

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture

Special Lecture Series: Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19

Invites you to a discussion with **James Farrer**, Sophia University,

“How are Tokyo’s Independent Restaurateurs Surviving the Pandemic?”

Date: Wednesday, October 7

Time: 5pm-6pm

Presentation will be followed by Q and A

On Zoom. Open to all; language English

Please register HERE (<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=p-YOaaVN3E-jFrtZnYKl0pSDtnsMuJVAtzRnSitkskJUMEpSRzVMNTJWMUNMWTIGTjY4U1FEVldSMC4u>)



Globally, independent restaurants have been dealt a double blow by COVID-19. Restaurant staff face the risk of infection, and restaurants have been among the businesses hardest hit by urban lockdowns. With fewer resources than corporate chains, small independent restaurants are particularly vulnerable to an extended economic downturn. Both government and community support have been key to sustaining these small businesses and their employees during this crisis. How do things look moving forward?

James Farrer is Professor of Sociology and Global Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo. His research focuses on the contact zones of global cities, including ethnographic studies of sexuality, nightlife, migration, and food. His recent publications include: *International Migrants in China’s Global City: The New Shanghailanders* (Routledge 2019); *Shanghai Nightscapes: A Nocturnal Biography of a Global City* (with Andrew Field, University of Chicago Press, 2015); and *Globalization and Asian Cuisines: Transnational Networks and Contact Zones* (editor, Palgrave, 2015). His ongoing study of a Tokyo restaurant community is documented in his webpage [Nishiogicho-gaku \(Nishiogiology\)](#).

James will be discussing his recently published paper: “[How are Tokyo’s Independent Restaurateurs Surviving the Pandemic?](#)” from our collection in the [Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus](#)

Notes on the full series:

This discussion is the first in a series we will hold over the autumn on the causes, effects and current status of vulnerable populations in Japan during the Covid-19 pandemic. Each discussion will be moderated by David Slater and will give listeners a chance to meet the authors and others associated with the articles (advocates, activists, supporters, and participants). The authors will provide insight into the articles, as well as background to the conditions of data collection in the age of Corona, an update on the situation and a look forward—asking if we are any better prepared for next time.

An introduction to the whole collection here: [Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#) by David H. Slater

Abstract for the full collection of papers: This is a collection of original articles on diverse vulnerable populations in Japan in the wake of the new coronavirus pandemic. The effects of COVID-19 are felt differently, with some among us at much greater risk of infection due to preexisting health and welfare conditions. For others, perhaps more than the risk of infection, it is the precautions taken to mitigate the risk for the whole population, such as lockdowns and business closures, that have pulled away the already fragile safety net of state and civil society organization (CSO) support, leading to increased marginalization and social exclusion. The goal of this set of papers is to document the conditions of those that have been most directly affected by the virus and to provide background on the conditions that made them vulnerable in the first place, notably chronic conditions that are brought into more obvious relief in light of emergency measures. Each of the authors had a pre-established relationship with those affected populations and employed various ethnographic approaches, some face to face, others digitally via Zoom interviews and SNS exchanges. In this moment of what appears to be relative calm, we hope that our collection, quickly compiled in an attempt to capture the ever-changing situation, will give some insight into how those most vulnerable are faring in this time of crisis and provide information that will allow us to prepare better before the next wave comes our way.

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