

## **Forum on Platform Workers**

Monday, 28 February 2022  
Online via Zoom

### **PROGRAMME**

9.30 am – 9.35 am

**Welcome and Introduction**

9.35 am – 10.25 am

**Research Presentation**

#### **IPS Research Team**

Dr Mathew Mathews  
Principal Research Fellow &  
Head of Social Lab

Ms Thian Wen Li  
Research Associate  
Social Lab

Mr Shamil Zainuddin  
Research Associate  
Society and Culture Department

Ms Fiona Phoa  
Research Assistant  
Social Lab

Ms Clara Lee  
Graduate Researcher

Mr Shane Pereira  
Research Associate  
Social Lab

10.25 am – 10.40 am

**Question-and-Answer with IPS Research Team**

10.40 am – 12 noon

**Panel Discussion**

#### **Moderator**

Associate Professor Tan Ern Ser  
Academic Adviser  
Social Lab  
Institute of Policy Studies

#### **Speakers**

Professor Danny Quah  
Dean & Li Ka Shing Professor in Economics  
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

Mr Lien Choong Luen  
General Manager  
Gojek Singapore

Associate Professor Irene Ng  
Department of Social Work  
Social Service Research Centre  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
National University of Singapore

Dr Mathew Mathews

12 noon

**End**

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

**Clara LEE** is a Graduate Researcher at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) and a Political Science PhD candidate at the University of Pennsylvania. In her capacity at IPS, she has worked on projects involving national identity, immigration, as well as public attitudes, values, and beliefs towards society and various public policies in Singapore. Her research interests are in international and comparative political economy, globalisation, immigration, and labour mobility, and her dissertation focuses on labour immigration policies. Prior to her doctoral study, she obtained a Master's in Social Sciences from the National University of Singapore, majoring in international relations.

**LIEN Choong Luen** is the Head of Gojek's operations in Singapore. Prior to Gojek, he was at the National Research Foundation, where he worked to enhance innovation at companies in Singapore's research and development ecosystem. Mr Lien was also a strategy consultant in McKinsey China, and the Head of the McKinsey Centre for Government (Southeast Asia). He spent more than ten years in the Singapore Armed Forces as a Special Forces officer. Outside of work, Mr Lien has a passion for challenges. Some adventures include summiting Mount Everest, K2 skiing to the North Pole, and enduring temperature extremes ranging from -50°C to +50°C.

**MATHEW Mathews** is Principal Research Fellow and the Head of Social Lab at the Institute of Policy Studies. He has been involved in over 50 research projects examining social policy issues ranging from social cohesion, family and low-income matters. He is currently leading a three-year study on work and savings behaviour. He has published in academic and media outlets and taught courses on social policy.

Dr Mathew is on the boards of OnePeople.sg and the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre in Singapore. He is Research Advisor to the Ministry of Social and Family Development, and serves on the VWOs-Charities Capability Fund panel and Families for Life Council.

**Irene NG** is Associate Professor at the Department of Social Work and Social Service Research Centre at the National University of Singapore. Associate Professor Ng holds a joint PhD in Social Work and Economics from the University of Michigan. Her research areas include poverty and inequality, intergenerational mobility, and social welfare policy. Her research projects include a study of in-work poverty among the young; National Youth Surveys 2010, 2013, 2016 and 2019; a study of low-income households with debt; and the development of universal digital access. She

serves or has served in committees in the Ministry of Social and Family Development, the National Council of Social Service, the Ministry of Manpower, and various social service agencies.

**Shane PEREIRA** is Research Associate at Social Lab, Institute of Policy Studies. He specialises in applied ethnography and social research methods, and holds qualifications in Sociology and social research methods, which he taught for the last 11 years in both the National University of Singapore and King's College London. He also taught Cognitive Processes and Problem Solving in Republic Polytechnic.

Mr Pereira's research focus centres on issues of diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism. His current research interests include ethnographic methodology, in-work poverty in the gig economy, intergenerational poverty, social and cultural diversity, and Singapore's religious landscape.

He also has a keen interest in the social construction of cults, sects, and other minority religions. His last foray in this regard was a multi-sited, six-year ethnographic study of the Sathya Sai Baba Movement.

**Fiona PHOA** is Research Assistant at Social Lab, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). She has a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the National University of Singapore and has three years of relevant quantitative research experience. In IPS, she has done quantitative research projects studying the lived experiences and issues faced by private hire vehicle drivers, attitudes on race and religion in Singapore and attitudes on living with COVID-19 in Singapore.

Prior to joining IPS, Ms Phoa's research focused on understanding labour and employment issues in Singapore, as well as understanding market practices on compensation and benefits. She has also been involved in developing employers' position on workplace issues for discussions with tripartite partners.

**Danny QUAH** is Dean and Li Ka Shing Professor in Economics at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. His research on inequality and income mobility characterises the range of experiences across economies to suggest that a single narrative on inequality is unlikely to be correct or helpful. His work on world order takes an economic approach to international systems, studying the supply and demand of world order: what international system do the world's superpowers wish to provide; what world order does the global community need?

Professor Quah is a Commissioner on the Spence-Stiglitz Commission on Global Economic Transformation and serves on the Executive Committee, International Economic Association; the Advisory Board, LSE IDEAS; the Eminent Advisory Council of the UNDP Bureau for Asia-Pacific; and the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council for Geopolitics.

He is the author of *The Global Economy's Shifting Centre of Gravity*.

**SHAMIL Zainuddin** is Research Associate in the Society and Culture Department at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). He specialises in applied ethnography and holds qualifications in Sociology, which he has taught as a teaching assistant while completing his Masters in the National University of Singapore.

Before joining IPS, he was Senior Design Ethnographer at a global enterprise technology company. From bus stations in Saudi Arabia and bank branches in Indonesia to construction sites and supermarkets in Singapore, Mr Shamil has employed qualitative methods researching human experiences both locally and abroad to inform R&D, innovation and marketing.

Mr Shamil has received awards for applied ethnographic work and is the recipient of the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Day Award in 2005. Above all, he is most interested in carrying out the work to make the everyday easier for especially disadvantaged communities.

**TAN Ern Ser** is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore (NUS); Academic Convener, Singapore Studies, NUS Faculty Arts and Social Sciences; Academic Adviser, Social Lab, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS); and Deputy Chair, NUS General Education Committee. He was previously Vice-Dean of Students, NUS, and Head, IPS Social Lab.

Associate Professor Tan received his PhD in Sociology from Cornell University. He is author of *Does Class Matter?* (2004) and *Class and Social Orientations* (2015), and a co-author of *Social Capital in Singapore: The Power of Network Diversity* (2021). He is co-investigator of Asian Barometer-Singapore and principal investigator of the *Singapore Panel Study of Social Dynamics*.

Associate Professor Tan has served as research consultant to government ministries. He is an adviser for socioeconomic research and chairs the Research Advisory Panel, Housing and Development Board. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 2013, and is a member of the Board of Visiting Justices.

**THIAN Wen Li** is Research Associate at Social Lab, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). Her research focus includes labour, social class and inequality, organisations, and workplace conditions. She has conducted ethnographic research on the industrial blue-collar workers in Singapore, where she worked as a meat packer in a meat processing plant to investigate the workers' work and life experiences. She has done research on the cosmopolitan practices and national identity of Singaporeans.

Prior to IPS, Ms Thian worked in the management office in the United Nations system in Japan. She holds a Master of Social Science (Sociology) from the National University of Singapore, and a Bachelor of Social Science (Sociology and Psychology) from Singapore Management University.

*Last modified on 24 February 2022*

