

# Brown Bag Lunchtime Talk

Friday, 18 Sept 2020, 12pm - 1pm via Zoom



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## *Digital Asymmetries in Transnational Communication of Chinese 'Study Mothers': Expectation, Autonomy and Gender Positioning in the Household*



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### Synopsis

In contemporary society, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are widely cherished for helping transnational households preserve a coherent sense of familyhood despite geographical separation. Despite ICTs having positive benefits for the maintenance of long-distance intimacies, digital asymmetries characterized by gaps in routines, emotional experiences and outcomes of ICT use can also emerge between family members of different structural, social and geographical conditions. Drawing on an innovative 'content-context diary' cum participant observation, we investigate the multi-dimensional digital asymmetries emerging from the transnational communication of Chinese 'study mothers' in Singapore. Using data visualization and analysis tool 'ecomap', the findings uncover that study mothers were largely beleaguered by expectation asymmetry and autonomy asymmetry, arising from different expectations to and control over daily transnational communication with their family members. The study mothers were disadvantaged by their relatively isolated life situations in the host society and accentuated gender hierarchies in the household.

### About the Speaker

Wang Yang is a research fellow at the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities (LKYCIC), Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). She received her PhD in Communications and New Media from National University of Singapore (NUS). She is interested in research on the social impact of new technologies on family households, organizations and diaspora communities. Her past research delved into topics including household ICT domestication, transnational communication, mobile parenting, social media use, and online deliberation. Her PhD dissertation investigates ICT domestication by Chinese "study mothers" (peidu mama) in Singapore. She is currently working on a project studying digital transformation and disruption in the workplace.