



NEW HORIZONS

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

JANUARY 2020 • ISSUE 04

Sustainability solutions for the future

News

- NTU establishes Jek Yeun Thong Community Development Fund at SSS
- Exposing the truth about lying to children
- Singapore Bicentennial Conference in NTU - SG200: Heritage, Identity, Progress

People

- Welcoming our scholars back as new faculty members



CONTENTS

AUGUST 2019 | ISSUE 03

1 Chair's Message

NEWS

- 2 Welcoming new faculty and recognising excellence
- 2 NTU establishes Jek Yeun Thong Community Development Fund at SSS
- 2 Assoc Prof Md Saidul Islam elected Chair of Sociology for CSA
- 2 Assoc Prof Laura Wu conferred 2019 National Day Awards' Commendation Medal
- 3 Assoc Prof Andy Ho picks up top awards at APHC and SHBC 2019
- 3 Exposing the truth about lying to children
- 4 SSS Convocation 2019: Life should not be perceived as a zero sum game
- 4 NTU Sociology launches Community Fund
- 5 EAUI Summer School 2019: East Asian Regional Integration in a Populist and Nationalist Age
- 6 Singapore Economic Review Conference 2019
- 6 EGC pens networking group agreement with Nankai University
- 7 Singapore Bicentennial Conference in NTU—SG200: Heritage, Identity, Progress



5 EAUI Summer School 2019



7 Singapore Bicentennial Conference in NTU

FEATURE

- 8 Sustainability solutions for the future

PEOPLE

WELCOMING OUR SCHOLARS BACK AS NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

- 12 When inquisitiveness leads to a path less travelled
- 13 Unravelling the black box of China's foreign policy



3 Assoc Prof Andy Ho at APHC 2019



8 Sustainability solutions for the future

RESEARCH GRANTS

- 14 MOE Academic Research Grant Awards
- 14 External Grants

PUBLICATIONS

- 15 Books
- 15 Book Chapters
- 16 Journal Articles



Professor Liu Hong
Tan Lark Sye Chair Professor of Public Policy and Global Affairs
Chair, School of Social Sciences
Nanyang Technological University

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to the fourth issue of NEW HORIZONS.

Our feature article looks at sustainability solutions from the perspective of the social sciences. While the hard sciences are key to advancing technologies for sustainability solutions, the social sciences also play an important role in influencing individual behaviours and policy outcomes. (And in line with NTU's sustainability development goals, we have reduced our printed version of the newsletter by half, and will be moving towards a digital version in our collective efforts to protect the environment.)

We closed the final months of 2019 with a few exciting events. Some of our faculty members received recognition for their outstanding contributions to education at School and NTU. We also recognise the exceptional members of our management and support staff, who are the backbone of our School's operations. We welcomed two new faculty members who are part of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) International PhD Scholarship (HIPS) programme—they are featured in this issue's People.

Together with the Nanyang Centre of Public Administration (NCPA) and Chinese Heritage Centre, the School hosted a Singapore Bicentennial Conference in NTU—SG200: Heritage, Identity, Progress. Coincidentally, a building and a road in

NTU have been renamed to recognise the pioneers who have contributed to education in Singapore.

The College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences—which our School is part of—has been renamed the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan Building. A stone's throw away from the building, the road in front of the Chinese Heritage Centre, has been renamed the 'Tan Lark Sye Walk'. This is to mark the contributions of the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan and its then President, Mr Tan Lark Sye who was also the founding father of Nanyang University.

In the spirit of philanthropy that the late Mr Tan Lark Sye had together with community leaders in Singapore's pre-independence period, we are proud to announce that NTU has established the Jek Yeun Thong Community Development Fund at School of Social Sciences (SSS). The late Mr Jek was one of the pioneering political leaders who helped to build Singapore into a harmonious and multi-cultural society it is today. In honour of his contributions and legacy, the Fund will be used to support undergraduate research and internships relating to community engagement.

We hope that 2020 will be a fruitful and prosperous year for everyone, including us at NTU and SSS.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support, and I hope you will enjoy this issue of NEW HORIZONS!

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WELCOMING NEW FACULTY AND RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

A warm welcome to our new faculty to the School of Social Sciences, and our heartiest congratulations to the faculty and staff for their outstanding contributions to the School!

NEW FACULTY

Economics
Tang Cheng Keat

Public Policy and Global Affairs
Dylan Loh

FACULTY AWARDS

Nanyang Education Award (School)
Assoc Prof Andy Ho Hau Yan

Nanyang Research Award (Young Investigator)
Asst Prof Setoh Pei Pei

FACULTY PROMOTION AND TENURE

Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure
Assoc Prof Andy Ho Hau Yan
(Psychology)

Assoc Prof Xu Hong
(Psychology)

Assoc Prof Christopher Holman
(Public Policy and Global Affairs)

MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT OFFICER (MSO) AWARDS

Best Customer Service
Ms Constance Yong

Best Leadership
Ms Christina Teu

Best Teamwork
SSS Undergraduate Education Office

NTU ESTABLISHES JEK YEUN THONG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND AT SSS

NTU has established the Jek Yeun Thong Community Development Fund at the School of Social Sciences, with a generous donation from Madam Huang Kek Chee, the widow of the late Mr Jek Yeun Thong. Mr Jek was one of Singapore's pioneering politicians, and was responsible

in propelling the multicultural society the nation has today. He was known for his compassion for the disadvantaged and vulnerable, and the Fund was set up to honour his legacy. The Fund will enable undergraduates to conduct field research on social issues, and to experience

working with the less fortunate through internships with social service organisations in the non-profit sector. It will support faculty discussion of social issues through public seminars by NTU faculty as well. The Fund will be launched in February 2020.

ASSOC PROF MD SAIDUL ISLAM ELECTED CHAIR OF SOCIOLOGY FOR CSA

Associate Professor Md Saidul Islam was elected as the Chair of the Sociology of Development Cluster, Canadian Sociological Association (CSA) for 2019-2020. A professor of Sociology, he is

currently the coordinator of the Environment and Sustainability Research Cluster in SSS and Asian School of the Environment (ASE). He is a former Visiting Scholar of the Abdul Latif Jameel

Water and Food Systems Lab in Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

ASSOC PROF LAURA WU CONFERRED 2019 NATIONAL DAY AWARDS' COMMENDATION MEDAL

Associate Professor Laura Wu, Associate Chair (Academic), was conferred the Commendation Medal at the National Day Awards. She is one of the 77 faculty and staff members who have been awarded the 2019 National Day Honours by the

Singapore President. The honours are bestowed upon individuals in recognition of their contributions to education in Singapore as well as their dedicated service to the University. Associate Professor Wu is a professor of Economics, whose research focuses on the

effects of various distortions and frictions on firms' investment and financing behaviour and their implications to economic development and resource allocation.

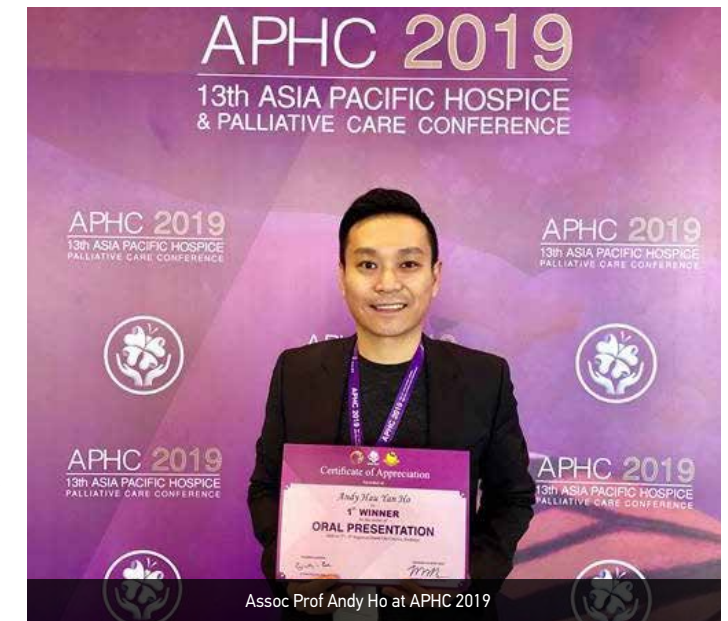
ASSOC PROF ANDY HO PICKS UP TOP AWARDS AT APHC AND SHBC 2019

Associate Professor Andy Ho from Psychology picked up top awards at two major healthcare events in 2019.

He came in first in the Best Oral Presentation Award presented at the Asia Pacific Hospice and Palliative Care Conference (APHC) on 4 August 2019, and bagged the Gold Award of the Best Poster Award in Allied Health at the Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress (SHBC) on 10 October 2019. His presentations at both events shared his research findings of psycho-socio-spiritual care. He presented the paper, 'Family Dignity Intervention (FDI)

for advancing Holistic Care in Asia Palliative Care: Preliminary Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial', at APHC and 'Family Dignity Intervention (FDI) for advancing Holistic Care in Asia Palliative Care: Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Singapore' at SHBC. Both his papers were among the top abstracts selected for oral and poster presentations at the respective events.

"Psycho-socio-spiritual care is utmost important to support terminally-ill patients and families as they approach the final stages of life," said Associate Professor Ho. "However, most palliative care interventions focus predominately on the physical aspect of care, with pain management and symptom control taking precedence over the deep and



powerful existential distress and suffering of mortality." His research is supported by the

Ministry of Education Academic Research Fund (AcRF) Tier 2 grant.



EXPOSING THE TRUTH ABOUT LYING TO CHILDREN

A new psychology study led by NTU has garnered much media coverage since it was released. It suggested that parents who lie to their children to get them to behave may have caused negative

effects lasting into the latter's adulthood. The study also showed that adults who reported being lied to more as children were also inclined to report lying to their parents as adults.

The study was done in collaboration with the University of Toronto, the University of California, San Diego, and Zhejiang Normal University. It has been featured in many local and international news outlets around the region and across the globe in Europe and in the United States. In addition, NTU Psychology's Assistant Professor Setoh Pei Pei, lead author of the paper, has been interviewed by local radio station CNA938 and British public service broadcaster, BBC.

Assistant Professor Setoh is the lab director of NTU's Early Cognition Laboratory.

Her research areas include developmental psychology, infant cognition, and causal reasoning.

In the study, 379 Singaporean young adults were asked whether their parents had lied to them when they were children, how much they lie to their parents now, and how well they adjust to adulthood.

"Parenting by lying can seem to save time especially when the real reasons behind why parents want children to do something is complicated to explain," said Assistant Professor Setoh. "When parents tell children that 'honesty is the best policy', but display dishonesty by lying, such behaviour can send conflicting messages to their children. Parents' dishonesty may eventually erode trust and promote dishonesty in children."

SSS CONVOCATION 2019: LIFE SHOULD NOT BE PERCEIVED AS A ZERO SUM GAME

Congratulations to more than 600 School of Social Sciences graduates who were conferred their degree scrolls on 25 July at NTU Convocation 2019. Mr Douglas Foo—Nominated Member of Parliament, and Founder and Chairman of Sakae Holdings—and Ms Penny Low—former Member of Parliament for Pasir Ris Punggol GRC and founder of Social Innovation Park—were the guest speakers for SSS' ceremonies. In his speech, Mr Foo advised the graduates on the importance of values and how they should continuously seek opportunities to learn. Ms Low advised the graduates on establishing a firm value system, and asserted that they should dream big and aspire

to become the person they admire most.

Meanwhile, in her valedictorian speech, Ms Aisyah Yusoff, urged her fellow graduates to have the "humility and compassion" to lower their voices once in a while and listen to those whose voices are softer than theirs. "Connectedness underpins our existence in society," she asserted, "and life should not be perceived as a zero sum game, contrary to what others tell us." She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, and will be pursuing further studies in anthropology in University of Cambridge. She is also a Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award recipient.



SSS Valedictorian, Ms Aisyah Yusoff, from Sociology

NTU SOCIOLOGY LAUNCHES COMMUNITY FUND AT ALUMNI REUNION

NTU Sociology held their inaugural alumni reunion on 11 October 2019 at NTU Alumni House, Marina Square. They also took the opportunity to launch the Sociology Community Fund. Associate Professor Teo You Yenn, Head of Sociology, shared the purpose of the Community Fund. Three Sociology alumni, Pranav Sethaputra (Class of 2015), Hemavalli Padmanathan (Class of 2009) and Lee Kui Bao (Class of 2010) shared a few memories about their time in NTU and what being an NTU

Sociology alumni has meant to them.

NTU Sociology is committed to building an environment where all of their students, regardless of background, are able to thrive. The Sociology Community Fund draws from our Sociology community in NTU—faculty, alumni, and other donors. Funds will be used to support students who have emergency financial needs, as well as for academic and social activities that benefit the student

body. The Fund is open to all full-time undergraduates and postgraduate students enrolled in Sociology.

It was a warm and convivial affair—a great opportunity to meet up with old friends and make new ones—and was attended by 13 Sociology faculty members and 46 alumni. Professor Kwok Kian Woon, the first Head of Sociology, was the guest-of-honour for the event.



Assoc Prof Teo You Yenn (left) with Prof Kwok Kian Woon (right)

EAUI SUMMER SCHOOL 2019: EAST ASIAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN A POPULIST AND NATIONALIST AGE

A combination of summer school programme and an international symposium, this year's East Asian University Institute (EAUI) Summer School was held in Tokyo, Japan, from 29 July to 2 August. It was attended by professors and 30 graduate students from the five participating universities – the host university, Waseda University (Japan), Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), Korea University (South Korea), Peking University

(China) and Thammasat University (Thailand).

The theme for the 2019 summer school was 'East Asian Regional Integration in a Populist and Nationalist Age: Rhetoric, Emotion and Action'. The first two days of the programme consisted lectures by professors from each university on various research topics centred on the main theme. Among them was SSS' Assistant Professor Kei Koga who touched on 'fake

news' and the Yasukuni Shrine controversy in his lecture, arousing passionate discussions among the students.

The third day was marked for group discussions and also featured a screening of the film, 'Shusenjo – The Main Battleground of the Comfort Women Issue', which prompted robust discussions from the students and faculty. Professors from the participating universities presented their research on

the fourth day, which had been designated as the international symposium. Students then made their presentations on the final day of the summer school, based on the questions allocated to them by a professor. The EAUI Summer School 2019 concluded with a farewell dinner for all participating students and professors.

Peking University will take over from Waseda University to host EAUI Summer School 2020.



Participants of the EAUI Summer School 2019

SINGAPORE ECONOMIC REVIEW CONFERENCE 2019



Education Minister Mr Ong Ye Kung giving his address at the 8th SERC

the autonomous universities in Singapore—Nanyang Technological University (NTU), National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore Management University (SMU) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). It was attended by over 350 participants from 50 countries.

The event commenced with welcome remarks from Albert Winsemius Professor Euston Quah from NTU, and an address by guest-of-honour, Education Minister Mr Ong Ye Kung. More than 70 parallel and five plenary

sessions were conducted over the three-day conference. About 30 distinguished professors, which included editors and co-editors of major economic journals were invited speakers.

The SERC has been organised since 2005, and is the largest gathering of eminent economists and policy makers in the region. Co-organisers and partners of the SERC 2019 included the Monetary Authority of Singapore, Asian Development Bank Institute and academic and professional publisher, World Scientific.

The eighth biennial Singapore Economic Review Conference (SERC) was held from 5 to 7

August 2019 at Mandarin Orchard Hotel. It was organised by professors representing four of

EGC PENS NETWORKING GROUP AGREEMENT WITH NANKAI UNIVERSITY

The NTU Economic Growth Centre (EGC) signed the Research Centres Networking Group (RCNG) agreement with Nankai University on 8 August 2019 during the SERC at Mandarin Orchard Hotel Singapore. The RCNG is a visiting research programme that aims to facilitate research between faculty and research fellows across the network. It was established by EGC in September 2013. The agreement will be effective for three years from the date of signing.

The network for this time around comprises ten academic institutions in Australia, China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam and EGC. The ten institutions are:

- Graduate School of Economics, Kobe University (Japan)
- Asian Development Bank Institute, Asian Development Bank (Japan)
- Asian Growth Research Institute (Japan)
- School of Economics, Hiroshima University (Japan)

- Arndt Corden Department of Economics, Australia National University (Australia)
- University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam)
- Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University (Korea)
- Centre for New Structural Economics, Peking University (China)
- Centre for Research of Private Economy, Zhejiang University (China)

- School of Economics, Nankai University (China)

Under the agreement, faculty members in the research centres or universities in the network can visit other member institutions for one to three weeks, subject to the research needs and budgets of the host institution. Members of the networking group can also convene at joint workshops and conferences on common themes across the centres.

SINGAPORE BICENTENNIAL CONFERENCE IN NTU—SG200: HERITAGE, IDENTITY, PROGRESS



Speakers and organisers of the SG200 conference. Prof Liu Hong (fourth from right) with keynote speakers Dr Liu Thai Ker (fourth from left), Prof Takeshi Yamashita (third from left), and Mr Zainul Abidin (third from right).

In conjunction with the nation's commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Raffles' arrival in Singapore, the School of Social Sciences (SSS), Nanyang Centre for Public Administration (NCPA) and Chinese Heritage Centre hosted the 'SG200: Heritage, Identity, Progress' conference. It was held from 18 to 19 October at the Nanyang Executive Centre, and attracted more than 100 participants, and featured speakers from Asia, North America, Australia and Europe as well.

The conference focused on themes of empire/nation, public policy/society, and Singapore's international environments as they interconnect in terms of understanding the nation's past and present, how they shaped the people's sensitivities and

approaches to the future. The two-day conference was divided into three main tracks: Empire & Mobilities; Governance, Public Policy, and Society; and Singapore in International Environment. It opened with a welcome speech from Professor Liu Hong—Tan Lark Sye Chair Professor in Public Policy and Global Affairs; Chair, SSS; and Director, NCPA.

There were three keynote speakers, Former Senior Minister of State for Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Zainul Abidin (also Board of Trustees Member, NTU; and Adjunct Professor, NCPA); world-renowned historian Professor Takeshi Hamashita (Head of Research Department, Toyo Bunko in Tokyo, Japan); and "Father of Urban Planning" in Singapore, Dr Liu Thai

Ker (Chairman, Morrow Architects & Planners; Chairman, Centre for Liveable Cities; and Adjunct Professor, NCPA).

Three of SSS faculty members presented at the conference. Associate Professor Wang Jue, head of Public Policy and Global Affairs, presented during the Public Policy & Society panel of the Governance, Public Policy and Society track. She shared her research findings on collaboration networks of academics in Singapore in her presentation, 'Strategies in Global Talent Race: A Study of Academics in Singapore'.

Assistant Professors Laavanya Kathiravelu and Zhan Shaohua, both from Sociology, each presented in the third track of

the conference, Singapore in International Environment, as part of the Connectivity panel. Assistant Professor Laavanya's presentation, 'Active Citizenship: Rethinking Ethnic Belonging in Singapore' looked at forms of affective citizenship performed by Singaporeans in ways that challenged state-sponsored notions of who is legally a citizen of the nation. Meanwhile, Assistant Professor Zhan's presentation, 'Digital Communication and Immigrant Integration: Chinese and Indians in Singapore, Vancouver and Los Angeles' investigated the effects of digital communication through the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as social media and messaging apps, on immigrants' socio-economic integration in the host society.

SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

NTU's School of Social Sciences tackles the question of sustainability through its research and curriculum

Research has shown that climate change is accelerating environmental changes at an alarming rate. According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the revealing signs and impacts of climate change increased during 2015-2019. We are facing the real threat of rising sea levels, shrinking ice caps, oceans heating up and increasing their acidity levels, and extreme weather. Addressing the climate change conundrum requires the contributions from many disciplines. It is not a problem only for climate scientists to solve. There is no doubt that technological innovation is deepening our understanding of current environmental challenges and offering new ways to tackle them. However, the drivers of and the solutions to climate change and sustainability issues are fundamentally social, economic and political. This means that the social sciences play an equally vital role in developing sustainability solutions.

Examining inequity in sustainability solutions

Sustainability is usually defined as meeting the needs of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet theirs, and it encompasses three components: economic, environmental, and social. However, Associate Professor Md Saidul Islam, a sociology professor from

Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) School of Social Sciences (SSS) observes, there is more emphasis on sustaining economic growth than ecological integrity and social justice where sustainable development is concerned. "The world has managed to prosper, but the levels of consumption today are unsustainable, inequitable and inaccessible to majority of humans," he says.

Associate Professor Md Saidul Islam teaches and specialises in environmental sociology—the study of societal-environmental interactions which emphasizes the study of social factors that bring about environmental problems, the social impact of these problems and efforts to solve them. He is deeply interested in understanding the relationship between development politics and global processes, and how environmental and social landscapes are shifting due to global and local economic activities. He is also curious about how marginal communities are shouldering the burden of development and consumption of rich nations. These concerns are reflected in some of his research projects and publications, which offer groundbreaking findings on environment and sustainability.

For example, his research on "The Rise of the 'Green' movement in

the Global Environmental Politics (2018 – 2021)"—funded by Ministry of Education's Academic Research Fund Tier 1 grant—proposes to evaluate the emerging 'green' movement around food and climate change in the global environmental politics. In two of his books, *Development, Power and the Environment: Neoliberal Paradox in the Age of Vulnerability*¹ and *Social Justice in the Globalization of Production: Labor, Gender and the Environment Nexus*², he analyses global sustainability challenges and offers approaches to a sustainable earth; and investigates the unique conditions, contradictions, and confrontations in labour, gender and environmental relations neoliberal globalisation creates respectively.

Renewable energy for all?

It is undeniable that technological advances have helped to evolve technologies for renewable energy. However, while more affluent parts of the world can afford to convert to clean energy, there are still millions more who are still fighting to get basic economic benefits that we have gotten from burning fossil fuels. "In the remote, rural areas in part of the so-called developing world, as many as one billion people still do not have access to modern forms of energy," Assistant Professor Monamie Bhadra Haines points out. She is also a sociology professor

in SSS, with several research interests such as in nuclear power; renewable energy transitions; and science and technology studies. Her teaching areas are related to her research and includes topics like science, technology and democracy; environmental social movements; and politics and cultures of nuclear power.

Her current research project, "The Politics of Green Entrepreneurship: Comparing Decentralized Solar Energy Development in India and Bangladesh", investigates how venture-capital driven, privatised solar energy development controls and affects democracy, practices of citizenship and formation of political subjectivities in India and Bangladesh. This project, funded by NTU's Start-Up Grant for new faculty members, examines the politics of renewable technologies of India and Bangladesh as these two countries have "intensively deployed solar power through social entrepreneurs."

Assistant Professor Haines comments: "[T]he energy choices we make have certain values embedded in them and come with particular political implications." Through this research she also seeks to find out how women, often part of marginalised communities, are being empowered through different energy technologies. She

"The world has managed to prosper, but the levels of consumption today are unsustainable, inequitable and inaccessible to majority of humans."

– Associate Professor Md Saidul Islam



Engineers discussing about the solar photovoltaic cell during a solar power plant training in India (Source: Shutterstock)

also believes that her research demonstrates how crucial careful and attentive ethnographic work is in understanding problems that are considered to be techno-economic and not political in nature.

Influencing sustainability behaviours

Science can inform us what is happening and develop technology to deal with climate change problems. However, the social sciences are critical to shaping major changes. Social scientists not

only help to decipher individuals' attitudes and perceptions around climate change and energy use, but also help people to understand and highlight benefits to adopting greener behaviours.

"Understanding this helps policy makers to come up with low cost, but effective, policy interventions," says Assistant Professor Yan Jubo, an economics professor from SSS. "Environmental economics has much to do with social preference and behavioural economics."

He shares that he has always been interested in individual behaviours and how they respond to environmental changes. His research focuses on how individuals respond and make decisions.

His latest journal article, "Negotiating Housing Deal on a Polluted Day: Consequences and Possible Explanations"³ observes how house buyers respond to air pollution changes in the short run. He and his co-authors discover that

people were paying a premium if the contracts were signed on more polluted days, and they clarify that people were willing to pay more to protect themselves.

The cost and impact of environmental issues on society is a clear interest of Professor Euston Quah, Albert Winsemius Chair Professor of Economics and Head of Economics in NTU. His areas of teaching and research are in environmental economics and cost-benefit analysis. He published

¹ Islam, Md. 2013. *Development, Power and the Environment: Neoliberal Paradox in the Age of Vulnerability*. Routledge.

² Saidul Islam and Ismail Hossain. 2015. *Social Justice in the Globalization of Production: Labor, Gender and the Environment Nexus*. Palgrave Macmillan.

the first studies on the social cost of smoking, and is known locally and internationally for his work on the economics of transboundary haze pollution. His work has notably significant relevance for use in public policy.

In a recent contributed article to *The Straits Times*⁴, Professor Quah and fellow colleague Associate Professor Chia Wai Mun disclosed the amount the haze pollution—caused by the slash-and-burn agriculture and clearing of land in Indonesia—had cost Singapore in 2015. Apart from outlining the tangible costs which ranged from health costs to productivity costs to cost of mitigation and adaption by government agencies and houses, the duo also included intangible costs of the haze. Such research, as shown by SSS’ economics professors, would have direct policy implications. Policy makers

could and should use such findings to better design policies to help mitigate climate change.

Interdisciplinary research for sustainability solutions

In addition to the cutting-edge research our faculty undertakes, the School also supports and is aligned with NTU’s five-year strategic plans, which focuses on five key research thrusts. In meeting one of these research thrusts, Sustainable Earth, SSS has identified Environment and Sustainability as one of its three research clusters.

Coordinated by Associate Professor Md Saidul Islam and Assistant Professor Yan Jubo from Economics, the Environment and Sustainability research cluster aims to create a new paradigm that fundamentally changes how we think about our existence in relation to the environment and

sustainability. It also aspires to create dialogue among scholars from different disciplines to advance sustainable development within and beyond NTU.

The research cluster hosts a monthly series of transdisciplinary workshops – “sustainability saloons” to foster informal conversations about sustainability strategies, ideas and issues. These conversations help to strengthen the culture of sustainability at NTU while promoting cross-disciplinary conversations and collaborations for research, and contribute to professional development through the exchange of pedagogical approaches to sustainability.

In the special issue of *Nature and Culture* (Vol. 10, No. 1, 2015) with the theme of “Reconsidering Sustainability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from Asia,” guest

editors Professor Liu Hong—Chair of SSS and professor of Public Policy and Global Affairs, and Assistant Professor Els Van Dongen from School of Humanities organised six articles by key scholars from both Singapore and overseas. These articles pertain to Asian experiences in tackling sustainability. The editors argue that most of the world’s rapidly developing economies are located in the Asia-Pacific region, and the unprecedented speed of industrialisation that has characterised development in the region has also led to both an increasing demand for resources and a rise in the production of carbon dioxide emissions. Interdisciplinary approaches to sustainability from regional, historical, institutional, technological, and policy perspectives are indispensable for addressing this globally significant issue.



The haze blankets Singapore’s downtown area (Source: Shutterstock)

“Environmental economics has much to do with social preference and behavioural economics.”

– Assistant Professor Yan Jubo



The Arc is a Green Mark Platinum certified building in NTU that has eco-friendly features like energy-saving LED lighting, motion sensors and solar-powered systems (Source: NTU)

NTU—walking the talk in sustainability solutions

At NTU, we believe that educational institutions play a decisive role in cultivating and empowering our community to respond to increasingly challenging times. The University launched several sustainability initiatives and development goals, of which, many are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. According to the NTU’s 2017 Sustainability Report, the University aims to convert the entire campus to zero water consumption, almost zero waste and almost zero net emissions by 2030.

In FY17, NTU reduced its energy

and greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 26% and 37% respectively. We are also on track to reduce our carbon footprint by achieving Green Mark Platinum Certification for all our campus buildings by 2020—95% of 230 building on campus are already Green Mark Platinum certified.

In August 2018, NTU President Professor Subra Suresh launched ECHO—the One-NTU initiative that stands for Eco-friendly, Connected, Healthy and One-NTU. Under ECHO, the University aims to reduce waste and encourage more sustainability behaviour among the NTU community on campus.

In addition, a new 40,000 gross

square metre academic building will be constructed using mass-engineered timber with material procured from renewable forests. It will be prefabricated before installed on site and is expected to be completed in 2021.

In conclusion

According to the latest report on climate change released by the United Nations (UN), global warming is harming the earth at an unprecedented rate. The report also revealed that a tipping point has already been reached, and some extreme consequences will be impossible to avoid. Depending on science and technology alone is not enough to develop sustainability solutions for climate change. These answers require

the social sciences to assess public behaviour and attitude to climate change or to exact climate solutions.

“From an economist’s point of view, it is often times not that we do not want to engage in sustainable development, but that people lack the information and self-control,” Assistant Professor Yan states. People are often myopic when it comes to utilising natural resources and do not collaborate enough on climate change issues. Solutions to such issues are to design “better mechanisms and discover more factors that could nudge people to change their behaviours to engage in more sustainable development.”

³ Yu Qin, Jing Wu, Jubo Yan. (2019). *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 94, 161-187.

⁴ Euston Quah and Chia Wai Mun. What the 2015 haze cost Singapore: \$1.83 billion, 17 September 2019, *The Straits Times*

WELCOMING OUR SCHOLARS BACK AS NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

We would like extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our faculty, Assistant Professor Tang Cheng Keat from Economics, and Assistant Professor Dylan Loh from Public Policy and Global Affairs. They joined SSS in August and September 2019 respectively. The two assistant professors are recipients of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) International PhD Scholarship, or HIPS. HIPS aims to encourage outstanding Singapore citizens to pursue an academic career in HASS by supporting their doctoral studies overseas.

WHEN INQUISITIVENESS LEADS TO A PATH LESS TRAVELLED

By Tay Xin Yi

"I have never really thought about pursuing academia until I really went ahead to try it," quips Assistant Professor Tang Cheng Keat. His academic journey in Economics began when he signed himself up to be a research assistant in his undergraduate years in the National University of Singapore (NUS).

For Assistant Professor Tang, academia is more than just paperwork and research. There were instances where he received "hate" and "malicious emails" in response to his research findings during his four years in London. He wrote a paper demonstrating that speed cameras do save lives. However, anti-speed camera campaigners were not happy with his findings, he shared. They harassed him and his supervisors through emails, demanding that the working paper be removed from online. The harassers escalated the saga by sending similar emails to the senior management of London School of Economics (LSE) when Assistant Professor Tang and his supervisors refused to cave in. Despite that, he

took things in his stride, not once wavering as he continued to pursue his research. "The harassers only stopped when we threatened to sue them," he added.

With a plethora of research experience, he is no stranger to the realm of Economics and Public Policy. A testament of how learning is an ever changing state of mind, Assistant Professor Tang obtained his bachelor's degree in Real Estate and proceeded to complete a master's in Real Estate and Urban Economics at NUS. He completed his PhD in Economic Geography at the LSE and then his postdoctoral fellowship in Environmental Economics at the University of Southern California. Having recently returned from the latter, he remarks that although Singapore has changed tremendously, there is still a sense of familiarity and comfort. Born and bred here in Singapore, he hopes that by bringing his findings and research experiences back home, they can identify and bridge the gaps between existing policies and the state of social welfare here.

His interest in pursuing the answers to his questions was not a chance encounter but began with an inquisitive mind as a teenager. This curious nature has spurred him to seek answers to his questions through his research, which he affirms as "gratifying". More than just a satisfying pursuit, his research sheds light on the unintended consequences of certain policies and adds value to various social issues.

Some of his many research interests include transportation economics, environmental economics, urban and housing economics. He has published several articles in peer-reviewed journal *The Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics*, and completed research on valuing the economic costs of congestion, the cost of gun violence to the society, and evaluating the effectiveness of speed cameras in improving road safety. Some of his work has been covered by the media, including *Financial Times*¹, *Forbes*², and *Wall Street Journal*³. Currently, he is working on various projects examining the impacts of various



environmental policies in China and India on air and water quality. Assistant Professor Tang also has experience teaching applied research methods and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at LSE. In the coming semester, Assistant Professor Tang will be teaching the course *Cost-Benefit Analysis*. Rather than just imparting theoretical knowledge, he hopes to engage his students to think critically and beyond the course material and their respective majors to assess existing policies with discernment.

UNRAVELLING THE BLACK BOX OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

By Elizabeth Tay



Assistant Professor Dylan Loh recently received his PhD from Cambridge University at the Politics and International Studies Department under the HIPS programme and is currently an Assistant Professor in NTU's Public Policy and Global Affairs (PPGA) Department. Assistant Professor Loh says it was not an easy journey to get to where he is today. He admits he was disinterested in his studies when he was younger. The Singapore Polytechnic business IT graduate did not consider a career in academia until he entered NTU to study sociology. "It was something that I liked and felt I was good at," he says. He was so interested in the subject, he would read all the required readings, loved them, and go on to read the optional

readings as well. Within his first year in NTU, he knew he wanted to pursue academia as a career.

Assistant Professor Loh's professors played a big part in this decision. He looked up to them as role models and imagined himself being in their shoes one day, discovering new knowledge and imparting it to the next generation. His NTU professors had opened his eyes to his passion for research. It was during his time as a research analyst in the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), that he realised his research interests lie in China's foreign policy and diplomacy. He highlights the importance of understanding how China asserts its power in the public eye, especially as

a rising power on the world stage. He notes that within the Chinese literature, there is not much research done on Chinese diplomacy, its foreign policy, and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself. In fact, Assistant Professor Loh calls the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs a "black box" that has not been openly studied, perhaps due to access issues, language issues, not being able to stay in China for prolonged fieldwork, etc. He mentions that when people discuss about China's rise, they talk about "China being able to influence Country X or Country Y" but he says this is merely at the conceptual level. He hopes that with his research, he would be able to shed light on China's foreign policy and map out exactly how China exerts

its power at an empirical level. Assistant Professor Loh posits that China's power stems not just from its military (as is commonly assumed) but also its diplomats in their foreign embassies.

Assistant Professor Loh will be teaching Singapore's Foreign Policy in Semester 2 of AY 2019/2020 and possibly China's Foreign Policy in the near future. In his personal life, he is an avid collector of original early 20th Century satirical posters – he has even visited absurdist artist, Glen Baxter's house and bought a limited-edition poster from him in person! As a graphic novel fan, he is also very excited that Netflix recently greenlit a TV series Neil Gaiman's comic book series, *The Sandman*.

¹ Speed Cameras: vest pests, 11 January 2019, *Financial Times*

² New York City's Congestion Fees Should Impact More Than Driving Costs, 25 July 2019, *Forbes*

³ Congestion Pricing Could Give Lift to Some Home Values, 1 May 2019, *The Wall Street Journal*

RESEARCH GRANTS

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOE) ACADEMIC RESEARCH GRANT AWARDS

MOE Academic Research Fund Tier 1

Subject	Principal Investigator	Project Title
Economics	Assistant Professor Bao Te	Experimental study the Effect of Communication and Settlement System on Financial Stability
Economics	Assistant Professor Leong Kaiwen	Do inmates exhibit Loss Aversion? Evidence from Singapore's Reformatory Training Centre
Psychology	Assistant Professor Charles Or	Learning to make better confidence judgements: Is such learning transferrable to new situations?
Psychology	Nanyang Assistant Professor Gerrit Maus	Perceptual continuity across eye blinks in virtual reality
Psychology	Assistant Professor Lee Kai Chung Albert	Smiling in the Face of Setbacks: A Holistic View of Life Can Turn the Experience of Suffering into Meaning in Life
Psychology	Assistant Professor Tan Chin Hong	Socioeconomic status and cognitive impairment: the mediating effects of cardiovascular function and brain volume
Public Policy and Global Affairs	Assistant Professor Azusa Katagiri	The Strategic Sequencing of Signals in Crisis Bargaining: Computational Approach to Foreign Relations Documents
Sociology	Associate Professor Sulfikar Amir	City Resilience in Expanding Urbans of Southeast Asia
Sociology	Assistant Professor Ye Junjia	Migrant-Driven Diversification Through Differential Inclusion in Singapore

MOE Academic Research Fund Tier 2

Subject	Principal Investigator	Project Title
Psychology	Professor Annabel Chen	Assessing causality of the association between exercise and neurocognitive gains

EXTERNAL GRANTS

Subject	Funding Agency / Grant Type	Principal Investigator	Project Title
Psychology	National Arts Council (NAC)	Associate Professor Andy Ho	ARTISAN 2.0: Deconstructing the Integrative efficacy of a multimodal Art-based Intervention to strengthen understanding and demystify misconceptions on Arts, Heritage, and Health
	Ageing Research Institute for Society and Education (ARISE) Strategic Initiatives Funding		Mindful-Compassion Art Therapy for Dementia Care (MCAT-DC)—Empowering Resilience and Holistic Wellbeing for Sustainable Family Caregiving: A Waitlist Randomized Controlled Trial
	National Arts Council (NAC)	Associate Professor Qiu Lin	Revealing the psychological and behavioural effects of public art using virtual reality

BOOKS

Chinese Migrants Write Home: A Dual-Language Anthology of Twentieth-Century Family Letters, Singapore: World Scientific.



Gregor Benton, Huimei Zhang, Prof Liu Hong (Public Policy and Global Affairs), eds., 2020.

Qiaopi (侨批) is the name given in Chinese to letters written home by Chinese migrants to accompany remittances, in the 150 years starting in the 1820s. Qiaopi had numerous functions and dimensions, ranging from economic and social to cultural and political. The Qiaopi Project was officially registered in 2013 under UNESCO's "Memory of the World" programme. As the first book of its kind, this anthology collects, translates and analyzes around one hundred letters from Singapore, China, Malaysia, Thailand, the USA, and Canada. It also examines the letters' socio-economic and political significances in the contexts of global migration and modern China history.

An Emerging Asian Model of Governance and Transnational Knowledge, London: Routledge.



Ting-Yan Wang and Prof Liu Hong (Public Policy and Global Affairs), eds., 2019.

This timely volume explores the emergence of Asian models of governance, taking into account the shifting global political economic landscape and the region's rapid growth in recent decades. As well as theoretical explorations, the book also provides rich empirical evidence on the contextualized lessons accumulated in Asia, offering a nuanced understanding of Asian governance experience through comparative case studies.

Exploring Public-Private Partnerships in Singapore, Routledge.



Asst Prof Kim Soojin (Public Policy and Global Affairs) and Kai Xiang Kwa. 2019.

This book looks at what drives effective management of public-private partnerships (PPP). It examines widely cited Singaporean cases pertaining to successful PPPs as well as those in failure (and subsequently contracted back in the public sector provision) in diverse areas of public service, such as water services, educational services, trade and logistical data services, residential services, acquisition and maintenance of military systems, research and development services, infrastructure, and sport services.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Advance Care Planning

Assoc Prof Andy Ho (Psychology) & Geraldine Tan-Ho. In Danan Gu, Matthew E. Dupre [eds.], *Encyclopedia of Gerontology and Population Ageing*, Springer, Cham, 2019, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-69892-2.

China's economic development: A perspective on capital misallocation

Assoc Prof Laura Wu Guiying (Economics). In Ligang Song, Yixiao Zhou, Luke Hurst [eds.], *The Chinese Economic Transformation: Views from Young Economists*, Australian National University Press, 2019, pp. 19-31.

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Asst Prof Felicity Chan (Sociology). In Tridib Banerjee, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris [eds.], *The New Companion to Urban Design*, New York: Routledge, 2019.

Euthanasia and Senicide

Assoc Prof Andy Ho (Psychology) & Geraldine Tan-Ho. In Danan Gu, Matthew E. Dupre [eds.], *Encyclopedia of Gerontology and Population Ageing*, Springer, Cham, 2019, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-69892-2_1008-1

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Asst Prof Walid Jumblatt Abdullah (Public Policy and Global Affairs). In Lily Zubaidah Rahim, Michael D. Barr [eds.], *The Limits of Authoritarian Governance in Singapore's Developmental State*, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, pp. 151-171.

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Asst Prof Kei Koga (Public Policy and Global Affairs). In Kyle Springer [ed.], *Implementing the Indo-Pacific: Japan's region building initiatives*, Perth: Perth USAsia Centre, 2019, pp. 24-37.

Living with Terrorism: Resilience through Compassion

Assoc Prof Andy Ho (Psychology) & Geraldine Tan-Ho. In Neil Thompson, Gerry R. Cox [eds.], *Promoting Resilience: Responding to Adversity, Vulnerability, and Loss*, 2019, UK: Routledge.

Seeking Respect, Fairness, and Community: Low Wage Migrants, Authoritarian Regimes and the Everyday Urban

Asst Prof Laavanya Kathiravelu (Sociology). In Sandra Brunnegger [ed.], *Everyday Justice: Law, Ethnography, Injustice*, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Accumulation by and without dispossession: Rural land use, land expropriation, and livelihood implications in China

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A novel mindful-compassion art therapy (MCAT) for reducing burnout and promoting resilience for end-of-life care professionals: a waitlist RCT protocol

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Nur Atiqah Azhari, Farouq Azizan & Nanyang Asst Prof Gianluca Esposito (*Psychology*). 2019. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 103, 31-32.

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Justyna Tasic, Fredy Tantri & Sulfikar Amir (*Sociology*). 2019. *Complexity*, DOI: 10.1155/2019/3946356

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Abhijit Viasaria & Assoc Prof Premchand Dommaraju (*Sociology*). 2019. *Social Science & Medicine*, 229, 14-21.

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