Welcome to the first issue of SOSS Insights, the research newsletter of the SMU School of Social Sciences!

2020 was a trying year. We had the stresses that came with election night(s), the tedium and frustrations that lockdowns provoked, and how we missed the calming experience of pre-flight shopping in Changi Airport. For many of us, the search for a substitute for Game of Thrones proved quite fruitless. All that said, 2020 was nonetheless a successful year for the School. In these pages can be found evidence of the (quite different) fruit of our labours. We have been busy. Is it too much to expect that some of this research will go viral?

In any event, we anticipate that 2021 will be even more productive and look forward to updating you on our efforts in the next issue of SOSS Insights.

Professor Chandran Kukathas
Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Political Science
Dean, School of Social Sciences
The year 2020 will be remembered for the COVID-19 global pandemic. In Singapore’s combat with the pandemic, Professor David Chan (Director, Behavioural Science Institute) has been among the most visible intellectuals providing thought leadership in the country. In addition to his book, *Combating a Crisis* (highlighted in the Publication Highlights section), Professor Chan has also Received the Merit Award (Best Commentary) for the article “The 5Cs of beating the coronavirus outbreak” published in The Straits Times at the inaugural Stories of a Pandemic (SOAP) Awards 2020, organised by The Majority Trust to recognise contributions by writers, photographers and artists who provided impactful stories related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The following list documents the public talks, panel discussions, newspaper articles, and media interviews on the pandemic that Professor Chan has contributed to in the past year.

Public lectures delivered by SOSS Dean, Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Political Science, Chandran Kukathas:

- 5 March 2020, 'Immigration and Freedom', Public Lecture at the Fundacion Rafael del Pino, Madrid
- 6 March 2020, 'Immigration and Multiculturalism', Public Discussion at LibertyCon 2020, Madrid
- 29 May 2020, 'The Liberal Archipelago: An Introduction', Instituto Juan de Mariana, Madrid (online)
- 2 June 2020, 'On Freedom', at the Research Colloquium of Political Theory' at the Institut für Politikwissenschaft, Goethe Universität, Frankfurt (online)
- 2 July 2020, Discussant on a panel on Domenico Melidoro's *Dealing with Diversity*, Centre for Ethics, Politics and Society, University of Minho, Portugal (online)
- 2 October 2020, 'Immigration and Freedom', Yale-NUS Philosophy Research Colloquium. (online)
## SOSS Research at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Numbers (Jan – Dec 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal publications</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other publications</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events – Public Lectures, Invited Talks, Seminars, etc</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference presentations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research grants awarded</td>
<td>9 (S$12.3 million)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crunch Time: How Married Couples Confront Unemployment
(University of California Press, June 2020)

In *Crunch Time*, Aliya Rao gets up close and personal with college-educated, unemployed men, women, and spouses to explain how comparable men and women have starkly different experiences of unemployment. Traditionally gendered understandings of work—that it’s a requirement for men and optional for women—loom large in this process, even for marriages that had been not organized in gender-traditional ways. These beliefs serve to make men’s unemployment an urgent problem, while women’s unemployment—cocooned within a narrative of staying at home—is almost a non-issue. *Crunch Time* reveals the minutiae of how gendered norms and behaviors are actively maintained by spouses at a time when they could be dismantled, and how gender is central to the ways couples react to and make sense of unemployment.

https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520298613/crunch-time

Combating a Crisis: The Psychology of Singapore's Response to COVID-19
(World Scientific, July 2020)

In this first book about Singapore’s experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic, Professor David Chan examines Singapore’s reaction and response to the coronavirus and draws lessons for crisis management, psychological preparedness, and adaptability. Consisting of 12 chapters, the book is organized into three parts.

This book was cited in the Singapore Parliament Debate on Strategy to Emerge Stronger from COVID-19 and in the Singapore Parliament Debate on COVID-19 Temporary Measures Amendment Bill.

https://www.worldscientific.com/worldscibooks/10.1142/11836
Religion, Hypermobility and Digital Media in Global Asia: Faith, Flows and Fellowship

(Amsterdam University Press, September 2020)
Edited by Catherine Gomes

This edited volume features cutting edge research by scholars across disciplines seeking to understand the role and significance of religion among transnational mobile subjects in this age of digital media, and in particular, as experienced in Global Asia. Digital media is changing the ways in which religion is practiced, understood, proselytised and countered. Migrant and mobile subjects are able to be connected to their faith wherever they may be, providing them with an anchor in unfamiliar physical and cultural surroundings. As Asia rises, mobilities associated with Asian populations have escalated. The notion of ‘Global Asia’ is a reflection of this increased mobility, where Asia includes not only Asian countries as sites of political independence, but also the transnational networks of Asian trans/migrants, and the diasporic settlements of Asian peoples all over the world.

Hyperlink:
Publication Highlights - Articles

**Humanities**

**Steven Burik**  

**Winston Chow**  

Project Coolbit: Can your watch predict heat stress and thermal comfort sensation?  

**Matthew Hammerton**  


**Hoe Su Fern**  

**Lily Kong**  


---

**Steven Burik**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy

**Winston Chow**  
Associate Professor of Science, Technology and Society

**Matthew Hammerton**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy

**Hoe Su Fern**  
Assistant Professor of Arts and Culture Management

**Lily Kong**  
SMU President; Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Social Sciences
Publication Highlights - Articles

**Humanities**

**Ngoei Wen-Qing**  

**Justin Tse**  

**Fiona Williamson**  


**Orlando Woods**  


**Humanities**

**Orlando Woods**


**Political Science**

**Sebastian Dettman**


**John Donaldson**

Publication Highlights - Articles

Political Science

**Ulas Onur Ince**

**Devin Joshi**


**Inwook Kim**

Sebastian Dettman
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Devin Joshi
Associate Professor of Political Science

John Donaldson
Associate Professor of Political Science

Inwook Kim
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Ulas Onur Ince
Associate Professor of Political Science
Publication Highlights - Articles

Political Science

Chandran Kukathas


Ishani Mukherjee

Jacob Ricks


Psychology

Cheng Chi-Ying

Kimin Eom

Publication Highlights - Articles

**Psychology**

**Andree Hartanto**


**Angela Leung**


**Norman Li**


**Cheng Chi-Ying**
Associate Professor of Psychology

**Kimin Eom**
Assistant Professor of Psychology

**Andree Hartanto**
Assistant Professor of Psychology (Education)

**Angela Leung**
Associate Professor of Psychology
Publication Highlights - Articles

**Psychology**

Norman Li


Li, N. P., Yong, J. C., Tsai, M. H., Lai, M. H., Lim, A. J., & Ackerman, J. M. (2020). Confidence is sexy and it can be trained: Examining male social confidence in initial, opposite-sex interactions. *Journal of Personality, 88*(6), 1235-1251.


Jacinth Tan


Tsai Ming-Hong


Li, N. P., Yong, J. C., Tsai, M. H., Lai, M. H., Lim, A. J., & Ackerman, J. M. (2020). Confidence is sexy and it can be trained: Examining male social confidence in initial, opposite-sex interactions. *Journal of Personality, 88*(6), 1235-1251.
Publication Highlights - Articles

**Psychology**

**Hwajin Yang**


**Sociology**

**Alwyn Lim**


**Yasmin Ortiga**

**Yasmin Ortiga**


**Hiro Saito**

**Qian Forrest Zhang**
Indigenous Perceptions and Climate Change Adaptation Behaviour in Malaysian Borneo
Speaker: Dr Terry van Gevelt, Assistant Professor in Environmental Sustainability, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Hong Kong
November 27, 2020

The Rise and Fall of Global Jihadism in Southeast Asia
Speaker: Dr Quinton Temby, Visiting Fellow, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute
October 30, 2020

Emergent Socialities and the Governing of Precarity in the Contemporary Philippines
Speaker: Professor Koki Seki, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hiroshima University
October 16, 2020

Romantic Relationships Provide a Platform to Reduce Adult Insecurities
Speaker: Dr Ximena Arriaga, Professor of Psychological Sciences and University Faculty Scholar, Purdue University
March 20, 2020

Toward a Sociological Theory of Trans Value: Emergent Patterns of Inclusion in a Globalized Workplace
Speaker: Associate Professor Emmanuel David, University of Colorado Boulder
February 14, 2020

Schemes and Scheming: How Groups Think, Feel and Decide
Speaker: De Verlin B. Hinsz, Professor, North Dakota State University
February 7, 2020
Global Parenting and the Unintended Gender Consequences: The Case of Taiwan
Speaker: Dr Pei-Chia Lan, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Director of Global Asia Research Center, and Associate Dean of the College of Social Sciences, National Taiwan University
February 5, 2020

Mandala Matters: Former Tributary States and Modern Civil Conflict in Thailand
Speaker: Dr. Jessica Vechbanyongratana, Assistant Professor of economics, Chulalongkorn University
January 31, 2020

Brexit and the Realignment of British Politics
Speaker: Dr Steve Davies, Manchester Metropolitan University
January 21, 2020

Lucky Numbers and Pollution: A Natural Experiment Testing the Effects of Cultural Traditions on Public Policy Implementation
Speaker: Dr Amy Liu, Associate Professor, University of Texas, Austin
January 17, 2020

Epicurus on Pleasure, a Complete Life, and Death: A Defence
Speaker: Alex Voorhoeve, Professor of Philosophy, London School of Economics.
January 16, 2020
Jake’s work thus far has addressed two main literatures. The first is the political economy of development, especially rural development. Jake is interested in questions of how states acquire the institutional capacities to accomplish developmental tasks. For instance: why are some state bureaucracies effective in promoting the private activities necessary for economic success while others hinder those activities and delay development? Jake pursued this question through extensive fieldwork with the irrigation and agricultural agencies in Thailand and Indonesia.

Building upon his work in development, Jake has a project investigating how changing political institutions, especially the shift between democracy and dictatorship, determine policy interventions in the rice industry in Thailand, and thus impact the process of structural transformation. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, fieldwork for this project has been delayed, but Jake looks forward to returning to this as soon as possible.

His second field of research has to do with the creation and perpetuation of national identities among minority populations. In other words, he’s interested in the way that states can manipulate identities. One ongoing project includes analyzing data from an original online survey experiment carried out in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines regarding the impact of language on political opinions. In another, Jake is studying the historical trajectory that has allowed the Thai state to perpetuate the illusion of ethnic homogeneity, an illusion that is targeted to both external and domestic audiences. He’s currently drafting a book manuscript based on historical sources arguing that the creation of the Isan regional identity was key to enticing Thailand’s large Lao ethnic minority to abandon their ethnic identity and embrace Thai-ness.

Ulas’s research lies at the intersection of political theory, political economy, and colonial studies. He mainly investigates how the imperial constitution of global capitalism, manifested in entrenched political-economic asymmetries and socio-cultural hierarchies, has been theorized in the medium of political economy since the early-modern period.

His first book, Colonial Capitalism and the Dilemmas of Liberalism (Oxford UP, 2018) situates the origins of this problem in the British Empire and its distinctly liberal vindications in the long-eighteenth century. The book contends that the theoretical parameters of liberalism were forged in the crucible of colonial expropriation and exploitation that gave birth to the capitalist world economy. The oft-noted imagination of the British Empire as an “empire of liberty” – the global avatar of private property, free trade, and free labor – had to grapple with the empire’s record of territorial conquest, bonded labor, and resource extraction across four continents.

Ulas’s current book project, Between Commerce and Empire: Capitalism and the Limits of Liberal Anti-Imperialism, turns the framework of colonial capitalism on the liberal critics of European colonialism in the same period. It is argued that classical political economists’ anti-imperialism was ultimately constrained by their commitment to commercial and capitalist expansion. Their efforts to imagine liberal commerce as an alternative to illiberal empire, the book shows, founded on the dependence of commerce and capital on Atlantic slavery, settler colonialism in North America, and free trade imperialism in Asia.

In addition to the two books, Ulas has produced a series of articles that explore the political aspects of capitalism and their reception in political and economic thought. Two article manuscripts in progress push these agendas in new directions. One paper traces entwinement of economic and racial categories in the context of Britain’s Asian empire, expanding the scope of “racial capitalism” beyond the extant scholarship’s fixation on the Atlantic history. The second paper critically examines the uses of colonial history in the field of new institutional economics, connecting the arguments of the second book project to contemporary debates in comparative politics and development studies.
Opinion diffusion is often simulated in agent-based models to reveal the perpetuation of norms and beliefs. This paper presents a dual attitude model where agents’ interaction, information search, and opinion formation are influenced by the need for cognitive closure (NFCC). Two experiments simulated topic advocacy with either high- or low-NFCC agents. Experiment one initiated societies with unbiased distribution of NFCC levels between advocates of two competing topics, while experiment two initiated biased distributions of NFCC levels between the topics. Results in the unbiased condition showed that the popularity of the majority topic increases over time in high NFCC societies while it decreases over time in low NFCC societies. These results are magnified in the biased context where high NFCC agents provided an NFCC advantage for their advocated topic. When high NFCC agents’ advocated topic is the majority or equal at initiation, the topic’s popularity will increase significantly over time. When high NFCC agents’ advocated topic is minority at initiation, these agents resist the assimilative pressures of the majority topic to protect their own topic from popularity losses. Tracking simulations over time revealed different dynamics generated between the two experimental conditions and showed the roles low NFCC agents and edge-of-cluster agents play in enabling the emergence of such patterns. These results may shed light on the impact NFCC individuals have in within-society and between societies cultural shifts.

Assistant Professor of Public Policy, Seulki Lee, who joined SOSS in July 2020, was awarded the NASPAA Dissertation Award in September 2020, by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). Dr. Lee completed the dissertation, entitled "Accountability Challenges in Collaborative Governance", and received her doctoral degree in Public Administration at the Robert Wagner Graduate School of Public Service of New York University in June 2020. The papers in this dissertation examine complexities and uncertainties around the accountability question—to whom the collaborative is accountable and for what? The first paper explicates the nature of collaborative governance accountability and provide a framework for assessing it. The framework, grounded on a process-based approach to accountability, presents three dimensions—information, discussion, and consequences—and several components and indicators for each dimension. The second paper explores how actors in collaborative governance manage conflicting accountability demands in the context of a Korean interorganizational network. The study identifies different types of accountability tensions and actors’ strategic response to them. Findings suggest that accountability tensions may be viewed as opportunities for strengthening partnerships and advancing shared purposes. The third paper examines empirically what drives the perceived legitimacy of collaborative governance. A survey experiment among a sample of US residents is used to test the effect of three factors—representation, performance information, and issue complexity—on perceived legitimacy. Findings suggest that representation and performance information influence perceived legitimacy while the effect of issue complexity is unclear.
The School of Social Sciences is delighted to announce the following promotions:

Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

with effect from July 2020

TSAI Ming-Hong
Associate Professor of Psychology
Office: SOSS #04-066
Tel: 6828 1905
Email: mhtsai@smu.edu.sg

Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

with effect from January 2021

INCE Onur Ulas
Associate Professor of Political Science
Office: SOSS #04-080
Tel: 6828 1902
Email: ulasince@smu.edu.sg

Jacob RICKS
Associate Professor of Political Science
Office: SOSS #04-079
Tel: 6808 5460
Email: jacobricks@smu.edu.sg

Orlando WOODS
Associate Professor of Humanities
Office: SOL #04-010
Tel: 6828 0718
Email: orlandowoods@smu.edu.sg