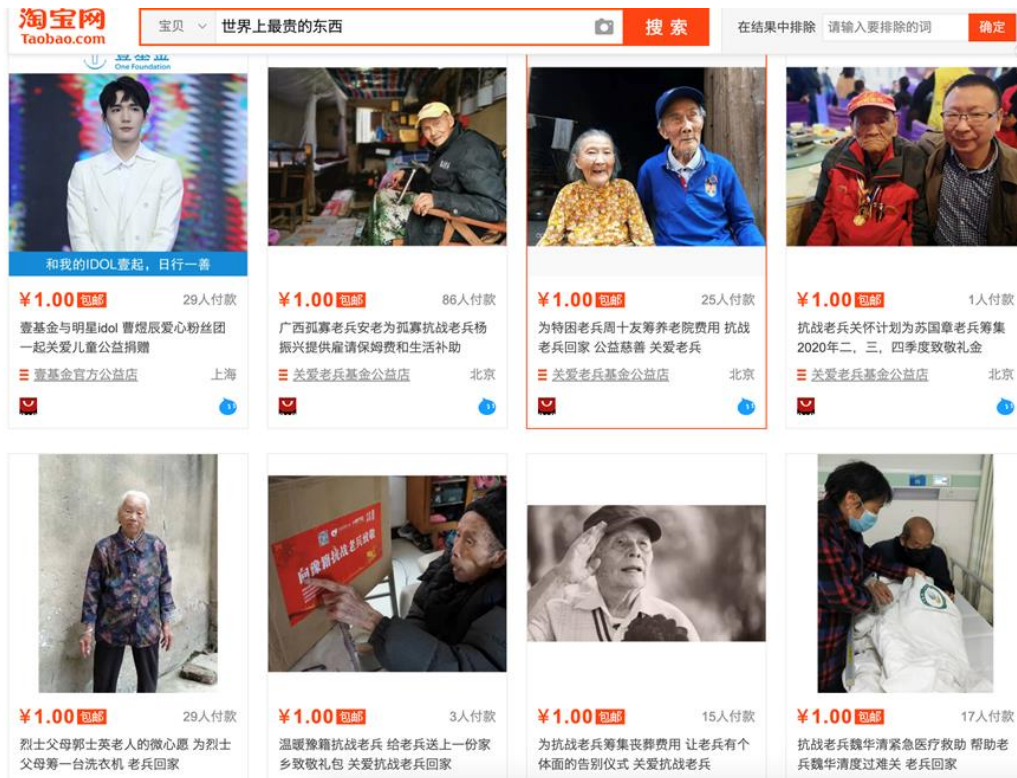


‘The Most Expensive Item in the World’ Online Marketing and the E-commercialisation of Charitable Projects in Contemporary China



Jacqueline Zhenru LIN

(Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge)

5pm, 21 Oct, 2020 (Wednesday)
via Zoom (pre-registration required)

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China Research Seminar Series (Michaelmas 2020)

Abstract

This ethnographic study uses long-term intensive fieldwork on charitable organisations to explore how e-commerce platforms change the moral landscape of Chinese society by creating a novel culture around doing good. Expanding beyond a simple communication channel, social media platforms in China allied with the charitable NGOs to standardise the presentation of disadvantaged groups in a commercialised format. Through closely examining the documentary practices through which charitable projects are classified and framed, this study probes the development of the internet-based charity sphere in China. It highlights the moral dimension of social-mediatisation in a non-Western context. Methodologically, it proposes a new approach to capturing the dynamic processes of socio-technical transformations.

Speaker Bio

Jacqueline Zhenru LIN is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge, and a member of St John's College. Her doctoral thesis, entitled *The Digital Life of Goodness: National Heroes, NGOs, and Commercialized Charity in China*, sheds light on a historical-redress movement aiming at re-evaluating the War of Resistance against Japan (1937–1945) in contemporary China. Foregrounding the institutional production and social networking among different stakeholders, her ethnographic study interrogates a new modality of doing good as featured in digital China: e-commercialised charity. Through an anthropological lens, her work examines the relationships between memory and heroism, civic engagement and volunteerism, charity and activism.

