of such emerging digitally-enabled personal intermediary phenomenon on the formation of a transnational Chinese working class.

*Dr Jian Xu is a Senior Lecturer in Communication at Deakin University. He researches Chinese digital media and communication with particular interests in China's digital media politics, internet governance, digital youth cultures and celebrity studies.*

### **Striking a balance in Transnational Living: Chinese Skilled Trade Workers in Western Australia**

*Qian Gong and Huan Wu*

This research investigates the skilled trade workers who migrated to Western Australia (WA) from China between 2004 and 2012. Although there are substantial studies looking at rural-urban migration in the context of internal mobility in China and the transnational migration of China's well-educated groups (like students and academics), little has been written about the transnational migration of skilled trade workers who moved from China to Western countries. The life trajectory of most of the interviewees was to migrate from villages to cities in China and then from Chinese cities to Perth, the capital of Western Australia. Through participatory observations and in-depth interviews with 11 Chinese skilled trade workers in Perth from 2016 to 2021, this paper explores the changes in economic capital, cultural capital and social capital of this workers' cohort during the migration from rural to urban and from China to WA. The technical skills that helped the skilled workers cross the urban-rural divide also helped them successfully cross national borders and become globalised human resources. In the process of integrating into WA society, their economic capital has been improved to varying degrees. In addition, they have also rebuilt social capital by establishing workers' communities and using social media. We argue that groups with a relatively small cultural capital in cross-border flows are more inclined to build strong social ties to make up for their

shortcomings in cultural capital. However, highly homogenous social ties may prevent them from further accumulating economic capital and promoting cultural capital.

**Qian Gong** is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, Curtin University. She had been a journalist in *China Daily* for nine years, writing on culture and life and people, before joining in the academy in Australia. Her research interests include Socialist culture and contemporary culture in China, media studies and gender.

**Huan Wu** currently works in the School of Culture, History and Language at The Australian National University. Wu was previously a research associate working for Digital China Lab and Curtin Tencent Research Centre at Curtin University. She received her doctoral degree from The Chinese University of Hong Kong and had worked as an associate professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University for five years. Her research interests include creative industries of China and the interaction between new media and disadvantaged people.

### **Mismatched: Intensive Mothering in Urban Villages of China**

*Jin Shuheng*

Intensive mothering has long been learned as the dominant culture of motherhood in North America. Along with all kinds of products and ideas, this ideology of intensive mothering is imported to China's new generation of mothers through the booming industries of publishing and early childcare. Foreign middle-class mothers, depicted as ideal mothers that abide to expert knowledge and cultivate their children's talent accordingly, are set up as counter examples to Chinese mothers in mass media. Migrant mothers in urban villages of China, too, have been exposed to this ideology of intensive mothering along their rural-to-urban migration through reading and interactions with medical and educational experts. Through eight months of ethnographic research in two urban villages in southern China, I present in this research how migrant mothers have been trapped in the mismatches between the foreign, urban middle-class ideology of intensive mothering and their positions in the social class ladder. With limited economic and cultural resources, learning and internalizing intensive mothering have disempowered migrant mothers and made them feel even less competent, while they find other alternatives to reassert their agency and build solidarity.

**Jin Shuheng** is now a Post Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Sociology in University of Hong Kong. She receives PhD in the Chinese University of Hong Kong learning migrant motherhood in urban villages of China. Her research focuses on migrant communities and social policy.

### **Making China's Mobile Middle Class: Gender and Subject Production in Transnational Education**

*Fran Martin*

This paper draws on a recently concluded 5-year ethnographic study of the social and subjective experiences of fifty young women from China through the years of their university study in Australia. Although around 60% of outgoing students from China are female, the gendered dimensions of China's educational diaspora have to date been little discussed. My study is interested in how the experience of educational mobility affects post-90s middle-class women's negotiations of the contradictory gendered life scripts and self-understandings available to them today. One of the study's premises was the observation of a tension in contemporary Chinese public culture between, on the one hand, a neoliberal-style discourse of self-reliant, self-entrepreneurial professional subjecthood that has strong interpellative power for well-resourced, middle-class, urban singleton daughters; and, on the other hand, a neotraditionalist discourse of women's inherently family-centred "nature" and their biological destiny to marry and have a child(ren) by age thirty. This paper draws on fieldwork and interviews in order to understand the type of subjectivity that was ultimately produced through participants' experiences of transnational educational mobility. Findings reveal a *haigui* (graduate returnee) subjectivity marked by decreasing identification with the neotraditionalist model of femininity, and correspondingly increased identification with mobile enterprising selfhood.

This broad tendency, however, is marked by multiple forms of ambivalence and contradiction, which I explore in this paper through selected participant stories.

***Fran Martin** is an Associate Professor in Cultural Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on television, film, literature and other forms of cultural production in contemporary transnational China (The People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong), with a specialization in transnational flows and representations and cultures of gender and sexuality. She is currently working on a 5-year ARC Future Fellowship project that uses longitudinal ethnography to research the social and subjective experiences of young women from China studying and living in Australia (<http://www.mobileselves.org>). She is the author of *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film, and Public Culture* and a co-editor of *AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Genders and Sexualities; Embodied Modernities: Corporeality, Representation, and Chinese Cultures; and Mobile Cultures: New Media in Queer Asia*, also published by Duke University Press.*

# REMAKING CITIES AND CITIZENSHIP IN DIASPORA

## 'China Anxiety': De-Racialising Debates about Australian Housing and Education

*Dallas Rogers Christina Ho and Jacqueline Nelson*

'China anxiety' has escalated dramatically in recent years in Australia, with regular headlines about 'political interference' and 'trade wars'. This paper explores two arenas that have arguably received less public attention, namely, the role of the 'Chinese' in Australian housing and education markets. In Australia and elsewhere, there is growing competition for desirable places in both the housing and education markets. In this competition, 'Chinese' individuals are often seen as being 'too successful'. In housing, the 'Chinese' are successful in making strategic real estate purchases, including for investment purposes. In education, Chinese migrants' children dominate enrolments in high-performing selective schools and classes, and perform disproportionately well in standardised tests. In relation to both housing and education, public debates have included expressions of anxiety and resentment at 'others' taking up valuable positions in these increasingly competitive markets. Concerns about being left behind or left out have become racialised, with Chinese individuals blamed for crowding out more deserving 'local' people. While there are complex factors at play in the housing and education markets, including government policies that have encouraged both greater commercialisation and the entry of people from Asia into Australia, popular anxieties have often focused on blaming 'the Chinese' for their perceived competitive advantage. This paper critically analyses these racialised debates and offers alternative frameworks for understanding the competitive cultures of contemporary Australian housing and education markets.

***Dallas Rogers** is a Senior Lecturer and Co-Program Director for the Bachelor of Architecture & Environments at The University of Sydney. He is an urban geographer with a broad interest in housing, land, real estate and urban development. He writes about the colonial histories of land claiming, public housing, foreign real estate investment, the politics of urban development, participatory planning, platform real estate, and more. Rogers is an Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Housing Policy. He served as the Associate Dean of Student Life and Program Director of the Master of Urbanism in the School of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney. He was a convener of the Institute of Australian Geographers Urban Studies Group.*

***Christina Ho** is Associate Professor of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney, where she researches migration, cultural diversity and urban inter-cultural relations, with a particular focus on education. Her co-edited books include Asian Migration and Education Cultures in the Anglosphere (2019); 'For those who've come across the seas': Australian Multicultural Theory, Policy and Practice (2013); and Beyond the Hijab Debates: New Conversations on Gender, Race and Religion (2009).*

***Jacqueline Nelson** is an Adjunct Fellow at the School of Communication at the University of Technology Sydney. Dr Nelson is interested in how racism manifests and exploring how we can respond to racism, both as individuals and by challenging cultures and practices that reproduce racism and inequality. In previous work she has examined local or place-based responses to racism and discourses of denial. Her postdoctoral research uses ideas of performativity to look at how people respond to racism within their own families. Jacqueline has also published on the topics of bystander responses to racism, and ethnic discrimination in housing and employment. She holds a Bachelor of Liberal Studies (Hons I Psychology) from the University of Sydney, an MSc (Applied Social Research) from Trinity College in Ireland, and a PhD from the University of Western Sydney.*

## Strategic Noncitizenship: Mainland Chinese Immigrants as Noncitizens in Australia

*Qiuping Pan*

This research aims to provide a bottom-up view of how Mainland Chinese immigrants approach, navigate, and act upon their statuses as citizens and noncitizens in their countries of residence. For this purpose, this paper presents an empirical case study of Mainland Chinese immigrants in Australia by integrating data sourced from Australia's 2016 National Census as well as online and offline fieldwork. This paper develops the concept of strategic

noncitizenship to understand Mainland Chinese immigrants' responses to the constraining and changing citizenship frameworks in which they find themselves. Findings of this research suggest that, just like citizenship, noncitizenship can also be a strategic self-chosen way of being; one that still allows room for agentic practices, claims-making, and political empowerment. Therefore, noncitizenship is not necessarily precarious and powerless as often claimed. This paper has two discussion sections. The first identifies the distinctively low naturalisation rate among Mainland Chinese immigrants in Australia and explains why most of these immigrants have voluntarily chosen not to acquire Australian citizenship. The second part demonstrates how these noncitizen immigrants have tactically responded to and even contested Australia's initiatives to tighten its citizenship framework. By delineating how noncitizen immigrants transform into more citizen-like subjects, this research proposes to conceptualise citizenship/noncitizenship as a self-chosen way of being, particularly for immigrants of higher socioeconomic status and transnational mobility. Empirical findings of this research also point to the important roles played by taxation and collective actions in noncitizens' claims-making, showing how immigrant noncitizens can be conditionally empowered to challenge states' reevaluation of citizenship from above.

***Qiuping Pan** is an Assistant Professor at Shenzhen Technology University and an honorary research fellow at the University of Melbourne, where she completed her PhD. Her research mainly focuses on contemporary Chinese immigrants and the socio-political activities of overseas Chinese communities. Based on empirical case studies, her research reflects upon the aspirations and lived experiences of transnational mobility as well as the promise and pitfalls of accelerated transnational migration for individuals and nation-states alike.*

### **Young Chinatown: Chinese Youth Diaspora and Everyday Place-Making in Sydney's Chinatown** *Alexandra Wong*

This paper seeks to examine the emergence of the 'youthful' place character in Sydney's Chinatown in association with youth-oriented dining and entertainment venues within the context of the influx of the new 'Chinese' migrants from China and the Sinosphere to Australia in the past three decades. Despite the recognition by a number of studies of the contribution of youth economy to urban transformation, young people have not received much attention in the study of Chinatowns. Drawing on data from extensive empirical research, including interviews, focus groups, student survey and site observations, this paper aims to capture two phenomena that drive innovative culinary production and consumption practices to help transform the area. This first is a growing number of culinary businesses owned by young entrepreneurs of diverse 'Chinese' backgrounds established with transnational capital and networks engaging in inter-Asian referencing practices. The second is this cohort of 'Chinese' students with their intimate understanding and high demand for authentic Asian food and services act as agencies for neighbourhood changes driving transcultural experimentation and interaction. The paper concludes with attention to the implications for 'diversity' in the (re)making of contemporary Australian urbanity. While the traditional facade of Chinatown does not align with the preference of this new Chinese diaspora who favour the urban aesthetics and images of cosmopolitan Asian cities, the new and established culture and practices are not mutually exclusive but converge and interact in the 'contact zone' (Pratt 1991) of Chinatown. The everyday place-making practices of new users transform in Sydney's Chinatown into a hybridised, modern, transnational and youthful space linked to other Chinese diasporic sites, juxtapose with the area's orientalist and traditional images for different consumers.

***Alexandra Wong** is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society at the Western Sydney University. She received interdisciplinary training from her PhD at the University of Edinburgh, UK. Her research focuses on three areas of interest, 1) creative cities and cultural policies 2) migration and multi-culturalism and 3) urban studies and sustainable development. She is currently working on the ARC Discovery Project 'The China Australia Heritage Corridor' (2017-2020) to research the historical and contemporary connections between China and Australia through the transnational flow of materials, knowledge, capital and people.*

## Sydney as 'Sinoburbia': Patterns of Diversification across Emerging Chinese Ethnoburbs

*Shanthi Robertson, Alexandra Wong, Christina Ho, Ien Ang and Phillip Mar*

Long established as an arrival city for Chinese migrants to Australia, 'Chinese Sydney' has shifted away from the historic inner-city Chinatown and towards new residential concentrations in suburban localities with varied histories of progressive diversification. In some of these suburbs, 40% or more of residents report Chinese heritage, where older generations of diaspora Chinese intermingle with a substantial recent wave of China-born middle-class professionals – often distinguished as the 'new Chinese'. This paper situates the localised, internal diversities of the modern arrival city within the geo-political conditions, urban development strategies and migration patterns that shape Sydney's Chinese ethnoburbs (or 'Sinoburbs'). Drawing on demographic analysis, site mapping of local infrastructure and site observations, we trace changing demographics and patterns of suburban development within three different case study suburbs. In doing so, we elucidate some emerging lines of inquiry that challenge the extant focus in both enclave and ethnoburb models of urban ethnic concentration, and suggest a number of new interventions to future research on emerging Sinoburbia localities both in Australia and elsewhere.

*Shanthi Robertson is an Associate Professor in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts and an Institute Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University, specializing in migration and diversity, youth studies and urban social change. She has completed an Australian Research Council (ARC) fellowship on Asian temporary migrants to Australia and is currently Chief Investigator on three ARC Discovery and Linkage projects that focus on: the economic, social and civic outcomes of transnational youth mobility for young people moving into and out of Australia for work, leisure and study; the role of autonomous technology in the social inclusion of migrants living with disability in Sydney; and the changing social civic practices in Sydney suburbs with high numbers of Chinese heritage residents. Her most recent publications appear in Geoforum, Current Sociology, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, and Journal of Youth Studies. Her second book, *Temporality in Mobile Lives: Contemporary Asia-Australia Migration and Everyday Time*, was published by Bristol University Press January 2021.*

## **A Desire for Hong Kong Popular Cultures: Jia Zhangke's Cinema Revisited**

*Calvin Hui*

This presentation focuses on the representations of Hong Kong popular cultures in Jia Zhangke's cinema. I note that Jia's films display a distinctive intertextual desire and transmedia impulse concerning Hong Kong. For example, in *A Touch of Sin* (2013), he quotes King Hu's and Chang Cheh's wuxia films in the 1960s-1970s. In *Still Life* (2006), he cites John Woo's gangster films such as *A Better Tomorrow* (1986) and *The Killer* (1989). One of the characters in Jia's films also calls himself a little Mark (played by Hong Kong actor Chow Yun-fat). Furthermore, in *Mountains May Depart* (2015), Jia references Sally Yeh's sentimental songs in the 1990s. Why is this mainland Chinese film director so fascinated with Hong Kong popular cultures? What does the figure of Hong Kong mean to him, and indeed, to his generation of Chinese people who were born and grew up during the Cultural Revolution period and matured during the market reforms period? Also, what kinds of contemporary cultural theories can be used to describe and explain such a cross-border phenomenon? In this presentation, I suggest that the discussion of northbound colonial imaginary in Hong Kong cultural studies in the mid-1990s is useful insofar as it enables us to see the issue from Hong Kong's perspective, rather than mainland China's perspective. To remedy this theoretical problem, I propose another framework that involves desire. My research intersects with the symposium's theme by thinking through minor transnationalism and the multiplicity of Chinese-ness.

*Calvin Hui is a tenured Associate Professor of Chinese Studies at the College of William and Mary in the United States. He received his PhD in Literature at Duke University. His first book, *The Art of Useless: Fashion, Media, and Consumer Culture in Contemporary China*, is forthcoming with Columbia University Press in spring 2021. It is part of the "Global Chinese Culture" series. His second research project focuses on contemporary China's copycat cultures. His third research project delves into the dialogue between the cinema of Chinese director Jia Zhangke and the critical/cultural theory of Fredric Jameson. For Calvin Hui's profile, see: [https://www.wm.edu/as/modernlanguages/faculty/hui\\_calvin.php](https://www.wm.edu/as/modernlanguages/faculty/hui_calvin.php)*

## **Intimate Strangers: Nei Di Sheng as Emotional Subjects in Recent Hong Kong Protests**

*Lin Song and Shih-Diing Liu*

This paper focuses on Nei Di Sheng as emotional subjects in recent Hong Kong protests. Combining textual analysis and in-depth interview, we look at both Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese media's emotional narratives about NDS and NDS's lived emotional struggles and subjectivities. We argue that both nationalism's and nativism's power to generate belonging and alienation has shaped NDS's cross-border experiences by creating an emotional impasse that pins them down to restricted subject positions. The ways in which NDS negotiate with and defy these emotional norms and expectations, we suggest, can constitute the first step in thinking beyond nationalist and nativist identity politics in a polarized political and emotional environment, and to assert agency and build solidarity in post-national security law Hong Kong.

*Lin Song is Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Communication, University of Macau. He researches on gender, sexual, and national identities in popular and digital cultures in contemporary China and East Asia.*

*Shih-Diing Liu is Professor of Communication at the University of Macau. His recent book, *The Politics of People: Protest Cultures in China*, is published by State University of New York Press. He is now working on a next book project about the politics of emotion in China.*

## History Written in Advance: The Temporal Politics of Learning Mandarin for Jehovah's Witnesses in Zambia

*Justin Haruyama*

Over the last decade, there have been a proliferating number of Mandarin-language Jehovah's Witnesses congregations in Zambia. These congregations are almost exclusively composed of local Zambians who have learned Mandarin as a second language, and count few to no ethnic Chinese congregants among their number. Nevertheless, these congregations conduct their meetings exclusively in Mandarin, and their Zambian congregants have attained a very high degree of fluency in Mandarin. Though ostensibly formed for the purpose of evangelizing to Zambia's rapidly growing Chinese migrant community, members of the congregation emphasize that the apparent lack of Chinese converts is no failure at all. Regardless of the outcome of their efforts, what is important is that their intense evangelizing is part of an ongoing fulfillment of their obligations to Jehovah God. Thus, the relations between these Witnesses and the Chinese they proselytize to are not dialogic but triangular. Their evangelizing efforts represent a challenge to secular time: while secular portrayals of Chinese expatriates "buying up" Zambia rest upon teleological assumptions of economic and political development, these congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses act upon a temporal horizon in which biblical truths must be quickly spread before the rapidly approaching dissolution of the current system of things.

*Justin Haruyama is an ABD, post-field doctoral candidate in sociocultural anthropology at the University of California, Davis, with designated emphases in African Studies and Critical Theory. His dissertation examines the controversial presence of Chinese migrants and investors in Zambia today. Haruyama explores the diverse forms of relationality enabled by these encounters, ranging from intimacy and fellowship, to exclusion, to mutual dependence and obligation. Drawing upon twenty-eight months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in Zambia and China, his research examines these relations as they manifest in two different domains. The first domain is that of religion, through a Jehovah's Witness congregation that, though overwhelmingly composed of local Zambian congregants, nevertheless conducts its meetings entirely in Mandarin Chinese in order to better evangelize to Chinese expatriates. The second domain is that of labor, through a Chinese-operated coal mine in Zambia which has engendered not only violence but also new linguistic and familial formations that put the very categories of "Zambian" and "Chinese" into variation. Taking issue with simplistic narratives that have too frequently painted Chinese companies and individuals in Africa as either neocolonial exploiters or South-South, "win-win" development partners, Haruyama brings these two domains together to demonstrate that concrete encounters between Chinese and Zambians are far more ambivalent and open-ended than is often portrayed by contemporary rhetoric about "China in Africa."*

## 'Mobile' Media Memory: Older Chinese Migrants and their Construction of Media Memories Across their Transnational Lives

*Joyce Cheng*

Throughout the 1980s, scholarly interest emerged in media memory studies. In the early debates, researchers explored how mediated content influenced the way how citizens reflected their biographical 'reality'. However, most of these discussions are based on national perspectives; the construction of media memory in the transnational sphere, including the memory produced by migrants, has long been overlooked.

To address this gap, this research examines the way how older Chinese migrants reflect their media memories across two phases of their lives in a) China and b) Australia. This study outlines a new transnational dimension which I describe as 'mobile' memory, as a 'fluid' transnational memory space across migrants diverse lifeworlds. Through this focus, this study — unlike most of the research of media migrants with a national focus on either 'home' or 'host' country — aims to assess memory structures in the individuals' perception of the role of media in their transnational biographies.

Based on extended in-depth qualitative (narrative) interviews with older Chinese migrants in Melbourne, this study's results reveal how the cohort's earlier lifeworld media memories during the Mao era in China have influenced media usage, the experiences they gained in Australia in their later life stages and how these two phases make them reflect and re-interpret their pasts across time and space. Such a 'mobile' memory space illuminates a fresh perspective in assessing the construction of media memory in the context of globalisation.

**Joyce Cheng** works as a journalist and academic tutor. She has a masters from the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. Her research interest is in media-related memory, media globalisation and its implication on Chinese migrants.

### **Contemporary Chinese Buddhism in Africa: Context, Thrust and Novelty**

*Xuefei Shi and Hangwei Li*

This paper reveals and explores an uncharted territory in the transnationalization of Chinese ideologies and belief systems, that is, the Buddhist organizations supported by contemporary Chinese migrants and their spread in African societies. We have observed in our longtime fieldwork in East and Southern African countries that there is a new wave of introduction of Buddhist organizations and institutions that are attempting to make different the religious landscape in Africa. This paper, based on our ethnographic data from South Africa, Tanzania, Botswana and Malawi, examines the trajectories and categorizations of contemporary Chinese Buddhism arriving in Africa, discusses their contemporality with the ongoing China-Africa relations, and looks back at their origins and drives. We argue that in the Chinese Buddhist communities in Africa there exist multiple connections and competitions among the various Chinese actors, which are the constituent parts of a dynamic Chinese transnational space in Africa, and beyond. The political and cultural influences of contemporary Buddhism being practiced by the Chinese transnationals in Africa on the production of soft power, charity and value deserve further examination.

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### **Independent Chinese Schools as Sites of Cultural Contestation: Chinese Malaysian Students' Choices for Overseas Studies between Taiwan and China**

*Ting-Fai Yu*

Going overseas for higher education has long been an upward mobility strategy of students from the 60 independent Chinese schools in post-independence Malaysia, due to their qualifications not being recognised for entry into public universities under Malay-centric policies. Contrary to other educational migration patterns previously observed (e.g. from Asia to the West), many of these students have been attending universities in Taiwan rather than established destinations for foreign students such as Australia and Canada. This is largely the result of Taiwan's welcoming education policy (e.g. low tuition fees), as a Cold War legacy, for Chinese overseas students (qiaosheng) since the 1950s, long-established transnational networks of Malaysian Chinese students as well as recommendations of teachers, administrators and school seniors who were former students returned from Taiwan. In recent years, however, a growing number of these students have turned to metropolitan Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shanghai for higher education. This is due to Chinese universities' active overseas recruitment such as special university quotas for Chinese school graduates and, more importantly, China's growing economic prominence in Southeast Asia.

Based on findings from my multi-sited ethnography, it examines Malaysian Chinese students' choices for overseas studies between Taiwan and China vis-à-vis changing Chinese geopolitics which shaped how they perceived the two places as potential destinations for higher education. In doing so, I demonstrate how independent Chinese schools are sites of cultural contestation where Sinophone politics are negotiated and Chinese identities reconfigured. Through this transformation of educational mobility, this paper aims to formulate a current perspective of Chinese geopolitics in Southeast Asia, highlighting specifically the everyday strategies and cultural processes of China's global presence.

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## **(In)Dependent on the hegemony to be heard: Postcoloniality of Chinese ethnic media in**

### **Australia**

*Fan Yang*

This paper is based on a longitudinal project on the internal operation within the Chinese ethnic media (*huaren meiti*) industry in Australia. The industry is characterised by Chinese-language newspapers, websites, news-focused WeChat Official Accounts (hereafter WOAs), and the most recently Chinese-language news apps. These media accounts have been playing a critical role now and in history in keeping Chinese diasporic communities informed about Australian society (Sun 2018; Yu and Sun 2020; Yang and Martin 2020; Yang 2021). This paper contextualises an alternative perspective to a common academic discourse that ethnic media in the West provide a voice for the marginalised from the original bourgeois public sphere (Hardt 1998; Ojo 2006; Budarick 2019). From August 2019 to March 2021, the author interviewed 27 media professionals with Chinese heritage working for Chinese ethnic media. The participant cohort in this project is constituted by the first and the second generational Chinese migrants coming from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or China. The Chinese-language media in this study thus involve the media entities of different ownerships with backgrounds in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. This paper argues that Chinese ethnic media are financially independent of Australia and representing the voice of Chinese migrants; however, they are also socially, culturally, and politically attached to the hegemonic postcolonial structure of Australian society.

To unpack this argument, Chinese ethnic media are financially independent of the nation-state in contrast to Australia hegemonic taxpayer-sponsored media or Chinese state-owned media. They aspire to undertake advocacy roles on behalf of Chinese migrants to recentre the marginalised voices. Contrary to what many media scholars have argued is that Chinese ethnic media do not completely represent antithetical voices to Australian English media. According to the interviews with media professionals, Chinese ethnic media also desire to 'be part of Australia' without being completely 'counter-hegemonic', and such message is imbued in their content production and representation practices to appeal to the demand of the readership. In this way, they are attached to the hegemonic journalism in terms of content production, the aspiration to be part of the dominant media structure in Australia to be heard and trusted by the authority, and the uncritical, problematic representation of people of colour that upholds white supremacist discourse against black people (Martin 2018). This paper considers that the postcoloniality of Chinese ethnic media was rooted in the very first Chinese-language newspaper established in the 1850s in the Gold Rush and is consolidated throughout the development.

The paper was drafted during the onset of anti-Asian violent attacks in the West, fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic and the intensified geopolitical divide between China and the West. The author denounces society's persistent structures of white supremacy and contagious racism. The paper is dedicated to unveiling the masked fact that minority-minority prejudice within Chinese ethnic media in Australia is uncritically perceived as a promise of being part of the Australian dominant mediasphere. The future development of this paper will contribute to exploring the infiltration and internalisation of structural biases from the dominant to the marginalised media.

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*ethnographic observation with production teams that generate native content for those platforms, particularly observing decision-making and self-management in this context.*

## **Worlding in the Chinese Social Media: The Experience of Mandarin-Speaking Migrants**

*Haiqing Yu*

In many countries of the global West, the life-world of many first-generation Mandarin-speaking migrants from the People's Republic of China is marked by a variety of shifts, transitions and tensions, in terms of individual identity, community politics, and citizenship practice. All these aspects are mediated and negotiated through their use of media, especially social media. For instance, as they shift from a predominantly Chinese world to an identity politics that treats them as a minority, they need to negotiate the tension between their love for their motherland and their political loyalty to their host nation. Their media consumption practices also need to transition from an authoritarian to a liberal-democratic context. Furthermore, like everyone else, PRC migrants need to negotiate a 'hybrid media system' that is characterised by a clash between older and newer media logics. Finally, they also straddle two ideologically conflicting social media spaces – Twitter versus weibo and WeChat versus, for instance, WhatsApp.

Drawing on quantitative surveys, immersive online ethnography, in-depth interviews, and longitudinal interactions with mature-age first-generation PRC migrants in Australia, this paper analyses the roles of diasporic Chinese social media – WeChat in particular – in the world of Chinese migrants in Australia. We explore the Chinese social media as a mobile ensemble of practices, tendencies, capacities, relations and affordances. We explore how such an assemblage leads to the construction of a particular kind of diasporic Chinese world, in a time and space marked by China's rise, on the one hand, and anxiety about Chinese influence in the West, on the other. Through the prism of some topical issues such as the 2019 protests in Hong Kong, we show that, while negotiating these transitions, shifts and tensions is an essential aspect of this cohort's attempts to build an affective space that is legible and specific to this transnational Chinese community, this is a messy, ongoing and often contradictory process. The paper argues for a rethinking of 'flexible citizenship' as a spatial and temporal contingency.

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