![SMU | School of Social Sciences]

SOSS Insights

A newsletter of the SMU School of Social Sciences

Issue 8, August 2024

Singapore Management University
School of Social Sciences
10 Canning Rise
Singapore 179873
www.socsc.smu.edu.sg
Email: socsc@smu.edu.sg
Tel: +65 6828 1976

@SMUSOSS

@sgSMUSOSS

Contents

Innovative Applications of Large Language Models in Political Text Analysis

Professor Kenneth Benoit
Professor of Computational Social Science
Dean, School of Social Sciences

I'm pleased to be opening this issue of SOSS Insights with a welcome to our readers and the opportunity to introduce myself as the new Dean of the School of Social Sciences.

I am also an active researcher myself. In my capacity as Professor of Computational Social Science, I will describe two current research projects I'm actively engaged with, both leveraging the transformative power of large language models (LLMs) and artificial intelligence to advance the analysis of political texts. I like to think that this research exemplifies the potential new avenues for social science research through integrating cutting-edge data science and AI-driven methodologies into the social sciences. This has revolutionary implications for knowledge generation in the social sciences, reflecting a broader movement towards innovative, scalable, and replicable research practices. Never before has such power been available so readily to researchers who face constraints on their time and budgets.

In my first project, I explore the potential for LLMs to replace human experts in the analysis of political texts, specifically party manifestos. This research is groundbreaking as it moves beyond traditional methods, which often rely on time-consuming and costly human expert analysis, and demonstrates that LLMs can produce valid and reliable estimates of political party positions. By treating LLMs as political experts and asking them to analyse texts to determine policy stances, this work challenges the current reliance on legacy datasets and human coders. The findings indicate that LLMs can replicate expert judgments on a range of policy dimensions with remarkable accuracy, opening the door to more scalable and flexible political analysis, shattering the previous limitations due to fixed, single-shot dataset generation projects, and available in any language or context.

The second project focuses on predicting policy positions from political texts using supervised machine learning techniques. This research replicates the widely-used left-right (RILE) scale from the Manifesto Project, applying transformer-based architectures trained on multi-lingual large language models. The study demonstrates the effectiveness of these models in predicting policy positions from large corpora in multiple source languages, further showcasing the potential of AI to enhance the scalability and accuracy of political text analysis. Additionally, the successful application of transfer learning in this context illustrates the ability to predict policy positions for texts outside the original training domain, significantly extending the utility of human annotation schemes.

Together, these projects highlight the transformative potential of AI and LLMs in the field of political science, offering new, scalable tools for the analysis of political texts. I hope that these innovations will not only enhance the efficiency and scope of political science research in text analysis and the estimation of political party positions on policy, but also offer examples of how I hope the School of Social Sciences can lead in other methodological advancements in computational social science and the use of AI for social research.

Thought Leadership

Lily Kong
President SMU; Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Social Sciences

Keynote Speeches, Invited Talks and Interviews

Date	Event	Role
20 Jun 2024	Women's Forum Singapore, "Harnessing the potential of technology to educate for change", Singapore	Opening Remarks and Plenary Speaker
18 Jun 2024	Youth Model ASEAN Experience (YMAX) Conference, "Beyond Imagined Worlds: Constructing ASEAN's unity in diversity", Singapore	Guest of Honour
3 Jun 2024	World Cities Summit 2024 Opening Plenary, "Liveable and Sustainable Cities: Rejuvenate, Reinvent, Reimagine", Singapore.	Plenary Speaker and Panelist
3 Jun 2024	World Cities Summit 2024 Opening Plenary, Cities For People – Singapore Geospatial Forum", Singapore.	Panelist
21 May 2024	ANZA (Australia and New Zealand Association) Magazine re: 2nd edition of "Singapore Hawker Centres: People, Places, Food"	Interviewee
9 May 2024	"Presidents' Panel: A Leadership Conversation", CASE Asia Pacific Annual Conference, Singapore	Plenary Panel Speaker
30 Apr 2024	"Higher education reforms in the digital age", Times Higher Education Asia Universities Summit 2024, 30 April 2024, Malaysia.	Keynote Speaker
23 Apr 2024	Public Lecture on "SINGAPORE: The making of a sustainable city-state", VinUniversity, Vietnam	Speaker
20 Mar 2024	"Advancing Social Science & Humanities Research in Singapore", Social Science & Humanities Ideas Festival Launch Event, Singapore	Speaker and Panelist
6 Mar 2024	"Inspiring inclusion in a fragmented world", International Women's Day @ BlackRock,Singapore	Panel Speaker
24 Jan 2024	"Higher Education in an Age of Disruptive Change", Institute for the Future of Education (IFE) Conference 2024, 24 January 2024, Tecnológico de Monterrey in Monterrey, Mexico (virtual)	Plenary Speaker
12 Jan 2024	"(De)contextualised Liberal Arts Education: Perspectives from Singapore", Yale-NUS College Symposium: Learning from Liberal Arts Education: Innovation and Resilience, Singapore	Keynote Speaker
15 Nov 2023	"Religion, Secularism and National Identity: Perspectives from Singapore", 6th SRP Distinguished Lecture And Symposium 2023, Singapore	Keynote Speaker
31 Oct 2023	"Study of Religion in Singapore: Less religious, more tolerant", National Steering Committee for Racial and Religious Harmony, Singapore	Speaker
17 Jul 2023	"Cultural Geographies of Past, Present and Future", 9th conference of Chinese Cultural Geography, China (virtual)	Keynote Speaker

Thought Leadership

Lily Kong
President SMU; Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Social Sciences

- "What does Singapore need from its next generation?" *The Straits Times,* 1 March 2024

- "Advancing women in academia: geographical mobility and the path to success" *Times Higher Education,* 29 February 2024

David Chan
Professor of Psychology; Director, Behavioural Sciences Initiative

- Keynote address titled "Conversation on Computational Social Science: Issues, Insights, and Applications" at the first of 13 events of the inaugural Humanities & Social Science Science Ideas Festival 2024, which was jointly organised by the various autonomous universities in Singapore and supported by the Social Science Research Council. https://youtu.be/GuH7SNOsRvA

- Lee Kong Chian Professorship Public Lecture titled "Modeling Meaning Matters: A Scientist-Practitioner Approach to Understanding and Enhancing Meaning in Life", 27 Jun 2024 https://youtu.be/NEwC3ZHNRHI

Matthew Hammerton
Assistant Professor of Philosophy; Basket Coordinator for Modes of Thinking

- Invited talk titled "Pain, Pleasure, and Meaning" at the 8th Annual SMU-SOKA International Peace Symposium, February 2024

Thought Leadership

David Ocon
Assistant Professor of Arts and Cultural Management (Practice)

- Invited to make a presentation, together with Prof. Lluis Bonet from the University of Barcelona, on Enhancing ASEAN-EU Relations through Cultural Cooperation at the Asia-Europe Foundation's online forum *ASEF LinkUp: Asia-Europe Cultural Diplomacy Lab.* 14 May 2024

Nathan Peng
Assistant Professor of Political Science (Education)

- Invited talk on "Social Mobility in Singapore" by Access Singapore and BP, 23 May 2024
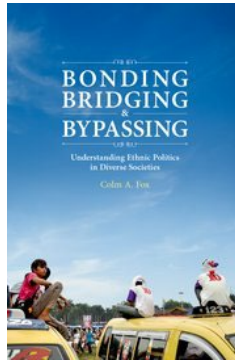
Brandon Yip
Assistant Professor of Philosophy

- "Is intellectual humility compatible with possessing strong religious or political beliefs?" ABC Ethics and Religion March 2024 https://www.abc.net.au/religion/religious-convictions-and-the-virtue-of-intellectual-humility/103586584

- "Intellectual Humility" with ABC Listen's The Philosopher's Zone March 2024 https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/philosopherszone/intellectual-humility/103551638

SOSS Research at a glance

Activities	Numbers (Jan - Jun 2024)
Journal publications	37
Other publications	11
Events – Public Lectures, Invited Talks, Seminars, etc	30
Conference presentations	11
Research grants (Project start date: Jan – Jun 24)	3 (S$52,525)

Bonding, Bridging, & Bypassing
Understanding Ethnic Politics in Diverse Societies
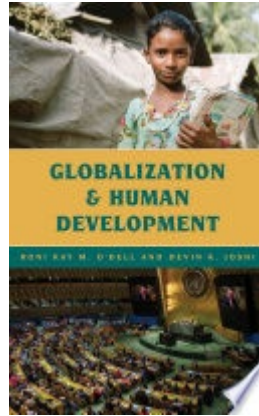
Published by Oxford University Press

Colm Fox
Associate Professor of Political Science;
Lee Kong Chian Fellow

Societal divisions and even violence can occur when electoral candidates appeal to race, religion, or tribe. Why do candidates make these ethnic appeals? More specifically, why do some candidates appeal to their own ethnic group while others reach out to other ethnic groups or abandon ethnic appeals altogether? To answer this question, Colm A. Fox adopted a ground-breaking, novel approach to study campaign appeals made by thousands of candidates. He collected and systematically analyzed photographs of over 25,000 election posters from campaigns across Indonesia, along with newspaper reports and interview data. The book shows how electoral rules, political party ideology, ethnic demographics, and social norms shape candidates' decisions to bond with co-ethnics, bridge across other ethnic groups, or bypass ethnicity entirely. Its findings yield not only insights as to which ethnic identities are likely to become politicized, but also prescriptions on how to curb divisive ethnic politics.

https://global.oup.com/academic/product/bonding-bridging-and-bypassing-9780197743966?cc=sg&lang=en&#

Publication Highlights - Books

Globalization & Human Development

Published by Rowman & Littlefield

Devin Joshi
Associate Professor of Political Science

Stories of humans striving for the good life are the focus of this new text from Roni Kay M. O'Dell and Devin K. Joshi, grounding students' understanding of globalization and international development in real human and practical experience. *Globalization and Human Development* provides a new history and focus to the study of international development, with a concern for how people have been included, or continue to be left out, of the center of development thinking and practice. While many books on international relations ignore the contributions and influence of the Global South, this book incorporates their important contributions, while at the same time recognizing the continued inequalities, and disproportionate power and wealth of these marginalized nations.

This book is the first to examine the globalization of the human development and capability approach (HDCA) as an ideology of international development and an ideology of globalization. It explores the relationship between HDCA and globalization, and the extent to which the HDCA has been globalizing. Further, the authors' analysis looks at:
- How certain HDCA ideas are promoted, discussed, and cited more often than those stemming from neoliberalism and other development paradigms
- How the HDCA was influenced by development thinking in the Global South during the Cold War, along with mobilizations to end all forms of colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism
- Why the HDCA has re-oriented global development thinking and practice away from state-centric and profit-focused development models fixated on GDP growth to prioritize individual well-being and freedoms.

https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538164143/Globalization-and-Human-Development

Publication Highlights - Books

Designing Behavioural Insights for Policy:
Processes, Capacities & Institutions
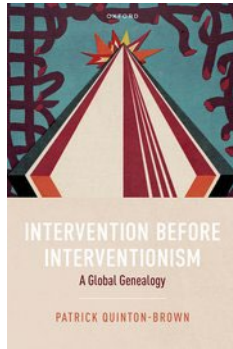
Published by Cambridge University Press

Ishani Mukherjee
Associate Professor of Public Policy;
Programme Director, Master of Sustainability;
Policy Lead, SMU Urban Institute

The diversity of knowledge surrounding behavioural insights (BI) means in the policy sciences, although visible, remains under-theorized with scant comparative and generalizable explorations of the procedural prerequisites for their effective design, both as stand-alone tools and as part of dedicated policy 'toolkits'. While comparative analyses of the content of BI tools has proliferated, the knowledge gap about the procedural needs of BI policy design is growing recognizably, as the range of BI responses grows in practice necessitating specific capabilities, processes and institutional frameworks to be in place for their design. This Element draws on the literature on policy design and innovation adoption to explore the administrative, institutional and capacity endowments of governments for the successful and appropriate integration of BI in existing policy frameworks. Further, we present three illustrative cases with respect to their experience of essential procedural endowments facilitating for the effective integration of BI in policy design..

https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/abs/designing-behavioural-insights-for-policy/FB26DC74671851760BF0F44EE405CB62

Intervention Before Interventionism: A Global Genealogy

Published by Oxford University Press

Patrick Quinton-Brown
Assistant Professor of Political Science

In international relations and its study, the age of interventionism has come to an end. The dominant discourse today, as a series of ongoing crises suggest, is instead about defending sovereign borders, putting up walls, and respecting or realizing national identity. *Intervention before Interventionism* re-considers the meaning of intervention and non-intervention in international society, particularly in light of non-Western contestations of Western-dominated order since 1945. Patrick Quinton-Brown argues that the normative and institutionalized trajectories of intervention have been shaped fundamentally by encounters with the Global South or 'Bandung Powers.' The dilemma of our present cannot be understood through the lens of cosmopolitan or liberal-solidarist duties. Recovering an anti-colonial and solidarist internationalism from the ashes of interventionism involves unlearning much of what we thought to be true.

https://global.oup.com/academic/product/intervention-before-interventionism-9780198886457?cc=sg&lang=en&#

Publication Highlights - Books

Memories of Unbelonging: Ethnic Chinese
Identity Politics in Post-Suharto Indonesia

Published by University of Hawaii Press

Charlotte Setijadi
Assistant Professor of
Humanities (Education)

The ethnic Chinese have had a long and problematic history in Indonesia, commonly stereotyped as a market-dominant minority with dubious political loyalty toward Indonesia. For over three decades under Suharto's New Order regime, a cultural assimilation policy banned Chinese languages, cultural expression, schools, media, and organizations. This policy was only abolished in 1998 following the riots and anti-Chinese attacks that preceded the fall of the New Order. In the post-Suharto era, Chinese Indonesians were finally free to assert their Chineseness again. But how does an ethnic group recover from the trauma of assimilation and regain a lost cultural identity?

Memories of Unbelonging is an ethnographic study of how collective memories of state-sponsored ethnic discrimination have shaped Chinese identity politics in Indonesia. Combining case studies, in-depth primary data, and incisive analysis of Indonesia's contemporary political landscape, anthropologist Charlotte Setijadi argues that trauma narratives are at the core of modern Chinese identity politics. Examining spaces and domains such as residential enclaves, educational institutions, the creative arts, and politics, this book paints a vivid picture of how different generations of Chinese Indonesians make sense of their historical trauma, ethnic identity, and belonging in a post-assimilation environment. Far from being passive victims of history, the ethnic Chinese are actively challenging old stereotypes and boundaries of acceptable Chineseness in the country.

This emphasis on group and individual agency marks a strong departure from structural analyses of Chinese Indonesians that mostly highlight their disempowerment as an oppressed minority. Furthermore, placing the analysis within the broader context of China's rise in the twenty-first century demonstrates how the combination of persisting local anti-Chinese sentiments and renewed pride over China's growing global dominance have prompted many Chinese Indonesians to re-evaluate their sense of ethnic and national belonging. By focusing on the nexus between collective memory, local identity politics, and the rise of China as an external factor, *Memories of Unbelonging* offers new perspectives of understanding about Chinese Indonesians, post-Suharto Indonesian society, and the relationship between China and ethnic Chinese communities in Southeast Asia.

https://uhpress.hawaii.edu/title/memories-of-unbelonging-ethnic-chinese-identity-politics-in-post-suharto-indonesia/

Publication Highlights – Journal Articles

▊ Humanities

Lily Kong

Zhang, H., Qian, J., & Kong, L. (2024). "Fly Buddha to Mars": The co-production between religiosity and science & technology at Longquan Monastery, Beijing. *Geoforum*, *148*, 103948.

Grimley, E., Woods, O., & Kong, L. (2024). Educating Indians, learning 'Indianness': navigating pluralistic educational infrastructures in diasporic Singapore. *South Asian Diaspora*, 1-16.

Gao, Q., Woods, O., Kong, L. and Zhou Y**.** (2024) "Political ecology of death: Funeral reforms and the conflicts of land and emotion in Singapore", *World Regional Studies* (世界地理研究), Vol. 33, No. 4, Apr 2024, 24-35,

Tan Sor Hoon

Tan, S. H. (2024). Merit and inequality: Confucian and communitarian perspectives on Singapore's meritocracy. *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture*, *41*, 29.

Tan, S. H. (2024). Confucian Family Ideal and Same-Sex Marriage: A Feminist Confucian Perspective. *Hypatia*, 159-176.

Lily Kong
President, SMU;
Lee Kong Chian
Chair Professor of
Social Sciences

Tan Sor Hoon
Professor of Philosophy

Publication Highlights – Journal Articles

▌ Political Science

Devin Joshi

Joshi, D. (2024). From guo to tianxia: linking two Daoist theories of International Relations. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, *24*(1), 1-27.

Joshi, D. (2024). An Integrated Theory of Happiness: The Yang Zhu Chapter of the Liezi. *Journal of Daoist Studies*, *17*(17), 1-25.

Ishani Mukherjee

Cashore, B., Mukherjee, I., Virani, A., & Wijedasa, L. S. (2024). Policy design for biodiversity: How problem conception drift undermines "fit-for-purpose" Peatland conservation. *Policy and Society*, puae019.

Mukherjee, I., & Guha, P. (2024). Policy-takers and policy calibrations: exploring the demand side of micro-level policy design choices. *Policy Design and Practice*, 1-18.

Jacob Ricks

Jatusripitak, N., & Ricks, J. I. (2024). Age and Ideology: The Emergence of New Political Cleavages in Thailand's 2566 (2023) Election. *Pacific Affairs*, *97*(1), 117-136.

Devin Joshi
Associate Professor
of Political Science

Ishani Mukherjee
Associate Professor of Public
Policy;
Programme Director, Master of
Sustainability;
Policy Lead, SMU Urban Institute

Jacob Ricks
Associate Professor of
Political Science;
Associate Dean (Research)

Publication Highlights – Journal Articles

Psychology

Cheng Chi-Ying

Ng, M. H., & Cheng, C. Y. (2024). The social evaluation of accents and perceived social influence in Singapore: A comparison of American and Singaporean English accents. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*.

Andree Hartanto

Hartanto, A., Lua, V. Y. Q., Kasturiratna, K. T. A. S., Koh, P. S., Tng, G. Y. Q., Kaur, M., Quek, F. Y. X., Chia, J. L., & Majeed, N. M. (2024). The effect of mere presence of smartphone on cognitive functions: A four-level meta-analysis. *Technology, Mind, and Behavior, 5*(1).

Hartanto, A., Kasturiratna, K. T. A. S., Hu, M. L., Diong, S. F., & Lua, V. Y. Q. (2024). Negative work-to-family spillover stress and heightened cardiovascular risk biomarkers in midlife and older adults. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 178,* 111594.

Tng, G. Y., Koh, J., Soh, X. C., Majeed, N. M., & Hartanto, A. (2024). Efficacy of digital mental health interventions for PTSD symptoms: A systematic review of meta-analyses. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 357,* 23-36.

Andersson, P. A., Vartanova, I., Västfjäll, D., Tinghög, G., Strimling, P., Wu, J., ..., Hartanto, A., ..., & Eriksson, K. (2024). Anger and disgust shape judgments of social sanctions across cultures, especially in high individual autonomy societies. *Scientific Reports, 14*(1), 5591.

Chia, J. L., Hartanto, A., & Tov, W. (2024). Profiles of activity engagement and depression trajectories as COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed. *Psychology and Aging, 39*(1), 31-45.

T'ng, K., Kenardy, J., & Hartanto, A. (2024). Evaluating mental health outcomes in COVID-19 ICU survivors: A scoping review of measurement tools. *Journal of Clinical Medicine, 13*(11), 3191.

Bognar, M., Szekely, Z., Varga, M. A., Nagy, K., Spinelli, G., Hartanto, A., Majeed, N. M., Chen, N. R. Y., Gyurkovics, M., Aczel, B. (2024). Cognitive control adjustments are dependent on the level of conflict: A replication of Zhang et al. (2021). *Scientific Reports, 14*(1), 3116.

Cheng Chi-Ying
Associate Professor of Psychology

Andree Hartanto
Associate Professor of Psychology (Education)

Publication Highlights – Journal Articles

▌▌Psychology

Angela Leung

Dai, X., Leung, A. K. Y., & Chong, M. (2024). The link between people's social perceptions of cultivated meat eaters and their acceptance of cultivated meat. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*.

Dai, X., & Leung, A. K. Y. (2024). Motivations matter: moral and health-related motives indirectly relate to differential psychological health indicators among vegetarians. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, *43*(1), 56.

Lee, S. T., Mah, J. J., & Leung, A. K. Y. (2024). A dual-angle exploration towards understanding lapses in COVID-19 social responsibility. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*.

Chong, M., Leung, A., & Fernandez, T. M. (2024). On-site sensory experience boosts acceptance of cultivated chicken. *Future Foods*, *9*, 100326.

Norman Li

van Vugt, M., Colarelli, S. M., & Li, N. P. (2024). Digitally Connected, Evolutionarily Wired: An Evolutionary Mismatch Perspective on Digital Work. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 20413866241232138.

Koohgard, S., Tan, L., Li, N. P., & Hashemi, M. (2024). The impact of modernization on mating strategies in Iran: A comparison across cities versus small towns. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *221*, 112546.

Tan, L. K., Li, N. P., & Tan, K. (2024). Cash, crowds, and cooperation: The effects of population density and resource scarcity on cooperation in the dictator game. *Evolution and Human Behavior*.

Lester Sim

Tse, H. W., Yan, J., Sim, L., Zhang, M., Wen, W., Song, J., & Kim, S. Y. (2024). Parallel Ethnic Identity Development of Mexican-Origin Adolescents and Mothers Under the Influence of Neighborhood Latinx Concentration and Ethnic-Racial Diversity. *Identity*, 1-17.

Sim, L., Song, J., Ip, K. I., Costa, C. N., Wen, W., & Kim, S. Y. (2024). Mexican-origin adolescents' cumulative strengths predict baseline and longitudinal changes in self-growth outcomes. *Developmental psychology*.

Jacinth Tan

Tan, J. J., Tan, C. H., & Kraus, M. W. (2024). Subjective socioeconomic status moderates how resting heart rate variability predicts pain response. *Affective Science*, 1-8.

Angela Leung
Professor of Psychology; Advisor, SMU Institutional Review Board

Norman Li
Professor of Psychology

Lester Sim
Assistant Professor of Psychology

Jacinth Tan
Assistant Professor of Psychology; Lee Kong Chian Fellow

Publication Highlights – Journal Articles

‖ Psychology

Tsai Ming-Hong

Rees, L., Tsai, M. H., Kopelman, S., & Hu, H. H. (2024). Can confidence influence persuasiveness in disagreements by conveying competence versus dominance? The moderating role of competitiveness. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research, 17*(2), 153.

Tsai, M. H. (2024). Does relationship conflict reduce novel idea communication through perceived leader openness? Power distance orientation as a moderator. *International Journal of Conflict Management*.

Tsai, M. H. (2024). The interpersonal effects of emotional expressions with both and single valences on work-related satisfaction: an examination of emotions and perceived openness as mediators. *Cognition and Emotion, 38*(3), 361-377.

William Tov

Chia, J. L., Hartanto, A., & Tov, W. (2024). Profiles of activity engagement and depression trajectories as COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed. *Psychology and Aging*.

Yang Hwajin

Khoo, S. S., Yang, H., & Toh, W. X. (2024). Leveraging Instagram to enhance self-esteem: A self-affirmative intervention study and multilevel mediation analysis. *Computers in Human Behavior, 150*, 107972.

Tsai Ming-Hong
Associate Professor of
Psychology

William Tov
Associate Professor of
Psychology;
Deputy Director, Centre
for Research on
Successful Ageing
(ROSA)

Yang Hwajin
Associate Professor of
Psychology;
PGR Coordinator

Publication Highlights – Journal Articles

▌Sociology

Annika Rieger

Rieger, A. (2024). Are Corporations Responding to Civil Society Pressure? A Multilevel Analysis of Corporate Emissions. *Sociology of Development,* 1-25.

George Wong

Wong, G. (2024). Lion City zoopolis: Urban crittizenship in biophilic Singapore. *Anthrozoös,* 1-17.

Forrest Zhang

Zhang, Q. F. (2024). Smallholders in Capitalist Agriculture: Persistence and Challenges. *Rural China, 21*(1), 126-152.

Hu, Z., & Zhang, Q. F. (2024). Alternative agrifood systems and the economic sustainability of farmers' cooperatives: The Chinese experience. *Sustainable Development*.

Annika Rieger
Assistant Professor of Sociology

George Wong
Senior Lecturer of Sociology

Forrest Zhang
Associate Professor of Sociology

SOSS Research Camp
5 April 2024

Presentation by Tan Sor Hoon
Professor of Philosophy

Philosophical Arguments for Confucian Democracy

The presentation explain the motivation and method for my project of Confucian Democracy. From being rejected as obsolete state ideology and apology for autocracy, Confucianism has been "revived" (although "reflourished" might be a better description) since the late twentieth century, first to meet the challenges of modern life through reconciliation with ideas and institutions of European origins that are considered modern, and later as a source of alternative models of government and ways of life challenging Western hegemony. I will locate my project within the on-going debates about the relevance of Confucianism to contemporary problems.

Presentation by Annika Rieger
Assistant Professor of Sociology

Profiting from Denial: Computational and Qualitative Analysis of Corporate Discussions of Climate Change

Climate change's destructive forces have become impossible to ignore and political and popular calls for emissions cuts are growing. In this context, how do fossil fuel executives frame their business operations? In answer to this question, I will present a mixed-methods analysis of 887 public earnings-calls meetings between executives, investors, and outside analysts from 24 major oil and gas companies in 2007-2020. Findings suggest that these discussions, which ostensibly promote openness and debate to protect investors, reproduce corporate status quo by cultivating narratives that deny the need for change. To conclude, I will discuss future plans for the "dictionary" of corporate climate change terms produced by the computational analysis.

SOSS Research Camp
5 April 2024

Presentation by Tsai Ming-Hong
Associate Professor of Psychology

How to make a manuscript more interesting

I will discuss two established approaches on how to convince others that a manuscript is interesting and substantially contributes to the field of research. Specifically, I will discuss how to question established beliefs in the literature and how to explore a mysterious aspect of a relationship between variables. During the presentation, I will explain and illustrate these approaches and provide practical suggestions on how to implement them.

Presentation by Patrick Quinton-Brown
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Intervention before interventionism: A global genealogy

The era of liberal interventionism is over. And the prevailing international discourse is once again about defending state borders and putting up walls. This broad re-assertion of sovereignty and non-intervention---often considered the normative foundation of the BRICS countries, of the Non-Aligned Movement, of Bandung, of the 'Westphalian' South---raises a series of difficult questions, not least about the management of challenges shared by all. How are we to make sense of re-organisations of intervention and non-intervention in global order? Intervention before Interventionism is about the ways in which statespeople have re-ordered intervention and non-intervention since the middle of the twentieth century; it is concerned primarily with non-Western contestations of Western-dominated order; it illustrates institutional change in and through decolonization; and it provides a conceptual roadmap for understanding dilemmas of intervention and non-intervention today, particularly in relation to contestation as it has re-emerged in the twenty-first century. While building upon and conversing with existing literature, this book stands out from previous approaches insofar as it is a mapping of international struggles for the re-constitution of intervention in the globalization of the society of states.

Events

Friends with (Workplace) Benefits
Speaker: Stephen M. Colarelli, Professor of Psychology,
Central Michigan University
9 January 2024

Masculinities, Gender and International Relations
Speaker: Terrell Carver, Professor of Political Theory, University of Bristol
17 January 2024

Ironic Effects of Singlehood Stigma
Speaker: Kenneth Tan, Assistant Professor of Psychology
30 January 2024

The Theme of Mate Selection and Survival in "Dream of the Red Chamber"
Speaker: Yu, Shiu-yun, Director of the Department of Applied Chinese,
Ming Chuan University
2 February 2024

Explaining the Indonesian Election Results
Speaker: Eve Warburton, Research Fellow, The Australian National University
19 February 2024

Events

Through the lens of a naturalist: A smartphone intervention to promote awe and nature connectedness in urbanized Singapore
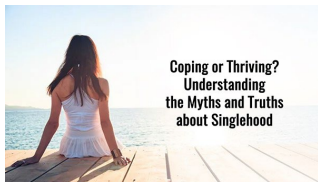Speaker: Ng Shu Tian, Psychology PhD Candidate, SOSS, SMU
20 February 2024

Does National Political Economy Impact Corporate Emissions?
Speaker: Annika Rieger, Assistant Professor of Sociology
21 February 2024

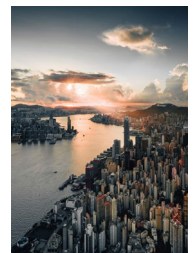**Coping or Thriving? Understanding the Myths and Truths about Singlehood**
Speaker: Yuthika Girme, Associate Professor of Psychology,
Simon Fraser University
23 February 2024

Modernizing Rural China Workshop
Organizer: John Donaldson, Associate Professor of Political Science
23 - 25 February 2024

Sorry States or Contrition Chic? Politics in the Age of Apology
Speaker: Ehito Kimura, Associate Professor of Political Science,
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
26 February 2024

Events

Consistent Methods Safeguard Against False Findings
Speaker: Jolynn Pek, Associate Professor of Psychology,
The Ohio State University
5 March 2024

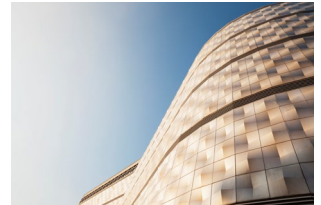**Bandung's Grandchildren: Recent Mainland Chinese Memoirs of Indonesia**
Speaker: Josh Stenberg, Associate Professor in Chinese Studies
The University of Sydney
6 March 2024

Playing at the Edge of Chaos
Speaker: Ijlal Naqvi, Associate Professor of Sociology;
Associate Dean (Curriculum and Teaching), SMU
6 March 2024

Intellectual Humility without Limits
Speaker: Brandon Yip, Post-doctoral research fellow,
Australian Catholic University
6 March 2024

Unseeing refugees: Topolgangers in the city
Speaker: Gerhard Hoffstaedter, Associate Professor in Anthropology,
University of Queensland
15 March 2024

Unseeing refugees:
Topolgangers in the city

Events

**Political Sermons and Attitudes toward Religious Authority:
Evidence from High-Frequency Surveys in Indonesia**
Speaker: Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo,
Assistant Professor of Political Science, NUS
22 March 2024

**Urban Kaleidoscope: Racialized space and South Asian migrant
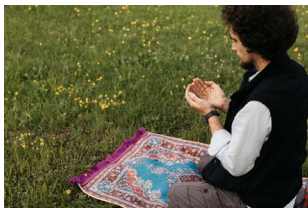Inclusion/Exclusion in Global City Singapore**
Speaker: Subadevan s/o Mahadevan, Adjunct Faculty, SMU SOSS
27 March 2024

Grant Getting Sharing Session
Speakers:
• Jacinth Tan, Assistant Professor of Psychology, SMU SOSS
• Ken Neo, Director, Office of Research, SMU
28 March 2024

Causal Complexity Explains the Beliefs in Tempting Fate
Speaker: Albert Lee, Associate Professor of Psychology, NTU
2 April 2024

**Labeling as Nation-Building:
The Politics of Refugee Return in Socialist China**
Speaker: Liu Jiaqi, Assistant Professor of Sociology, SMU SOSS
4 April 2024

Events

The Press and Democracy Protests in Asia
Speaker: Colm Fox, Associate Professor of Political Science, SMU SOSS
12 April 2024

Information Processing in Participatory Governance
Speaker: Daniel Berliner, Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, London School of Economics
17 April 2024
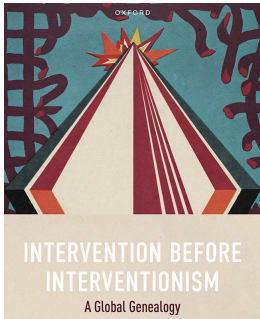
Is this Behaviour Impressive or Repulsive?
The Influence of Our Ecology on Our Social Evaluations
Speaker: Tan Kai Lin Lynn,
PhD Candidate in Psychology, SMU SOSS
17 April 2024

Shaping Pride from Abroad: The Impact of Foreign Praise on National Pride
Speaker: Jiyoung Ko,
Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Korea University
23 April 2024

Events

Book Launch: Intervention before Interventionism by Patrick Quinton-Brown
Opening Remarks: Chandran Kukathas, Dean, SMU School of Social Sciences,

Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Political Science
Author: Patrick Quinton-Brown, Assistant Professor of Political Science
Commentators:
- Antony Anghie, Professor, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore and S.J. Quinney School of Law, University of Utah Executive Editor, Asian Journal of International Law
- Andrew Hurrell, Former Montague Burton Professor of International Relations, Oxford University Senior Research Fellow in the Law Faculty, Humboldt University
- Robbie Shilliam, Professor of International Relations, Johns Hopkins University; Co-editor, Manchester University Press book series: Postcolonial International Studies
- Tan Sor-hoon, Professor of Philosophy, SMU School of Social Sciences

25 April 2024

A launch event for the new book, supported and organized by SMU SOSS, took place on 25 April at the Function Lounge of the SMU Yong Pung How School of Law. The event was moderated by Dean and Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Political Science, Chandran Kukathas, and included commentaries by Antony Anghie (Professor of Law, National University of Singapore and the University of Utah), Andrew Hurrell (former Montague Burton Professor of International Relations), Robbie Shilliam (Professor of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University), and Sor-hoon Tan (Professor of Philosophy, SMU).

(From L to R): Chandran Kukathas (Dean and Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Political Science, SMU); Robbie Shilliam (Professor of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University); Andrew Hurrell (former Montague Burton Professor of International Relations); Patrick Quinton-Brown (Assistant Professor of International Relations, SMU); Sor-hoon Tan (Professor of Philosophy, SMU); Antony Anghie (Professor of Law, National University of Singapore and the University of Utah).

Author's remarks

Events

Lee Kong Chian Professorship Public Lecture
Modeling Meaning Matters: A Scientist-Practitioner Approach to
Understanding and Enhancing Meaning in Life
Speaker: David Chan, Lee Kong Chian Professor of Psychology &
Director, Behavioural Sciences Initiative, SMU
27 June 2024
https://youtu.be/NEwC3ZHNRHI

Building Presidential Coalitions in Indonesia: From Jokowi to Prabowo
Speaker: Marcus Mietzner, Associate Professor,
Australian National University
28 June 2024

Examining a Regulatory Flexibility Framework of Psychological Distress:
Integrating Distress Tolerance, Emotion Differentiation, and Emotion
Regulation Flexibility
Speaker: Tng Yue Qi Germaine, PhD candidate in Psychology, SMU SOSS
28 June 2024

Events

SMU-DBS Foundation Symposium on Essential Household Needs in Singapore
12 Jul 2024

On 12th July 2024, the Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA) organised and hosted the SMU-DBS Symposium on Essential Household Needs in Singapore at the Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium. This symposium featured findings from the "Household Needs Study (HNS)", that was supported by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF). The study, conducted by Principal Investigator Professor Paulin Straughan (Director, ROSA) and Dr Mathew Mathews (Head of Social Lab and Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) and Collaborator at

ROSA) examined the ability of Singaporeans to afford what they deem as necessities and their general beliefs towards reasons for poverty. A companion piece titled "Public Perceptions of Provision of Essential Needs Study" was conducted by IPS and was similarly presented during the symposium. In total, over 220 participants – comprising individuals from government agencies, SMU, and corporate and social services sector – attended the symposium. Guest of Honour, Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development, highlighted in his closing speech that such research could help to better inform the government on how policies can be improved to ensure that basic needs of Singaporeans are met.

During the keynote presentation, Professor Straughan highlighted the findings from the HNS by presenting a list of 40 items that were deemed essential for a normal life in Singapore. These items could be classified in 10 broad categories which included household appliances and furniture, digital connectivity and devices, social participation, housing, food, clothing and hygiene, transport, healthcare, children and caregiving needs, and finances. Professor Straughan also noted how different demographic groups have differing perceptions on what items are deemed a necessity. For instance, air-conditioning was reported as a necessity by individuals from higher-income groups, whereas individuals from lower-income groups perceived this item as more of a luxury rather than an essential need.

Professor Paulin Straughan delivering the Keynote presentation

From Left to Right, Panellist members Professor Paulin Straughan, Professor Takashi Oshio and Moderator, Assistant Professor Nathan Peng

Assistant Professor Nathan Peng served as the moderator for the panel discussion on 'Understanding essential needs in different contexts', which included Professor Paulin Straughan, Professor Takashi Oshio from Hitotsubashi University and Professor Aya Abe from Tokyo Metropolitan University. The panelists shared insights on how rapid demographic changes are currently changing perceptions regarding what are deemed as essentials in both Singaporean and Japanese societies.

In the second segment of the symposium, the discussion pivoted to who should help provide essentials to those in society who are deprived of them. Dr Mathew Mathews shared the poll results that respondents had a higher tendency to expect the government to provide basic necessities, healthcare and childcare related items while the community (including relatives and friends) should be responsible for providing meals, personal items and furniture. This was followed by a panel discussion with representatives from social service agencies and industry.

The new findings released at the symposium were widely covered by local media and raised the awareness about what constitutes essential needs in Singapore and what the community can do to support the more vulnerable groups in attaining access.
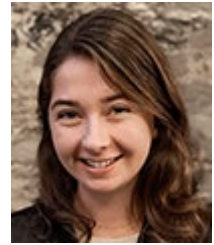
Faculty Spotlight

Norman Li
Professor of Psychology

Norman Li is a psychologist who uses evolutionary theory to guide the study of social phenomena. He has published over 100 journal articles and developed research lines centered on human mating, evolutionary mismatch, and their intersection. An evolutionary psychological perspective examines how the mind is functionally designed to process environmental input—including both physical and sociocultural cues—to produce adaptive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Given that reproduction is at the heart of evolution, mating strategies constitute a central aspect of the psychology of all sexually reproducing species. Norman's research extensive work on mate preferences seeks to identify decision rules that evolved to allow individuals to choose partners who increase their reproductive fitness. Using a microeconomic model to examine how we may have evolved to select our partners, this work separated the "necessities" from the "luxuries" in people's preferences for long- and short-term mates and in their actual mate choices, resolving a longstanding paradox in the mate preferences literature. The budget allocation method, which allows participants to make choices under different levels of constraints, has not only been used in this work but also adopted in a wide range of other research areas.

Much of Norman's research also examines the root causes of difficulties people face in the modern world. This work involves identifying key aspects of the physical and social environment that are processed as input by key psychological mechanisms and have rapidly changed due to advances in technology. Because such changes have occurred very recently and much faster than our minds can evolve, our ancient psychological mechanisms are now increasingly mismatched to the current environment, thereby leading to a lot of maladaptive or undesirable thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. High rates of long-term depression, anxiety, dissatisfaction, disordered eating, and lifestyle diseases found in modern societies (but absent in hunter-gatherer societies) are prime examples. Consider also the ultralow birthrates experienced by Singapore, the rest of the Far East, and in many other modern societies. As conceptualized by Norman's research, this modern phenomenon results from various forms of mismatch affecting psychological mechanisms that evolved to regulate the tradeoff between reproduction and self-investment. That is, in line with a life history mismatch perspective, when individuals feel stressed, uncertain, or in danger, they naturally slow down their mating and reproduction to invest more in themselves until they perceive greater safety and security. In the modern world, however, cues to competition and other pressures are ubiquitous, intense, and relentless, thereby leading various individuals to indefinitely forgo mating and reproduction. Research from Norman's lab has thus far shown that high levels of economic uncertainty and desires for social status induce people to want less children and delay marriage and reproduction.

Faculty Spotlight

Annika Rieger
Assistant Professor of Sociology

How does national context—social, economic, and political—affect corporate sustainability? Corporations are disproportionately responsible for carbon dioxide emissions, the primary driver of the climate crisis. Understanding the role of macro-level factors can help target action to reduce corporate emissions.

Annika uses a variety of quantitative methods, including multi-level regression models and Qualitative Comparative Analysis, as well as computational analysis to contextualize quantitative and qualitative corporate data within broader social contexts.

One strand of Annika's research focuses on the macro level, examining how national efforts to influence corporations via pro-business policies and foreign direct investment can affect the environment. Nations with better business "environments" tend to have higher emissions—most notably those in marginalized economic positions, who may pursue business-friendly policy to encourage economic development at the cost of the environment. Similarly, economically marginalized nations enmeshed in foreign direct investment networks tend to have higher emissions. Foreign direct investment is often seen as the key to development, but again it can come at an environmental cost.

Another strand of research focuses on the meso level; specifically, corporations in the most polluting industries. In a forthcoming article, Annika and her coauthor show how oil and gas executives continue to deny climate change. Corporate earnings calls become grounds for interaction rituals whereby executives, industry analysts, and shareholders respond to pressure to address climate issues by discussing them in a manner that upholds the extractive status quo.

A final strand of research combines the macro- and meso-level to understand how factors such as integration into pro-environmental global society, position in the global political economic hierarchy, a variation in political and economic institutions can effect corporate environmental outcomes. In a continuation of this research, Annika is currently working on using Qualitative Comparative Analysis to identify the "recipes" or combinations of national characteristics that lead to either increased or decreased corporate emissions.

Research Centres

Centre for Research on Successful Ageing

SMU Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA) was a co-organiser of the 2nd SIGMA Research Conference and the 20th International Conference on Pensions, Insurance and Savings with Renmin University, which was held in Beijing, China on 23-24 May 2024. This event is part of a research series organised by the Societal Impact and Global Management Alliance (SIGMA) which is a global network of universities that have pledged to develop closer interdisciplinary research collaborations.

ROSA presented on a variety of research topics at the conference; with Professor Paulin Straughan, Director of ROSA, and Lim Wensi, Centre Manager of ROSA, sharing about Project Silverlight, a ground-up social initiative that was designed and led by older adults themselves. In the same session, Assistant Professor Cheng Cheng, one of ROSA's collaborators, showcased her study which examined spousal differences in activity levels and engagement. Dr Tan Yi Wen, a research fellow from ROSA, also shared about his paper on the determinants of social isolation in older adults while Associate Professor William Tov, Deputy Director of ROSA, presented his research on the stability of life satisfaction, a measure of well-being. Participating at the SIGMA conference helped ROSA to network with key ageing researchers such as Professor Zhao Yaohui, the lead PI for the China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study (CHARLS), as well as various legal experts to explore the topic of retirement using legal and economic frameworks.

Lien Centre for Social Innovation

LCSI is conducting several impact assessment studies with partners such as Tote Board, Lotus Life Foundation, Red Hat Asia Pacific, and UNIQLO. Additionally, the Centre is expanding its research on food insecurity in Singapore. In collaboration with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), LCSI is working to update the prevalence of food insecurity nationwide and investigating the enablers and barriers to food access, especially among low-income households. In January 2024, LCSI was awarded a US$500,000 grant by Citi Foundation in its inaugural Global Innovation Challenge to address food insecurity among lower-income households in Singapore. Notably, LCSI was the sole grantee from Singapore among 50 community organisations worldwide that Citi Foundation recognised in its US$25 million initiative to strengthen food security and the financial health of low-income families and communities through a pilot intervention.

Achievements – Awards/Recognitions

Lily Kong
President, SMU;
Lee Kong Chian
Chair Professor of
Social Sciences

❖ The Royal Geography Society (with the institute of British Geographers) Victoria Medal 2024 for conspicuous merit in social and cultural geography and in urban research.

Andree Hartanto
Associate Professor of
Psychology (Education)

❖ The APS Rising Star by the Association for Psychological Science

Liu Jiaqi
Assistant Professor of
Sociology

❖ Honorable Mention for the Best Article by an International Scholar Award from the Global and Transnational Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association (ASA). Liu, J. M. (2022).
Diasporic placemaking: the internationalisation of a migrant hometown in post-socialist China. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 48*(1), 209-227.

Achievements – Awards/Recognitions

Lee Kong Chian Fellowship

Steven Burik
Associate Professor of Philosophy
(Education); Associate Dean (Student Matters
& Alumni Affairs); Lee Kong Chian Fellow

Colm Fox
Associate Professor of Political Science;
Lee Kong Chian Fellow

Jacinth Tan
Assistant Professor of Psychology;
Lee Kong Chian Fellow

Research Projects Awarded Jan – Jun 24

External Research Grant

PI: **Paulin Straughan**, Dean of Students; Professor of Sociology (Practice); Director, Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA); Urban Fellow, SMU Urban Institute
Funding Agency: Agency for Integrated Care Pte Ltd
Project title: Understanding Emerging Trends of Care Communities for Singapore Residents Aged 50 – 76
[Additional funding to SMU for existing research project.]

SMU Internal Research Grant – MOE AcRF Tier 1

PI: **Cheng Chi-Ying**, Associate Professor of Psychology
Project title: Structure of National and Racial Identities in Multicultural Settler Countries and Consequences for Intergroup Relations

PI: **Colm Fox**, Associate Professor of Political Science;
Lee Kong Chian Fellow
Project title: Press Coverage and the Legitimization of Protest in Hong Kong and Myanmar

SMU Internal Research Grant – Research Capacity Building Fund

PI: **David Ocon**, Assistant Professor of Arts and Cultural Management (Practice)
Project title: 'Next-Gen Cultural Heritage': AI's Role in Sustainably Reconstructing Truncated Narratives

Achievements - Promotion

The School of Social Sciences is delighted to announce the following promotion:

Promotion to Associate Professor
with effect from July 2024

Andree Hartanto
Associate Professor of Psychology (Education)
Office: #04-05
Email: andreeh@smu.edu.sg