

ChinaWhite international workshop 1-2 December 2022 “Researching whiteness in a transnational pandemic context”

Biographical details

Presenters

ELENA BARABANTSAVA

Dr. Elena Barabantseva is a Senior Lecturer in Chinese International Relations at the University of Manchester (UK). Her research interests lie at the intersection of borders, identity, migration, intimacy, and citizenship in the context of globalizing China. She takes inspiration from a diverse body of scholarship, particularly poststructuralist International Relations, Anthropology, Cultural Theory, and Feminist Studies. She experiments with post-positivist forms of inquiry, drawing on in particular on archival, genealogical, ethnographic, and audio-visual methods. Her current research focuses on marriage migration and governing issues in the context of China's borders with Russia. In the book-length study tentatively entitled *Marriage, Migration, and Race across the Chinese-Russian Borders* she argues that the focus on marriage migration as a site of geopolitical and intimate projects reveals complexity of the politics of desire, marriage, and race in China's struggle for national rejuvenation. She started developing this project as the coordinator of the AHRC-funded 'Borders of Migration' research network. This research interest also laid the foundation for a major internationally-funded collaborative project '[Immigration and the Transformation of the Chinese Society](#)' (2015-2019) which she collaborated on with colleagues in Europe and China. She is the author of *Overseas Chinese, Ethnic Minorities and Nationalism: De-Centering China* (Routledge 2012) and co-editor (with William A. Callahan) of *China orders the World? Soft Power, Norms and Foreign Policy* (Johns Hopkins University Press 2012). Her research was published in *the International Political Sociology*, *the Journal of Asian Studies*, *Modern China*, *The Journal of Contemporary China* and other journals.

MILOŠ DEBNAR

Miloš Debnár is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of International Studies, Ryukoku University in Kyoto and currently a Visiting Researcher at the University of Vienna. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from Kyoto University in 2014 and his main research interest is sociology of European migration to Japan. He has written on migration patterns, social integration and the role of race and whiteness in the integration. His current projects are a comparative study analysing choices of staying and leaving by European migrants to Japan, and a collaborative project with the University of Vienna on study abroad in East Asia by students at Central European universities. He is the author of *Migration, Whiteness, and Cosmopolitanism: Europeans in Japan* (Palgrave, 2016) and his recent publications include a paper co-authored with Špela Drnovšek Zorko *Comparing the racialization of Central-East European migrants in Japan and the UK* (CMS, 2021, 9:30) and a forthcoming chapter *Privileged, Highly Skilled and Unproblematic? White Europeans in Japan as Migrants* that will be published in *Expatriation and Migration: Two Faces of the Same Coin* (ed. Sylvain Beck, Brill, 2023).

JAMES FARRER

James Farrer is Professor of Sociology and Global Studies and Director of the Graduate Program in Global Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo. His research focuses on the contact zones of global cities, including ethnographic studies of sexuality, nightlife, expatriate communities, and urban food cultures. Recent publications include *International Migrants in China's Global City: The New Shanghailanders*, *Shanghai Nightscapes: A Nocturnal Biography of a Global City* (with Andrew Field), and *Globalization and Asian Cuisines: Transnational Networks and Contact Zones*. Originally from the United States, he completed his PhD in Sociology at the University of Chicago and has lived in Asia most of his adult life.

ERIC HENRY

Eric Henry is Associate Professor of Anthropology, Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Canada. I am a linguistic anthropologist focused on the study and use of global languages in contemporary China. Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang, my research explores the complex interactions between English, Mandarin and the regional dialect as speakers negotiate their own identities within a rapidly changing social field. I am the author of *The Future Conditional: Building an English-Speaking Society in Northeast China*, published by Cornell University Press in 2021. My work has also been published in journals such as *Language in Society*, *City & Society*, *Anthropological Forum* and *Anthropologica*. I have served on the executive of the Canadian Anthropology Society (2016-2018), as co-editor of the anthropology blog *Culture*, and on the editorial board of the *Journal of Undergraduate Ethnography*. My teaching is interdisciplinary, spanning the departments of anthropology, linguistics, and Asian studies, with courses on linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, semiotics, and contemporary Asia. With a commitment to guiding undergraduate students, I have served as the Honours Program Coordinator in my department, supervising students in research design, data collection, and academic writing. I currently live in Halifax, Nova Scotia with my wife and three children.

HELENA HOF

Helena Hof is a Senior Research and Teaching Fellow at the University of Zurich and a Research Fellow at the Socio-Cultural Department of the [Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity](#). Helena is a migration researcher with a focus on Japan and comparative perspectives. Her work lies at the nexus of mobility studies, the sociology of work, skilled and middle-class migration, gender, ethnicity and race, and global cities. After completing a project on the career mobility and social mobility of European early-career migrants in Tokyo and Singapore she is currently part of a four-year German government-funded collaborative project on the role of skills in labor migration processes in Asia. In her own sub-project, Helena examines the intersections of foreign entrepreneurs' skills with the given power structures in Tokyo's and Singapore's startup ecosystems and with the way in which innovation, talent, and progress are governed. Helena holds guest researcher affiliations with Waseda University's Institute of Asian Migrations in Tokyo and the Asia Research Institute's Migration Cluster at the National University of Singapore and has been a fellow at the Center for Metropolitan Studies at the University of Sao Paulo (USP), Brazil. She is book reviews editor of the academic journal *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration*. Some of her most recent publications include the monograph *The EU Migrant Generation in Asia. Middle-Class Aspirations in Asian Global Cities* (12/2022, Bristol University Press),

EU migrant retention and the temporalities of migrant staying: A new conceptual framework (with Simon Pemberton and Emilia Pietka-Nykaza, 2021, Comparative Migration Studies), and *Intersections of Race and Skills in European Migration to Asia: Between White Cultural Capital and 'Passive Whiteness'* (Ethnic and Racial Studies).

AURÉLIA M. ISHITSUKA

Aurélia M. Ishitsuka is a PhD Candidate in a dual degree program in sociology and gender studies at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales and the University of Geneva. Her research interests include international student mobility and expatriation, elite lifestyle and service work, temporalities of migration, and social mobility. Her dissertation focuses on the experience of young global professionals (both foreign and Chinese) in Shanghai. She is the author of two articles. "Visual Encounters in Global Shanghai. On the Desirability of Bodies in a Coworking Space" was published in *China Perspectives* and examines the logics of belonging in a cosmopolitan space based on the analysis of everyday interactions among start-uppers and service workers. Her article "Passer à Shanghai. Mobilité géographique et déplacement social d'une jeunesse française qualifiée" was published in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*. It proposes the concept of passing as key to explaining the experience of upward social mobility among French elite school students and graduates in Shanghai. Aurélia is currently a Visiting Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley.

CHRISTINA KEFALA

Christina Kefala is a graduate of the School of Social Anthropology at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens (Greece). She received her Master of Law in Sociology from the School of Social Development and Public Policy at Fudan University in Shanghai (China), with a scholarship from the Chinese Government (CSC). Her research interests are Chinese Society and Culture, as well as Marketing Research. Currently, she is a PhD student at the Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) at the University of Amsterdam under the ChinaWhite project. Specifically, her doctoral research focuses on "Performing whiteness in China's transnational business and entrepreneurship sector".

SHANSHAN LAN

Shanshan Lan is an Associate Professor at the Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam (UvA). Her research interests include urban anthropology, migration and mobility regimes, comparative racial formations in Asia and Euro-America, transnational student mobility, global cities, African diaspora in China, Chinese diaspora in the United States, and class and social transformations in Chinese society. She is the author of two books: *Diaspora and Class Consciousness: Chinese Immigrant Workers in Multiracial Chicago* (2012), and *Mapping the New African Diaspora in China: Race and the Cultural Politics of Belonging* (2017). Both are published by Routledge Press.

RAVIV LITMAN

Raviv Litman is a PhD candidate at the Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam (UvA). He studies whiteness as performed in China's Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) industry. His research background is in the anthropology of migration, regional expressions of the global education industry, and transnational families in Asia. He is from Canada and has worked and studied for 7 years in China and Singapore, first as a student of Chinese language and then as a teacher of English

language. He wrote his Master's thesis at the University of Victoria titled *The Parent Tax: The governance of gratitude among transnationally educated sons in Singapore* (2016).

KE MA

Ke Ma obtained her B.A. in English and Literature at the Minzu University of China and research M.A. in Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. Her fields of interest are visual arts, globalization studies, and China studies. For her PhD research, she looks into western models and performers' daily experiences in China and investigates how multiple versions of whiteness are performed in China's media, fashion, and entertainment industries. Outside academia, she enjoys cooking, dancing, and creative writing.

ED PULFORD

Ed Pulford is an Anthropologist and Lecturer in Chinese Studies at the University of Manchester. His research and teaching focus on anthropological and historical approaches to Eurasian borderlands, China-Russia relations, and comparative experiences of socialism and empire. His first book *Mirrorlands* (2019) explores Russia-China connections and national identities through the two countries' shared borderlands, while his forthcoming monograph *Progresses Past: Northeast Asia in Socialist Time* argues for temporality as a key pivot in cross-border relations between China, Russia and Korea. He has written for academic and popular publications on socialist 'Friendship', transnational indigenous groups and postsocialist migration.

JOHN RUSSELL

John G. Russell is Emeritus Professor of Cultural Anthropology in the Faculty of Regional Studies at Gifu University. His research focuses on representations of race and gender in Japanese and American popular culture. He is the author of *Nihonjin no kokujin-kan [Japanese Perceptions of Blacks]* (Shinhyōron, 1991), *Henken to sabetsu ga dono yō ni tsukurareru ka [How are Prejudice and Discrimination Produced?]* (Akashi Shoten, 1995), and several articles and book chapters, including "Don't ~~It~~ Make My Black Face Blue: Race, Avatars, Albescence, and the Transnational Imaginary" (*The Journal of Popular Culture*, 2013), "Replicating the White Self and Other: Skin Color, Racelessness, Gynoids, and the Construction of Whiteness in Japan" (*Japanese Studies*, 2017), "Trading Races: Albescence, Staining, Xenoface, and Other Race-Switching Practices in American Popular Culture" (*The Journal of American Culture*, 2018). His chapter "Anaconda East: Fetishes, Phallacies, *Chimbo* Chauvinism and the Displaced Discourse of Black Male Sexuality in Japan" is included in Tamari Kitossa (ed.), *Appealing Because He Is Appalling: Black Masculinities, Colonialism, and Erotic Racism* (University of Alberta Press, 2021).

SHULING WANG

Shuling Wang is a critical feminist scholar and educator. She is a PhD researcher in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge. She is particularly interested in how racism/whiteness operates in China and how racism impacts educational inequality. Her PhD research focuses on Chinese women teachers' encounters with whiteness. Her project brings the intersections of race, gender and language into one conversation and explores how Chinese teachers interpret and respond to their experiences of racism and sexism in the English language teaching industry, with an aim to theorise and disrupt intersectional racism in China's education context. Her academic

work has been published in journals including *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. She has contributed blogs to ESEA Hub and 结绳志. She is also a reviewer for Cambridge Educational Research e-Journal, Children and Youth Services Review, and BERA Conference 2022. Shuling is the founder of *Cambridge Against anti-Asian Racism Group*, an organizer of *The Race, Empire and Education Collective* (reecollective.co.uk), and Chair of 2021 Cambridge China Education Forum. She is also a member of British Education Research Association, Women of Color in ELT, Cambridge Language Sciences, and Cambridge Chinese Migration Group. Her research has been funded by Faculty of Education at University of Cambridge, British Federation of Women Graduates, British Education Research Association, Hughes Hall Education Grants. Shuling holds an MA in Sociology of Education with distinction from University College London, an MIT in International Conference Interpreting and Translation from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, and a BA in English Language and Literature from Sichuan University. Shuling was previously a lecturer in Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, and a high school English teacher in China.

Discussants

ASHLEY MEARS

Ashley Mears is Professor of Sociology and the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program at Boston University. Her research, at the intersection of cultural and economic sociology, documents how societies value people and things, and how people recognize and transact non-financial forms of capital. She is the author of two books, *Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model* (California, 2011), about the gendered labor behind the 'look' in New York and London fashion markets, and *Very Important People* (Princeton, 2020), a study of conspicuous consumption among the global VIP leisure class. Her award-winning publications appear in journals including *American Sociological Review*, *Theory & Society*, *Poetics*, and *Social Forces*. Her research, supported by the National Science Foundation and the Whiting Foundation, has been featured in media like NPR, *The Financial Times*, and the BBC. Additionally, she writes for *The New York Times* and *The Economist's 1843 Magazine*. She has been a visiting professor at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, and at the University of Amsterdam, and a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study also in Budapest. She received her PhD in Sociology from New York University. Before going into academia, she worked as a fashion model in New York, Tokyo, Milan, and Hong Kong, where she developed a fascination with the value of beauty and different ways of organizing markets. She splits her time between Boston and Belgrade, Serbia.

LEON MOOSAVI

Dr Leon Moosavi is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology at the University of Liverpool, UK. Leon joined the University of Liverpool in 2012 and was the Director of the University of Liverpool in Singapore between 2014 and 2022. Leon's research expertise relates to: the sociology of race, ethnicity, and migration; the sociology of religion; and coloniality/decoloniality. Leon completed his PhD in the Sociology Department of Lancaster University in 2011. His thesis was entitled: "Defying Gravity: Islamophobia, Belonging and 'Race' in the Experiences of Muslim Converts in Britain". In 2021, Leon founded The Decolonial Critique, a global network of more than 1,700 scholars and activists who have an interest in theoretical

and applied approaches to coloniality/decoloniality within and beyond the university. Leon has published papers relating to Whiteness and White Privilege in East Asian Universities and White Privilege in the Lives of Muslim Converts in Britain.

WILLY SIER

Willy Sier is an assistant professor in the department of anthropology at Utrecht University. She currently works on her book *Dreams Chasers: Becoming Urban in the New China*, based on her PhD-research amongst rural-urban education migrants in Wuhan, China. Willy conducted her postdoctoral research as part of the ChinaWhite-team, where she focused on the production of whiteness in Chinese-foreign romantic relationships. Currently, Willy also works on Chineseness by studying debates about identities of children born into Chinese-foreign families, and is starting to explore ideas about Dutchness. In addition to writing about research, Willy also enjoys making short, collaborative documentaries.

WILLEM VAN SCHENDEL

Willem van Schendel (University of Amsterdam & International Institute of Social History) works in the fields of history, anthropology, and sociology of Asia. His research interests include borderlands, more-than-human history, indigo, labour history, and photography. He has published widely about Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar. Recent books include *Entangled Lives: Human-Animal-Plant Histories of the Eastern Himalayan Triangle* (Cambridge University Press, 2022; with Joy L.K. Pachuau); *Flows and Frictions in Trans-Himalayan Spaces: Histories of Networking and Border Crossing* (Amsterdam University Press (2022, ed. with Gunnel Cederlöf); *A History of Bangladesh* (Cambridge University Press, new edition, 2020); *Embedding Agricultural Commodities: Using Historical Evidence, 1840s-1940s* (Routledge, 2017, ed.); and *The Camera As Witness: A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India* (Cambridge University Press, 2015, with Joy L.K. Pachuau).

Most of his publications can be downloaded at: uva.academia.edu/WillemVanSchendel