

## Keynotes - Age, Agency, Ambiguity - 27-30.August 2017

### Abstracts and bios

#### Yan Yunxiang:

##### Intergenerational Relatedness and Neo-Familism in Contemporary China

*Abstract:* Based on evidence drawn from longitudinal fieldwork over three decades and secondary literature, the present study unpacks the complex connections among the new pattern of intergenerational relations, the redefinition of filial piety and the rise of neo-familism in contemporary Chinese society. Remarkable developments include the increasing importance of parents-children axis in family relations, the surge of intergenerational intimacy, the renewed primacy of the family in public life, and the trend of descending familism in which the focal point of resource allocation, emotional attachment, and life aspiration in the family has shifted from glorifying the ancestors to raising the perfect child. Consequently, the family institution has been further privatized, the individual has exercised more agency in the working of family relations, and yet the individualization process has taken a collectivist twist.

*Bio:* Yunxiang YAN, professor of anthropology and director of the Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. He earned his B.A. in Chinese Literature from Peking University in 1982 and Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from Harvard University in 1993. He is the author of *The Flow of Gifts: Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village* (Stanford University Press, 1996), *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949-1999* (Stanford University Press, 2003), and *The Individualization of Chinese Society* (Berg publishers, 2009). His research interests include family and kinship, social change, the individual and individualization, and moral changes in post-Mao China.

## Helene Aarseth:

### The Gendered Romantic of Financialized Capitalism

*Abstract:* This lecture will look into changes in gender and agency in response to processes of increased financialization and globalized competition. The focus will be on social groups positioned at 'the upper end' of economic chains, i.e. the financial elite. The empirical data is narrative interviews with financial intermediaries living in a Norwegian context. I explore the emotional dynamics involved in the formation of gendered practices and subjectivities in a context of risk and competition. I will particularly focus on those emotional dynamics that drive what I conceive of as a revived cultivation of a particular form of sensitive and nurturing femininity that was burgeoning in the very early phases of Western capitalism.

*Bio:* Helene AARSETH is Assistant Professor at Centre for Gender Research, University of Oslo. Her main research interests are family cultures, class and gender. Her work focuses on feminist social theory and psycho-social theories. She is the author of two books and several articles on changing masculinities, everyday life of the late modern family and parenting and social class. Recent publications in English include 'Conflicts in the habitus. The Intergenerational Emotional Work of Becoming Modern', *The Sociological Review* 2016, 'Eros in the field? Bourdieu's double account of socialized desire', *The Sociological Review* 2016.

## Pun Ngai:

### Gendering the new generation of youth workers at the vocational schools in China

*Abstract:* In recent years, an increasing number of rural youth are absorbed by the urban vocational education system. These girls and boys migrate to the cities to receive education and training with their urban counterparts before seeking employment in the manufacturing and service sectors. Unlike general academic schooling, vocational education is specifically geared toward entrance into the labour

market. Developing one's own career plan and fitting oneself into future employment are the two major topics in both formal and informal curriculums of vocational schools. Also, different from the graduates in the 1980s and 1990s, whose jobs were arranged and delivered by the system; current generation of vocational school students have to find their own jobs and make their own choices before graduation. When the young people trying hard to fit themselves in the neoliberal state which adopts the principles of flexible accumulation and welfare elimination, how would they conform to, negotiate with or resist against the gender relations while integrating into the market system? Would their youngness and gender be used/ exploited as a source of flexible and inexpensive labor in the globalized economy? These are our questions.

*Bio:* PUN Ngai obtained her Ph.D. in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She will join the University of Hong Kong as Professor of Sociology in March 2017. Pun Ngai was honored as the winner of the C. Wright Mills Award for her first book *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace* (2005) in August 2006, which has been translated into French, German, Italian and Polish. Her next representative work, *Dying for iPhone: Foxconn and the Lives of Chinese Workers* (co-authored with Jenny Chan and Mark Selden, 2015) 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). She has published widely in leading international journals such as *Current Sociology*, *Global Labor Journal*, *Work, Employment and Society*, *Organization*, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, *positions*, *Modern China*, *China Quarterly* and *China Journal*, etc.

## **Michael Kimmel:**

### **Emerging Adulthood or Guyland: Gendering the Transition between Adolescence and Adulthood**

*Abstract:* This lecture will focus on the emergence of a new stage of development between adolescence and adulthood in the US and Europe, and offer some grounds for comparative analysis between China and Europe. I want to "gender" that

transition through "early adulthood" and talk about the specific issues faced by women and men.

*Bio:* Michael KIMMEL is one of the world's leading experts on men and masculinities. He is the SUNY Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies at Stony Brook University and a guest professor at Centre for Gender Research at the University of Oslo. Among his many books are *Manhood in America*, *Angry White Men*, *The Politics of Manhood*, *The Gendered Society* and the best seller *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. With funding from the MacArthur Foundation, he founded the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities at Stony Brook in 2013.

## **Pei Yuxin:**

### **Gendered pleasure in times of change**

*Abstract:* How is gendered sexual pleasure being articulated by men and women? Both men and women's sexuality are stereotyped in popular discourses which actually increased "sexual troubles" in sexual relationships. In a workshop focussed on sexual intimacy. The participants were encouraged to articulate their "different" experiences in exploring sexual pleasure and how they could position themselves in the popular sexual scripts. It will also be explored how those stereotypes in popular discourses have changed over time - especially from the start of the reform-era - and how they relate to different generations and generational relations.

*Bio:* PEI Yuxin is Associate Professor of the Department of Social Work at Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China. She got her PhD on women's sexualities in the department of social work and social administration in the University of Hong Kong, 2008. Her research interests focus on women's sexualities and life politics. She is also an expert on social work and women's sexualities in periods of disasters. She creates a course named as "sexuality and social work" which provide deep analysis and intervention to gender and sexuality issues in social work practices, such as domestic violence, LGBT movements, Aids concern, sex work etc. She has published extensively on the subjects of women's sexuality both in Chinese and English. From

2014-2015, she visited University of Southern California as a Fulbright scholar. Her recent projects involve in Aids concern and social work intervention, sex consent, sex negotiation, sex health and sex education in China.

## **Lene Myong:**

### **The Biopolitics of Transnational Adoption: Examining Danish Media Debates on Adoption From China**

*Abstract:* The history of transnational and transracial adoption in the Scandinavian countries dates back to the 1950s. During the 1970s and 1980s the South Korean adoption program provided thousands of children to white Scandinavian adopters, but when the number of adoptable Korean children began to dwindle during the late 1980s, Danish adoption agencies quickly turned their attention to China. The first registered transnational adoption from China to Denmark took place in 1994, and over the following years the number of adoptions from China increased dramatically. My lecture examines the gendered and racialized logics that informed Danish media debates on Chinese adoptions during the 1990s and early 2000s. In these debates adoption from China is predominantly explained as a necessary consequence of China's one child policy and a gendered preference for boys in Chinese society. The relinquishment of Chinese children is thus imagined as the consequence of patriarchal gender patterns and a brutal, state-sanctioned population policy. In contrast transnational adoption is rarely construed as a result of Danish population policy and reproductive governance, but rather as a positive and vulnerable family-making project that deserves protection and support from the Danish welfare state. The lecture seeks to contextualize the case of adoption from China to the broader question of adoption biopolitics in the Danish welfare state during the 20. century.

*Bio:* Lene MYONG is professor, Network for Gender Studies, University of Stavanger, Norway. She received her PhD in 2009 from the Department of Education, Aarhus University, Denmark. Her work focuses on transnational adoption, racial formation, and affect, and her publications appear in journals such as Cultural Studies, Sexualities, and GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies.