



**MOBILITIES & TEMPORALITIES**  
Rethinking Migrant Trajectories and  
Transnational Lifestyles in the Asian Context

25-26 February 2016

In recent years, the so-called 'mobilities turn' has had considerable impact on the study of migration and transnationalism. Ushered in as a new paradigm within the social sciences, it presents a new way of looking at social phenomena through the prism of mobility. While on the one hand a direct response to the often static approach in social sciences towards the idea of 'movement' itself – largely treating it as a given, something that needed no further explanation or thought – the paradigm shift is also an endeavour to engage with the speeding up of the mobility of people, goods and ideas in general. 'Mobilities' as such has become synonymous with an acceleration of economic, social and cultural life.

Migration scholars however have also noted that the renewed focus on 'mobilities' is not necessarily new. The introduction of the concept of transnationalism two decades ago can be thought of as an earlier 'turn' towards a 'mobilities' oriented perspective within the study of migration itself. Where migration trajectories were once imagined along rather uni-directional linear pathways, during the 1990s, the focus gradually moved to spotlight the transnational character of many migrants' lives and livelihoods. In Asia, the availability of budget airlines and cheap air-tickets allowed migrants to return home much more frequently than ever before. In addition new developments in telecommunications made it possible to stay in touch with family and friends on a daily basis over transnational space. This presented a fundamental change in the migration experience and demanded a response from researchers.

Building upon the transnationalism optic and the more recent 'mobilities' turn, this workshop seeks to advance the migration literature in two ways:

- First, it seeks to understand how migrant trajectories coalesce with pathways of upward or downward social mobility. How is social mobility experienced by people on the move in Asia and how is it strategized as part of transnational migration trajectories?
- Second, in the context of migration regimes in Asia where temporary migration predominates, recent studies have started to flag how an increasing number of migrants are in essence 'permanently' temporary while migrations are continually 'circular'. How do migrants navigating temporary or circular migration pathways engage notions of transience and permanence, and the many gradations of temporary or partial membership in(-between) home and host societies? How do temporalities impact the engagement with local/transnational space and place?

## **CONVENORS**

### **Dr Michiel Baas**

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### **Prof Brenda S.A. Yeoh**

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## 25 FEBRUARY 2015 (THURSDAY)

09:30 – 09:45	REGISTRATION	
09:45 – 10:00	OPENING & WELCOME REMARKS	
09:45	<b>Michiel BAAS</b>   National University of Singapore <b>Brenda S.A. YEOH</b>   National University of Singapore	
10:00 – 11:15	KEYNOTE ADDRESS	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Brenda S.A. YEOH</b>   National University of Singapore	
10:00	<b>Mimi SELLER</b> Drexel University, USA	Mobility Justice and the Temporalities of Multi-Scalar Migrations: Friction, Turbulence, and Uneven Mobilities
10:45	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
11:15 – 11:45	TEA BREAK	
11:45 – 13:15	PANEL 1 – TEMPORALITIES & MOBILITIES	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Elaine Lynn-Ee HO</b>   National University of Singapore	
11:45	<b>Adam SALTSMAN</b> Boston College, USA	Fragments of “Home”: Constructing Gendered Order and Place among Precarious Burmese Migrants in Thailand
12:05	<b>Diana IBAÑEZ-TIRADO</b> University of Sussex, and University of London, UK	“We Sit and Wait”: Migration, Mobility and Temporality in Guliston, Southern Tajikistan
12:25	<b>Seonyoung SEO</b> National University of Singapore	Labour Migration and Temporalities of Class: The Case of Nepalese Migrant Workers in South Korea
12:45	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
13:15 – 14:15	LUNCH	
14:15 – 15:45	PANEL 2 – TEMPORALITIES VS PERMANENCE	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Sun Sun LIM</b>   National University of Singapore	
14:15	<b>Catriona F STEVENS</b> University of Western Australia	Temporary Work, Permanent Visas and Circular Dreams: New Migration Paths of Chinese Nationals Living in Perth
14:35	<b>Shanthi ROBERTSON</b> University of Western Sydney, Australia	Migrant, Interrupted: Temporalities of Mobility in Asia-Australia “Staggered” Migration
14:55	<b>Michiel BAAS</b> National University of Singapore	The Queerness of Mobilities and Temporalities: Young Professional Migrants in-between India, Singapore and Beyond
15:15	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
15:45 – 16:15	TEA BREAK	

<b>16:15 – 17:15</b>	<b>PANEL 3 – NEGOTIATING TEMPORALITIES</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Maria PLATT</b>   National University of Singapore	
16:15	<b>Kristel Anne ACEDERA</b> National University of Singapore  <b>Brenda S.A. YEOH</b> National University of Singapore	Migrant Mothers and Left-behind Families: The Rituals of Communication and the Reconstitution of Familyhood across Transnational Space and Time
16:35	<b>Menusha de SILVA</b> National University of Singapore	Bridging Transnational Citizenship and (Im)mobility through Cumulative Inequality: The Case of Returning Retirement Migrants from UK to Sri Lanka
16:55	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>17:15</b>	<b>END OF DAY 1</b>	
<b>18:00 – 20:00</b>	<b>WORKSHOP DINNER</b> (For Speakers, Chairpersons & Invited Guests)	



## 26 FEBRUARY 2015 (FRIDAY)

<b>09:30 – 09:45</b>	<b>REGISTRATION</b>	
<b>09:45 – 11:15</b>	<b>PANEL 4 – INTIMACY, MORALITY AND THE ETHICS OF MOBILITIES</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Julia LOSSAU</b>   University of Bremen, Germany	
09:45	<b>Pardis MAHDAVI</b> (via SKYPE) Pomona College, USA	Intimate Im/Mobilities: Migrating Out of the Social Contract in Asia
10:05	<b>Maren K. BOERSMA</b> City University of Hong Kong	Filipina Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong: Between Permanence and Temporariness in Everyday Life
10:25	<b>Anju Mary PAUL</b> Yale-NUS College, Singapore	Culture and Structure in the Adoption of Stepwise Migration by Indonesian and Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers in Asia
10:45	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>11:15 – 11:45</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
<b>11:45 – 13:15</b>	<b>PANEL 5 – STUDYING MOBILITY / STUDENT MOBILITIES</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Michiel BAAS</b>   National University of Singapore	
11:45	<b>Catherine GOMES</b> RMIT University, Australia	“Home is Wherever I Drop My Backpack”: Foreign Talent and their Negotiation of Transience in Singapore
12:05	<b>LIU Tianfeng</b> Royal Holloway University of London, UK, and Central South University, China	Temporalities and Transnational Workplace: British Academic Migrants’ Everyday (Im)Mobilities
12:25	<b>Avyanthi AZIS</b> University of Indonesia	Out of Seoul? Korean Student Migration to Indonesia
12:45	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>13:15 – 14:15</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>14:15 – 15:45</b>	<b>PANEL 6 – SEARCHING &amp; FINDING MOBILITIES</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Gracia LIU-FARRER</b>   Waseda University, Japan, and National University of Singapore	
14:15	<b>Nonie TUXEN</b> Australian National University	“Setting Myself Apart”: Studying Abroad and Upward Social Mobility among Mumbai’s Youth
14:35	<b>Etsuko KATO</b> International Christian University, Japan	From East to West, and Back?: Japanese Self-searching Migrants in the Asia-Pacific Context
14:55	<b>Yasmin Y. ORTIGA</b> Nanyang Technological University, Singapore	Beyond “Home” and “Host”: Family, Professional Status, and Social Mobility among Highly Skilled Migrants in Singapore
15:15	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>15:45 – 16:15</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	

<b>16:15 – 17:15</b>	<b>PANEL 7 – MULTIPLE MOBILITIES?</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Anjeline DE DIOS</b>   National University of Singapore	
16:15	<b>Carol UPADHYA</b> National Institute of Advanced Studies, India	Materialising Mobility: Migrant Property Investments in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, India
16:35	<b>Andrew DAWSON</b> University of Melbourne, Australia	Taking the Mobility Out of Migration
16:55	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>17:15 – 17:45</b>	<b>CLOSING REMARKS</b>	
17:15	<b>Michiel BAAS</b>   National University of Singapore <b>Brenda S.A. YEOH</b>   National University of Singapore	
<b>17:45</b>	<b>END OF WORKSHOP</b>	

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

### **Mobility Justice and the Temporalities of Multi-Scalar Migrations: Friction, Turbulence, and Uneven Mobilities**

**Mimi Sheller**

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International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility, Drexel University, USA  
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This talk draws on some concepts being developed more fully in my book in progress, *Mobility Justice: The Ethics of Transport and Travel*. After introducing the new mobilities paradigm, this paper traces how it overlaps with critical migration studies and explores how both fields have generated important critiques of sedentarist or static models of society, territory and belonging. Drawing on arguments about the figuration of the migrant, kinopolitics, and the ongoing dynamics of mobilities, I seek to dynamically reconceptualize the relation between spatial scales and temporalities of migration. First, I draw connections from the micro-politics of embodied mobilities and environments, to the macro-level geopolitics of rights to migration, border-crossing, travel, and residency, and ultimately to wider geo-ecological understandings of the deeper temporalities of energy flows and material resources that move around the world. Second, I build on notions of “permanently temporary” and “continually circular” migration to examine the temporalities of migration in terms of differential speeds, the organizing and sequencing of movement, the mechanization of temporalities of migration, and the temporality of punctuated immediacy.

**Mimi SHELLER**, PhD, is Professor of Sociology and founding Director of the Center for Mobilities Research and Policy at Drexel University in Philadelphia; and currently President of the International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility. She is author or co-editor of nine books, including *Aluminum Dreams: The Making of Light Modernity* (MIT Press, 2014); *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (2013); *Mobility and Locative Media* (2014); and *Citizenship from Below* (Duke University Press, 2012). As founding co-editor of the journal *Mobilities*, Associate Editor of *Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies*, and co-editor of books such as *Mobile Technologies of the City* (2006), *Tourism Mobilities* (2004), and *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration* (2003) she helped to establish the new interdisciplinary field of mobilities research. She was awarded the Doctor Honoris Causa from Roskilde University, Denmark (2015) and has held Visiting Fellowships at the Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University (2008); Media@McGill, Canada (2009); the Center for Mobility and Urban Studies at Aalborg University, Denmark (2009); and Penn Humanities Forum, University of Pennsylvania (2010). She has received research funding from the National Science Foundation, the British Academy, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the Macarthur Foundation.

## **Fragments of “Home”: Constructing Gendered Order and Place among Precarious Burmese Migrants in Thailand**

**Adam Saltsman**

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For people who are displaced and who are on the move, how do notions of permanence shift and reproduce amidst mutations of space and sovereignty? This paper addresses this question through a case study among Burmese migrants living in Thailand on the border with Myanmar. For many in this population, migration is a generational trend. Following decades of displacement, mobility is a way of life and a tool for protection from various forms of violence. In the town of Mae Sot and the surrounding rural districts, there are more than 150,000 Burmese men and women who engage in circular transnational migration and who live and work in precarious conditions in garment factories and plantation-style farms. The majority, who are undocumented, find themselves in a space of exclusion from Thailand’s normative juridical framework, effectively beyond the law. Amidst such liminality, I find that migrants iteratively reproduce a sense of place, albeit one that is fluid and rooted as much in the imaginary as in transient political and social networks. Specifically, this study suggests that migrants discursively reproduce notions of homeland, gender, and ethnicity as they engage in cross-border practices of survival and order maintenance. While such discourse and practice enables a link to a notion of permanence manifested in the idea of tradition and custom, these are, in fact, iterative productions unique to mobile subjectivities that impose their own opportunities and constraints. This paper is based on a multi-modal qualitative approach relying on collaborative action research and key informant interviews that I conducted between 2012 and 2014.

**Adam SALTSMAN** is a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Sociology at Boston College and he received his PhD from this department in 2015. His research focuses on the intersection of gender, violence, humanitarian intervention, and precarious mobility. He is currently writing a book, *Between Empowerment and Exploitation: Migrants, Global Supply Chains, and Humanitarian Intervention on the Thailand-Myanmar Border*, based on his doctoral thesis.



**“We Sit and Wait”:  
Migration, Mobility and Temporality in Guliston, Southern Tajikistan**

**Diana Ibañez-Tirado**

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External labour migration play an important role in Tajikistan’s economy: nearly 50% of Tajikistan’s GDP comes from remittances from abroad (especially from Tajik male migrants working in Russia). This paper analyses how people in Guliston, a village of about 3000 inhabitants in southern Tajikistan, experience *waiting* both for labour-migrants to return from Russia, and for their migrant-relatives to invest in projects in Guliston. These projects aim at interrupting or breaking the migrants’ cycle of out-migration and involve, for example, buying a vehicle to be turned into a taxi, or the opening of a cotton-oil factory funded with remittances.

In this paper, I conceptualise *waiting* as sets of embodied and material practices that mediate Guliston residents’ experiences of time and space. As Bissell (2007) suggests, waiting points towards “animating suspension” rather than passivity or stillness. This approach contributes to attempts to critically re-examine the deployment of existing categories to describe the lives of people who do not migrate (the so-called “left-behind”) and the home-towns to which migrants expect to return one day. In his book *On Waiting*, Schweizer (2008) argues that it is often notions of direction and intention underpinned by discourses of modernity and expectations of rapid social change that might turn waiting into forms of boredom, passivity, inactivity or, indeed, the sense of time-wasting. As well, Bissell (2007:281) notices that much investigation on the relationship between mobility and immobility “is often premised on a primacy of the mobile as the more desirable relation in the world”. Therefore, the use of the word “behind” to refer to those who do not migrate or interrupt their cycles of migration because they are unable to keep working abroad also connotes a temporal and spatial reference point that opposes the rural world of the migrants’ home to the “advanced” cities or “modern” sites to which they travel for work. Hence, my ethnography of Guliston underscores the problems that arise as a result of the association of “mobility” with modernity, and “fixidity” with tradition and stillness.

Based on 18 months of anthropological fieldwork conducted between 2009 and 2015, this paper warns against making simplistic assumptions about how the possibilities of leading active lives and generating aspirations of individual and collective self-improvement are exclusively produced in places far-away from the migrants’ original home-towns. Although there are undeniable negative effects produced by extended labour migration in villages and towns in Tajikistan and Central Asia more generally, my ethnography shows that *waiting* as ‘animating suspension’ enacted by both those who do not migrate and those who migrate (yet eventually or periodically return to their home-towns) turn villages such as Guliston into affective spaces and lived places (Navaro-Yashin 2009) at the centre of circulation of caregiving (Baldassar and Merla 2014) among mobile and divided families.

**Diana IBAÑEZ-TIRADO** is a social anthropologist trained at SOAS, University of London. Currently, she works as an associate researcher at the School of Global Studies (Anthropology) in the University of Sussex. She is also a research associate at the Centre of Contemporary Central Asia and the Caucasus at SOAS, University of London. She has in depth experience of research in Tajikistan: her doctoral research investigated subjectivity and temporality in the Kulob region, southern Tajikistan, and theorised the importance of routines to the construction of everydayness, and the relationship of “normalcy” to extraordinary events that “disrupted” the flow of her informants’ everyday lives. She has also conducted anthropological research about multi-ethnic family life in the cosmopolitan port city of Odessa in Ukraine. Currently, she is working on the postdoctoral project “Intimacy and Touch: Embodied Care and the Shaping of Muslim Families in Tajikistan”, funded by The Camel Trust Small Grant for Anthropological Research (2015).

## **Labour Migration and Temporalities of Class: The Case of Nepalese Migrant Workers in South Korea**

**Seonyoung Seo**

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This paper, based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in both Nepal and South Korea throughout 2012 and 2013 explores changing class identities of Nepalese migrants in the processes of Nepal-South Korea labour migrations. Drawing on Cwerner (2001)'s "The Times of Migration", particular focus is given to the temporalities of class and the experiences of migrants in three aspects: the temporary labour migration regime, temporal disjunctures and adaptations in workplaces, and temporal synchronisation in transnational spaces. Firstly, I examine the ways in which Nepalese migrants perceive the downward social mobility involved in the migration processes under the Employment Permit System (EPS). This highlights that the temporariness of their sojourn under the migration regime is perceived by migrants as a "time-out" from their life-course and making the precariousness of life and work bearable. Secondly, illustrating the subjective experiences of Nepalese migrants as underclass workers in unfamiliar workplaces, I argue their experiences are tied up with the temporal disjunctures between times in Nepal and Korea, and their adaptations to the fast-paced industrial time in Korea. Lastly, I show that their class identities are reworked by dividing their working time and social time, and that their lives outside of work develop temporal synchronisation between migrants and their home lands and other parts of the world. The conceptual and empirical insights offered by this study aim to contribute to the discussions of temporalities of migration and class analysis of people on the move.

**Seonyoung SEO** is a PhD Candidate at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. She obtained her BA in Sociology from the University of Yonsei (South Korea) and MA in Migration Studies from the University of Sussex (UK). Before beginning her PhD, she worked for migrant support NGOs and Migrant Trade Union in Korea for about 10 years. Her current research interests are in the areas of labour geography, transnational labour migration in and from Asia, critical development studies, migrant community organisation, identity, and urban space.

## **Temporary Work, Permanent Visas and Circular Dreams: New Migration Paths of Chinese Nationals Living in Perth**

**Catriona F Stevens**

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Australian immigration policy and visa regimes assume a conceptual binary of permanent settlers and of temporary guest workers that respond to labour market demand. For those that stay, there is a further assumption of a linear progression from temporary status to permanent residency to full citizenship. Yet ethnographic research conducted among recent migrants from China living in Perth, Western Australia, and engaged in semi-skilled (trades) and unskilled employment demonstrates that lived realities rarely fit this mould and so renders such assumptions problematic. Many individuals who arrived in Australia with the intention of quickly attaining permanent residency continue to experience the uncertainty, liminality and family disruption that comes with precarious employment and a temporary visa status. Others meanwhile have become permanent residents despite arriving as self-imagined sojourners, employment in Australia very often the next step in a series of temporary labour migrations within China or to other countries in the region. Australian citizenship is rarely preferred over a permanent visa since retaining Chinese citizenship enables migrants to work and provide care more flexibly across borders and to imagine futures that entail circular patterns of on-migration. This empirical data further unpacks the false dichotomy of temporary and permanent migration and contributes to discussions around new models of mobility in Asia.

**Catriona F STEVENS** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Western Australia. Catriona's research project addresses questions of belonging and identity among lower income migrants from mainland China living in Perth. Themes include: the discourse of transience and permanence; education and the second generation; early childhood, aging parents and transnational care giving; and the ways class structures originating in China are reproduced in the Chinese Australian social setting. She also has a research interest in ethnicity and changing ethnic identities, including panethnicity and mixedness. Catriona speaks fluent Mandarin, having received a BA (Hons) in Chinese Studies from Oxford University, taken advanced language training at Peking University and Beijing Language and Culture University, and worked in China for several years. Catriona is a sessional lecturer at Murdoch University where she coordinates units on Chinese society, business and language.

## **Migrant, Interrupted: Temporalities of Mobility in Asia-Australia “Staggered” Migration**

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Migrant mobilities from Asia to Australia are changing, due to both new modes of migration governance and new forms of migrant agency. These changes have significant temporal dimensions – linear and permanent trajectories and paradigms are being replaced by increasingly complex and circular pathways, encompassing varied stages and durations as well as ambiguities around temporariness versus permanence. This paper argues for new ways to understand these “staggered mobilities” between Asia and Australia through a temporal lens. It puts forward a conceptual framing which foregrounds the intersections between multiple “timescales” (institutional, biographic and everyday) and the “mobility course” of migrants’ individual trajectories. It then mobilises this framework in the analysis of data from in-depth narrative interviews with 42 migrants from six Asian source countries, revealing how disruptive senses of time, understood through two key themes of “fractured biographies” and “indentured times”, become key to their experiences of mobility. The paper seeks to understand how the temporal and spatial control of migrants’ mobilities involves the creation of specific temporalities, which operate and intersect in migrants’ lives across various scales. In doing so, the paper also seeks to contribute new conceptual approaches to an emergent scholarship on migration and time.

**Shanthi ROBERTSON** is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. Her research interests centre on migration, transnationalism, citizenship and urban space, particularly the social, cultural and political consequences of contemporary modes of migration governance in the Asia-Pacific. She is currently working on a three-year Australia research council-funded project on temporality, mobility and Asian temporary migrants to Australia. Her work has been published in various international journals, including in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *Citizenship Studies*, *Ethnicities*, *City and Community*, *Journal of Intercultural Studies* and *Population, Space and Place*. Her first book, on transnational student-migrants and the state, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2013.

## **The Queerness of Mobilities and Temporalities: Young Professional Migrants in-between India, Singapore and Beyond**

**Michiel Baas**

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This paper uses a “queer” lens to discuss the conflicting temporal dimensions that characterize migrant trajectories especially in relation to the constraints imposed & opportunities offered by migration “programs” or “regimes”. While the specific architecture of a migration infrastructure is generally designed with the aim of a (controlled) in- and (timely) outflow of various migrant categories in order for the host nation to maximally benefit from their presence, migrants tend to come with their own plans and ambitions which may not always run in tandem with those of the host. This paper is chiefly interested in understanding this from a “temporal” perspective and asks: how do migrants engage with questions of “permanence” and “temporariness” in relation to personal ambitions on the one hand and structural constraints on the other? This paper zooms in on the case of a number of young professional migrants from India who self-identify as gay and who were part of a larger project on mid-level skilled migrants in Singapore. Although formally highly-skilled, their income and employment/visa arrangements makes that we need to understand their position in Singapore as “somewhere” in-between lowly/semi- and highly-skilled (or talent) migrants. While “being gay” was not a factor in their decision to migrate to Singapore, it did emerge as a significant factor in the way they engaged with the direction and temporal dimensions of their own (ongoing) trajectories. Although a Singaporean permanent residency was seen as an important next step, “permanently” residing in Singapore was generally reflected on as something “temporary” since a more fulfilling gay life was imagined to be elsewhere. Drawing on queer (migration) theory, especially in its engagement with the concepts of home, destination and mobility, this paper will not only shed light on the way sexualities give shape and direction to migration trajectories but will also allow for a rethinking of migrant mobilities as inherently “queer” in their divergent nature. This then also necessitates a critical re-examination of the idea of migration “categories” and the way they structure migration as well as get reproduced in migration research.

**Michiel BAAS** is currently Research Fellow with the Asian Migration Cluster at Asia Research Institute. Previously, Dr Baas was a coordinator with the International Institute for Asian Studies (Leiden, the Netherlands), as well as lecturer with the Anthropology Department of the University of Amsterdam, coordinator with the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research and coordinator with the Eutopia Institute (Amsterdam). He received both his PhD and MA in Anthropology from the University of Amsterdam and BA in International Management from the Higher School of Economic Studies. In his work he focuses on questions pertaining the Indian middle class, in particular with respect to issues of mobility, migration and transnationalism. His current project focuses on recent Indian migrants in Singapore.

## **Filipina Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong: Between Permanence and Temporariness in Everyday Life**

**Maren K. Boersma**

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Hong Kong is residence to around 150.000 Filipina domestic helpers who want to earn money for their families and futures. The employment for these migrants is organized in temporary two-year contracts, but since many women stay “multiple contracts” in Hong Kong, their situation may be better characterized as permanently temporary. In this respect, scholars have coined the term “permanent temporariness” that signifies both a specific experience of temporal or circular migration, as well as a sort of “disciplinary mechanism” that informs people’s everyday lives. Lacking in these understandings is, however, a solid theoretical exploration of the temporal dimension.

Based on ethnographic work, individual and group interviews, this paper attempts to further the theoretical discussion on permanence and temporariness by focusing on “lived time” of Filipina domestic helpers in Hong Kong. The paper discusses how temporariness and permanence are enacted and experienced in the everyday lives of Filipina helpers, how they reflect on and cope with this, and, how these inform everyday life decisions and negotiations with their employer. Thereby, the study indicates that temporariness and permanence operate in different fields of everyday life and that the different meanings involved all play a part in understanding “permanent temporariness”.

**Maren K. BOERSMA** graduated (cum laude) from the Research Master in Human Geography & Planning at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. She is currently in the last stage of her PhD project on *Time in Everyday Life of Filipina Domestic Workers in Hong Kong*, at the City University of Hong Kong. Her research interests involve the spatial and temporal organization of work activities and experiences of time and space in everyday life, in the context of the global economy.



## **Migrant Mothers and Left-behind Families: The Rituals of Communication and the Reconstitution of Familyhood across Transnational Space and Time**

**Kristel Anne Acedera**

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This paper examines how transnational care labour migration reconstitutes notions of ‘family’ in Asia through the polymediated spaces of intimate transnational communication. Drawing on a study of Filipino migrant mothers working in Singapore and left-behind family members, we explore how transnational families continue to ‘do family’ through mobile householding and the management of emotional circuits of care despite the temporal and spatial separation of key members. We give particular attention to recent calls to focus on the temporality of migration flows and processes (Cwerner, 2001; Gray, 2011; Robertson, 2014). As migrant trajectories are non-linear and fluid, both migrants and those who stay behind continue to navigate the interstices between permanence and temporariness, repetitions and ruptures, synchronicity and asynchronicity in the work of sustaining “family”. We aim to understand how different kinds of temporalities influence the way migrant mothers and their left-behind families negotiate and reorganise domestic family time transnationally.

**Kristel Anne ACEDERA** is a Master of Social Science Candidate at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. Her current research interest is about the role of communication technologies on transnational familyhood and mediated intimacies. Her previous works on this have been published in *New Media and Society* as well as in a report for the UK’s Department for International Development.

**Brenda S.A. YEOH** is Professor (Provost’s Chair), Department of Geography, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. She is also the Research Leader of the Asian Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, NUS, and coordinates the Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis. Her research interests include the politics of space in colonial and postcolonial cities, and she has considerable experience working on a wide range of migration research in Asia, including key themes such as cosmopolitanism and highly skilled talent migration; gender, social reproduction and care migration; migration, national identity and citizenship issues; globalising universities and international student mobilities; and cultural politics, family dynamics and international marriage migrants. She has published widely in these fields. Her latest book titles include *The Cultural Politics of Talent Migration in East Asia* (Routledge, 2012, with Shirlena Huang); and *Migration and Diversity in Asian Contexts* (ISEAS press, 2012, with Lai Ah Eng and Francis Collins); *Return: Nationalizing Transnational Mobility in Asia* (Duke University Press, 2013, with Xiang Biao and Mika Toyota); as well as a paperback reprint of her book *Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment* (originally published in 1996 by Oxford University Press; reprinted by NUS Press in 2003 and 2013).

## **Bridging Transnational Citizenship and (Im)mobility through Cumulative Inequality: The Case of Returning Retirement Migrants from UK to Sri Lanka**

**Menusha de Silva**

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The transnational retirement migration literature predominantly focuses on migrants who leave their natal country in the global North to settle in countries that offer cheaper cost of living and affordable health care in the global South. However, I draw attention to a less examined category of retirement migrants, viz. skilled immigrants from the global South to the global North who consider a return to their natal country for retirement. My study focuses on the case of relatively wealthy transmigrants from Sri Lanka who have worked and raised families in the United Kingdom, the majority of whom lay claim to both countries through dual citizenship. Drawing on 38 migration narratives of Sri Lankan-British retired migrants, I focus on their temporally varying ideals of retirement and how these migrants fulfill them through the negotiation of (dis)advantages created by their transnational citizenship. Thus, I first illuminate how a return as retirement is influenced by a desire to lead a more elite and comfortable retirement that signifies the migrants' social mobility and transnational affiliations, and how these retirement ideals evolve as the migrants face greater frailty, and the proximity to adult-children and better healthcare facilities become priority. Second, I interrogate the (im)mobilities that emerge due to the differing levels of transnationality the retired migrants wish to maintain during the various phases of their retirement.

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## Intimate Im/Mobilities: Migrating Out of the Social Contract in Asia

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Drawing on over ten years of fieldwork in the migrant receiving countries of the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, and more recent ethnography in migrant sending countries of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Cambodia, this paper foregrounds the intimate lives of migrants as a major decision making factor in seeking mobility (which may result in horizontal or vertical *immobility*) from one part of Asia to another. Contrary to common frameworks of migration that focus on poverty and economic reasons as “push” factors, many of my interlocutors narrate social and intimate reasons for wanting to migrate. Specifically, young women and men describe wanting to migrate not out of poverty, but out of their families and communities. Migrants indicate a desire to migrate away from unwanted or arranged marriages, familial pressures, and social contracts that require them to perform within communal expectations. Some migrate in search of love or adventure abroad, hoping to form new intimate bonds away from the watchful eyes of their social communities. Others feel that they can only express their sexualities when they will not be in a space where they may bring shame on their families. Migrants thus move seeking emotional and social mobility, which may also result in upward class mobility for families back home. This aspect of migration, which I call intimate mobilities, results in the formation of new sexual identities and foregrounds the intimate lives of migrants which have been eclipsed in current literature that focuses exclusively on the circumstances or type of labor of migrants across Asia. In this talk, I explore the multidimensional lives of migrants, chronicling their complex decision making factors as they seek to define and work with and within their mobility and immobility. In so doing, I look at the interconnections between different types of horizontal and vertical mobility and immobility. I draw on ethnographic interviews with migrant men and women moving from South and Southeast Asia to West Asia (or the Middle East), as well as their kin and loved ones who remain “home”, but whose intimate lives are intricately touched by the migration of a loved one. In so doing, I explore the liminality of migrants and their families as they employ flexibility in redefining home, the self, belonging, and subjectivity in and through migration.

**Pardis MAHDAVI**, PhD, is Associate Professor and Chair of Anthropology at Pomona College. Her research interests include gendered labor, human trafficking migration, sexuality, human rights, youth culture, transnational feminism and public health in the context of changing global and political structures. Her first book, *Passionate Uprisings: Iran’s Sexual Revolution* was published with Stanford University Press in 2008, and her second book, *Gridlock: Labor, Migration and “Human Trafficking” in Dubai*, also Stanford University Press, was published in 2011. Her third book, *From Trafficking to Terror: Constructing a Global Social Problem* was published with Routledge in 2013. Her fourth book is forthcoming with Stanford University Press in early 2016 and is entitled *Intimate Im/Mobilities: Love, Labor and Life in a Gulf City*.

## **Culture and Structure in the Adoption of Stepwise Migration by Indonesian and Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers in Asia**

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Stepwise international labor migration is a means for capital- and information-constrained labor migrants to gain access to preferred, but hard-to-access destinations by working sequentially up a hierarchy of easier-to-access overseas labor markets. Within the Asian migrant domestic worker (MDW) industry, only Filipinos have been observed systematically engaging in stepwise migration. Little data exists on the stepwise migration rates of other nationality groups of MDWs. To fill this gap in the literature, we analyzed the migration histories of 635 Filipino and Indonesian MDWs in Singapore and Hong Kong. We find that Indonesian MDWs have statistically lower odds of engaging in stepwise international labor migration as compared to Filipino MDWs. But we do not find support for the differing abilities hypothesis that this is due to Filipinos' higher levels of pre-migration social and human capital. Instead, we find greater support for the differing aspirations hypothesis that Indonesians' distinct homeward orientation leads to their reluctance to engage in stepwise migration. In addition to these cultural factors, our analysis shows that the higher entry barriers of the Hong Kong market compared to the Singapore market seems to necessitate the adoption of stepwise migration by both Indonesian and Filipino MDWs who desire entry into Hong Kong. Our findings highlight the role of culture and structure, and not just capital, in Asian MDWs' adoption of stepwise mobility strategies and trajectories.

**Anju Mary PAUL** is Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Division of Social Sciences at Yale-NUS College. She is an international migration scholar with an interest in emergent patterns of high and low-skilled migration to, from, and within Asia. Her research subjects encompass migrant domestic workers, migrant nurses, and Asian scientists and their spouses. She has published in top sociology and migration journals including *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, and *Migration Studies*.

**Margaret Fenerty SCHUMANN** is a third-year student of Anthropology at Yale-NUS College. Her research interests are Asian migrant domestic workers, the migrant recruitment industry, and cultural studies. She is currently studying the weekly day-off legislation in Singapore, in addition to analyzing the stepwise migration patterns of Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers. Her preferred methodology is mixed-methods analysis, sometimes with novel datasets.

## **“Home is Wherever I Drop My Backpack”: Foreign Talent and their Negotiation of Transience in Singapore**

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Singapore is host to approximately 1.6 million transient migrants who either work or study in the city state. While there has been extensive research on the conditions of low skilled or unskilled workers (e.g. Lyons 2007 and Kathiravelu 2015), little has been written about the experiences of the educated and middle class transnationally mobile workers and students and how they make a home for themselves in the city-state. Through in-depth interviews with 100 international students and educated transnationally mobile workers on their self-perceived identities, social networks, concepts of home, and media and communication use, this paper looks at the strategies used by “foreign talent” migrants to feel at home in Singapore. Here I suggest that while foreign talent migrants develop a combination of creative strategies in order to make Singapore “a home away from home”, being transient negatively affects not only their relationship with Singaporeans but also their relationships with their peers in the home nation. I also suggest that while transient migrants develop close relationships with co-nationals as a strategy for transience, they also maintain/develop class structures while overseas where social mobility is determined by circumstance. In other words, international students and working professionals do not associate with co-nationals who are in low skilled or unskilled work.

**Catherine GOMES** is Senior Research Fellow and Australian Research Council Research Fellow based at RMIT University. Her current research examines the social and cultural spaces occupied by transient migrants in Singapore and Australia. Catherine has also written about ethnicity and race, multiculturalism, xenophobia and the media in Singapore and Australia. She is the founding editor of *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration* to be newly published by Intellect Books.

## **Temporalities and Transnational Workplace: British Academic Migrants' Everyday (Im)Mobilities**

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This paper interrogates the crucial role that temporalities play in influencing British academic migrants' engagement with transnational/local places on an International Branch Campus in China. In this paper, I relate transnational academic (im)mobilities with the notion of place, whilst also demonstrating the pertinent linkages between time, place and individual migration trajectories. In doing so, I question, how "time" impacts mobility scholars' connections with "host" university spaces in practice. I specifically focus on the work, leisure, and living spaces that academic migrants utilise, and seek to find some distinctions/similarities between the ways of using them on "host" and "home" campuses, in order to reveal the underlying social, cultural and academic dilemmas caused by their "temporary sojourn" in China.

The group of British academic migrants being targeted in this research exhibit an explicit pattern of transnational academic mobility – institutionally-organised academic migrants, who continually "circulate" between "home" and "host" academic fields. Gleaning insights from 60 semi-structured interviews with those British academics, and using Bourdieu's notion of habitus and social capital as conceptual tools, the paper argues for a translocal and gradually unfolding understanding of academic migrants' everyday (im)mobilities. It demonstrates that the academic migrants' "circular" journey in transnational space and their engagement with local places on transnational university campus are constitutively entangled. This research seeks to provide a novel angle for looking at the temporalities embedded in academic mobilities, and demonstrates how "time" adds to existing debates on transnational academic migration, grounded transnationalism and transnationalism from "below".

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## Out of Seoul? Korean Student Migration to Indonesia

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This research scrutinizes the increasing flow of Korean students to Indonesia, looking at how they use migration as a venue to shape themselves into desirable, transnational economic subjects. It is partly an effort toward more fine-tuned theorisation of student migration (Findlay *et al*, 2010) amidst the “proletarianisation of skills across the migrant spectrum” (Raghuram, 2012) while also addressing the dearth of literature on Indonesia as a destination for migrants (a positionality eclipsed by dominant research/advocacy focus on the country as sender of low-status workers). Having failed in securing enrolment in the competitive inSeoul universities, Korean students featured in this research employ overseas study as a strategy for upward social mobility and future employability through focus on acquiring “encultured knowledge”. The study also highlights how—in the absence of an active agenda from Indonesia’s higher educational institutions to establish themselves as knowledge brokers—their migration is primarily built upon existing transnationalism first put in motion by Korean corporations’ transnational production and the concomitant mobility of the Korean managerial, entrepreneurial class. In contrast to studies concerned with working student migrants, what is of interest here is not the troubling erosion of boundary between study and work, but the transition from the former point to the latter. Korean student migration will further put mobility & transnationalism in permanence as they seek neither integration with the host society, nor physical return/re-integration to the home country. Rather, they are “transnational wannabes” (Baas, 2010) carving a specialised, productive niche in between.

**Avyanthi AZIS** is a lecturer at the Department of International Relations, University of Indonesia, where she teaches in the areas of international population movements and transnationalism. She is particularly interested in migrants’ agency and their emergence as transnational actors. For the past six years, she has been collecting and recording personal accounts and life stories from urban refugees in Malaysia and Indonesia, examining their narratives of protracted displacement, refugee subject-making, and subjectivity. A former Fulbright scholar, she holds an MS from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. She conducted ethnographic fieldwork among displaced Rohingya population in Peninsular Malaysia in 2009-2010, with support from the Nippon Foundation through its Asian Public Intellectuals (API) Fellowship programme. Her most recent publication is “Urban Refugees in a Graduated Sovereignty: The Experiences of the Stateless Rohingya in the Klang Valley”, *Citizenship Studies* 18:8 (2014), 839-854.

## **“Setting Myself Apart”: Studying Abroad and Upward Social Mobility among Mumbai’s Youth**

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India is experiencing an unprecedented outflow of students seeking tertiary studies abroad. The rapid growth of the “new” Indian middle classes (Fernandes 2000); the changing face of the international education landscape (affordable courses, attractive migration outcomes); and perceptions of a “broken” local education system, have all contributed to attracting young Indians to study abroad. This paper will discuss how transnational mobility attained through studying abroad is imagined as a way to elevate or maintain class status by pre-departure students and their families.

This paper seeks to explore how Mumbai’s youth imagines studying abroad and its potential impacts on their futures, particularly in relation to imaginaries and performances of class and social mobility. Based on interviews conducted with 26 students and their families, as well as various agents and intermediaries involved in international education, this paper will importantly consider the views of young people from vastly different socio-economic backgrounds, as well as different regional communities and religious orders. In doing so, it argues that social mobility through international educational in India cannot be understood without examining deep-rooted communal and religious norms, as well as the socio-economic background of the family sending their child abroad. The difference in study opportunities and knowledge between lower-middle class and upper-middle class students and families is striking, and arguably has a significant impact on their pathways to upward social mobility. Overall, the paper argues that imaginaries of class and social mobility are deeply embedded into imaginaries of the meaning and outcomes of studying abroad for young Indians in Mumbai.

**Nonie TUXEN** is a PhD Candidate in the Interdisciplinary and Cross-cultural Research Program at Australian National University. Based in Mumbai, her current research focuses on the emergence of the Indian middle classes and the desire to study abroad. Her research also explores the infrastructure that facilitates the movement of Indian students between nations. Nonie’s work in Mumbai is funded by an Endeavour Postgraduate Scholarship, awarded by the Australian Government. Nonie’s previous research has explored how women in the Indian diaspora conceptualise ideas of love and marriage.

## From East to West, and Back?: Japanese Self-searching Migrants in the Asia-Pacific Context

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Since the early 1990s, tens of thousands of Japanese young adults have left their home yearly on a Working Holiday visa or a student visa, to realize their long-held dream of living, working, and learning English overseas, most notably in Australia and Canada. Some extend their overseas stay and/or fly back and forth between home and the host country/-ies, developing their wishes to immigrate, although immigration for them often means rights to live and work in the country when they want rather than settling down. Seemingly easy-going and radically blurring the boundaries between temporary residents and immigrants, work and holiday, and youth and adulthood, these migrants, or “self-searching migrants” as I call, are actually in a serious quest of what they really want to do. Based on ethnographic observation and interviews with 127 participants in Vancouver and 50 participants in Sydney, this paper first elucidates implicit gender- and class-based inequalities in Japanese society that facilitates certain social groups’ exodus. Then the paper probes into what overseas (*kaigai*) and English mean to their empowerment. It especially probes into the migrants’ world views which “overseas”, that has originally meant Western, English-speaking countries, gradually includes “Asia” (excluding Japan); and the ironic reality that neither the West nor Asia necessarily empowers them. Overall, the paper explores the (imaginary) meaning of the West and Asia for Japanese self-searching migrants in the Asia-Pacific context.

**Etsuko KATO** (PhD from the University of Toronto) is Professor of Cultural Anthropology at International Christian University, Japan. Since 2001, she has been researching the views on self, work, and the world of young Japanese migrants in Vancouver, Canada. Between 2011 and 2013 she conducted a comparative field research in Sydney, Australia with JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) governmental research grants. Combining psychological anthropology, youth studies and migration studies, she has published several papers in English, including “Self-searching Migrants: Youth and Adulthood, Work and Holiday in the Lives of Japanese Temporary Residents in Canada and Australia” in *Asian Anthropology*, 2013 (12:1), 20-34; and a book in Japanese, *Jibun sagashi no imin tachi: kanada bankubā samayou nippon no wakamono* [Self-searching Migrants: Wandering Young Japanese in Vancouver, Canada] (2009). Another book, *Gurōbaru jinzai towa dareka* [Who are Global Human Resources?] is forthcoming.

**Beyond “Home” and “Host”:  
Family, Professional Status, and Social Mobility  
among Highly Skilled Migrants in Singapore**

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Most studies depict the migration of highly skilled scholars and researchers as a movement between “sending” and “receiving” countries, where individuals must choose between pursuing professional opportunities in traditional centers of knowledge (often in the west) and closeness to family and friends back “home”. This paper seeks to introduce a different narrative of highly skilled migration, beyond the zero sum game of choosing between a “home” and “host” nation. I argue that an increasing number of migrant scholars turn to emerging “knowledge hubs” like Singapore as ideal destinations, where generous university resources allow them to further their academic careers; while budget airfares and communication technology provide easier access to home communities located in nearby countries. Based on in-depth interviews with 40 foreign professors (both tenured and tenure-track) in Singapore, I show how migrant scholars work to maintain two transnational social fields (Levitt 2004): one that keeps them connected to aging parents and family; and another that keeps them “visible” to an international academic community. This project then shows how conflicting notions of social mobility define these fields. For migrant scholars from developing nations, being in Singapore provides a sense of upward mobility, an opportunity to move beyond the underfunded and “unproductive” universities within their home countries. Yet, being in Singapore also represents a sense of downward mobility, especially for individuals who had attained their PhDs in more “prestigious” institutions in the west. These contradicting ideas shape future migration decisions, thus raising new questions in terms of how we define the mobility of highly skilled individuals in today’s knowledge-based economy.

**Yasmin Y. ORTIGA** is Research Fellow from the Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme at Nanyang Technological University. A sociologist by training, Yasmin is interested in the intersection between migration, education, and development. Her work investigates how the pursuit of human capital shapes migration flows, which in turn changes local institutions within both sending and receiving countries. Her previous research investigated how Philippine higher education institutions seek to produce workers for “export”, altering local curriculum and school policies in an effort to educate students for foreign employers. She focused specifically on the experiences of students and educators in Nursing and Hotel Management, two programs linked to perceived labor demands overseas. Currently, she is part of a research team that investigates the mobility and experiences of foreign and returnee scholars in Singapore. Her work has been published in *International Migration Review*, *Social Science & Medicine*, and *Power & Education*.

**CHOU Meng-Hsuan** joined Nanyang Technological University in August 2013 as Nanyang Assistant Professor in the Public Policy and Global Affairs (PPGA) programme. She is the co-PI on the NRF funded project, Singapore in the Global Talent Race. She is also Associate Fellow at EU Centre Singapore and Academic Coordinator for the UACES collaborative research network on the European Research Area. Hsuan was previously a postdoctoral researcher at ARENA – Centre for European Studies, Oslo and a visiting scholar at SCANCOR, Stanford University. Her research interests lie at the intersection of public policy, regionalism and international relations. Hsuan is currently researching how governments in Asia, Europe and North America compete for talent in a globalised world, how scholarly networks are organised across time, and the emergence and evolution of higher education regionalisms.

**Gunjan SONDHI** is Research Fellow within the Division of Public Policy and Global Affairs at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She received her PhD in Migration Studies from the University of Sussex, UK. Her research interests lie within the field of gender studies, and knowledge mobilities. At present, Gunjan is a member of a team working on a project entitled Singapore in the Global Talent Race, funded by the Singapore's National Research Foundation. The project examines the motivations of international scholars and academics to move to Singapore; and evaluates the impact of the Singapore's investment into its research and innovation system both onto the system, and on the wider social milieu. Prior to her current position, Gunjan was a Post-doctoral fellow at York University, Canada. Gunjan's work has appeared in the annual publication, India Migration Report 2015, Journal of South Asian Diaspora, and Compare the journal of British Association of International and Comparative Education.

**WANG Jue** is Assistant Professor at Nanyang Technological University and the PI for the NRF funded project Singapore in the Global Talent Race. She holds a PhD degree from the School of Public Policy at Georgia Institute of Technology. She also has her Master degree in Management and Bachelor degree in Biomedical Engineering. She was a research fellow in Fraunhofer Institute for System and Innovation Research (ISI) in Germany in 2005-2006 and an assistant professor (tenure-track) of public administration at Florida International University in USA during 2008-2011.

## **Materialising Mobility: Migrant Property Investments in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, India**

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Software engineers from Coastal Andhra Pradesh constitute a major fraction of the global Indian IT labour force, and many people from this region have settled abroad – especially in the US. In Andhra, migration has become a focal point for youth aspirations and the centre of the mobility strategies of many families. The transnational field that has formed between Andhra and the US is most visible in the substantial financial resources that are sent back to the region by IT migrants, which are invested mainly in land and real estate. Drawing on fieldwork carried out between 2013 and 2015, this paper traces the transnational, or trans-regional, circulation of bodies and money between Andhra and the US, and asks why migrants use their savings to purchase property in a “hometown” to which few are likely to return. I suggest that it is through such investments that migrants enact and materialise their continuing presence in the home region. The purchase of real estate is not motivated simply by individuals’ desire for accumulation or economic security, but should be understood as a strategy aimed at creating or reproducing social power and position in a cultural context where symbolic capital derives from particular forms of wealth, especially land. The argument is framed by anthropological theories of value, which highlight the symbolic significance of money and property and posit that different spheres of value (kinship, politics, class) are mediated, interlinked and transformed by the circulation of material resources and money through them.

**Carol UPADHYA**, a social anthropologist, is Professor in the School of Social Sciences at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, India. Prof Upadhya’s research focuses on social transformations in contemporary India, especially economic development and class formation, processes of social and spatial mobility, and the globalisation of Indian cities – themes on which she has published several articles. Recently she has worked on international migration, transnationalism, and regional diasporas. Prof Upadhya is the co-director of the Provincial Globalisation Programme and was anchor of the Urban Research and Policy Programme at NIAS. She co-edited (with A.R. Vasavi) the volume *In an Outpost of the Global Economy: Work and Workers in India’s Information Technology Industry* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2008), and her anthropological monograph on the Indian software industry, *Rebooting India: Work, Capital, and Class in an Offshore Economy*, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press (New Delhi, 2016).



## Taking the Mobility Out of Migration

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The Mobility Turn promised, justifiably nothing less than a paradigm shift. However, its substantive, methodological and conceptual ambitions—in which foundational concepts such as identity and culture were to be re-figured by new mobile metaphors—have often been thwarted in practice. Ironically, nowhere has this been more evident than in fields whose substantive foci are intrinsically mobile. Migration Studies, for example, remains concerned with the causes, impacts and meanings of migration in both “sending” and “receiving” societies, but often at the cost of not understanding what takes place betwixt and between them – in short, mobility. I develop the argument through two illustrative so-called innovative developments in Migration Studies, and thereby engage in a constructive dialogue with core themes and assumptions in the conference call. (1) The first is the energy given to the generation of new categories of migrant – “forced migrant”, “leisure migrant” and the like. While this may offer the virtue of analytical clarity, as a kind of “conceptual fixing”, so to speak, it stands askance to exciting possibilities promised by the Mobility Turn. For example, it elides the elusiveness of categories themselves and the possibility of understanding the processes, of negotiation, exclusion and inclusion, by which different migrants “move” between similar such categories that are created by states. (2) The second is the emergence of transnationalism. Heightened mobility has produced new and complex forms of global connection and identification. However, it is fair to say that the study of transnationalism has focused largely on more familiar units of analysis, the transnationalism of national, ethnic and (g)local communities. It would appear that disciplines such as anthropology, from whence the transnationalism perspective came, have overcome their mourning for the loss of authentic otherness that global mobility may entail, but in a most regrettable fashion. Mobility has been rendered, not a challenge to authentic otherness, but a means by which it can be reproduced on a global scale by processes of migration. Or, to put it another way, the laudable aim of the Mobility Turn scholars to represent “flow” has been defeated in Migration Studies by the persistence of “boundary”.

**Andrew DAWSON** is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Melbourne and former Director of Development Studies. His early work in books such as *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement* anticipated the Mobility Turn. Some of his early work on mobilities was selected for a state-of-the-art volume on the issue that includes contributions from the likes of Jacques Derrida and Mike Davis. More recently, he has applied insights from the Mobility Turn to work he has conducted on migration and transnationalism. His main fieldwork considers displaced Bosnians in Europe, Asia (Malaysia) and Australia. And, he has also completed substantial policy-related research on asylum-seeker experiences for both NGOs and government, including the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, UK. Dawson’s forthcoming monograph is entitled *Modern Mobilities*.

## ABOUT THE CHAIRPERSONS & ORGANISERS

**Anjeline DE DIOS** is Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute. She holds a PhD in Geography from the National University of Singapore. Her research interests lie in the geographies of music, creative industries, and labor migration. Her dissertation on Filipino musicians in theme parks, cruise ships, and hotels in Asia investigated these intersections in a transnational labor niche of racialized (and self-racializing) migrant creative workers in a peripheral creative industry. Outside the academe Anjeline is a musician, singer, and meditation teacher, and uses her practice to explore the interfaces of performance, meditation, and participatory music-making.

**Brenda S.A. YEOH** is Professor (Provost's Chair), Department of Geography, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. She is also the Research Leader of the Asian Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, NUS, and coordinates the Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis. Her research interests include the politics of space in colonial and postcolonial cities, and she has considerable experience working on a wide range of migration research in Asia, including key themes such as cosmopolitanism and highly skilled talent migration; gender, social reproduction and care migration; migration, national identity and citizenship issues; globalising universities and international student mobilities; and cultural politics, family dynamics and international marriage migrants. She has published widely in these fields. Her latest book titles include *The Cultural Politics of Talent Migration in East Asia* (Routledge, 2012, with Shirlena Huang); and *Migration and Diversity in Asian Contexts* (ISEAS press, 2012, with Lai Ah Eng and Francis Collins); *Return: Nationalizing Transnational Mobility in Asia* (Duke University Press, 2013, with Xiang Biao and Mika Toyota); as well as a paperback reprint of her book *Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment* (originally published in 1996 by Oxford University Press; reprinted by NUS Press in 2003 and 2013).

**Elaine Lynn-Ee HO** is Associate Professor at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore (NUS). Her research addresses how citizenship is changing as a result of migration. She has conducted research in China, Myanmar and Singapore. Her current research focuses on African student migration to China and border mobilities between Myanmar and China. Prior to joining NUS, she was a lecturer at the University of Leeds. She completed her PhD at University College London, after which she was awarded postdoctoral fellowships at Royal Holloway University of London and the University of British Columbia. Dr Ho serves on the editorial boards of *Citizenship Studies*, *Emotions, Society and Space*, and the *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*. She is also an international member of the ESRC Peer Review College in the United Kingdom.

**Gracia LIU-FARRER** is Professor of Sociology at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Japan. She holds a PhD in sociology from the University of Chicago, and leads the Migration and Citizenship Research Group at Waseda Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies. Her research compares different immigrant groups' economic, social and political incorporation in Japan, as well as examines the identity and belonging issues of Chinese immigrants in different ethno-national social contexts. Her interests also include the global mobility of international students and wealthy Chinese. Her current research project is a sociological investigation of both immigrant and Japanese employees' experiences of globalizing Japanese firms. Through this project, she hopes to understand how individuals define meanings of work and career in an age when social mobility is increasingly accompanied by global geographic mobility and, on the other hand, how changing modes of career mobility impact on Japanese organizations' practices.

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