



The Department of Anthropology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

presents a seminar

by

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on

**'Do You Realise This is a Chinese School?':
White Parents as Ethnic Minorities in the
Local Hong Kong School System**

Friday, 3 Nov 2017

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Room 11 Humanities Building

New Asia College, CUHK

A light lunch will be served at 12:30 pm. First come first served.

Abstract:

A central motif in the social research on education is that white parents enjoy privilege and choice in schooling for their children, even when their children are in a minority and lack trans-national cultural capital. I challenge this assumption with an examination of the case of white parents attempting (mostly unsuccessfully) to enroll their children in government primary schools in postcolonial Hong Kong. In this setting, many white parents cannot compete with emerging Chinese elites in funding the high cost of their children's education, nor with their proficiency in language skills. In-depth interviews with 18 white parents living in Hong Kong reveal that white parents find that their children are segregated both in the classroom and the educational system as a whole, with little recourse for redress. The assumption of white privilege, I argue, has normalized the influence of growing Chinese elites and neoliberal school policies, which affect choice and agency not just among whites, but other poorer ethnic minorities too.

Bio:

Paul O'Connor is a Research Assistant Professor in Sociology and Social Policy at Lingnan University. He is a qualitative sociologist interested in ethnicity, religion, embodiment, and subculture. Paul is also the author of the book 'Islam in Hong Kong: Muslims and Everyday Life in China's World City' and of various publications on religious and ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Paul also researches skateboard culture, and is engaged in projects on middle-aged skateboarders, and lifestyle sports in East Asia.

ALL INTERESTED ARE WELCOME