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# **Symposium on Social Change and Social Policy in the COVID-19 Context: Asian Perspectives and Experiences**

DATE: 16 December 2022 (Friday)

TIME: 09:30-16:15 HKT

FORMAT: Hybrid Model

VENUE: LYH201/1, 2/F, Lau Lee Yuen Haan Amenities Building & Zoom

**TOPIC: Symposium on Social Change and Social Policy in the COVID-19 Context:  
Asian Perspectives and Experiences**

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**ZOOM LINK:**

**MEETING ID : 982 9474 0371**

**PASSCODE : 20221216**

The Symposium on Social Change and Social Policy in the COVID-19 Context: Asian Perspectives and Experiences is a multidisciplinary conference held at Lingnan University in Hong Kong. The Covid-19 global pandemic has unleashed a catastrophic crisis all across the world, which also changed people's lives in different ways. It is clear that the future of social policy needs rethinking in many ways and responding to the need for social protection and the challenges of social injustices. The symposium aims to foster dialogue on rethinking social policy for post-pandemic transformations in the Asian context so as to meet global challenges, with a special focus on the following topics:

- *Labour Markets and Youth Employment*
- *Ageing and Public Health*
- *Educational and Societal Supports*
- *Policy and Research Directions*

## SCHEDULE AND RUNDOWN

Welcoming & Photo taking

Time: 09:30-09:45

~ By Joshua Ka Ho MOK, Vice-president of Lingnan University, Hong Kong~

Keynote

Time: 09:45-10:30 (with Q&A)

Social Policy Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Asia Pacific Region:

Some Reflections from Taiwan's Experiences

~ By KU Yeun Wen, National Taiwan University, Taiwan~

Session 1: Labour Markets and Youth Employment

Time: 10:30-11:30 (with Q&A) | Chair: PUN Ngai

Reconceptualizing Youth Poverty through the Lens of Precarious Employment in Global Pandemic Period

~By PUN Ngai and Peier CHEN, Lingnan University, Hong Kong~

Exploring the Gaps in COVID-19 Prevention Practices in Hong Kong from a Social Justice Framework

~By Gizem ARAT, Lingnan University, Hong Kong~

Platform Work and Social Risks: A Qualitative Study on Workers' Experiences and Views in Hong Kong

~By Cham Kit MING, Tat Chor AU-YEUNG, Gizem ARAT, Lingnan University, Hong Kong ~

Tea & Coffee break

Time: 11:30-11:45

Session 2: Ageing and Public Health

11:45-12:45 (with Q&A) | Chair: Cheng SHI

How Does COVID-19 Affect Formal-informal Care Relationship of People with Dementia in the Community during the Post-pandemic Period? Evidence from Hong Kong

~By Cheng SHI, Lingnan University, Hong Kong~

Does Compulsory Testing Measure work for suppressing the infection of COVID-19 in the elderly community: Evidence from Hong Kong

~By Cong LIANG, Lingnan University, Hong Kong~

How Productivist Welfare Regime Frames the Risks of Ageing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

~By Zhen TIAN, Lingnan University, Hong Kong~

~End of the AM Session

Lunch

Time: 12:45-14:00

Session 3: Educational and Societal Supports

Time: 14:00-15:00 (with Q&A) | Chair: *Weiyang XIONG*

A Re-Examination of the Pull Factors Influencing the Destination Choices of Chinese International Students After  
Massive Global Immobility

~By Baohua YU, Lingnan University, Hong Kong

*Joshua Ka Ho MOK, Lingnan University, Hong Kong*

*Lihang GUAN, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong~*

Health Hazard and Symbolic Violence: The Impact of Double Disturbance on International Learning Experiences  
and Social Policy Implications for Hong Kong

~ By *Joshua Ka Ho MOK, Lingnan University, Hong Kong* ~

Hong Kong Children's Views about their Lives and Well-being during the Pandemic: Evidence from the Covid-19  
Supplement of Children's Worlds

~By *Stefan KÜHNER, Lingnan University, Hong Kong*

*Maggie Ka Wai LAU, Lingnan University, Hong Kong~*

Tea & Coffee break

Time: 15:00-15:15

Session 4: Policy and Research Directions

Time: 15:15-16:00 (with Q&A) | Chair: *YANG Shen*

Balancing the Needs between Public Health and the Economic Recovery: Nordic Social Policies in the Wave of the  
Covid-19

~ By *Ka LIN, Lingnan University, Hong Kong* ~

Unmasking the Social Policy Responses of COVID-19 in Four Southeast Asian Nations: Institutional Patterns and  
Policy Adjustment

*~By Tauchid Komara YUDA, Lingnan University, Hong Kong ~*

~Closing~

Time: 16:00-16:15

***Keynote***  
***Time: 09:45-10:30***

**Social Policy Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Asia Pacific Region:  
Some Reflections from Taiwan's Experiences**

Yeun Wen KU

The COVID-19 pandemic has had daunting economic and social impacts on many aspects of human life, but these impacts have been unequally distributed, with the brunt of health and labor market risks falling on socio-economically disadvantaged individuals and families. We argue that the welfare state could help mitigate such social risks and facilitate social solidarity. Moreover, NGOs (and social groups) play a prominent and supplemental role in developing welfare states in the face of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic potentially raises an opportunity to rethink the current structures of the capitalist economy and the welfare state, and result in more ambitious reforms in East and Southeast Asian welfare states. Taiwan is exactly an excellent case against the COVID-19 Pandemic and its social impacts. Benefiting from its national health system, Taiwan effectively delivers vaccines, medicines, and public health information to all citizens. A comprehensive social safety net, as well as the initiation of some universal cash subsidies, reduces inequality and therefore maintains social stability. However, there are still some lessons we can learn from Taiwan's experiences.

## ***Session 1: Labour Markets and Youth Employment***

***Time: 10:45-11:45***

### **Reconceptualizing Youth Poverty through the Lens of Precarious Employment in Global Pandemic Period**

Ngai PUN and Peier CHEN

Risks of youth poverty in relation to employment have largely been overlooked both internationally and locally, especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Moving beyond the concepts of income, economic factors and in-work poverty as applied to the general population, we examine the multi-scalar employment risk confronting highly educated working youth (aged 18-29) in Hong Kong by assessing the intersection of precarious employment and in-work poverty, which is crucial to understanding youth poverty. Drawing on in-depth interview research on creative workers, this study calls for the reconceptualization of in-work poverty through the lens of precarious employment, which is not viewed as a separate economic entity, but as an organic whole encompassing a multi-scalar risk in economic, social, psychological and political terrains generating an existential problem shaping young people's sense of future and work-life meaning. This paper sheds light on the policy implications of high-educated youth suffering from in-work poverty in the creative industry.

### **Exploring the Gaps in COVID-19 Prevention Practices in Hong Kong from a Social Justice Framework**

Gizem ARAT

Specific ethnic groups have been targeted and blamed for spreading the coronavirus. Ethnically Asian and Chinese communities have experienced blame as spreaders of the coronavirus in many Western societies. For example, in the United States, this "blame game" became enmeshed with ethno-politics when former U.S. President Trump repeatedly referred to COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus" which has lent to adverse impacts on Asian Americans, including but not limited to: hate crimes, negative stereotyping, harassment, microaggressions, xenophobia, and racism.

A number of international studies on the COVID-19 pandemic which focus on racial minorities have highlighted the importance of addressing the impact of oppression, power, and privilege against oppressed groups in society. Recent studies have argued that promotion of COVID-19 vaccines is not considered social justice because it does not eliminate structural racism. Providing COVID-19 vaccination for racial minorities only provides short-term and surface level solutions to health inequalities. This project explores social service providers' views on existing issues related to COVID-19 prevention practices and the gaps of those provided for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

## **Platform Work and Social Risks: A Qualitative Study on Workers' Experiences and Views in Hong Kong**

Cham Kit MING, Tat Chor AU-YEUNG, Gizem ARAT

Platform work is emerging globally as a form of precarious work mediated and monitored digitally under the gig economy. Drawing on new social risk theories, this qualitative research investigates the risks experienced and perceived by workers from food delivery and courier platforms in Hong Kong. A total of 23 platform workers involved in the crowdsourcing gig work platforms were interviewed. Six types of platform work-related risks are mapped, namely fluctuating income, non-regular working hours, low transparency, extra and shifted cost, unexpected injuries and absent compensation, and the inability of future planning. The findings also reveal how workers perceive and make sense of these platform-related risks, which shapes their adaptation to and contestation over platform work. Based on a multi-level mechanism, platform workers' experiences could be explained by the power asymmetries at the individual, organisational, and institutional levels. The algorithmic control implemented by platforms and workers' dependence on platform work contributes to the imbalanced power between workers and platforms at the individual and organisational levels. The absence of employee status and the limited platform regulation, along with relatively weak labour organisation, constrains worker' collective bargaining power against platforms in Hong Kong's institutional settings. Policy implications are suggested to re-balance the power asymmetries embedded in platform work, while recognising workers' aspirations about flexibility and choices. This study makes two contributions to social policy studies. First, it links new social risks theories to the gig economy and platform work, expanding the understanding of risk in relation to digital technologies. Second, it furthers the empirical findings on platform work in an East Asian context dominated by a market-productivist welfare model.

## ***Session 2: Ageing and Public Health***

### ***12:00-13:00***

#### **How Does COVID-19 Affect Formal-informal Care Relationship of People with Dementia in the Community during the Post-pandemic Period? Evidence from Hong Kong**

Cheng SHI

COVID-19 has been dramatically affecting the lives of people with dementia and their family carers. This study examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on service utilisation of formal care (including health and social care) and informal care among community-dwelling people living with dementia during the post-pandemic period. Data were collected from 750 dyad persons with dementia or mild cognitive impairment and their family carer between March 2021 and February 2022 in Hong Kong. Resource utilisation of social and health care was captured by the localised Client Service Receipt Inventory (CSRI). Care time of multiple informal carers was captured by the Resource Utilization in Dementia (RUD) questionnaire. Results from a two-part model show that service use changes of formal care due to COVID-19 is related to that of informal care. Informal care may be invoked as a compensatory mechanism for the reduced formal care as a consequence of the COVID-19, while increased informal care hours may be dependent on the availability of family carers and care needs. Policy implications for supporting dementia informal carer will also be discussed in the presentation.

#### **Does Compulsory Testing Measure work for suppressing the infection of COVID-19 in the elderly community: Evidence from Hong Kong**

Cong LIANG

Despite receiving vaccines as the most feasible measure to mitigate the risk of infection of COVID-19, the vaccination coverage for the elderly (over 80 years old) in Hong Kong is no more than 70%, meaning that 30% of the elderly are in a dangerous situation. Over 95% of the fatal cases in the fifth wave are elderly people aged 60 or above, with the proportion of death and hospitalized cases being the highest in those aged 80 or above, where most of the deceased cases are unvaccinated persons. As of today, the Hong Kong government keeps adopting compulsory testing measures (CTM), which is the non-pharmaceutical intervention (NPI) to suppress the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the community. Is the CTM effective for mitigating the risk of being infected by COVID-19 for the elderly community in Hong Kong (i.e., over 50% population are 60-year-old people)? Little is known about this issue. To fill this knowledge blank and research gap, this study intends to examine the effectiveness of CTM in suppressing the spreading of the COVID-19 virus in the elderly community. The results provide evidence-based findings to inform the officials, city governors, and policymakers in Hong Kong to update and review the current vaccine policy and NPI in a timelier manner.

## **How Productivist Welfare Regime Frames the Risks of Ageing During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Zhen TIAN

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) presents a systemic social risk for the East Asian welfare system, primarily affecting elderly people who live in areas with inadequate social safety nets. This article focuses on ageing risks and its policy responses targeted at older individuals, which are East Asia's most pressing social policy issues before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. A review of policy measures related to ageing risk reduction in Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan reveals the complexity and changes in these economies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Taiwan and South Korea seem to combine the developmental-universalist and social democratic welfare state models, whereas Hong Kong and Singapore have followed a typical mix of development-universalist and facilitative approaches. Overall, they have successfully transitioned from Holliday's typologies to a more balanced protective-productive model, but they have done so through multiple pathways, with the market-conforming role of social policy for the elderly remaining dominant.

### ***Session 3: Educational and Societal Supports***

***Time: 14:15-15:15***

#### **A Re-Examination of the Pull Factors Influencing the Destination Choices of Chinese International Students After Massive Global Immobility**

Baohua YU, Ka Ho MOK and Lihang GUAN

Chinese international students compose the largest group of full-tuition-paying students globally and are important to the hosting destinations both culturally and financially. Yet, the obstructed international mobility caused by Covid-19 has changed their international applications. As the world gradually resumes its previous mobility level, it is important to comprehend what pull factors can effectively attract students for marketing purposes. This quantitative research re-examines the established pull factors considered and valued by prospective Chinese international students and their parents and discovered that: (1) a combination of five to six considerations may be decisive for Chinese students to decide on an overseas destination, (2) cost, global rankings, and Chinese employment prospects have become the most substantial factors in destination choices, (3) opportunities for immigration and overseas employment are no longer significant, and (4) students and parents view international education with different interpretations. The implications for overseas university marketing are discussed.

#### **Health Hazard and Symbolic Violence: The Impact of Double Disturbance on International Learning Experiences and Social Policy Implications for Hong Kong**

Ka Ho MOK

Students in Asia have been influenced by the disruptions from COVID-19 global health crisis and the growing influence of the new geopolitics in international higher education. Against this context, this study critically examines how Asian, particularly Chinese students, evaluate their experience and conceive their overseas learning plans. The first part of the chapter discusses how the rise of racism during the COVID crisis has affected Asian students and citizens in the United States. It then discusses how the cultural and racial discrimination has affected conceptions of citizens during the COVID-19 crisis. Subsequently, it presents the research findings generated from surveys conducted by the research team at Lingnan University in Hong Kong on how Chinese students conceive their learning abroad plan. The chapter discusses these empirical findings and draws implications for international higher education development. This paper also highlights the implications of social policy for Hong Kong as a regional higher education hub in East Asia.

## **Hong Kong Children's Views about their Lives and Well-being during the Pandemic: Evidence from the Covid-19 Supplement of Children's Worlds**

Stefan KÜHNER and Maggie Ka Wai LAU

Since the first coronavirus cluster was reported in December 2019, few families with children have managed to avoid the impacts of economic lockdowns, travel restrictions, school closures, and other public health measures on their everyday lives. To date, several studies have captured the experiences of children and young people during the pandemic, but few focus specifically on children's views on their lives and well-being. Moreover, fewer studies still are coordinated via international networks to enable systematic comparisons of Hong Kong children in their middle years (aged 8-12) with their peers worldwide. This presentation summarises the quantitative evidence from an online survey (n = 450) conducted in Hong Kong as part of the 'Covid-19 Supplement of Children's Worlds: The International Survey of Children's Well-Being'. Based on a unique questionnaire covering children's exposure to Covid-19 in their families as well as the pandemic's impact on their school life and relationships, it discusses changes in Hong Kong children's views about their lives and well-being. Based on this empirical evidence, the presentation develops relevant analyses for policymakers, NGO practitioners, schools and parents on how to potentially mitigate the negative impacts of future public health crises on child well-being in Hong Kong.

## ***Session 4: Policy and Research Directions***

***Time: 15:15-16:00***

### **Balancing the Needs between Public Health and the Economic Recovery: Nordic Social Policies in the Wave of the Covid-19**

Ka LIN

This study demonstrates the policy-making process of combating the Covid-19 in five Nordic countries, including Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland. The policy paths of evolution vary from one country to another, but some features can still be concluded. These countries rely on the effect of virus prevention on people's self-discipline and the autonomy of local governments, presented a model of soft way of social distancing. The ideal for universal testing is not popular, but after the second wave, they expect to have free vaccinations as a hope. Besides the quarantine policy as mostly addressed by researchers, the policies in income maintenance and encouraging production are also the key issues to cope with the challenges from the outbreak of coronavirus. In the Nordic countries, policies to support employment and the economy are fundamental. This study will review the Nordic social policies in response to the crisis of Covid-19 along three policy lines and give some reasons to understand the logic of their policy concerns. By reviewing this anti-epidemic process, we can get the better understanding about the context of their policy actions, and this can provide some explanations for the policy measures and policy outcomes of these Nordic states.

### **Unmasking the Social Policy Responses of COVID-19 in Four Southeast Asian Nations: Institutional Patterns and Policy Adjustment**

Tauchid Komara YUDA

The presentation aimed to compare the social policy responses to COVID-19 in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand using an institutionalist's perspective. The material for this presentation was based on my accepted, collaboratively written manuscript for publication in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work & Development* special issue titled 'Social Development and Social Policy Responses in the Covid-19 Pandemic: What Can We Learn from Each Other?'. Our analysis found the crisis expanded social protection through temporary schemes, with rare reforms, and opened greater possibilities for future institutionalisation of new policies. We argue that the COVID-19 policy responses must be viewed as an unfinished agenda of expansion-driven policy responses to the 1997–1998 financial crisis. Still, these are different sets of measures from the previous crisis, which have been characterised by minimal systemic changes. The variegated responses of countries reveal hitherto unexplored policy implications for the Southeast Asian region.

