

Made in China Summer School 2018

# Chinese Labourscapes: Transregional Perspectives on Work and Rights

Florence  
9-13 July 2018



**MADE IN CHINA**  
JOURNAL

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# **Chinese Labourscapes: Transregional Perspectives on Work and Rights**

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## **Programme**

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### **9 July (Monday)**

**9.30 am – 10 am: Greetings and Introduction of the Made in China Project**

**10 am – 11 am: Participant Introductions**

**11 am – 11.30 am: Coffee Break**

**11.30 am – 1 pm: The Banality of Exploitation: Collective Rental Economies and Labour Conditions (Luigi Tomba)**

In this presentation, I will suggest that there is a link between the organisation of the local collective political economy in areas of China where industrialisation is rampant and worker rights have deteriorated. In localities where a collective rural economy has been transformed into a booming industrial economy, there is a need to maintain control of the definition of rules of who is an ‘insider’ and who is an ‘outsider’. The success of the locality depends largely on preventing large numbers of migrants from having access to the resources reserved to the local population, such as land, property, and economic activities. Collectives often ramp up activities to harden the villages’ territorial boundaries to prevent outsiders from gaining control of its resources. This happens in spite of the fact that the very development of certain areas depends on an influx of outsiders who are essential to the growth of the local industry, and often suffers when migrants ‘talk with their feet’ following economic downturns. In this talk, I will present examples of how this creates new and unexpected forms of inequality.

**1 pm – 2 pm: Lunch Break**

**2 pm – 3.30 pm: Worker Mobility and Political Geographies of Resistance in China (Sarah Swider)**

This talk will utilise a framework provided by labour geographers to shed light on worker resistance in China. It will focus our attention on how workers are embedded in geography, and as such, actively shape the landscape of capitalism. In the face of ever-changing contours of capitalism, including new processes and norms for production and the (re)organisation of labour markets, workers resist. In this tradition, I will employ a geographical analysis of labour organising and resistance in Guangdong, Beijing, and beyond. I will explore how labour resistance and organising in China is embedded in the social, political, and cultural distinctness of place, resulting in unique local production of power and resistance. Each place has its own model of organising and resistance, but difference and distance across localities are bridged through the mobility of workers, which leads to an interconnectedness of the movement, as well as to diffusion and mutation of strategies and modalities of resistance.

**3.30 pm – 4 pm: Coffee Break**

**4 pm – 5.30 pm: Pro/contra Debate on Labour Empowerment and Precarisation in China (Ching Kwan Lee and Jack Linchuan Qiu)**

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## 10 July (Tuesday)

### 9.30 am – 11 am: Unemployment, Mental Health, and Therapeutic Governance in China (Jie Yang)

This talk examines the context and solution to the ‘unemployment complex syndrome’ in China—the psychological and physical symptoms workers suffer after job loss since the 1990s. In addition to inefficient job creation and tokenistic financial support to address the effects of mass layoffs, governments of different levels have adopted a loosely therapeutic approach by incorporating precepts and techniques of positive psychology and counselling to pacify unemployed workers and help them adapt to the market economy. This process translates class-based unemployment into personal dilemma and individual psychology, exercising power through therapeutic activities. I demonstrate that such psychologisation contributes to emerging therapeutic governance in the context of China’s economic restructuring.

### 11 am – 11.30 am: Coffee break

### 11.30 am – 1 pm: Roundtable on China’s ‘Influence’ (Sarah Brooks, Bertram Lang, Malin Oud; Chair: Luigi Tomba)

### 1 pm – 2 pm: Lunch break

### 2 pm – 3.30 pm: Methodology Workshop: Challenges of Doing Fieldwork (Mark Frazier, Sarah Swider, Jie Yang; Chair: Nicholas Loubere)

### 3.30 pm – 4 pm: Coffee Break

### 4 pm – 5.30 pm: Methodology Workshop: Digital Methods (David Bandurski, Stefan Brehm, Marina Svensson; Chair: Nicholas Loubere)

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## 11 July (Wednesday)

### 9.30 am – 11 am: The Spectre of Global China: Politics, Labour, and Foreign Investment in Africa (Ching Kwan Lee)

China has recently emerged as one of Africa’s top business partners, aggressively pursuing its raw materials and establishing a mighty presence in the continent’s booming construction market. Among major foreign investors in Africa, China has stirred the most fear, hope, and controversy about labour rights and national development. This talk analyses the peculiarity of outbound Chinese state capital by comparing it with global private capital in copper and construction in Zambia. Refuting the rhetorical narratives of ‘Chinese colonialism’ and ‘south-south cooperation’, I draw on ethnographic data collected over a six-year period to chronicle the multi-faceted struggles that confront and differentiate these two varieties of capital, and discuss their uneven potentials for post-colonial African development.

### 11 am – 11.30 am: Coffee Break

### 11.30 am – 1 pm: There and Back Again: Spontaneous Migration and Informal Chinese Labour in Africa (Nicholas Loubere)

While much emphasis has been placed on the increasing presence of Chinese state capital in Africa, and the coordinated flows of goods and people that has accompanied these large-scale investments, there has been relatively less attention paid to the growing numbers of spontaneous and informal exchanges between the two places. This talk examines the ongoing Chinese gold rush in Ghana, which has, since the mid-2000s, seen tens of thousands of Chinese nationals from poor rural areas engage in small-scale alluvial gold mining in the

country. This mass migration event has created new wealth for some, destroyed environments and livelihoods of others, provoked anti-Chinese sentiment stoking xenophobic public discourses, and has ultimately resulted the Ghanaian government instigating a series of military-style crackdowns aimed at eliminating the Chinese presence in the country's small-scale mining sector. This talk explores the ways in which this event has shaped and transformed relationships between people, places, and the natural environment, and examines the impact that it has had on the lives of those involved, both in Ghana and China.

### **1 pm – 2 pm: Lunch break**

### **2 pm – 3.30 pm: Demolition, Relocation, and the Politics of Citizenship in Shanghai and Mumbai (Mark Frazier)**

This talk offers a comparative reflection on social citizenship and rights to the city as seen from the experience of working class residents and migrant workers in the cities of Shanghai and Mumbai. Official statistics for the peak relocation period between 1995 to 2006 reflect a much larger scope of relocation in Shanghai (about 900,000 households) compared with those in Mumbai (about 450,000). In fact, the displacement of both formal residents and migrants, especially slum residents in Mumbai, is difficult to enumerate. One of the most common inferences drawn from such figures is that authoritarian officials in Shanghai could move with greater facility and unencumbered by civil society organisations or others who presumably protected slum residents in Mumbai from eviction. But this talk emphasises the similarities in the urban transformations of the two cities, which shared a crucial common feature: state authority over the disposition of urban land. I examine relocation of inner-city residents and de-industrialisation of manufacturing districts, both of which were driven by the commodification of land, and the power of the local state. Finally, I discuss these outcomes in terms of theories of social citizenship, urban citizenship, and rights to the city.

### **3.30 pm – 4 pm: Coffee break**

### **4 pm – 5.30 pm: Outsourcing Exploitation: Chinese and Cambodian Garment Workers Compared (Ivan Franceschini)**

In recent years, Cambodian garment workers have often launched extensive, coordinated strikes to demand higher minimum wages and other political concessions. In China, on the contrary, most protests in the garment sector target specific employers and remain contained inside single factories or industrial zones. How to explain these different patterns of labour activism? Through factory gate surveys and interviews conducted during the summer of 2016 in a sample of Hong Kong-owned garment factories in Dongguan and Phnom Penh, I will offer a comparative analysis of labour activism in China and Cambodia. In particular, I will focus on three elements: the wage expectations and perceived needs of the workers; the hegemonic hold of the labour law system; and trade union pluralism.

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## **12 July: (Thursday)**

### **9.30 am – 11.00 am: Resisting iSlavery: Between American and Chinese Theatres of (Digital) Abolition (Jack Linchuan Qiu)**

This talk is based the book *Goodbye iSlave: A Manifesto for Digital Abolition* (University of Illinois Press 2016) with two updates: a) new addition of historical materials about slave resistance and abolition movements before the American Civil War such as the passing of Ellen and William Craft and the Underground Railroad; and b) new conceptualisation of the Chinese working class—now as a digitised class object in itself—and reflections on Chinese reality especially ongoing crackdown on labour NGOs and picket-line activism facilitated by social media monitoring and datafication of everyday life, including the lives of the working class. What are the similar patterns in between, despite the obvious differences between nineteenth-century America and contemporary China? What lessons can be drawn from this comparative exercise, theoretically and epistemologically, for a better understanding of the role played by media and communication in labour movement, in China and globally? This talk shall propose that Chinese workers and activists have much to

learn from their African American and other counterparts two centuries ago; that effective abolition does not emerge from abstract principles transplanted from the past to the present era of digital capitalism; and that what ultimately matters is the praxis of grounded resistance based on *mētis* or local knowledge along the assembly line and in the data mine.

### **11.00 am – 11.30 am: Coffee Break**

### **11.30 am – 1 pm: A Lexicon of Marginality: Migrant Workers in the Chinese Media (David Bandurski)**

In November 2017, right on the heels of the Chinese Communist Party's 19th National Congress, authorities in Beijing forcibly evicted tens of thousands of migrant workers from their homes in makeshift communities on the rural-urban fringes of Beijing. The action, which reportedly stemmed from a deadly fire in Xinjian Village, home to thousands of migrant workers, brought a wave of shock and criticism from Chinese internet users and turned national attention, if only briefly, to the precarious existence of migrants in China's major cities. In criticising the official action, many internet users seized on a derogatory term used by the government to describe migrants in the city: 'low-end population', or *diduan renkou*. In my talk, I will explore the origins and development of this and other key phrases to describe migrant populations in major cities, and what these terminologies reveal about China's conflicted attitudes toward 'rural' workers in a rapidly urbanising society.

### **1 pm – 2 pm: Lunch break**

### **2 pm – 3.30 pm: Unfreeing Labour in the Chinese Electronics Manufacturing Sector (Stefan Brehm)**

This presentation engages with the concept of *unfree labour* in the context of China's electronics manufacturing sector. The purpose is to introduce agency of workers and factory managers and transform the static notion of 'unfree labour' towards a more dynamic conceptualisation of *unfreeing labour*. I look at *entering* and *leaving* the factory as two instances where practices of unfreeing labour become evident. *Unfreeing* comprises not only of strategies to bind workers into an exploitative relationship but triggers counter-strategies of workers seeking to extricate themselves. *Unfreeing* as a dynamic process is the result of a changing regulatory environment that shapes enabling and constraining factors of spatially and temporally diverse practices. The here presented study uses a new big-data driven approach to analyse changing labour relations. Insights are generated from a corpus of about 1.4 million workers' posts on labour related issues at Chinese factory sites belonging to approximately 40 final assembly and ODM manufacturers. Data analysis is based on a combination of structuring algorithms, in combination with quantitative and qualitative analyses.

### **3.30 pm – 4 pm: Coffee Break**

### **4 pm – 5.30 pm: Visualising Chinese Labour and Labourscapes (Marina Svensson)**

Photography can be a great tool to create awareness and understanding of social issues, including labour issues. In this presentation I will begin by discussing the power of photography and photography as a tool to create awareness and give some examples of classic photographs within the field. I then briefly discuss photography during the Mao era and as a tool of propaganda. I will focus on and analyse how a group of new photographers such as Song Chao (who himself was a miner), Zhan Youbing (who himself was a migrant worker), Liu Xingzhe (who recently made a photo series of bitcoin miners), Wang Jiuliang (who has documented waste and the migrant workers who work in this environment) and others have documented labour. I will also briefly address some international photographers working in China including Edward Burtunsky (who has documented factories, dam building, and other topics) and Sim Yin Chin (who among other things has documented Chinese gold miners and the migrant ant tribe in Beijing). I will end by discussing the extent to which digital developments such as the smartphone empower workers to themselves to document and portray their lives and work.

### **5.30 pm – 6.30 pm: Screening of *Plastic China***

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## **13 July (Friday)**

**9.30 am – 11 am: Roundtable on Chinese Labour Abroad  
(Gabi Dei Ottati, Wolfgang Mueller, Valter Zanin; Chair: Luigi Lama)**

**11 am – 11.30 am: Coffee break**

**11.30 am – 1 pm: Does Civil Society Still Have a Future in Xi's China?  
(Jean-Philippe Béja)**

Since the beginning of the reforms in 1978, Chinese society has developed in relative autonomy from the Party. During the 1980s, many forms of associations appeared in the socio-political field, including salons, research centres, and professional associations. During the 1989 pro-democracy movement, autonomous associations of workers bloomed in Beijing as elsewhere, but then in the aftermath of the June Fourth Massacre, these organisations all but disappeared. Only Deng Xiaoping's 1992 journey to the South gave back some space to society, and from 1995 on, NGOs started to reappear in China. In the early 2000s, the 'Rights Defence Movement' then helped consolidate social autonomy in various fields. Xi Jinping's accession to power has completely changed the situation: rolling back most of the reforms, he decided to re-install Party leadership and launched a crackdown on civil society. Repression of autonomous forces first started in the political field with the attack against the New Citizens Movement, then threatened rights defence lawyers, and finally extended to workers' organisations in Guangdong. The regime now uses the law to prevent the development of autonomous organisations and keeps international civil society from supporting them. In this talk, I will consider the prospects for China's civil society in Xi's new era, with particular attention to the implications of the One Belt One Road initiative.

**1 pm – 2 pm: Lunch break**

**2 pm – 3.30 pm: Roundtable on the Present Challenges for Chinese Labour NGOs  
(Kevin Lin, Zhang Shuchi, Nina Lau; Chair: Ivan Franceschini)**

**3.30 – 4 pm: Coffee Break**

**4 pm – 4.30 pm: Conclusion**

**7 pm: Farewell Dinner**



## Speakers List

### **David Bandurski – China Media Project**

David Bandurski is co-director of the China Media Project, an independent research and fellowship program founded in 2004 at the University of Hong Kong's Journalism & Media Studies Centre. His research focuses on media policy and propaganda, the political discourse of the Chinese Communist Party, and trends in journalistic professionalism such as investigative reporting. David is the author of *Dragons in Diamond Village* (Penguin, 2016), a book of reportage about urbanisation and social activism in China, and co-editor of *Investigative Journalism in China* (HKU Press, 2010). He is currently a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin, where he is working a new book about Shanghai's *World Economic Herald*, one of China's most influential newspapers in the 1980s, before its shutdown ahead of the 1989 June Fourth Massacre.

### **Jean-Philippe Béja – Sciences Po, Paris**

Jean-Philippe Béja is Emeritus Senior Research Fellow at the National Center for Scientific Research and the Center for International Studies and Research at Sciences-Po, Paris. He has worked for decades on relations between society and the Party in China, and has written extensively on intellectuals and on the pro-democracy movement in the People's Republic of China. He also works on Hong Kong politics. He edited *The Impact of China's 1989 Tiananmen Massacre* (Routledge, 2011), *Liu Xiaobo, La philosophie du porc et autres essais* (Gallimard, 2011), and *Liu Xiaobo, Charter 08 and the Challenges of Political Reform in China* (Hong Kong University Press, 2012, co-edited with Fu Hualing and Eva Pils).

### **Stefan Brehm – Lund University**

Stefan Brehm is a Researcher at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, and co-founder of Globalworks Lund AB, a start-up specialising in big data analytics for social and environmental governance (ESG). Stefan is an economist by training and has studied modern Chinese in Germany and Taiwan. He has worked on a wide range of China-related issues such as financial market regulation, fiscal policies, innovation systems, technology, leadership, environmental governance, and labour rights. As an advisor to the private and public sector, he gained practical insight into social auditing practices in Chinese factories. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Sarah Brooks – International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)**

ISHR is an independent, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights. We achieve this by supporting human rights defenders, strengthening human rights systems, and leading and participating in coalitions for human rights change. For more than a decade, we have been working with national-level defenders from around the world to bring them to Geneva to engage in training, strategic thinking, and accompanied advocacy; based on those interactions, we also closely follow UN processes and advocate for the UN system and its member states to be more accessible, responsive and effective. In this context, Sarah Brooks leads ISHR's programmatic and advocacy work to support defenders in the Asian region (with particular focus on China) as well as defenders of migrant and refugee rights. Sarah also supports ISHR's work in corporate accountability and leads organisational change in digital security. Prior to joining ISHR, Sarah worked to advance US foreign policy in the area of labour rights and supply chains; she has a dual Master's from the University of Michigan. She has published in *The Diplomat*, among other web-based journals and outlets, and comments on her work, transnational feminism, and geopolitics on Twitter @sarahmcneer.

### **Gabi Dei Ottati – University of Florence**

Gabi Dei Ottati is Professor of Local Development in the Doctorate in Economics at the University of Florence. She was professor of Applied Economics for many years at the campus of Prato of the University of Florence. Her main research interests focus on industrial organisation and especially on industrial district model of organisation and the role of industrial districts in the Italian economy. On these topics Gabi Dei Ottati has published several books and more than 50 refereed articles, many of which in international journals such as Cambridge Journal of Economics and European Planning Studies. In more recent years her research activity extended to immigrant businesses in Italian industrial districts and in particular to Chinese entrepreneurs in Prato. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Ivan Franceschini – Ca' Foscari University of Venice and the Australian National University**

Ivan Franceschini is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and at the Australian Centre on China in the World, the Australian National University. His research focuses on Chinese labour and civil society, but he is also interested in Chinese modern history and literature. He has published several books related to China, on topics ranging from human trafficking to digital activism, and from labour struggles to civil society. He is co-editor of *Made in China: A Quarterly on Chinese Labour, Civil Society, and Rights*. Currently, he is developing a research project on labour rights in Cambodia. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Mark Frazier – The New School**

Mark W. Frazier is Professor of Politics at The New School, where he also serves as Academic Director of the India China Institute. He teaches and writes about social policy in China and efforts to reduce inequalities. His recent research draws comparisons between China and India in terms of how each has coped with challenges related to inequality and urbanisation. In his capacity as a director at the India China Institute, he works with faculty colleagues to sponsor research projects and conferences to support scholarship on comparative research on China and India, as well as Sino-Indian relations and their joint impact on the rest of the world. He is the author of *Socialist Insecurity: Pensions and the Politics of Uneven Development in China* (Cornell University Press, 2010) and *The Making of the Chinese Industrial Workplace* (Cambridge University Press, 2002). Before assuming his current position at The New School in 2012, he held faculty positions at the University of Oklahoma and at Lawrence University in Wisconsin. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Luigi Lama – Centro Studi CISL**

Luigi Lama is a Trainer at Centro Studi Cisl, the national training centre for one of the major Italian trade union confederations, where he is responsible for training national and local leaders. He is also a senior project manager in the Cisl Trade Union Institute for Development Cooperation (ISCOS). From 1989 to 1996, he was in charge of training at the national metalworkers federation FIM Cisl. His main areas of interest are industrial relations and collective bargaining, trade unions as organisations, and union history. Luigi has managed and taught in international training programmes in Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. His publications can be found at [this link](#).

### **Bertram Lang – Goethe University Frankfurt**

Bertram Lang is a doctoral researcher in political science at Goethe University Frankfurt and a policy fellow at the Mercator Institute for China Studies, where he gained experience in political consulting on German and European China policy. Besides his expertise in Europe-China relations, his current research focuses on Chinese philanthropy and civil society as well as the politics of corruption and anti-corruption. Recent publications include an analysis of China's impact on international anti-corruption norms and a Merics study on the implementation of China's social credit system. Full profile at [this link](#).



### **Nina Lau – Asia Monitor Resource Centre**

Nina Lau is the Coordinator of the Worker Rights Programme at Asia Monitor Resource Centre. The programme covers issues like social protection, occupational safety and health, and women empowerment. Besides developing and managing the implementation of the programme on the ground, she also facilitates and provides training to activists and organisers to build their capacity in response to the drastic changes that are taking place in China. She is interested in knowledge sharing and advocacy in order to raise awareness about China labour issues among activists, organisers, and trade unionists all over Asia.

### **Ching Kwan Lee – University of California, Los Angeles**

Ching Kwan Lee is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is interested in global and comparative issues work, globalisation, political sociology, development of the global south, comparative ethnography, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, and Africa. One of her current research projects examines the rise of ‘platform capitalism’ in China and its impact on state-capital relation, employment, and workers’ new imaginations of work and working lives. Another on-going project traces the historical trajectories and contemporary forms of grassroots politics in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. Previously, she has published three monographs on China, forming a trilogy of Chinese capitalism through the lens of labour and working class experiences. *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women* (1998) documents the organisation of gender and work in factory regimes in Hong Kong and Shenzhen when South China first emerged as the workshop of the world. *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China’s Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (2007) chronicles the unmaking and making of the Chinese working class in two regional economies experiencing the death of socialism and the rise of capitalism respectively in one country. *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Africa* (2017) follows the footsteps of Chinese state investors to Zambia and compares its relation with African state and labour to other global private investors. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Kevin Lin – International Labor Rights Forum**

Kevin Lin is the China Program Officer at International Labor Rights Forum, a non-profit organisation in Washington DC that advocates for workers’ rights globally. He has worked with university law schools and civil society organisations to provide legal aid to and improve the legal environment for rural migrant workers in China. His research interests include labour relations in China’s strategic state-sector, collective bargaining and industrial relations, labour protest, and the development of Chinese civil society. His current focus is on the intersection between the workers’ activism and civil society.

### **Nicholas Loubere – Lund University**

Nicholas Loubere is Associate Senior Lecturer in the Study of Modern China at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University. His main area of research explores the ways in which microcredit programmes are implemented at the township and village levels in rural China, and the roles that these programmes play in local development strategies and livelihoods. He is also in the process of developing two new research projects. The first seeks to examine the informal migration of Chinese nationals to Ghana in order to engage in small-scale gold mining; the second aims to explore the use of new forms of Internet finance—particularly peer-to-peer lending—in rural areas of China. He is co-editor of *Made in China: A Quarterly on Chinese Labour, Civil Society, and Rights*. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Wolfgang Mueller – Metalworkers Union IG Metall**

Wolfgang Müller advises on China-Europe labour relations and has published a survey about labour relations in Chinese-invested companies. Previously, he worked for IG Metall for 15 years and has established a network for labour representatives in Chinese-invested companies.

### **Malin Oud – Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

Malin Oud works at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI) of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, where she currently wears many hats: Head of Stockholm Office, Economic Globalisation Team Leader, and Interim China Director. In 2011-2016, Malin Oud was the founder and managing director of [Tracktwo](#). She headed RWI's Beijing Office from 2001 to 2009, and has worked as a consultant and adviser to inter alia the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Business Initiative on Human Rights, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Malin is a Member of the Board of Directors of Sweden-China Trade Council, where she also serves as Chairperson of Sweden-China Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Business. She studied Chinese language, Chinese law, and international human rights law in Lund, Kunming, and London, and has an MA in International Development from Melbourne University. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Jack Linchuan Qiu – Chinese University of Hong Kong**

Jack Linchuan Qiu is Professor at the School of Journalism and Communication, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he serves as Director of the C-Centre (Centre for Chinese Media and Comparative Communication Research) and Co-Director of the Centre for Social Innovation Studies. His publications include *Goodbye iSlave* (University of Illinois Press, 2016), *World's Factory in the Information Age* (Guangxi Normal Univ Press, 2013), *Working-Class Network Society* (MIT Press, 2009), *Mobile Communication and Society* (co-authored, MIT Press, 2006), some of which have been translated into German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Korean. He is on the editorial boards of twelve international academic journals, and is Associate Editor for the *Journal of Communication*. He also works with grassroots NGOs and provides consultancy services for international organisations. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Marina Svensson – Lund University**

Marina Svensson is Director of the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies at Lund University. Her main fields of research include: human rights debates and struggles; legal developments and struggles; cultural heritage debates and issues; investigative journalism, journalism cultures, and China's media ecology; documentary film and visual cultures; and China's digital society. Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Sarah Swider – University of Copenhagen**

Sarah Swider is an Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology of the University of Copenhagen. Her research interests include labour and labour movements, globalisation, development, urban studies, migration, and Asian Studies. She is interested in understanding the role of im/migrants and other precarious workers, especially those working in the informal sector, in reshaping urban spaces and building economies. She is also interested in understanding how the organisation of work is changing, the challenges that workers face today in the global economy, and how they are organising to deal with these challenges. She is the author of *Building China: Informal Work and the New Precariat* (Cornell University Press, 2015). Full profile at [this link](#).

### **Luigi Tomba – University of Sydney**

Luigi Tomba worked at the Australian National University for over fifteen years. Since 2017, he is the Director of the China Studies Centre at the University of Sydney. His early research focused on the ideological debates and policy implications of China's labour reform, between 1975 and 1995, but Luigi's best-known work is on urbanisation, the social engineering of a Chinese urban middle class, housing and land reform. His current research interests are informed by China's urban question the ideological implications of China's project to urbanise the country and its social, political and territorial consequences. His most recent book, *The Government Next Door*, won the prestigious Joseph Levenson Prize in 2016. Full profile at [this link](#).

**Jie Yang – Simon Fraser University**

Jie Yang is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Simon Fraser University. She was trained in linguistic anthropology, and her current research centres on psychological/medical anthropology. She has done research on privatisation, unemployment, new urban poverty, mental health, psychotherapy, and the politics of gender and class in contemporary China. Her research focuses on the emergence of new forms of governance in the context of China's economic restructuring, for example, aesthetic, therapeutic, and neoliberal governance. Her first and ongoing project explores the psychological and emotional effects of state-enterprise restructuring on Chinese workers, particularly laid-off workers since the 1990s. She has recently started a new project on the mental health of government officials (the phenomenon of *guan xinbing*, 'officials' heartache'). Full profile at [this link](#).

**Valter Zanin – University of Padua**

Valter Zanin is an Adjunct Professor of Sociology of Organisations at the University of Padua, Italy, where he coordinates a research group on contemporary coerced labour and related issues. He is member of the scientific board of the Unesco Chair on Sustainable Development and Territorial Management (University of Torino), International Association for Audiovisual Archives on Migrations Europe-Latin America (Areia—University of Genova), and Research Group on Contemporary Slavery (Gptec—Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro). He carried out field research on the mining sector in Brazil, international maritime labour, and Chinese migration in Italy and Brazil. His research on Chinese migration in Italy has focused on labour and health conditions of Chinese migrant workers, and of the transformations of work-organization and management in Chinese migrant-run enterprises.

**Shuchi Zhang – Beijing Yilian Legal Aid and Research Center of Labor in China**

Shuchi Zhang is an activist specialised in law at Beijing Yilian Legal Aid and Research Center of Labor in China. For the past few years he has worked as a civil society practitioner in several Chinese NGOs, assisting them in employing legal and policy advocacy strategies to address labour-related issues. His current research focuses on social movements, urban space theory, doctrine of sovereignty in a context of modern biopolitics, neo-imperialism study from a labour perspective, and the political economics of market socialism. He is also conducting a survey project on the emerging stratum of service workers in China. Recently he has started the volunteer project *weworkers.club*, an on-line platform that features data on Chinese labour, policy research, and other independently-produced contents.

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