

Department of Cultural Studies

Research Finding Seminar

By

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" Powerless or Perilous? Ageing women as an emerging social force in Hong Kong " (in English)

Date : 23 October 2006 (Monday)

Time : 4:30 - 6:00 pm

Venue : Rm 101, 1/F, B Y Lam Bldg., LU

Abstract

Ageing women have so often been represented in government policy rhetoric, gerontology literatures and journalistic discourse as the genderless, powerless and passive objects of welfare and services, by and large, as a social problem that needs to be monitored and managed. Taking a cultural research approach, this thesis explores ageing women's actual practices in Hong Kong social movements and aims to re-represent ageing women as active social agents capable of generating multiple 'tactical identities' enabling them to participate in and interact with an environment that poses concrete challenges to their participation.

In filling the gap between research on social movements and in social gerontology, both massively studied areas but ones whose mutual interactions are rare, this thesis reviews the social participations of three women at their late 60s and early 70s, who have been actively involved around issues of involuntary removal in public housing, and in health care and rent issues. The research explores how ageing women have used the notions of 'Old Hong Kong' and 'Old residents' - a rhetoric long bound up with their life histories in Hong Kong - to create a 'mask of ageing' in negotiation and interaction with the authorities, with neighbours, their community and, most importantly, their children. On the other hand, by acting as mothers, as grandmothers and as the 'por por' ('older woman' in Cantonese) living next door, ageing women in effect compose collectives and form networks in their community to support their independent mode of living. The thesis argues that a new politics of ageing which addresses the everyday realities of ageing women's lives is essential if we are to offer an alternative interpretation of their ageing experiences.

Bio

LUK Kit-ling is currently the Research Development Officer in the Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, Lingnan University. She has been actively engaged in community organizing and housing rights movements.

All are Welcome

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