

Consuming Asia NNC Conference programme 2023

Thursday 22 June 2023

08:30-09:00	Arrival and coffee
09:00-09:30	Opening session: Rector's greeting and organisers' welcome
09:30-10:30	Keynote 1
10:30-10:45	Coffee break
10:45-11:00	Move to JUS
11:00-12:20	Session 1
	Panel 1: <i>Consuming religion, health and ecologies in South Asian landscapes of extraction</i>
	Panel 2: <i>Consuming, reducing and replacing meat in contemporary Asia: Systems, practices and cultures</i>
	Panel 4: <i>Politics in Transition</i>
12:20-13:10	Lunch
13:10-14:20	Session 2
	Panel 1: <i>Consuming religion, health and ecologies in South Asian landscapes of extraction</i>
	Panel 2: <i>Consuming, reducing and replacing meat in contemporary Asia: Systems, practices and cultures</i>
	Panel 5: <i>Film and Television</i>
14:20-14:40	Coffee break
14:40-16:00	Session 3
	Panel 3: <i>Entrepreneurialism, Environment and sustainability</i>
	Panel 6: <i>Mobility and Inequality</i>
16:00-16:20	Coffee break
16:20-17:40	Session 4
	Panel 3: <i>Entrepreneurialism, Environment and sustainability</i>
	Panel 6: <i>Mobility and Inequality</i>
18:00	Conference dinner at Knut Fægri's Hus, Villaveien 9

Friday 23 June 2023

08:30-09:00	Arrival and coffee
09:00-10:00	Keynote 2
10:00-10:20	Coffee break
10:20-11:40	Session 5
	Panel 7: <i>Gender and Sexuality</i>
	Panel 8: <i>East Asian Cultures</i>
11:40-12:40	Lunch
12:40-14:00	Session 6
	Panel 7: <i>Gender and Sexuality</i>
	Panel 8: <i>East Asian Cultures</i>
14:00-14:20	Closing remarks
15:00	Social event/excursions

	<p>Option 1: A walk up to Fløyen, with beautiful views over the city and fjord. A must-see when in Bergen. Those who do not want to do the hike up can also take the funicular.</p> <p>Option 2: A walk around Nordnes, a picturesque neighborhood overlooking the Fjord. With a stop at USF Verftet for a drink/coffee.</p> <p>For both tours meet at 15:00 in the lobby at the conference venue.</p>
--	--

Panels & titles

1. Consuming religion, health and ecologies in South Asian landscapes of extraction

Chair: Daniel Münster and Rahul Ranjan

1.1 Daniel Münster: *Yogic ecology and soil health in South India: Notes on Satguru's Safe Soil Campaign*

1.2 Aase J. Kvanneid: *Matter out of place: bottom-up strategies to grapple with waste in North India*

1.3 Heidi Fjeld: *Health, ecology and compassion: ongoing initiatives to reduce meat consumption in Bhutan*

1.4 Rahul Ranjan: *Environment of Hazard: Sinking Town in Higher Himalayas of Uttarakhand (India)*

1.5 Kenneth Bo Nielsen: TBD

1.6 Lakhan Bir Meena: *Localised consumerism: Assimilation of global patterns in a rural context; case study of a village*

2. Consuming, reducing and replacing meat in contemporary Asia: Systems, practices and cultures

Chair: Arve Hansen

2.1 Sigrid Wertheim-Heck & Jonas House: *What does it mean to replace meat? Cross-cultural meat practices and their implications for a protein transition*

2.2 Mina Fosse Kristoffersen: *No pork, no life? Exploring the practices and negotiations of meat reducers in South Korea*

2.3 Arve Hansen: *Replacing meat in contemporary Vietnam: Foodways, materials, and provisioning systems*

2.4 Tatsuya Mitsuda: *Constructing East Asian Meatways and the Problems of Consuming Foreign Beef in Imperial Japan*

2.5 Paul Chen: *"Chinese people must eat meat": Emotional configurations of animal-based diet in contemporary Chinese online anti-vegan discourse*

3. Environment and sustainability

Chair: Nathan Edwin Hopson

3.1 Agnieszka Nitza-Makowska: *Pakistan's Energy Consumption and Environmental Sustainability under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor*

3.2. Henrik Nykvist: *Go West Young Han– A study of Chinese Graduate Students' Experiences of a State-Mobilized Volunteer Program in Contemporary China*

3.3 Carin Graminius: *Consuming anticipation: air pollution apps and water-level apps in a Sinophone context*

3.4 Anastasia Sinitsyna: *The Impact of Entrepreneurship on Environmental Changes across Asian Economies*

3.5 Hang Zhou: *Provincial variations and entrepreneurialism in the development of China's Distant Water Fisheries (2011–2020)*

4. Politics in transition

Chair: Duncan McCargo

4.1 Duncan McCargo: *When Winning is Only the Beginning? Thailand's 2023 Elections*

4.2 Siv H. Oftedal: *At the End of a Paradigm: The Institutional Turn versus the Xi Jinping Era in Research on Chinese Politics*

4.3 Timothy Mann: *What happens to activist lawyers after democratic transition? The case of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI)*

5. Film and television

Chair: Duncan McCargo

5.1 Sheng-Mei Ma: *Bao and Turning Red: Eating Chinese in Bloody Toronto*

5.2 Tom Smith: *Unravelling the 'Asia' in neo-noir cinema: the case for a new sub-genre- Neon-Noir*

5.3 Sheng-Mei Ma: *Chinese Serials/Cereals: Classic Chapter Novels, Colonial Cannibals, TV Series*

6. Mobility and inequality panel

Chair: Terese Gagnon

6.1 Terese Gagnon: *Consuming Home, Nurturing Other Worlds*

6.2 Rubkwan Thammaboosadee: *"The Capital" How many hearts do you still have? : Exploring consumed dignity and unfolded inequality in Thai society amid the pandemic through an applied-drama workshop*

6.3 Young-Sook Lee: *Conceptualising Asian mobilities consumption: a critique*

6.4 Ben Grafstrom: *Japan's Population Crisis and its Effects on the Future of Rural Folk Religious Festivals: 3 Case Studies*

6.5 Suchismita Goswami: *Sites of Adaptation – Through Autoconstruction*

7. Gender and sexuality

Chair: Anwesha Dutta

7.1 JiMin Nam: *Consumer Politics of Contemporary Young South Korean Feminist Women*

7.2 Anna Romanowicz: *Consuming love, consuming sex. On individual choice as a strategy for class reproduction*

7.3 Jana Aresin: *Gender and Economic Citizenship in Postwar Japan: The Politics of Women's Labour and Consumption*

7.4 Cecilie Mueenuddin: *Making consumption moral: Pakistani middle-class masculinity and the role of Islam*

8. East Asian Cultures

Chair: Sha-wu Jung

8.1 Sujie Jin: *Writing Allohstory: Fantasizing Alternative Pasts in Chinese Danmei Fiction*

8.2 Wenjia Zhou: *The Becoming of Milk in China*

8.3 Yijian Liu: *Consuming and consumed entrepreneurs: precarious privilege in Shenzhen's high-tech start-ups*

8.4 Young Joo Hong: *Emotional Culture of South Korea: Cultural history of depression and emotional experiences*

8.5 Zhentian Xie: *Through Pots and Pans: Culinary and Cultural Bonds Between China and Japan, 1868-1949*

Abstracts

Consuming religion, health and ecologies in South Asian landscapes of extraction

This panel we take on the ambivalence of the term consuming as signifying both the consumption of eaters and buyers and destruction of landscapes and ecosystems “consumed” by extractive logics. The panel in looks at the interplay of religious and ritual action and belief with concerns for the destruction of more-than-human health and ecologies in landscapes affected my extractive modes of production. We are interested in the role of religious and spiritual actors and ideas in addressing and redressing consequences of extractive relations of industries, cities, and food producers with South Asian ecosystems. How do religious, spiritual and ritual formations act on and respond to the consumptions of landscapes brought about by extractive logics? How do spiritual movements and actors respond to challenges such as the “meatification” of South Asian diets, the decline of soil health, the increasing production of toxic waste? Asking about the role of religion and spirituality raises questions about the place of nativism, communalism and identity politics in regionally situated environmental and health justice movements.

Daniel Münster

Associate Professor - Department of Community Medicine and Global Health, University of Oslo (UiO)

Yogic ecology and soil health in South India: Notes on Satguru’s Safe Soil Campaign

Aase J. Kvanneid

Postdoctoral Fellow - Environmental Humanities, UiO

Matter out of place: bottom-up strategies to grapple with waste in North India

Heidi Fjeld

Professor - Department of Community Medicine and Global Health, UiO

Health, ecology and compassion: ongoing initiatives to reduce meat consumption in Bhutan

Rahul Ranjan

Postdoctoral fellow at Oslo Met

Environment of Hazard: Sinking Town in Higher Himalayas of Uttarakhand (India)

Kenneth Bo Nielsen

Associate Professor - Department of Social Anthropology, UiO

Lakhan Bir Meena

Doctoral candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Localised consumerism: Assimilation of global patterns in a rural context; case study of a village

Consuming, reducing and replacing meat in contemporary Asia: Systems, practices and cultures

The dramatic meat booms in many parts of Asia over the past decades have a range of dramatic implications both within and outside the region, and the changing diets of the new Asian middle classes has attracted attention from academics, policymakers, investors and environmentalists alike. Now, attention is gradually turning towards the (re-)emergence of practices of avoiding and replacing meat. While these trends have already led to major investments in meat replacement products and made Asia the most important market for meat analogues, they have so far received scant academic attention.

This session brings together scholars working on meat consumption, reduction, avoidance and replacement in different parts of Eastern Asia. How do meat-intense food practices develop and how do meat-avoiding practices (re-)emerge in meatified foodscapes? How is increased or decreased production and consumption of meat promoted, and how do different actors place themselves in contemporary markets for meat and meat-replacement products? How do active meat reducers negotiate meat intense foodscapes and food practices? And what do the likely futures of Asian meat practices look like? The papers approach these questions and more, and analyse the role of meat in modern and contemporary Asia, how systems of consumption have become 'meatified', as well as how and why less meat-intense trends and practices emerge and what kind of roles meat replacement products play in these.

Sigrid Wertheim-Heck & Jonas House;

Environmental Policy Group, Wageningen University

What does it mean to replace meat? Cross-cultural meat practices and their implications for a protein transition

Mina Fosse Kristoffersen;

Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo

No pork, no life? Exploring the practices and negotiations of meat reducers in South Korea

Arve Hansen;

Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo

Replacing meat in contemporary Vietnam: Foodways, materials, and provisioning systems

Tatsuya Mitsuda

Associate professor, Keio University

Constructing East Asian Meatways and the Problems of Consuming Foreign Beef in Imperial Japan

Paul Chen;

Graduate student at the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies,
Stockholm University

*“Chinese people must eat meat”: Emotional configurations of animal-based diet
in contemporary Chinese online anti-vegan discourse*

Environment and sustainability

Agnieszka Nitza-Makowska

(Phd), University of Tartu, Asia Centre

Pakistan's Energy Consumption and Environmental Sustainability under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

Launched in 2015 and already dubbed a game-changer, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) provides a 3,000-km network of highways, railways, and oil and gas pipelines to link the Pakistani city of Gwadar to China's Xinjiang. This pilot part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) holds the potential to influence Pakistan's state and society. This paper particularly looks at the CPEC's implications for Pakistan's energy consumption and environmental sustainability. To meet this state's demands for improved energy security, the CPEC provides expanded energy infrastructure, including coal-fired power plants, wind farms, a hydropower station, and others. According to the estimations, this infrastructure will significantly increase energy consumption in Pakistan. What are the implications of such an increase for Pakistan's environmental sustainability, especially given that most of the CPEC energy infrastructure relies on coal? Does Pakistan's establishment even consider such implications? To address these questions, this paper first identifies whether and how CPEC's energy infrastructure holds the potential to affect the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pakistan, specifically of these SDGs and targets that align with the environmental dimension of sustainability as SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13 (climate action). Second, this paper recognizes to what extent Pakistan's policy-makers at the state and local levels mention and discuss environmental issues in the contest of the energy infrastructure constructed under the CPEC.

Henrik Nykvist

Doctoral Research Fellow at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society

Go West Young Han— A study of Chinese Graduate Students' Experiences of a State-Mobilized Volunteer Program in Contemporary China

Graduate unemployment has increasingly become a social problem in Mainland China. The Chinese economy has not succeeded in generating the type of jobs that match the skills and desires of graduates, and in 2023, a record of almost 12 million Chinese students will graduate from universities. Unemployment among graduates is an issue the leaders of the Chinese communist party (CCP) are very concerned about. Various policies have been introduced to resolve this problem. One of many solutions presented by the CCP is to encourage university students to sign up for long-term state-controlled volunteer programs. In this paper, I examine why Chinese graduate students majoring in humanities and social sciences sign up for the one-year Graduate Students Volunteer Plan program in Western China. Moreover, I investigate how the party-state mobilizes students to participate in this program. Based on fieldwork observations and interviews with graduate volunteers working as teachers from 2016-2019, I argue that this program is proposed to prolong the timeline of the education system without incurring additional costs for the students and to reduce the pressure on the labor market. Additionally, students are encouraged to live in rural areas to develop as human beings and thereby be adept at enduring hardship, or the more colloquial term, “eat-bitterness” (chiku 吃苦). Finally, to some extent, it is possible to view this program as a “civilization” project, where peasants form the primary target of their teaching and minority groups constitute a secondary target. Here the aim is to customize and familiarize these groups with Han culture and CCP ideologies.

Carin Graminius

Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University

Consuming anticipation: air pollution apps and water-level apps in a Sinophone context

The prevalence of apps has inspired the term app culture – a world where our daily lives are mediated by technological appliances (Ajana 2018). Utility apps are one type of apps designed to meet a variety of needs, and following deteriorating environmental conditions, air pollution apps and water-level apps have become everyday utility devices for citizens in various parts of Asia. In this project I seek to understand two types of utility apps in two different Sinophone contexts: Singapore and the People’s Republic of China. The closeness to water has long been central in Singaporean visions of their green city state (Fogarty 2012; Goh 2014; Pei and Islam 2017). But with rising sea levels, Singapore is vulnerable to flooding. The sea increasingly constitutes a threat, and commercial and governmental apps which monitor water-levels are prevalent (NCCS 2017). Likewise, environmental utility apps are increasingly used in China. Despite efforts to curb air pollution, poor air quality is a common problem, and air-quality apps constitute popular everyday devices where citizens check

anticipated pollution levels (Graminius and Haider 2018). Designed by companies or governmental agencies and building on scientific knowledge, these types of environmental apps constitute ubiquitous knowledge infrastructures; they provide a space where scientific, commercial and political knowledge is consumed, produced, anticipated and put in action. Thereby, they also play a role in forming understandings of environmental matters. But what kind of knowledges and understandings of environmental issues do they convey? Furthermore, these utility apps are built around anticipation – the form the future takes in the present (Miller 2021) – and they suggest actions based on these anticipations. What kind of anticipations are communicated, and what do users do with the information provided through these apps? In my presentation I seek to shed light on the intersections and entanglements between consumption, science, technology and politics for the purpose of advancing knowledge about environmental communication as consumption and practice in these two specific geographical and cultural contexts.

Anastasia Sinitsyna

Junior research fellow, Center for Asian Studies, University of Tartu

The Impact of Entrepreneurship on Environmental Changes across Asian Economies

The connection between entrepreneurship, consumption, and environmental sustainability is a crucial issue in today's interconnected world, particularly in the rapidly growing economies of Asia. The rise of innovative technologies and shifting consumer habits has placed increasing pressure on entrepreneurs in the region to find ways to promote sustainable development. The current study aims to explore the impact of innovation-driven entrepreneurship on environmental sustainability in Asian countries. The findings of the study, which used regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between per GDP carbon dioxide emissions, GDP growth rates, and the share of the service sector in GDP, suggest that entrepreneurship has a negative short-term impact on the environment, making sustainable development difficult to achieve. These results align with the Socio-technical system theory, which posits that economic goals should be reevaluated to include environmental health as a key indicator in measuring progress and performance, rather than relying solely on measures such as GDP.

Hang Zhou:

Postdoctoral Researcher, Chr. Michelsen Institute

Provincial variations and entrepreneurialism in the development of China's Distant Water Fisheries (2011–2020)

China is a key player in global production, consumption, and trade of seafood. Recent analysis shows that by 2030 China will see seafood consumption outstrip domestic production; and the expansion of distant water fishing (DWF) industry is expected to be one of the solutions

to fill this gap (Crona et al., 2020). At the same time, the last decade also saw increasing international pressure on China to improve its DWF governance. This study proposes rescaling the current state-centric understanding of the development of China's DWF and explores the instrumental role of Chinese provinces in actualizing and shaping this development. The rapid growth of China's DWF during 2011–2020 can be attributed primarily to five subnational provinces and actors. As a case study, this article shows that the Fujian provincial government proactively carved out development space for boosting its DWF industry, despite Beijing's growing efforts to tighten central control out of concern over environmental externalities. Central–Local relations remain a critical perspective for those who seek to understand the challenges faced by China's central government as it tries to rein in the rapid expansion of the country's DWF activities.

Politics in transition

Duncan McCargo:

Director, NIAS, Professor of Political Science, University of Copenhagen

When Winning is Only the Beginning? Thailand's 2023 Elections

Thailand held a general election on 14 May 2023, which saw a strong showing by the opposition Move Forward and Pheu Thai parties. Nevertheless, their path to power will not be an easy one. Deep mistrust of both parties by the political establishment and conservative elites means that negotiations to set up a governing coalition may result in a compromise arrangement, involving some form of promiscuous power sharing between the two sides. Somewhat reminiscent of the 2022 Malaysian elections, Thailand's polls illustrate the complex forces at work in hybrid regimes where the routine alternation of ruling parties remains a fraught process rather than an institutionalized norm.

Siv H. Oftedal:

Senior lecturer in China Studies, University of Oslo (UiO)

At the End of a Paradigm: The Institutional Turn versus the Xi Jinping Era in Research on Chinese Politics

'The Institutional Turn' in social science research has influenced not only research on politics in general but also research within comparative authoritarian research and in China Area Studies. In China Studies, however, the 2018 political decision to remove the term limits on the state chairmanship was for several researchers the last straw that broke the argument of continuous institutionalisation as an underlying trend in Chinese politics.

This paper reviews the literature on institutionalisation in Chinese politics and evaluates how it was influenced both by the general institutional turn in Political Science as well as ongoing political reforms in China. The main argument of this paper is that in order to reconceptualise the role of institutions for the Chinese Communist Party and Chinese state in the Xi Jinping Era, incorporating systems concepts found in the Chinese political language into analysis, contributes to shifting the attention from institutions toward 'holistic governance' in current political reforms in China.

Timothy Mann:

Postdoctoral researcher, NIAS, University of Copenhagen

What happens to activist lawyers after democratic transition? The case of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI)

This paper explores how democratic change affects lawyers and the strategies they use to promote social change, through a case study of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI). Established in 1970, under former President Soeharto's authoritarian New Order regime (1966-1998), LBH became Indonesia's most prominent legal and human rights organisation and an influential hub of civil society resistance to the regime. The far-reaching democratisation process that began after Soeharto fell in 1998 involved many structural changes that should have provided the conditions for YLBHI to thrive. Yet in contrast to expectations, YLBHI struggled following the democratic transition. There was a period when YLBHI appeared weaker under democracy than it was under an authoritarian regime. Drawing on literature on cause lawyering and legal mobilisation, this paper focuses on the often-overlooked organisational factors crucial for supporting cause lawyering work, and explores how they were affected by democratic change. I argue that an identity crisis, funding constraints, leadership tensions, and management weaknesses – all of which were precipitated by the democratic transition – help to explain why YLBHI struggled after 1998.

Film and television

Sheng-Mei Ma:

*Professor of English at Michigan State University in Michigan, USA, specializing in Asian
Diaspora culture and East-West comparative studies*

Bao and Turning Red: Eating Chinese in Bloody Toronto

In her eight-minute animation of *Bao* (2018) on growing up Chinese in a Western city, the Toronto-based filmmaker Domee Shi manages to yoke locational markers and racial markers, or the place and the people, entwining them like the double helix to animate, pun intended, her work. Two film stills suffice to demonstrate how Shi plants Canadian symbols in a Chinese tale, or Chinese symbols in a Canadian tale. Figure 1 frames the characters' Tai Chi exercise against the backdrop of Toronto's landmark of the CN Tower. The happy ending in Figure 2 shows the new family with an addition of a blonde making baozi, the Father wearing a sweater with the Canadian maple leaf. Instead of the formulaic immigrant success story, the trope of baozi embodies a *mise en abyme* of the white, North American body politic (with)holding a minority of Asian bodies, which unwittingly bite back, engorging themselves with white dough wrappings glutted with meat minced, spiced, and kneaded Chinese-style. With five active and four passive verbs, with the foodie and the food, jostling one another throughout baozi-making and -eating in the space of one long sentence or one large land mass, it remains unclear as to who is consuming whom. What a metanarrative conundrum: the white world symbolically devouring Asian minorities partaking white-skinned baozi stuffed with a bit of their own home cooking, if not themselves!

Sheng-Mei Ma:

*Professor of English at Michigan State University in Michigan, USA, specializing in Asian
Diaspora culture and East-West comparative studies*

Chinese Serials/Cereals: Classic Chapter Novels, Colonial Cannibals, TV Series

This paper on China, Taiwan, and Asian America focuses on "Chinese Serials/Cereals: Classic Chapter Novels, Colonial Cannibals, TV Series." Sustaining Chinese culture like the ritual of breakfast cereal, the classic chapter novel *Journey to the West* unfolds as a pilgrimage over eighty-one calamities revolving around the pilgrim's flesh that gives immortality to whoever partakes it. The never-ending cannibalistic trope continues in modern (neo)colonial feeding frenzy in China's Lu Xun, Taiwan's Wu Zhuoliu, and contemporary web novels. These two urtexts on cannibalism mutates into symbolic appropriation of Asian Americans' "Taiwan Shift" in Cindy Pon and Jean Chen Ho; of second-generation mainlanders' demonization of *laobing* (old or retired soldiers) as sex predators from Bai Xianyong to Zhu Tianxin; and of China's trending *chuanyue* (spatial and temporal crossing) literary and filmic genre in denial of the state of being trapped, on the one hand, and, on the other, in a barely discernible nod to having been double-crossed by the State. The escapist *chuanyue* fad conjures up the specter of discontent. The fallacy of time travel, invariably returning to the present happily ever after, reminds one of the futility of blank pages raised high by demonstrators against Zero-Covid in 2022.

Seriality turns deadly in Chinese TV dramas featuring serial killers in *Reset* (2022); *The Bad Kids* (2020); and *Love Me If You Dare* (2015), the last with Taiwan's own Wallace Huo as the male lead. All three TV series—and films such as Fruit Chan's *Dumpling* (2004)—are

subtitled in English, lest the Anglophone audience find them unintelligible, indigestible. Questions remain: Why do the Chinese over centuries avail themselves of the serial/cereal as entertainment and food for thought? Why the Sinitic mise en abyme of consumption whereby viewing consumers satiate their cyclical hunger with variations of, in Lu Xun words, “man-eat-man” spectacles? While printed novels morph into digital media, the current Chinese and Taiwanese societies with relatively low crime rate and gun violence begin to savor ritualized bloodletting not at the breakfast table but at nightly viewing/bingeing. How to stomach the pun on “cereal,” which does not exist in the Chinese diet except as congee, or rice porridge (粥 *zhou*) in the morning? How to cross the cultural divide when even words and things, the signifier and the signified, cereal and 粥, do not agree?

Tom Smith:

*Principal Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Portsmouth and the
Academic Director of the Royal Air Force College*

Unravelling the ‘Asia’ in neo-noir cinema: the case for a new sub-genre- Neon-Noir

Ever since the re-invention of noir cinema with the release of Polanski's acclaimed *Chinatown* (1974) the prospect, spectre and image of Asia has consumed a section of the neo-noir film genre. So much so that this paper wishes to propose a new sub-genre - ‘neon noir’ - to stimulate debate and recognise the consumption and representation of Asia in neo-noir cinema.

The barriers and definitions as to what constitute Asian and non-Asian cinema have all but collapsed for some media forms with Asia being used across a spectrum from the benign to the insidious as a backdrop – sometimes cheaply, sometimes with provocative deep meaning for a variety of themes in the neo-noir genre. Traditionally themes like the clash of modernity, of urban life and violence with family and tradition have featured some form of ‘Asia’. The landscape of Asia can be found in backdrops to blockbuster Hollywood films from the James Bond and Batman franchises as a shorthand visual for – the modern and the future. Whereas in a film like the Danish-French production, *Only God Forgives* (2013) which comes with a European art-house sensibility whose transnational character challenges ideas and boundaries for the viewer to consume a challenging form of ‘Asia’. Set in a polarised Bangkok, urban and cosmopolitan by night, and peacefully rural by day, with Caucasian Hollywood stars in two of the three leading roles, and written and directed by Danish-born Nicolas Winding Refn. *Only God Forgives* (*OGF*) presents a significant and under-discussed development in transnational cinema in a genre inherently transnational – neo-noir.

As this paper will detail *OGF* not only challenges our consumption of Asia in neo-noir cinema but will look at other ‘neon-noirs’ that audiences have consumed Asia in interesting ways. Ranging from Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Black Rain* (1989), Michael Cimino's *Year of the Dragon* (1985), Jim Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog: Way of the Samurai* (1999)

'Neon-Noir' has been a genre for some of the most acclaimed directors of a generation. Their use of Asia has largely been unexplored in academic writing in neo noir until now.

Mobility and inequality panel

Terese Gagnon:

Postdoctoral researcher, NIAS, University of Copenhagen

Consuming Home, Nurturing Other Worlds

Alienation from homelands and food systems have been characteristics of life for many residents of Mae La refugee camp in Thailand, located close to the Myanmar border. I witnessed these trends during the six months I lived in the camp in 2018, conducting ethnographic research and volunteering as a teacher at a college in the camp. Meanwhile, through my interviews and friendships with Indigenous Karen young people living in Mae La, I learned that many of them frequently reminisced about their home villages and dreamed vividly of returning there. These young people, many of whom were my students in their mid-twenties, would often come to visit me in the evenings to chat and drink tea. At these times they spoke about their dreams of one day returning home to their villages on the Karen side of the border, otherwise known as Myanmar.

It was a commonly held goal among these young people to contribute to their local communities and build their futures in their respective home villages. As aid funding dried up, pressures towards precarious migrant labor and expulsion (Sassen 2010; 2014) were real and palpable in the camp. In the face of this, many of my young friends pushed back against the seeming inevitability of their flowing out of the camp to become migrant laborers in Thailand. In this presentation, I investigate how these students enacted a politics of refusal, as theorized by Audra Simpson (2014; 2017) through engagements with food and biodiversity from their homes. Such refusal was manifested in their affect-laden stories of home, as well as through sharing foods from home, sent across borders in defiance of settler state logics (Simpson 2014).

Rubkwan Thammaboosadee:

Department of Performing Arts, Bangkok University, Thailand

"The Capital" How many hearts do you still have? : Exploring consumed dignity and unfolded inequality in Thai society amid the pandemic through an applied-drama workshop

The COVID-19 pandemic has visibly revealed economic inequality in neoliberal societies where state support was meagre. In this paper, I aim to offer a critical analysis of an applied-

drama workshop called "The Capital: Covid-19 Edition". In designing the workshop in 2020 for university students, I initially sought to manifest how different capital and resources offered for citizens both enabled and disabled people to consume in their ordinary life situations such as 'enrolling in a university', 'falling in love', 'taking days off at work', and 'getting hospitalised'. By being further developed during the pandemic, in 2022, the workshop adopts a role-playing and decision-making process through a set of storylines in which players need to 'spend' and 'consume' resources to navigate situations in the pandemic, such as 'getting vaccinated', and 'working from home'. This paper investigates and reflects on the two conducted workshops with students and middle-class workers in 2022 on how the idea of consuming is embodied within class-based bodies. Playing in a group of four, each player will get a "Capital Bag" containing six Capital Cards: Health, Freedom, Education, Time, Money, and Heart. However, the number of Capital Cards is assigned differently in each bag, reflecting limited resources for people from different social classes. Like the structure of a three-act play, each player faces more challenging obstacles until the final scene, when they unravel the problems with their remaining resources. Regarding consumption during the pandemic in Thailand, I propose that consuming to deal with hunger is not only associated with physical needs and materials but also with a hunger for human dignity and justice -- which has been remarkably dismantled among the working class in Thai society in which their poverty has confined them. I propose that the workshop could generate class consciousness and compassion between participants by bringing bodies closer to each other, which could imitate and animate societal problems on the spot.

Young-Sook Lee:

UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Conceptualising Asian mobilities consumption: a critique

Mobilities, when we discuss human movements, are represented in the consumption related to travel and tourism. This form of consumption has peaked globally in the 20th century and continues into the 21st century. Indeed, researchers on travel and tourism define the sector as the latest form of human consumption embodied in various areas and sectors (e.g., consumption of environment, culture and history, transportation systems, energy bases, and materials and non-materials etc.).

In this paper, I present and question the ways in which Asian mobilities consumption, represented in tourism sector, is conceptualised and investigated.

Where Asian consumption is concerned, academic literature in marketing and tourism studies convinces us that Thorstein Veblen's conspicuous consumption notion explains Asian consumption quite satisfactorily. Superficially, the concept seems to aptly describe and explain the ways in which Asians consume. On a closer inspection, however, one is left to

wonder if the application of the 19th-century Norwegian American economist and sociologist's idea regarding 21st-century Asian consumption is indeed adequate (Lee, 2021: 14).

The term 'conspicuous consumption' was coined by Veblen in his book: *The theory of the leisure class* (1899). While the term has been fashionably adopted to describe the 20th and 21st century Asian consumption in general as well as tourism sector-related consumption, I argue that the adoption needs a more critical review on its applicability.

By thorough readings of the book where the term was first introduced, I present Veblen's meaning of conspicuous consumption. The adoption of the term to describe and conceptualise Asian mobilities consumption, is then critiqued based on the Asian worldview or epistemic ground that espouses Confucian values among other traditional values.

Ben Grafstrom:

PhD Candidate at the University of Oslo

Japan's Population Crisis and its Effects on the Future of Rural Folk Religious Festivals: 3 Case Studies

For nearly a century scholars, folklorists, and others on the sidelines have been sounding the death knell for the folk traditions found throughout Japan's countryside. Indeed, external forces such as authoritarianism, industrialization, and large-scale war have threatened to erase rural folk traditions that have been practiced for generations. The actual residents of these rural communities, who are the stakeholders of local folk traditions, have showed resilience and have continued their traditions against considerable odds. The current population crisis (a combination of a low birthrate, an ageing society, and rural–urban migration) is the latest challenge to preserving folk heritage in rural Japan. As with previous adversity, not all communities seem to share outsider's fatalist attitudes regarding the futures of their local culture. Instead, I argue that they have an "open future" mentality in which their local traditions continue.

Akita, Japan has the highest rate of depopulation in Japan. It is also home to a variety of centuries-old folk traditions at risk of vanishing due to population decline. The primary questions I pose are 1) How are the participants' interactions with their local festivals changing as a result of population decline; and what effects are these changes having on maintaining the traditions for future generations? By conducting ethnographic fieldwork at 3 locations in Akita and collecting data through interviews, participant observation, and from public and private documents, I hope to provide some insight into these questions. At the center of my conclusions will be questioning notions of authenticity and analysis of various layers of conflict surrounding the attempts at maintaining local traditions.

Suchismita Goswami:

Phd Student- University of Copenhagen

Sites of Adaptation – Through Autoconstruction

Every year urban disasters affect a large number of people all around the world causing massive loss of life, serious injury, loss of home and loss of livelihood. Resettlement has been the most common route of adaptation in the Global South after any disasters. Resettlement sites are constructed in the peripheries of the city that are constrained of resources, livelihood and many other rights. The site planning, location and allotment techniques in these sites are so crude that they do not facilitate space for community bonding and solidarity. This leaves the communities most vulnerable and precarious. After 5 months of fieldwork in the city of Chennai in India, I came across a unique self- adaptation technique developed by the communities resettled in the peripheries of the city after the devastating tsunami of 2005. The research is located in two resettlement sites of Semmencheri and AIR resettlement sites which are developed by the government for the tsunami survivors in phases between 2007-2010. The one-room flats handed over to the community are congested, ill-ventilated and frequently suffer from leakages, damp and yearly floods. The communities as a means of adaptation from climate change, lack of livelihood opportunities and communal spaces have resorted to developing extensions. These extensions in the resettlement sites are unregulated, informal, illegal and outside the plan and design of the government officials. The residents and the state engage in different modes of negotiations, contestation and clientelism to uphold these spaces. Yet the communities out of deprivation and desperation build these extensions as necessary means to mitigate and adapt to climate change, livelihood solutions, and means to increase social capital and solidarity. These extensions challenge the urban scholarship of situating the autoconstruction as only a means of development and upgrading the space habitation.. These auto-constructed extensions continue to develop even in resettlement areas as an adaptation means to reimagine or reconstruct the sites as per their needs and circumstances. These extensions in the resettlement community raise the re-examination of resettlement sites to more democratized and participative spaces for city-making.

Gender and sexuality

JiMin Nam:

MA student at the University of Oslo

Consumer Politics of Contemporary Young South Korean Feminist Women

It is a well-known fact that consumption is not only a private matter but also a political matter. Depending on which value people care about, consumers show their political stances through

various ways of consumption, such as boycotting or supporting specific companies. For instance, people who value animal rights and are against animal cruelty might boycott products from companies known to use animal testing in the hope that more companies find new ways to test the safety of the products. Such politics of consumption, however, needs more discussion in the context of a specific gender and region. The panel that encourages the debate about the various cases of different countries in Asia regarding the gendered and localized dimension of consumption politics will offer some meaningful insights regarding more specific contexts of politicized consumption. In this paper, I examine how young feminists in South Korea who identify themselves with a permanent withdrawal from heterosexual practices use particular ways of consumption as a weapon to promote their value. From my 6-month fieldwork, I discovered that the feminist women I met were careful about which products, cultures, people, contents, and companies to consume. Their values often orbit around the hope of achieving gender equality in South Korea. They make the forms of consumption in many different ways. Actively consuming specific contents that they think are beneficial to enhance women's status in South Korea, not giving any does of consumption to certain media contents by boycotting them, and rethinking consumption and instead settling into an extreme-saving mode for oneself along the line of radical thinking of self-loving could be the examples. The ways they think are appropriate to promote gender equality are also various. It contains consuming women-led businesses, not listening to a piece of music from K-Pop Idols or artists whose lyrics perpetuate gender stereotypes, changing the channel of the TV whenever an actor who has committed sexual crimes against women appears, and actively spending money on crowd-funding projects that have any feminist topics. Their various strategies as a consumer identity reflect women's status and conditions in political economy of South Korean context and offer an insight to researchers how people utilize consumption in the context of social movements.

Anna Romanowicz:

PhD, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Jagiellonian University in Krakow

Consuming love, consuming sex. On individual choice as a strategy for class reproduction

In popular media and scholarly discussion about intimate relationships in India, the focus is on variety of the forms: arranged and love marriages, love-cum-arrange marriages (and the other way around), informal relationships, to name a few. To classify a relationship as of a particular type, the nature of the choice (its variations on a continuum from individual to family choice) is often assessed. Among middle class participants of ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted in Delhi and Mumbai, the rhetoric of individual choice is prominent, too. The emphasis of individual choice serves as a tool to model neoliberal citizens in all spheres of social life. In my presentation, I argue that under a neoliberal regime, the emphasis on individual consumption as a means of economic development and the prescribed recipe for nation prosperity has contributed to a decline in fertility. In addition, I explore the ways in

which, in the sphere of middle class intimate relationships, an emphasis on consumerism as an expression of 'being modern' encourages the so-called love relationships.

Jana Aresin:

Ph.D researcher at the Institute of American Studies at FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

Gender and Economic Citizenship in Postwar Japan: The Politics of Women's Labour and Consumption

Common narratives of the post-World War II development of Japan tend to emphasize the country's U.S.-driven 'democratization' and integration into the capitalist economic order of the Western block. At the same time, Japan's postwar 'rehabilitation' is often tied to narratives of women's emancipation, economic growth, and rising levels of consumption. To trace the origin of such narratives and what they reveal about gendered perceptions of consumption in relation to economic and political participation, this paper will explore representations of democratic citizenship, consumption, and labour in Japanese women's magazines from the late 1940s and early 1950s. I argue that dominant images of democratic capitalism promoted in Japan by the United States discursively linked democratic ideals of equality, choice, and participation with consumerism as a form of economic participation and 'freedom' through consumer choice.

I also examine how economic growth and rising living standards through increased consumption is portrayed as a foundation and requirement for political stability and a functioning democracy. At the same time, the paper pays attention to the way these dominant narratives were challenged or questioned in Japanese print mass media at the time and how alternative forms of political and economic participation – often with an emphasis on labour activism and grassroots organizing – were imagined. I argue that casting labour as the primary marker of women's economic citizenship rather than consumption is a key element of these counternarratives. The paper aims to contextualize the cultural meanings that consumption – especially in the context of the capitalist consumer society – took on in the second half of the twentieth century in Japan by relating it to popular discourses on democracy, gender, and labour while paying close attention both to the impact of U.S. occupation policies and of Japanese social and intellectual movements in shaping these discourses and imaginations.

Cecilie Mueenuddin:

Doctoral Candidate, University of Oxford

Making consumption moral: Pakistani middle-class masculinity and the role of Islam

Consumption has been widely considered central to producing the middle classes, in diverse parts of the world. It has also been seen as important in the enactment of masculinity. In South Asia, the provider role and a man's ability to finance his family's consumption is central to configurations of masculinity. Issues of consumption and the maintenance of the family's middle-class status thereby weigh particularly heavily on men, whose masculinity to a large extent is measured by their income and ability to consume. However, consumption is also often seen as morally ambiguous – a form of competition that middle-class people feel forced to participate in despite the risk of being perceived as irresponsible spendthrifts. This paper therefore focuses on how Pakistani middle-class men resolve the apparent conflict between engaging in consumption – and thereby enhancing their masculinity – and maintaining a sense of personal and class-based morality.

Among Hindus in India, it has been argued that middle-class attitudes of moderation and a modest lifestyle are connected to upper-caste Brahman values that call for restraint and reason. In Pakistan, however, middle-class views of morality in consumption are rather rooted in Islamic ideals of behaviour. This means that a respectable man is considered to be someone who works diligently and honestly, earning a halal (Islamically permissible) income, and who is content with what God chooses to give him, rather than grasping for more. Many middle-class people claim to prefer a 'modest' lifestyle to a 'luxurious' one, and perceive this as a mark of religious devotion, elevating moderation to a religious virtue. This paper argues that middle-class men thereby contest the feminized position that their financial weakness relative to the upper classes places them in, by positioning their consumption and their masculinity as morally superior to the upper classes.

East Asian Cultures

Sujie Jin:

PhD Candidate at the University of Zurich

Writing Allohstory: Fantasizing Alternative Pasts in Chinese Danmei Fiction

The Chinese phrase danmei (耽美, also known as boys' love/BL) originated from the Japanese term Tanbi (たんび). It refers to the genre of online fiction which features romances between men. Danmei fiction is mainly written by and for women, which has been popularized in mainland China since the late 1990s. In the past decade, danmei alternative history (AH) has deviated from homosocial and homosexual content to emphasize various components that make up society – individual, family, nation, and nature. Previous studies have centered on the queer relationship in danmei stories; however, very little research has been done to explore other topics or themes. I herein intend to investigate the cultural phenomenon of

danmei AH writing and reading. This study will focus on the content and the feature of selected works. It aims at exploring how danmei stories reflect and affect the ethos of culture situated in the sociological context of changing cultural and natural environments. I will collect the primary data on the website named Jinjiang Literature City, the largest female-oriented online fiction website in China. Subsequently, I will use discourse analysis and formalist analysis to examine selected stories. Drawing upon the theory of intertextuality, I expect to provide a systematic introduction on danmei AH and conceptualize the interaction between the danmei text and its social context. Beyond that, I will explore possible interpretations of exemplars and identify the following themes: changing notions of family and marriage, human-nonhuman interactions, and human-landscape relationships. This study will demonstrate how danmei AH arouses historical nostalgia and offers its readers a strong sense of (imagined) participation in the making of the future world.

Wenjia Zhou:

PhD Candidate at NTNU

The Becoming of Milk in China

By 2020, China has become the world's second largest dairy products consumer and largest dairy importer. However, milk consumption as a habit among urban citizens did not emerge until the 1920s in China, and many Chinese people remain lactose intolerant (Sabban, 2014). Another thing to be noted is that plant-based milk is also gaining popularity in China, with an 800% increase of sales during 2019-2020 on Tmall, one of the largest Chinese eCommerce platforms. What makes milk integral to Chinese food practices? Are foreign brands much preferred by Chinese consumers? If (not) so, why (not)? What kinds of role do and will the plant-based milk products play in Chinese market? Most existing social scientific research studies milk consumption in China with a historical perspective, highlighting the discourses of national modernization and urban women's liberation (ibid; Lu, 2020; Zhang, 2020). The discourse of national modernization is also prominent in the rise of soy milk in Republican China (Fu, 2018) and milk consumption in the 21st century in China (Wiley, 2011). Some other research works draw on aspects concerning policy, legislation, and consumers' attitudes in terms of milk production and consumption (Pei et al., 2011; Bai et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2019). Few work examines the supply chain of milk in present-day China, which is vital to understand how milk becomes integral to Chinese people's lives. By examining the roles various actors play along the systems of provision of milk, I want to fill the research gap, add to existing knowledge of milk supply and demand by identifying these actors and their roles, and contribute to suggesting alternative solutions for reducing milk consumption. By seeing milk as an assemblage of actors and processes, I emphasize the entanglement of heterogeneous entities – both human and nonhuman – in rendering milk. I set out to study the becoming (Braidotti, 2002) of milk in China: what, how, where, and when objects become milk for Chinese consumers; the configurations of technologies, knowledges, politics, ecology,

ideology, and identities in the rendering of milk for Chinese consumers; and the invention and consumption of substitute milk products (e.g. soy milk and oat milk).

Yijian Liu:

PhD Candidate at the University of Oslo

Consuming and consumed entrepreneurs: precarious privilege in Shenzhen's high-tech start-ups

This paper examines the practices of the growing integration of consumption into the heart of entrepreneurship of China, and its implications for the day-to-day experiences of entrepreneurs. Research has documented the role of transnational entrepreneurs with technological know-how in regional development. China's talent recruitment efforts have also been the subject of a substantial body of research. The state's materialistic subsidies among other favourable conditions are generally considered to be successful strategies and have attracted transnational talents, both Chinese returnees and foreigners (Zhang, 2019). While transnational talents are in this sense seen as consumers of talent initiatives of the Chinese state, who enjoy benefits and development opportunities for entrepreneurship, they are expected to self-consume, self-strive in order to make their start-ups competitive in the market economy. In relation to this contested position of consumer/ consumed, I use the term precarious privilege to describe what it is like to be a transnational talent who builds a high-tech start-up in Shenzhen. Privilege refers to socially privileged entrepreneurial talents as consumers, produced within China's specific socio-legal framework, evident in talent policies and other state-sponsored initiatives, and enacted by transnational entrepreneurs themselves. Precarity refers to the experience of self-consuming entrepreneurial talents working to make their start-up succeed in the high-tech economy. I argue that the state-endorsed entrepreneurial talents are not necessarily recognised by market actors as having the potential to succeed in business. Drawing on seven months of participant observation in Shenzhen-based start-ups and incubators as an intern, and 95 semi-structured interviews, this study sheds light on state-business-individual relations in the global high-tech economy.

Young Joo Hong:

PhD Candidate at the University of Turku

Depressed Nation: Emotional Culture of South Korea: Cultural history of depression and emotional experiences

The topic of this thesis is emotion and depression discourse in modern South Korea (1980-2010). The objective is to examine how emotions are conceptualized and practiced in a specific context related to depression in South Korea. To do this, I examine how depression was conceptualized in South Korean published newspapers from the 1980s onwards. I will

also analyse how this conceptualisation resonated with the emotional culture of society during this time span.

In South Korea, despite the nation's development and its modern advances, there has been a growing and evolving public discourse about depression. In the wake of psycho-medical industries, medical and consumer views of mental health has been on the rise while the social nature of depression have increasingly been silenced. In this context, I point out that the issue of depression itself is produced and consumed as an emotional commodity.

I am about to present chapter three (my dissertation is divided broadly into three thematic chapters) for the Ph.D. workshop, the paper is thus devoted to the following question of how knowledge of depression was produced and consumed with the greater emotional resonance of collective consciousness of health/disease on the one hand, and what narratives were employed in the context of "depressed nation" discussions and in consequence how depression identified as a form of social pathology, paradoxically, transformed into "the personal" emotional experience, on the other.

Zhentian Xie:

PhD Candidate at the University of St Andrews

Through Pots and Pans: Culinary and Cultural Bonds Between China and Japan, 1868-1949

Since the late 19th century, the ways of eating in China and Japan have become more similar than at any other time in the history. Numerous shared culinary elements have reshaping both countries' culinary culture. MSG, Kombu, Gyōza, Chinggis Khan Pot ... These terms have become familiar to a growing number of Chinese and Japanese people. New dishes, skills and ingredients were created as a result of cultural interaction. Culinary exchange was an often-overlooked reflection, 'mirroring' other aspects of the Sino-Japanese relationship and the development of inter-East Asian bonds in modern times. While existing studies by Katarzyna Cwiertka, Berack Kushner and George Solt have highlighted that the introduction of Chinese cuisine into Japan was associated with empire and post-war economic boom, this paper discusses how Pan-Asianism, or '亚细亚主义' played a role in two-way culinary exchange before and during the second world war. Figures like Zhou Zuoren, Marumoto Shozo and Yamada Masahira attempted to use cuisine as a tool to recreate connections between China and Japan. Furthermore, this paper argues that, besides Ramen and Chūka restaurants (and their predominantly male cooks), the development of domestic cuisine led by female chefs showed another side of Sino-Japanese culinary exchange, which led to a more organic development and long-term influence on both countries' food history. Using cuisine as the agent, this dissertation provides a reconsideration of the Sino-Japanese relationship that existed alongside the political, economic and military realms, focusing on people's daily life under the intense interaction between China and Japan in the early and mid-20th century.