Minh Cao, PhD (she/her)

Assistant Professor of Management

Ethnographer, Sociology of Work

Research Interests: Sociomateriality; Sensemaking theory; The micro-foundations of institutional processes; Ethnographic and qualitative research methods

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EDUCATION

University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine)

Doctor of Philosophy in Organization and Management, September 2022

University of Cambridge

Master of Philosophy in Development Studies, June 2015

State University of New York at New Paltz (SUNY New Paltz)

Bachelor of Science in International Business, December 2013

PUBLICATIONS

Cao, M. (2026). To the lighthouse: Moral injury, moral resilience, and moral courage. In F. Scholz & J. M. Szulc (Eds.), *Towards Greater Equality in Academia: A Collective Response* (pp. 200–209). Edward Elgar Publishing.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Cao, M. 'First, let's eat cake': The material world triggers building blocks of resilience through sensemaking. *Under review as of October 2026.*

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

Cao, M. & Atay, E. 'Becoming, Resisting, and Situating': A dialectical model of how organizational actors respond to disparate institutional logics over time. *To be submitted to Organization Theory in 2027. (Accepted for presentation at the Organization Theory Winter Workshop in Paris, France, 2027)*

Cao, M. & Wang, C. 'Do you know my son's favorite food?': Emotional labor and sensemaking are shaped by family discourse as local expressions of embeddedness. *To be submitted to Organization Studies in 2027.*

Cao, M. 'Maybe don't mention Harvard!': Social reproduction processes in the translation of Bourdieu's four forms of capital in Asian societies. *To be submitted to Business and Society in 2027.*

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Cao (upcoming, January 2027). 'Becoming, Resisting, and Situating': A dialectical model of how organizational actors respond to disparate institutional logics over time*. Organization Theory Winter Workshop 2027*. Paris, France.

Ahmad, Cao, Gunasekara, & Pariona-Cabrera (September 2025). Building resilience in the workplace through social sciences perspectives. *Social Sciences Week (SSW) 2025.* Melbourne, Australia.

Cao (August 2022). The realm of the ridiculous: Straddling intimacy and professionalism in college admission consulting. *Academy of Management (AOM) annual meeting.* Online.

Cao (June 2022). Reflexivity at the micro level: How institutional actors resolve conflicts by focusing on present impacts. *European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS).* Online.

Cao (October 2021). The empathizers: How workers resolve conflicts by focusing on present impacts. *Harvard Business School's Rising Scholars Conference.* Online.

Cao (August 2019). Temporal and relational: The positionality of embeddedness in immigrant rights advocacy work. *Academy of Management (AOM) annual meeting.* Boston, MA.

PH.D. DISSERTATION

Customer service and its challenges in college admissions consulting

All three chapters of my dissertation employ ethnographic data on consulting firms to conceptualize the mechanisms via which embeddedness impacts the work of organizations. In my study, the cultural and relational dimensions of embeddedness are explored in the forms of emotional labor, sociomateriality, workers' resilience amidst turmoil, and the interpretation of Bourdieu's four forms of capital in Asian societies.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor of Management*, ISTEC Business School, Paris,* September 2026 - present

- Design assignments and teaching activities for the Cross-cultural Communication postgraduate course in the International and Geopolitics department

Course Coordinator, *The Business School, RMIT Vietnam*, November 2022 – October 2025

- Led the teaching team for Organisations (Sociology of Work)
- Re-designed online learning platforms (Canvas)
- Re-designed assignments and workshop activities
- Provided guidance and marking instructions for the teaching team and markers
- Moderated final scores and final results for every cohort of students
- Analyzed the achievement of learning outcomes and Assurance of Learning (AoL) competencies

Lecturer, *The Business School, RMIT Vietnam*, November 2022 – October 2025

- Taught Organisations (Sociology of Work) at the undergraduate level, and People and Organisations (Human Resources Management) at the MBA level
- Provided intellectual guidance and pastoral care to undergraduate students
- Mark assignments and provided feedback to students

Instructor, *Paul Merage School of Business, University of California, Irvine*, August 2020

- Taught Introduction to Business and Management online
- Provided intellectual guidance and pastoral care to undergraduate students
- Mark assignments and provided feedback to students

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Symposium Organizer, *Academy of Management (AOM) annual meeting*, August 2019
Symposium title: "Inequalities and the fight for inclusiveness: Unpacking the varied experiences of migrant workers."

I organized this symposium with my colleague Carrie Wang to offer insights into the various work and life experiences of migrant workers, all of whom are challenged by new environments and many of whom are marginalized.

This symposium consisted of four studies examining: 1) multi-level factors influencing ascriptive inequality towards migrant workers; 2) individuals who return to mainland China to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities; 3) the impact of social categories and group esteem theory on different immigrant groups; and 4) workers who do advocacy work for immigrant rights.

This symposium was selected to be featured in the 2019 All-Academy Theme "Understanding the Inclusive Organization."

AWARDS AND HONORS

Ray Watson Fellowship, Paul Merage School of Business
University of California, Irvine, 2019

Scholarship from the Cambridge Commonwealth, European & International Trust
University of Cambridge, 2014 – 2015

REFERENCES

Dr. Gerardo Okhuysen
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Dr. Carrie Wang
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, Arizona State University
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Dr. Erhan Atay
Associate Professor of Human Resources Management
College of Business, Abu Dhabi University
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Dr. Ziyuan Tang
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