Abstracts

Session1.			
Transition and Transformation: The Quest for well-being in a dynamic environment			
Moderator: Hiroko Naito (IDE-JETRO, Researcher)			
Speaker 1	Ruby Yuen Shan Lai	Lingnan University Hong Kong	Assistant Professor
Speaker 2	Ryuta Hagiwara	Hitotsubashi University Tokyo	PhD Candidate
Discussant	Sayaka Ogawa	Ritsumeikan University Kyoto	Professor

In East Eurasian countries, authoritarian regimes have persisted for a long, and there have been backslides into authoritarianism in many countries that democratized since the late 1980's. Statistical data indicates that authoritarianization often occurs through leaders changing the system. This means that it is happening at the different stage from the activities of society. During such political stages, what do citizens in these countries seek, and how do they accept or reject these changes? The case of Hong Kong, which this session addresses, is an excellent example to observe citizen's preferences amidst authoritarianization. Hong Kong is a region with a unique environment shaped by its relationship with mainland China and its colonial history. After its return to mainland China in 1997, Hong Kong's citizens enjoyed a partial form of democracy and freedom under the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework. Although its political landscape has been gradually transformed by the Chinese government, especially after the movement in Hong Kong, Hong Kong's geographical, societal, and economic uniqueness remains. This session explores what well-being Hong Kong citizens seek and how they struggle to seize it in the context of its relationship with mainland China and overseas countries.

Global Crises, Intersectional Vulnerabilities, and Collective Resilience: The Case of Families Living in Informal Subdivided Homes

Ruby YS LAI

In recent decades, informal housing has emerged as a consequence of the growing housing crisis in both the Global South and North, spreading across developing societies and megacities. The hardships faced by tenants of informal housing have been further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, causing long-term effects on their well-being and life trajectories. This study focuses on low-income families living in subdivided apartments in Hong Kong – tiny units subdivided from larger domestic quarters – to illuminate how the intertwined impact of global crises has exacerbated structural marginalization based on gender, class, and migration status, as manifested in everyday family life during and after the pandemic. It also documents the various forms of collective resilience practiced by tenants to sustain care work and family life. Data was collected through ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews with tenants living in subdivided apartments in two low-to-middle-income neighborhoods in Hong Kong since January 2021. The author interviewed 53 families, including 53 caretakers and 22 children. The findings reveal the disruption of everyday life caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including health risks, immobility, financial strain, family conflicts, and prolonged family separation, all of which severely threatened the tenants' well-being. By focusing on the spatio-

temporal and material aspects of home experience, the findings illustrate how the housing crisis has disproportionately undermined low-income families' ability to cope with the global health hazard. While the pandemic intensified the burdens on caregivers, especially women, it also motivated them to engage in community-based collective actions and cultivate affective social networks. The formation of such alternative infrastructures of care, as the author envisions, may potentially become sites of transcendence that contests housing inequalities and spatial injustice in the post-pandemic era.

Does the Rule of Law create happiness?
The relation between Society and Judiciary in Hong Kong

Ryuta Hagiwara

There is a positive correlation between the rule of law and happiness. However, a country with a limited rule of law is more likely also to be a country with lower levels of happiness just as a country with a strong rule of law is more likely to be one with happier citizens. In the case of Hong Kong, the rule of law is a socio-legal concept that has remained a core value for Hong Kong's development for over a century. After the crackdown of massive anti-government protests in 2019–2020 and the enactment of the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) in 2020, several surveys show that the condition of the rule of law in Hong Kong is getting worse yearly. This situation has brought attacks on Judges and courts' judgments and prompted a new wave of active and sometimes critical debates in society on the rights and wrongs of courts' judgments. Essentially, the Judiciary should respect citizen's right to have their views, but opinions voiced publicly could amount to pressure on or interference with the courts' administration of justice and should be expressed, if at all, with the greatest circumspection. This paper explores how Hong Kong's happiness compare to its level of rule of law and how might these two concepts be related from a perspective the relation between Society and Judiciary.

Session 2. Nomadism, Borders, and Well-being: Strategies of life around crisis and mobility in contemporary pastoralists Moderator: Moe Terao (CNEAS, Research fellow)			
Speaker 1	Ariell Ahearn	University of Oxford Oxford, UK	Lecturer
Speaker 2	Byambabaatar Ichinhorloo	National University of Mongolia Ulaanbaatal, Mongolia	Lecturer
	Daniel Murphy	University of Cincinnati Cincinnati, US	Associate Professor
Discussant	Ayumi Nakano	Chukyo University Nagoya	Lecturer

In Mongolia, where nomadic life has its roots, moving from one place to another in search of resources or to escape danger is an integral part of life strategies. The mobility of people, goods, and animals and the networks linking them across borders and localities are social functions that are essential for improving and maintaining people's livelihoods. Therefore, border crossings in Mongolia is not solely about evacuation but already part of people's well-being. Traditional images of nomadism, accompanied by nostalgia and nationalism, concurrently raise people's emotions and evoke a sense of well-being. However, in the context of global economic, political, and climatic changes, the values and realities of mobility have changed. In this session, we will discuss how the pursuit of well-being and mobility strategies are being implemented from the perspectives of both pastoralists and urban people, and consider the mobility associated with crises and the potential for well-being in such mobilities.

Cooperation in the pre-and-post disaster of Zud in the Eastern Mongolia

Byambabaatar Ichinkhorloo and Daniel Murphy

This paper will discuss how Mongolian pastoralists are living in the post-Zud time in Bayankhutag and what strategies and tactics they chose during and after Zud time. Natural disaster, Zud, hit the Bayankhutag sum, the one of Zud heavily affected 40 sums of Eastern Mongolia in the winter and spring of 2024. This disaster, like snap of Thanus, destroyed over half of the animals of herders and made the number of animals even among herders. To overcome Zud, herders used different tactics which resulted in 10% to 70% livestock survival. Many used traditional strategies and others used new strategies that were advocated by the development programmes in Mongolia. However, overall, it left no choice for herders of Bayankhutag except to cooperate temporarily with other people for safeguarding their well-being. The Zud has changed the former busy work time of herders to less work, households to emptiness, and individualistic attitude to cooperative manner. This paper argues that herders with less livestock tend to cooperate each other by joining their livestock and pooling their labour forces in post-Zud time temporarily. These issues further raise the question of how Zud disaster associate with the well-being of herders. This research is based on the ethnographic fieldwork of ENDOW project by the National University of Mongolia and University of Cincinnati.

Pastoralists in the Anthropocene: The End of Livestock?

Ariell Ahearn

The control and reduction of emissions is a key policy instrument for addressing the impacts of climate change globally. While CO2 emissions from fossil fuels remains the leading source of atmospheric change, methane emissions are also increasingly subject to monitoring and control regimes. Mongolia's climate change strategy and proposed policies attempts to combine continued economic growth from the mineral extraction industry with a step-change in methane emissions from livestock. Mining is turning to critical and rare earth mineral production for 'green' energy, while pastoralism is subject to critique for harboring methane. Recent reports identify livestock as the most significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. However this raises critical questions regarding how livestock and more generally how mobile pastoralist livelihoods are represented within climate change debates. While livestock numbers are presented as a matter of methane, pastoralism and its cultural, socio-economic and spiritual elements are stripped away. Likewise, mineral extraction is presented as an engine of economic growth with little presented on water and land degradation associated with these processes. This presentation considers current sustainable development discourses within Mongolia and the potential consequences of climate and environmental policies. How is the environment change understood and addressed in these contexts? How is disaster conceptualised by herders, the government and international actors?

Session 3.			
People with Disabilities in Times of Disasters and Wars: Mobility, Welfare, and Social Inclusion			
Moderator: Sébastien Boret (IRIDeS, Associate Professor)			
Speaker 1	Abby Ewen	University College London London, UK	PhD Student
Speaker 2	Madoka Nishiura	University of Tokyo Tokyo	PhD Candidate
Discussant	Keiko Kitagawa	Saga University	Emeritus Professor

This panel examines the problems of mobility, welfare, and inclusiveness faced by people with disabilities during crises in Eurasia. International media reported the struggles of almost 3 million people with disabilities trying to evacuate from fighting zones. They suffered from isolation, illness, and poverty. These struggles remain identical to those exposed by research on other disasters related to the pandemic (COVID-19 pandemic), natural hazards (2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami), and climate change (2003 European Heatwave). Relying on the principle that vulnerabilities only manifest during a crisis and are not created by crisis, this panel explores the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities during various crises while grounding their analysis of the specific socio-cultural contexts. For instance, our discussion shows how particular vulnerabilities are the products of specific social organizations and cultural patterns. Furthermore, the panel considers the idea of well-being for people with disability during crisis, focusing on trans-local or trans-national movements. Finally, the panellists conclude with a discussion on anticipating and reducing the impact of the crisis on vulnerabilities and a sense of well-being, not only for people with disabilities but also for the whole society.

The lived experiences of people with disabilities in the context of disaster in Nepal

Abby Ewen

The paper presents evidence from a research project that seeks to understand how urgent action around disaster recovery and resilience in an uneven development context intersects with ongoing cultural processes that shape individual self-identification with and public action on disability. It presents narrative accounts of the lived experiences of people with disabilities in Nepal during the 2015 earthquake and the 2021 Melamchi flood in Sindhupalchok, Nepal and their associated recovery processes. These stories were revealed through participatory timeline methods, with individuals with physical disabilities, that embedded the concepts of agency and ownership by people with disabilities. This enabled reflections on both the challenges and capabilities of people with disabilities and their representative organisations in the context of crisis. This shines a light on the important role that people with disabilities are playing as change makers and active contributors in risk and resilience work. Representation of which is critical for challenging understandings and approaches to disability that may minimise the agency and participation of people with disabilities in the context of crisis and beyond.

The Vulnerability of a Tourist-Oriented Deaf Community in Bali, Indonesia
During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Madoka Nishiura

The COVID-19 pandemic inflicted significant damage, not only in the realm of healthcare but also across the global economy. Among the hardest hit sectors was tourism, which suffered severe travel restrictions. This paper ethnographically explores the impact of the pandemic on a deaf community in Bali, Indonesia that relies heavily on tourism, examining the situation from both global and local perspectives.

Bengkala in Bali is known for its high population with genetic deafness, earning it the international moniker of "Deaf Village." Despite its distance from major tourist hotspots, Bengkala has attracted foreign tourists specifically seeking to meet the deaf residents and experience their unique culture. For the local deaf residents, who are relatively poorer than hearing residents, donations from foreign tourists have become a valuable source of income.

This paper examines the community's underlying vulnerabilities, highlighted by an unsuccessful crowdfunding campaign during the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, it was common for local deaf residents to receive donations from foreign tourists who visited Bengkala specifically for its unique culture and the reality of their poverty. During the pandemic, however, no tourists visited the village, and local residents tried to obtain donations through crowdfunding, which ended in failure. This paper discusses this stark contrast through an anthropological inquiry into the cultural and social factors that contributed to the community's vulnerability, which was exacerbated by the crisis.

Session 4. The Russian Invasion of Ukraine and the Wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples Moderator: Hiroki Takakura (CNEAS, Professor)			
Speaker 1	Stephan Dudeck	University of Tartu Tartu, Estonia	Research Fellow
Speaker 2	Victoria Peemot	JSPS/University of Helsinki Sendai/Helsinki, Finland	Post-doc.Fellow/ Researcher
Discussant	Takehiko Inoue	Osaka Kyoiku University Osaka	Associate Professor

How do ethnic minorities or indigenous people avoid the risk and construct well-being in a crisis? Is their way different from that of the majority or a nation? This session argues the relationship between the crisis and the well-being of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The war created more than 6 million Ukrainian refugees while dividing Russian citizens pro and con the war. The indigenous peoples in Russia also face the same dilemma. As observed among ethnic Russians, some migrate out of the country, while others choose to remain. This situation induces a reflection of their history and their positionality as a citizen, which might be a reason causing huge social mobility across the state border. By describing these social processes ethnographically, we would like to consider the meaning of their well-being and hope. We also extend our discussion to the underlying causes of their decision and its impact on their future.

Monitoring Indigenous participation in Russia's War

Stephan Dudeck

This paper presents the initial findings of a grassroots, non-commercial and independent initiative to monitor the involvement of Indigenous soldiers in the Russian war against Ukraine. The research focuses primarily on reports in social networks, which consist mainly of announcements of fallen or missing soldiers and provide limited background information. By compiling and analysing these reports, activists and anthropologists are working together to better understand the impact of the war on indigenous communities and to explore potential strategies for future action.

The research also raises significant methodological and ethical dilemmas, particularly in terms of risk management for participants, which may have wider implications for similar research contexts. The data collected provides insights into the underlying causes and consequences of Indigenous soldiers' military service and their motivations for signing voluntary service contracts. This work contributes to a deeper understanding of how the social integration and participation of Indigenous people in Russia's military efforts work, highlighting issues of social inequality and cultural hierarchies that result in disproportionate mobilisation, voluntary enlistment, and mortality rates among Indigenous soldiers.

In addition, the data serve as a revealing lens on the social conditions within these communities - conditions that were often overlooked or inadequately addressed in research prior to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although the findings are preliminary and fragmentary, they highlight the need for further research into the social factors affecting the well-being of indigenous communities in the Russian North.

A Turn to the South Burungaar: Re-Connecting Across the Time and Border

Victoria Peemot

Since the Russian Federation started its war against Ukraine in 2022, the cross-border movements of the Russian nationals intensified. Taking as a case-study the situation at the border of Mongolia and the ethnic Tyva Republic (Russia), this paper seeks to investigate the reasons behind the cross-border activities. The preliminary research results suggest a variety of reasons/purposes: political, economic, cultural and educational. In the former two cases, the impact of the war on motivation of the border region's population is obvious. It is explained by forced mobilisation and the economic sanctions which affected negatively the situation in the country. The latter two reasons for cross-border movements—cultural and educational— can be approached as a process of "remembering" and re-connecting that draws on the shared past of two regions which have been part of the same states for centuries before the Soviet regime seized power in this part of Inner Asia in the 1920s.

Session 5. General Discussion			
Moderator: Sébastien Boret (IRIDeS, Associate Professor)			
Comment 1	Donatas Brandišauskas	University of Vilnius Vilnius, Lithuania	Professor
Comment 2	Minoru Mio	National Museum of Ethnology Osaka	Professor