

ISPP Eastern Hemisphere Virtual Seminar Series – June 2021

Organizers: Ying-yi Hong, Diwa Malaya Quinones, Peter Beattie

June 25 (Friday) at 2-4pm (Beijing Time)

Host/Moderator: Peter Beattie (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China)

Speaker: Prof. Karim Bettache (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China)

Title: The Need for a Cultural Psychological Approach to Discrimination on the Basis of Skin Color in Asia

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Abstract

A strong preference for fair skin appears to be the norm across the Asian continent and may pervade many aspects of social life. Yet scholarly work on this ubiquitous phenomenon (a) is rare within psychological science, and (b) predominantly treats it as situated only within the individual, abstracted from the social context. In this talk, I argue that colorism has firm systemic roots as a result of the sociohistorical trajectories of different Asian societies that have attached cultural meanings to skin color. Consequently, similarities and differences in such trajectories may account for variability in the expression of colorism within contemporary Asian societies.

Speaker Bio

Karim Bettache acquired his BSc and MSc in psychology at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, and his PhD in psychology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, under the supervision of Prof. Fanny Cheung. He specializes in cultural, political and social psychology. His work tries to connect individual psychological phenomena to broader socio-historical and

economic contexts of human societies (e.g., colonialism or neoliberalism). Hence, his work strongly overlaps with other social sciences such as sociology and the political sciences. Prof. Bettache has further worked as a postdoctoral fellow with the Dean of Social Science (CUHK), Professor Chi-yue Chiu. He also worked as a lecturer for Monash University. He currently works as an Assistant Professor for the Faculty of Social Science at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.
