



華人家庭研究中心

Centre for Chinese Family Studies

The Chinese University of Hong Kong | 香港中文大學



Social Science/CUHK

(Not) Return to Work: A Comparative Study of Chinese Stay-at-home Mothers in Shanghai, Singapore, and New York

About the Webinar

Juggling work and parenting is often a complicated and demanding task, especially for mothers. As evolving gender norms encourage women to be both successful workers and devoted mothers, many struggle with work-family conflict as they try to “have it all”. How this norm of having it all affects mothers' work decisions can vary, depending on the prevailing societal expectations. However, most studies on stay-at-home mothers focus on a single cultural context, and on their decisions to leave the labor market. We propose a comparative lense to explore how college-educated, stay-at-home Chinese mothers make sense of their decisions of returning or not returning to work, and what the obstacles they face. Chinese mothers in three cities all state their non-working status as temporary and express desires and preparations for return to work. They all claim that they need support to make it happen. However, mothers vary in types of support they want—in Shanghai, it is the lack of flexible job opportunity; in New York, it is the affordability of childcare, and in Singapore, it is the combination of the two. The results call for a cross-cultural perspective in relation to societal prevailing gender norms.

About the Speaker



Felicia F. Tian is a Professor of Sociology and Vice Dean of School of Social Development and Public Policy at Fudan University. Her research focuses on social networks and social capital, and family sociology in China from a comparative perspective. She serves on the Social Change Research Association and Shanghai Sociological Association. Her work appears in *Social Networks*, *Social Stratification and Mobility*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, and *China Quarterly*. She is currently a principal investigator in a grant about community governance from National Social Science Foundation in China.

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Webinar Via Zoom

Registration Link:

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