CUHK SOCIOLOGY 中大社會系

NEWSLETTER

Academia in Switzerland

Dominic Amstutz

1.   Could you describe how you have pursued your academic interests before coming to Hong Kong?

I started my undergraduate studies with psychology as my major, but soon changed it to a minor and moved to the sociology department. I still remember that I read Georg Simmel's (1908) "The Quarrel" (in German: "Der Streit") in an elective course, which inspired me to study sociology. I am particularly interested in the interconnectedness and interdependence of humans (rather than isolated individuals), which is why I increasingly turned my attention to social networks and the group dynamics of social influence during my Master's studies at the University of Bern.

2.   In general, what was your student experience in Switzerland like?

Most students in Switzerland work part-time alongside their studies. In my case, I worked as a social worker for the city church, where I organized summer camps for children and youths, held prevention workshops, and ran a local youth club. I learned a lot during this time, and it was a great balance to my theoretical studies. Timewise, it wasn't always easy to reconcile study and work, which for me were something Weber might call a "vocation" (Bern is traditionally Protestant, and Calvin wasn't far away…). I'm glad that I can now fully concentrate on learning and doing research.

3.   Why did you decide to continue your studies in Hong Kong?

I already spent an exchange semester at CUHK two years ago, where I learned to like Hong Kong a lot. Coming from a small European city like Bern (about 150'000 residents), I was fascinated by Hong Kong. During this time, I also met some fantastic people who I wanted to see again. Furthermore, my research interests align well with my supervisor Prof. Jaemin Lee, under whom I took a course in digital sociology back in my exchange semester.

4.   What are the main topics of interest for social scientists in Switzerland?

The departments I have got to know so far are very broad in terms of sociological topics: From migration, inequality, welfare state, to culture, cognition, and collective behavior. One area that is increasingly coming to the fore is environmental sociology: Facing anthropogenic climate change, it incorporates many longstanding sociological issues, such as the extremely unequal distribution of greenhouse gas emissions by social class.

CONFERENCES

HE, Jiaxin. Impact of Adult Children's Marital Power Distribution on Their Filial Beliefs: An Empirical Study Based on CGSS 2017. PAA 2024 Annual Meeting, Columbus, USA

LIU, Danchen. Hustling Feminism: How Marginalized Women Creators Narrate and Reconstruct Work and Life. The 13th International Convention of Asia Scholars, Surabaya, Indonesia.

Mila's share on computational social science

YUE Xiaoqian (Mila)

1. What is computational social science?

Computational social science is the combination of computer science and social science. It is an emerging field that utilizes computational methods to conduct research on social science issues. This can involve analyzing large datasets, such as social media data, to extract patterns and insights that are not easily discernible through traditional qualitative methods.

2. What kind of sociological questions can this approach answer?

Computational social science can address a wide range of sociological questions, such as:

- How do social networks influence people's behavior and decision-making?
- What are the dynamics of collective actions, such as protests or social movements?
- How do socioeconomic factors influence online interactions?
- Is there an increase in polarization in online political discussions?
- How do movie posters display gender stereotypes?

3. Can you tell us a bit more about your own research?

I aim to leverage computational methods and big data to explore and answer pivotal sociological questions, thereby expanding the scope and scale of the sociological imagination. I have broad research interests, including social networks, social stratification, marriage, gender inequality, shifts in values and cultural norms, E-Government, etc. I have focused on two studies: (1) investigating occupational assortative mating using the social network approach and (2) exploring the mechanism of innovation diffusion among Chinese government microblogs. I am exploring my journey in sociology and am open to any collaborative opportunities.

4. If someone wants to start learning about computational social science, do you have books, articles, or websites you can suggest to get you started?

- My Favorite Book: "Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age" by Matthew J. Salganik
- Online Courses: Learn online at the Summer Institute in Computational Social Science (SICSS)
- CUHK Courses: SOSC7010 Computational Social Science (by Prof. TAM Hong Wing), COMM6320 Digital Research (by Prof. LIANG Hai and Prof. YANG Tian), SOCI3238 Digital Sociology (by Prof. LEE Jaemin)
- Webinar: Monthly Online Webinar of CSSL@CUHK
- Journals: Journal of Computational Social Science, Social Networks, Computational Economics

See Full Article

ANNOUNCEMENTS

✓ **Call for paper:**

- 2024 International Conference on Cybercrime and Computer Forensics (ICCCCF). **Deadline: 24 February, 2024**. (Paper Submission)

- The 7th International Conference on Advanced Research in Social Sciences (ICARSS). **Deadline: 17 May, 2024.** (Paper Submission)

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2