



WORKSHOP

**GENDER AND NEW EDUCATIONAL
MOBILITIES IN ASIA AND BEYOND**

24-25 April 2025

National University of Singapore

<https://ari.nus.edu.sg/events/educational-mobilities/>

The workshop is organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, and is funded by the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation Grant (IG22-SG007) on “Diligent Daughters: Chinese Women’s Educational Revolution”.

In the post-pandemic era, new patterns of knowledge and talent circulation are transforming Asia and beyond. These shifts in educational mobilities—spanning students, graduates, academics, and institutions—include increasing inter-Asian flows, digital brokerage, Asia-Africa linkages, and gender-sensitive caregiving circuits. These developments are shaped by shifting social, political, and economic realities, including population decline, US-China rivalry, rising Western xenophobia, and the weakening of colony-metropole dynamics in favour of inter-Asian connections. They carry profound geopolitical and geoeconomic implications, influencing brain circulation, higher education financing, nation-building, and economic development.

Gender plays a pivotal yet underexplored role in these dynamics, shaping the drivers, experiences, and outcomes of migration. As states confront declining birth rates, women are outpacing men educationally and delaying marriage across Asia. Gender influences decisions at every level—from family support and migrants’ career paths to institutional and state responses to demographic challenges. However, scholarship often treats gender as secondary, overlooking its centrality in structuring educational mobilities. This workshop positions gender as a core analytical lens to address these gaps.

Drawing from multiple perspectives—including feminist geopolitics, intersectionality, and queer studies—the workshop explores how gender both shapes and is shaped by migration flows, while intertwining with race, class, nationality, sexuality, ability, and generation. It aims to denaturalise gender as a static category and investigate its embeddedness in mobility practices, state regulations, education-to-work transitions, and labour markets vis-a-vis migration actors and infrastructures. Key topics include:

- Gendered multi-scalar flows, linking domestic and international spaces;
- Embodied statecraft, examining how geopolitics and biopolitics intersect in state efforts to manage populations and borders;
- Affective dimensions, exploring how migrants navigate emotions, identities, and relationships;
- Education-to-work transitions, analysing gendered nation-building strategies and labour-market dynamics;
- Intimate politics, considering how family decisions, caregiving, and reproductive choices shape state policies and geopolitical strategies.

This two-day interdisciplinary workshop aims to bring together international, regional, and local scholars to reflect on the role of gender in shaping how emergent educational mobilities are produced, experienced, and governed.

WORKSHOP CONVENORS

Assoc Prof Zachary M. HOWLETT

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore

Dr Kris Hyesoo LEE

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Dr Yi’En CHENG

NUS College, National University of Singapore

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

DATE	TIME (SGT)	PANEL SESSION
24 Apr 2025 (Thu)	09:10 – 09:30	WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
	09:30 – 11:00	PANEL 1 – RESPONSIBILITY & MORALITY IN MOBILE LIVES
	11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 2 – MULTI-/LAYERED-MIGRATIONS
	14:00 – 15:30	PANEL 3 – QUEERING MOBILITIES
	16:00 – 17:30	PANEL 4 – (IM)MOBILITIES & MIGRATION PATHWAYS
	18:15 – 20:00	WORKSHOP DINNER <i>(For speakers and chairpersons only)</i>
25 Apr 2025 (Fri)	09:30 – 11:00	PANEL 5 – MOBILITY FROM/OUT OF THE MARGINS
	11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 6 – CULTURAL POLITICS & KNOWLEDGE FORMATION IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION
	14:00 – 15:00	PANEL 7 – GENDER, SAFETY & SURVEILLANCE
	15:00 – 16:00	PANEL 8 – PATRIARCHY ACROSS THE GLOBAL SOUTH & NORTH
	16:30 – 17:30	PANEL 9 – HISTORICAL LEGACIES & DEPENDENCIES
	17:30 – 18:00	SUMMARY & CLOSING REMARKS

24 APRIL 2025 • THURSDAY

09:10 – 09:30	WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
	<p>ZACHARY M. HOWLETT <i>National University of Singapore</i></p> <p>KRIS HYESOO LEE <i>National University of Singapore</i></p> <p>YI'EN CHENG <i>National University of Singapore</i></p>
09:30 – 11:00	PANEL 1 – RESPONSIBILITY & MORALITY IN MOBILE LIVES
Chairperson	YI'EN CHENG <i>National University of Singapore</i>
09:30	<p>Between Freedom and Responsibilities: Understanding the Migration Intentions of Chinese Female International Students</p> <p>FENGYI LIN <i>Peking University</i></p> <p>JIALU WANG <i>Peking University</i></p> <p>WENQIN SHEN <i>Peking University</i></p>
09:50	<p>The Educational Mobilities of Chinese Migrant Wives and Mothers: A Gender Perspective</p> <p>WEI YANG <i>National University of Singapore</i></p>
10:10	<p>“A Death Sentence of His Wife”: Shifting Gendered Roles and Moral Shock of Hong Kong Migrant Couples in the UK</p> <p>DAVID KWOK KWAN TSOI <i>University of Oxford</i></p>
10:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
11:00 – 11:30	MORNING TEA BREAK
11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 2 – MULTI-/LAYERED-MIGRATIONS
Chairperson	ZACHARY M. HOWLETT <i>National University of Singapore</i>
11:30	<p>A “Way Out to Live”: Internal and Transnational Education Migration of Chinese Youth</p> <p>RINKO ARAI <i>University of Osaka</i></p>
11:50	<p>From Bwana to Outsider: Gender, Migration, and Hostel Youth Culture</p> <p>LEYA MATHEW <i>Ahmedabad University</i></p>
12:10 <i>online</i>	<p>Mobile Unbelonging and Gendered Containment: The Socio-Spatial Lives of Chinese Graduate Returnee Women</p> <p>FRAN MARTIN <i>The University of Melbourne</i></p>
12:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH BREAK

14:00 – 15:30	PANEL 3 – QUEERING MOBILITIES
<i>Chairperson</i>	KAMALINI RAMDAS <i>National University of Singapore</i>
14:00	Rethinking Jia (Family/Home)? Understandings and Experiences of <i>Jia</i> among Queer Chinese Women Migrants in the UK SCARLETT YEE MAN NG <i>University of Oxford</i>
14:20	Crossing Borders, Transgressing Boundaries: Gendered Educational Mobilities from Vietnam to Australia LAN ANH HOANG <i>University of Melbourne</i>
14:40	Navigating Patriarchal Zones: Pakistani Female Students' Gendered Mobility Experience in China YINGJING DU <i>Waseda University</i> MENGWEI TU <i>Swansea University</i>
15:00	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
15:30 – 16:00	AFTERNOON TEA BREAK
16:00 – 17:30	PANEL 4 – (IM)MOBILITIES & MIGRATION PATHWAYS
<i>Chairperson</i>	LAN ANH HOANG <i>University of Melbourne</i>
16:00	Gendered Cultural Dynamics in Regional Student Mobility: Female International Undergraduate Students in Malaysia Navigating Pandemic (Im)mobility Decisions SIN YEE KOH <i>Universiti of Brunei Darussalam & Monash University-Malaysia</i> SHARIFAH AZLINAH BINTI SYED ABDUL RAHIMAN AL-AYDEROSS <i>Independent Researcher</i>
16:20	Gendered Mobilities and Immobilities in a Japanese City: Lifestyle Choices and Predicaments of Women Primary Earners in Osaka LYNNE YUKIE NAKANO <i>Chinese University of Hong Kong</i>
16:40	Digitalization and Gendered (Im)mobilities: Japanese Mothers Negotiating Stepwise Lifestyle Mobilities in Southeast Asia HIROKI IGARASHI <i>Chiba University</i>
17:00	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
17:30	END OF DAY 1
18:15 – 20:00	WORKSHOP DINNER (<i>For Speakers and Chairpersons only</i>)

25 APRIL 2025 • FRIDAY

09:30 – 11:00	PANEL 5 – MOBILITY FROM/OUT OF THE MARGINS
<i>Chairperson</i>	WEI YANG <i>National University of Singapore</i>
09:30	Migration as Survival: Gender, Education, and Financialised Social Reproduction in Rural Northwestern China ZHIFENG CHEN <i>University of Oxford</i>
09:50	Securing the Household's Future: Educational Mobility and Gendered Labour in Neoliberal Cambodia JENNIFER ESTES <i>National University of Singapore</i>
10:10	"Have Children for the Country!": Highly Educated Rural Women and China's 21 st Century Population Politics WILLY SIER <i>Utrecht University</i>
10:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
11:00 – 11:30	MORNING TEA BREAK
11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 6 – CULTURAL POLITICS & KNOWLEDGE FORMATION IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION
<i>Chairperson</i>	KRIS HYESOO LEE <i>National University of Singapore</i>
11:30	Transnational Feminism and the Pursuit of Education: Indonesian Muslim Women's Experiences in Western PhD Programs NOR ISMAH <i>National University of Singapore</i>
11:50	On Being Self-Funded in the Era of Higher Education Regionalism: Transnational Doctoral Education of Vietnamese Lecturers from an Intersectional and Life Course Perspective PHAN PHUONG HAO <i>FPT University – Ho Chi Minh City</i>
12:10	The Impossibility of Being Female, Chinese, and a Doctoral Supervisor in Western Academia: A Critical Examination of Zhihu Comments CORA LINGLING XU <i>Durham University</i>
12:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH BREAK

14:00 – 15:00	PANEL 7 – GENDER, SAFETY & SURVEILLANCE
<i>Chairperson</i>	BERNICE LOH <i>National University of Singapore</i>
14:00	Dangerous Destinations: Gender, Place, and Security in Parents’ University Plans for their Children ANJU MARY PAUL <i>New York University Abu Dhabi</i> SANAM PARWANI <i>New York University Abu Dhabi</i>
14:20	“It is the Land of Opportunity. It is the Land of Safety”: Female International Student Mobilities and Corporeal Learning in Singapore EMMA GRIMLEY <i>Singapore Management University</i>
14:40	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
15:00 – 16:00	PANEL 8 – PATRIARCHY ACROSS THE GLOBAL SOUTH & NORTH
<i>Chairperson</i>	EXEQUIEL CAMARIG CABANDA <i>National University of Singapore</i>
15:00	Provincializing Patriarchy GUNJAN SONDHI <i>The Open University</i> PARVATI RAGHURAM <i>The Open University</i>
15:20	Governmentality of Women’s Aspirations and Mobilities for Higher Education in Asia CHERN YIN LIM <i>Independent Researcher</i>
15:40	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
16:00 – 16:30	AFTERNOON TEA BREAK
16:30 – 17:30	PANEL 9 – HISTORICAL LEGACIES & DEPENDENCIES
<i>Chairperson</i>	JENNIFER ESTES <i>National University of Singapore</i>
16:30	Surmounting Path Dependency: Educational Migration of Women, Mobility and Facilitation in South India V.J. VARGHESE <i>University of Hyderabad</i>
16:50	Navigating Trauma and Memory: Understanding the Impact of “Comfort Women’s” Legacy on Educational Mobility in South Korea SHREYASHI SHARMA <i>Cotton University</i>
17:10	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
17:30 – 18:00	SUMMARY & CLOSING REMARKS
	ZACHARY M. HOWLETT <i>National University of Singapore</i> KRIS HYESOO LEE <i>National University of Singapore</i> YI’EN CHENG <i>National University of Singapore</i>
18:00	END OF WORKSHOP

**Between Freedom and Responsibilities:
Understanding the Migration Intentions of Chinese Female International Students**

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This study explores the tension between freedom and responsibilities in the migration intentions of Chinese female international students. Using the gendered geographies of power as a theoretical lens, this study draws on in-depth interviews with 56 graduate students. Four distinct types of the female international students were identified from the analysis: returnees, stayers, cosmopolitans, and strugglers. Their migration intentions are shaped by multi-scalar forces—policy and institutional structures at the national scale, gender norms at the societal scale, and emotional ties and obligations at the family scale. Through their mobility experiences, these women undergo shifts in their social location, along with evolving understandings of gender-related structures and dynamics. Rather than aligning with conventional notions of economic migration, this group is better understood as lifestyle migrants, prioritizing socio-cultural environments, gender regimes, and the pursuit of autonomy. This study contributes to the literature on international student mobility from a gendered perspective, highlighting how transnational movement can serve as a transformative space for women to reconstruct the self and renegotiate their life trajectories.

Fengyi Lin is a PhD candidate at the Graduate School of Education, Peking University. Her research interests include international student mobility, student migration and post-graduation career development.

Jialu Wang (corresponding author) is a graduate student at the Graduate School of Education, Peking University, with a focus on research related to the international mobility of students and academic exchange between China and Germany.

Wenqin Shen is Associate Professor of Higher Education at the Graduate School of Education, Peking University. His research concerns research training system and doctoral education, history of higher education and internationalization of higher education.

The Educational Mobilities of Chinese Migrant Wives and Mothers: A Gender Perspective

WEI YANG

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Current research on educational mobility has mainly focused on the experiences of international students who migrate to a foreign (and often more advanced) country in search of better education. This paper, drawing on long-term qualitative fieldwork data, expands the research scope to include adult (im)migrants who have settled or struggle to settle permanently in a new country through noneducational channels. Building on my earlier research on “low-skilled” Chinese migrant women pursuing further education and reskilling after getting married in Singapore, the paper employs gender as a central analytical lens through which to (re)examine the women’s educational aspirations and pursuits. It shows that while migrant women’s strategies of mobility through self-development and further education subvert the highly gendered portrayal of migrant wives pursuing mobility via their feminized gender roles and reproductive labor, they often end up taking up “women’s jobs” to fulfill their motherhood duties due to the stratified labour market as well as persisting gender norms and shifting family values in the host and home countries. By focusing on migrant women’s reskilling practices and educational mobilities, the paper attempts to open up a space for discussing transnational female labour and marriage migrants’ educational and mobility aspirations, and making visible their multiple gendered identities.

Wei Yang is Postdoctoral Fellow with the Asian Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in Sociology from Nanyang Technological University. At ARI, she is working on her book manuscript, which explores the social and intimate lives of mainland Chinese female migrant workers employed in the global electronics manufacturing industries in Singapore. As a sociologist and migration scholar, she is particularly interested in examining the relationships between social and spatial mobilities, between the global and the intimate. Her work has been published in journals such as *Pacific Affairs*, *Gender, Place & Culture*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, and *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Her recent article is titled “From ‘disposable labour’ to ‘desirable citizen’: Chinese migrant worker-turned-marriage migrants negotiating citizenship pathways in Singapore”. She has also conducted research on immigrant parenting and middle-class migrant insecurities. Her newly published article is titled “Transnational class anxieties and intensive parenting: middle-class Chinese immigrant parents ‘doing security’ in Singapore”, co-authored with Peidong Yang and Lee Tat Chow and published in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

**“A Death Sentence of His Wife”:
Shifting Gendered Roles and Moral Shock of Hong Kong Migrant Couples in the UK**

DAVID KWOK KWAN TSOI

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This paper examines the shifting gender and moral dynamics of middle-class, heterosexual, married couples in the post-2019 emigration wave from Hong Kong to the UK. Different from the well-researched transnational families, these migrants in their thirties and forties migrated as a nuclear unit and mainly for their children’s education and development. Migration has nevertheless unsettled their life trajectories and social roles, particularly their gendered roles in a nuclear, urban, middle-class familial setting in an East Asian city. Based on pilot fieldwork in London and Manchester in 2024, I found that these Hong Kong migrant couples experienced anxiety toward their changing gendered roles and responsibilities; oftentimes, these changes manifest as deviation from a normative middle-class familial economic model and lifestyle back home—a dual-income nuclear family assisted with a female migrant domestic helper. Drawing on feminist geography, this article reflects upon how migration unhinges migrant couples from a heteronormative life trajectory and an East Asian urban middle-class setting that is often aided by a migrant domestic helper. It delineates the way in which migration shuffles normative, often heteronormative, notions about class, gender, and success of middle-class, heterosexual, East Asian migrant couples, a process in which migrants reconstitute the “moral economy of gendered life”.

David Kwok Kwan Tsoi is a DPhil student at the School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford. David holds an MPhil and an MA in Anthropology from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, respectively. Fully funded by Hong Kong Jockey Club Graduate Scholarship, his doctoral research examines housing market, class formation, and subject formation, in the context of contemporary political migration from Hong Kong to its former colonizer, the UK. His previous works are related to human intimacy, informal economy, the politics of memories and emotions, and state-society relations in Hong Kong and other East Asia cities. His research has appeared in *Men and Masculinities* (2024), and *Sexualities* (2023), and public writing on *Focaal Blog* (2024). He has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Hong Kong, Korea, and Lima, Peru.

**A “Way Out to Live”:
Internal and Transnational Education Migration of Chinese Youth**

RINKO ARAI

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This paper examines the interplay between internal and transnational migration in the context of educational mobility among Chinese youth. Drawing on group interviews and life stories conducted in Japan and China, the study highlights how domestic and international students, particularly those from less-privileged backgrounds, navigate educational transitions and mobility. The findings reveal a nuanced hierarchy of destinations, where Japan’s non-English-speaking status is perceived as a disadvantage within a Western-centric “hierarchy (*bishilian*)” but a strength in terms of its “gold content (*hanjinliang*)”, reflecting its cost-effectiveness. Participants identify “involution” and “survival pressure” as key drivers for studying abroad, viewing education as both a means of self-improvement and a temporary escape from societal expectations in China. Life stories further reveal how studying in Japan allows students to explore alternative life paths, emphasizing existential motivations for self-realization alongside instrumental goals. Participants recount struggles with gendered familial expectations and societal norms while negotiating a “way out to live”. For some, migration is contingent and uncertain, while for others, sexuality shapes their plans. Rural-origin students, shaped by early internal migrations driven by educational disparities, view studying abroad as an extension of these pathways, steering them away from rural origins toward mobile life trajectories.

Rinko Arai is a PhD student at the Graduate School of Human Sciences at the University of Osaka. Her doctoral research explores the educational migration of Chinese youth, particularly examining the interplay between internal and transnational mobility. She focuses on how geographical mobility intersects with other forms of mobilities, such as educational and existential mobilities. Her research employs qualitative methods, including in-depth life-story interviews, to understand the lived experiences of Chinese students navigating gendered sociocultural and economic pressures. Additionally, she conducted group interviews in both Japan and China, revealing how Chinese domestic and international students perceive the concept of “study abroad” in relation to their broader educational and life goals. Her work seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how migration influences educational choices and personal trajectories in a globalised world.

**From Bwana to Outsider:
Gender, Migration, and Hostel Youth Culture**

LEYA MATHEW

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This paper draws on research conducted at a pharmacy college in Gujarat, India, which has received international students since its inception in 1947 and housed them with internal student-migrants. Comparing movement across scale and time, the paper presents varied meanings of foreignness and the spatially overdetermined masculinities and femininities that advanced migrant belonging at the college. During the 1970s and 1980s, diasporic African-Gujarati Bwana were the cool youth at the college and diasporic Bombay youth and rich local student migrants sought their companionship and distinction. The spatiality of youth masculinity typified by the men's hostel was reshaped into a transnational-Western-diasporic aspirational horizon at the college. In the contemporary, international students faced militant vegetarianism and linguistic alienation but mobile masculinities, both spatial and cultural offered forms of participation in college life. Meanwhile, the women's hostel was and continues to be a strictly guarded space. While all women residents, Indian and international, faced restrictions, women with varying degrees of foreignness were rebuked for non-compliance. Yet, they too forged demure mobilities. The paper puts scholarship on education migration in conversation with that on hostels and youth culture to explore the significance of gendered youthful becoming for migrant belonging.

Leya Mathew is Assistant Professor at Ahmedabad University, India. Her research focuses on educational desire and mobility in the context of marketization. She recently co-edited a special issue on gender and educational mobility in China and India, which is forthcoming in *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*.

Mobile Unbelonging and Gendered Containment: The Socio-Spatial Lives of Chinese Graduate Returnee Women

FRAN MARTIN

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This paper, based on the follow-up study to *Dreams of Flight* (Martin 2022), draws on semi-structured interviews with 34 Chinese women who studied at universities in Australia and are now navigating their post-study lives. Focusing on the experiences of those who have returned to China (17), I will consider an emerging contrast in these women's socio-spatial experiences after their return. Findings to date show that on one hand, the experience of some is shaped by their internalization of the late-capitalist imperative to embody a mobile, "flexible" professional workforce. This group moves frequently along both domestic and sometimes transnational routes for work and leisure. However, they may experience a high personal toll for this mobility, which can entail social disconnection and alienation from a sense of belonging-in-place. On the other hand, some returnees find their lives geographically constricted by gendered constraints including the need to provide childcare, and/or the classed and gendered expectations of family elders. For this group, professional advancement amid ongoing mobility feels like a lost opportunity. Reflection on selected stories will allow re-theorization of the patterning of mobility, locality, and in-process gendered subjectivity for this group of im/mobile graduates in relation to existing conceptualizations of gender and mobilities.

Fran Martin is Professor of Cultural Studies and co-convenor of the Asian Cultural Research Hub at The University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on the transformations that globalization is wreaking in media, gender, sexuality and cultural identity across the transnational Chinese-speaking world. Fran is engaged in a multi-phase longitudinal study of the social and subjective experiences of fifty+ young women from China through the years of their university study in Australia and after. Fran's research also addresses television, film, literature, digital cultures and other forms of cultural production across Taiwan, the mainland People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and the worldwide Chinese diaspora. Her research monographs include *Dreams of Flight: The Lives of Chinese Women Students in the West* (Duke U.P., 2022), *Telemodernities: Television and Transforming Selfhood in Asia* (with T. Lewis and W. Sun, Duke U.P., 2016); *Backward Glances: Contemporary Chinese Cultures and the Female Homoerotic Imaginary* (Duke U.P., 2010); and *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film and Public Culture* (Hong Kong U.P., 2003).

**Rethinking Jia (Family/Home)?
Understandings and Experiences of *Jia*
among Queer Chinese Women Migrants in the UK**

SCARLETT YEE MAN NG

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Sociologists caution that when we talk about family, there is a dominant and normative understanding of “the family” as the nuclear family that centres on heteronormativity and biological ties and reproduction. However, is family or kinship “always already heterosexual” (Butler, 2002)? Drawing on in-depth interviews with 44 women migrants (aged 20-45 years old) who self-identified as non-heterosexual and came to the UK for higher education, this research asks: To what extent and in what ways does migration to the UK impact queer Chinese women migrants’ understandings and experiences of *jia* (family/home) beyond biological ties? My findings reveal complex and ambivalent understandings and experiences of *jia* among queer women migrants in their migration to the UK. Some queer Chinese women migrants form their chosen families, including same-sex civil partnership or marriage, communal living with friends, and queer Chinese political activism in the UK, considering the chosen families equally or even more significant than their natal families in China. In contrast, others emphasise that their natal families remain utterly indispensable and irreplaceable. This talk will primarily focus on the motives and meanings behind queer Chinese women migrants’ formation of chosen families in the UK.

Scarlett Yee Man Ng (she/her) is a DPhil candidate at the Department of Sociology, University of Oxford. Her doctoral research is a qualitative study examining intimate relationships of queer Chinese women migrants in the UK. The research examines topics, like gender and sexuality, intimacy, queer migration, race/ethnicity, intergenerational relationship, (unconventional) family formation, and mental health. Believing in the importance of public sociology, Scarlett also works with organisations, NGOs, and government departments, including Migration Museum UK, South Cambridgeshire District Council, KPMG, Queer China UK, QTI Coalition of Colour, etc., and hosts seminars and workshops on subjects related to gender, sexuality, queer migration, feminism, and discrimination laws in the UK. Scarlett was the co-director of the Queer Asia Film Festival in 2022 and is a trained mental health first aider in the UK.

**Crossing Borders, Transgressing Boundaries:
Gendered Educational Mobilities from Vietnam to Australia**

LAN ANH HOANG

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This paper explores gendered dimensions of student mobilities through the experiences of 46 Vietnamese migrants to Australia, and extensive non-participant observation conducted both online and offline between 2019 and 2024. It examines how transnational mobilities extend beyond the pursuit of educational and professional ambitions to encompass a deeper, more personal quest for self-determination and social recognition. For many migrants, particularly women and gay men, migration presents a transformative opportunity to escape the constraints of rigid gender norms embedded in Vietnamese society. Empowered by greater economic resources, geographical distance from Vietnam, and the influence of a more progressive social environment, my research participants feel confident to challenge conservative gender norms and assert their chosen identities in Australia. This study highlights how transnational mobility acts as a vehicle for resisting and redefining oppressive gender ideologies, profoundly shaping gender identities and relations within the context of Global Vietnam

Lan Anh Hoang is Professor in Development Studies, School of Social and Political Sciences, the University of Melbourne, Australia. She is author of *Vietnamese Migrants in Russia: Mobility in Times of Uncertainty* (Amsterdam University Press 2020), winner of the Association of Mainland Southeast Asia Scholars Book Prize in 2022, and co-editor of *Transnational Labour Migration, Remittances, and the Changing Family in Asia* (2015) and *Money and Moralities in Contemporary Asia* (2019). Lan's research on migration and gender has also been published in many prestigious journals including *Gender and Society*, *Gender, Place and Culture*, *Global Networks*, *Population, Space and Place*, *Geoforum*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Mobilities*, *Asian Studies Review*, and *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Lan recently completed a study on brokerage and migrant networks in the Vietnam-Australia migration corridor and is currently doing fieldwork on Vietnamese undocumented migrants in Japan.

Navigating Patriarchal Zones: Pakistani Female Students' Gendered Mobility Experience in China

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This study examines the gendered experiences of Pakistani female postgraduate students in China, exploring how they navigate gender norms between two highly patriarchal societies. Pakistan is the leading source country for degree-seeking international students in China, yet women are disproportionately in the minority. Through semi-structured interviews with 17 female participants, this study investigates their motivations for studying in China and how this migration shapes their gendered expectations regarding education, career, and marriage. Studying abroad for a postgraduate degree challenges the social norm of entering early marriage and being a good wife/mother. Findings reveal that these women renegotiate gender by partially maintain their South Asian Muslim traditions while transforming their gender identities in a relatively “safe” East Asian social space. Their female identity is evolving, with different compromises in hijab wearing, gender segregation, and marriage choices of arranged marriage and free love. Upon graduation, they cultivate a cosmopolitan identity, as their time in China fosters aspirations to remain abroad or pursue opportunities in other countries instead of returning to Pakistan. This study contributes the wider literature that regards transnational education a site of gender transformation by focusing on the evolving gender norms in South Asian Muslim societies in the background of South-South educational mobility.

Yingjing Du is a PhD candidate in International Relations at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan. Her research examines the inbound international student mobility to China under the Belt and Road Initiative. Her research focuses on the decision-making and graduation trajectories of degree students. Using a qualitative empirical research method, it aims to analyse how individual experiences and aspirations intersect with China's role in intercontinental socio-economic exchanges. Her supervisor is Gracia Liu-Farrer, and her deputy supervisor is Kazuo Kuroda. She received the Haraguchi Memorial Fund twice (in 2022, 2024) and did several fieldwork trips in China.

Mengwei Tu is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Swansea University, Swansea, UK. Mengwei's research focuses on international migration, specifically on two streams: first, she looks at international student cohorts both from China and to China and investigates their post-study career and migration trajectories; second, she explores the familial side of highly skilled migration by conducting qualitative longitudinal research on transnational families between China and the UK. Her academic career across China and the UK has enabled her to carry out empirical research in both countries, thus developing a transnational and comparative lens to her research subjects. Mengwei is the author of *Education, Migration, and Family Relations between China and the UK* (Emerald, 2018). She also leads a funded project “Student/graduate from Belt-Road countries in China: migration networks and career trajectory” (2018-2023).

**Gendered Cultural Dynamics in Regional Student Mobility:
Female International Undergraduate Students in Malaysia
Navigating Pandemic (Im)mobility Decisions**

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Gendered cultural dynamics is a critical yet underexplored dimension in international student mobility (ISM). This is especially the case for regional student mobility (RSM) within Asia, where gender and culture figure significantly in study mobility decisions with substantial parental and familial influence. Drawing from interviews with seven female undergraduate international students in Malaysia conducted in 2021, the paper shows that their pandemic (im)mobility decisions have been shaped, enabled, and facilitated by gendered cultural dynamics. Existing familial mobilities constituted a key facilitator for the respondents' RSM to Malaysia and their pandemic (im)mobility decisions. The immobile option (i.e. staying put in Malaysia during the pandemic) was desirable for respondents from conservative and patriarchal societies as they could enjoy greater personal freedom living away from their families. Paradoxically, their freedom was granted precisely because they had participated in RSM to a study destination that their parents considered to be culturally safe. While the respondents are similarly motivated by the pursuit of "personal freedom", their subjective interpretations regarding what this means may be different to their counterparts who engage in ISM further afield. Attention to the gendered cultural dynamics of RSM thus opens up space for a critical (re)examination of extant ISM theories.

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Sharifah Azlinah is an independent researcher and sustainability professional specialising in human rights and social standards within global palm oil supply chains. Her academic interests span labor rights, sustainability, mobility, and the intersection of gender and culture.

Gendered Mobilities and Immobilities in a Japanese City: Lifestyle Choices and Predicaments of Women Primary Earners in Osaka

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This paper considers new educational and career mobilities and lack of mobility (immobilities) in urban East Asia by considering the lifestyle choices and predicaments of women primary earners in Osaka. Women who are the primary earners in their families are an important and growing segment of the population. They include women who are nevermarried, divorced, widowed, and women who for various reasons earn more than their husbands or partners. Academic and popular literature has tended to represent women primary earners as either impoverished single mothers or as successful career women when in fact most are neither. Rather, most have jobs that enable them to modestly support themselves and others. Based on interviews with 30 women primary earners in Osaka, a city with large numbers of such women, this paper investigates women primary earners' educational and career trajectories. The paper shows that study participants have experienced various kinds of mobilities and "immobilities". While some study participants have sought geographic mobility to explore career and lifestyle opportunities, many experience or even desire social and economic immobility as a way to maintain lifestyle stability and avert precarity.

Lynne Yukie Nakano is Professor and Chair of the Department of Japanese Studies and Co-Director of the Gender Research Centre, Hong Kong Institute of Asia Pacific Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Lynne is interested in researching various kinds of marginal social positions in Japan and other East Asian societies. In particular, she has studied single women, women primary earners in their families, retirees, special education programs, and support groups for people with disabilities. She is the author of *Making Our Own Destiny: Single Women, Opportunity, and Family in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo* (University of Hawaii Press 2022).

Digitalization and Gendered (Im)mobilities: Japanese Mothers Negotiating Stepwise Lifestyle Mobilities in Southeast Asia

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Existing scholarship on the educational migration of East Asian families to non-traditional destinations such as Southeast Asia and Europe has focused on families' motivations and structural environments that facilitate their decisions. However, what's missing is an understanding of their life course trajectories and experiences after their relocation (Waters 2024) and the effect of digitalization upon them. Drawing on the framework of Ghassan Hage's "existential (im) mobilities" (2009), this paper aims to investigate how Japanese parents, especially mothers, in Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia) evaluate their own transnational life course in relation to digitalization accelerated by the pandemic. My interview findings indicate a gendered dimension to existential mobility among Japanese families during "stepwise lifestyle mobilities" (2024). Fathers often hold greater influence over life course decisions, contributing to mothers' feelings of existential immobility. While some mothers find fulfillment in aligning their life course with their children's development, those with career ambitions experience varying degrees of (im)mobility. Mothers with de-territorialized skills, facilitated by digital nomad visas, are better equipped to navigate work and family life. In contrast, mothers with location-bound skills often struggle to reconcile their career aspirations with their family responsibilities.

Hiroki Igarashi is a sociologist and Japan specialist, currently Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Global and Transdisciplinary Studies at Chiba University, Japan, and a visiting scholar at the Department of Japanese Studies, National University of Singapore. His research interests lie at the intersection of migration studies, sociology of education, gender, and social stratification and inequality. More specifically, he is interested in the transnational experiences of Japanese families in Southeast Asia via children's education and the de-territorialized forms of cultural capital. His key publications include "Navigating Stepwise Lifestyle Mobilities via the Global South: Japanese Migrant Families' Negotiation of Educational and Lifestyle Aspirations in Malaysia" (*Global Networks*, 2024) and "Cosmopolitanism as Cultural Capital: Exploring the Intersection of Globalization, Education and Stratification" (*Cultural Sociology*, 2014 with Hiro Saito).

**Migration as Survival:
Gender, Education, and Financialised Social Reproduction in
Rural Northwestern China**

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This paper explores how educational inequality and an acute marriage squeeze intersect to produce a crisis of male dropout in rural Northwestern China. Drawing on 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork—including participant observation and 107 semi-structured interviews with students, parents, teachers, and local officials—it argues that both push factors, such as starkly substandard rural schools, restrictive “birdcage” boarding regimes, and fierce academic competition, and pull factors, notably a severe shortage of marriageable women driving bride prices up to 400,000 Yuan (approximately \$57,000 USD), reshape local perceptions of responsible manhood. Rather than being viewed as personal failure, dropping out becomes culturally justified and even encouraged. Facing seemingly insurmountable academic barriers, boys increasingly regard early labour migration, particularly to Tibet, as a pragmatic strategy to build the financial foundation necessary to avoid lifelong bachelorhood. Those who persevere in school typically do so only if their families can afford substantial investments and they show promise of obtaining *bianzhi*, a coveted government position ensuring advantageous marriage negotiations. For most, exiting school early is accepted—sometimes endorsed by the community—as the responsible choice. This interplay of educational failures and financial pressures reveals how anxieties surrounding marriage have hijacked the meaning of formal education, deepening structural inequalities and transforming gendered life aspirations into pragmatic survival strategies. The findings highlight a broader reproductive crisis where the financialisation of both education and marriage intensifies existing inequalities.

Zhifeng Chen is a DPhil candidate in International Development at the University of Oxford. His research focuses on demographic pressures, educational inequality, migration, and marriage in rural northwestern China, informed by 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork. Zhifeng received the 2024 Early Career Researcher Prize from the British Association of Chinese Studies for his work on rural education.

Securing the Household's Future: Educational Mobility and Gendered Labour in Neoliberal Cambodia

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In Cambodia, neoliberal economic policies have resulted in untenable agrarian livelihoods, limited state support for social reproduction, and widespread indebtedness. Against this backdrop, many rural families see children's education as the best way to secure their household's economic future. With a secondary school diploma, youth can achieve social and spatial mobility by attending university and qualifying for urban, white-collar careers. However, Cambodia's nominally free education system is semi-privatized, requiring that students spend significant amounts of time and money to graduate. Drawing on ethnographic research in a rural community, this paper explores the gendered labor that underpins this educational landscape. Women, including daughters who are students themselves, do the majority of domestic work that allows youth to dedicate time to schooling. Many students also rely on the paid labor of siblings who have dropped out of school and migrated to enter gendered job markets in urban areas and abroad. In particular, households receive remittances from young women working in garment factories. Building on feminist scholarship on social reproduction in anthropology and related disciplines, this paper illustrates how educational mobility is underpinned by gendered relations of dependency that span multiple bodies and tie rural households into precarious urban labour markets.

Jennifer Estes is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the National University of Singapore. Her work is located at the intersections of economic anthropology, the anthropology of youth, and the anthropology of education. She is interested in how processes of privatization and financialization rely upon and rework intergenerational relationships while deepening inequalities. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in a rural Cambodian community, she has written about how commercial microfinance, translocal householding, and rising wedding costs, among other factors, shape the lives of youth and their families. Her current book project, *Betting on Education: The Costs of Schooling for Cambodian Youth*, illustrates how the semi-privatization of state schooling compels students to speculate about how best to invest time and money into their education in ways that reinforce class inequalities.

**“Have Children for the Country!”:
Highly Educated Rural Women and China’s 21st Century Population Politics**

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The number of babies born in China has decreased by fifty percent in the past seven years. This article poses that to understand the country’s rapid demographic change, we need to take a mobilities perspective. Focusing on the millions of rural Chinese women who became the first persons in their families to go to university in the past decade, a major driver of rural-to-urban migration, this paper explores how these women experience, avoid, contest, and change practices and ideas related to marriage and childbearing in the context of their increasing mobility and the country’s rapidly declining birth rate.

Highly educated rural women have long been subjected to state campaigns that encouraged their participation in higher education. However, after their graduation, they still face the pressure to marry and have children. This tension intensified after the Chinese government made a policy U-turn when it started campaigning for larger families in 2021 in response to the growing anxiety about the country’s future “underpopulation”. This paper explores the tensions between women’s new identities as rural-to-urban education and their roles as daughters-in-law and wives in rural families. It analyses educated rural-urban migrant women’s experiences in relation to narratives in China’s 21st century population politics, that have shifted from having a focus on “quality” to prioritising “quantity”. It employs the idea of the “human mine”, an internet term highlighting people’s biopolitical exploitation and used by netizens to lay bare the tense relationships between the Chinese state and a new generation of highly educated rural women.

Willy Sier is Assistant Professor in Department of Anthropology, Utrecht University. She received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Amsterdam in 2020. Willy has conducted long-term fieldwork in China, where she lived for over 8 years, and produces both written and visual output. Her book manuscript *Dream Chasers: Becoming Urban in the New China*, is currently under review.

Transnational Feminism and the Pursuit of Education: Indonesian Muslim Women's Experiences in Western PhD Programs

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This study explores the experiences of Muslim women from traditional backgrounds in Indonesia who pursue PhD studies in Europe, the United States, and Australia, focusing on how gendered multi-scalar flows connect domestic and international spaces. “Gendered multi-scalar flows” refers to the interaction between local forces (such as family, community, and national expectations in Indonesia) and global forces (including academic institutions, Western ideals, and cross-cultural encounters) that shape these women’s academic and personal lives. Using a transnational feminist framework, the study investigates how these women manage tensions between traditional gender roles and the demands of Western academic settings. Through textual analysis of personal stories and interviews, the research addresses three key questions: (1) How do Muslim women from traditional Indonesian backgrounds understand and navigate gendered expectations from their families and communities while studying abroad? (2) How do global academic institutions and migration experiences shape their identities and agency as women in Western contexts? (3) How do these women resist, adapt, or transform their gender, religious, and cultural identities while navigating both local and international academic environments? This study offers a nuanced analysis of the relationships between local traditions and global academic experiences, shedding light on the agency of women in transnational educational contexts.

Nor Ismah is Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She holds a PhD from Leiden University (2023) and an MA from the University of Hawaii at Manoa (2012). Her research focuses on gender studies, women’s knowledge production, media, and Islam in Indonesia. Her forthcoming book, *Women Issuing Fatwas: Female Islamic Scholars and Community-Based Authority in Java, Indonesia*, is poised to make a significant impact.

**On Being Self-Funded in the Era of Higher Education Regionalism:
Transnational Doctoral Education of Vietnamese Lecturers from an
Intersectional and Life Course Perspective**

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Transnational doctoral education of faculty members in private universities in Vietnam has been an under-studied issue, as previous research largely focuses on the group of government staff sent to funded training programmes in developed Western countries. Meanwhile, driven by the recent marketing campaigns to promote English-based doctoral programmes in internationally recognised universities in Malaysia and Thailand, and the demands of Vietnamese (private) universities to hire PhD holders, it has become increasingly popular for self-funded Vietnamese doctoral students to undertake their PhD in these neighbouring countries. This paper seeks to apply the concept of intersectionality and life course approach to rethinking transnational education of Vietnamese self-funded doctoral students in the context of international student mobility and ‘higher education regionalization’ in Southeast Asia. Through qualitative interviews with Vietnamese faculty members of private universities studying in Malaysia and Thailand, the paper illustrates how gender intersects with age and marital status to determine their choices of location for transnational doctoral education, which I term “mobilities of convenience”. The paper also suggests that academic partnerships partly motivate the self-funded doctoral students, as they are more likely to sign up for doctoral programmes in overseas institutions which engage in existing or future MoUs with their home universities.

Phan Phuong Hao holds a PhD in International Development from the University of East Anglia (UK). She was previously affiliated with the Institute of Cultural Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (Vietnam) and the Institute of Education, University College London (UK). She is currently working at FPT University, Ho Chi Minh City Campus, as Lecturer in Soft Skills. Her research foci include gender, environment, education and development. She has published her papers in *Asian Journal of Women’s Studies*, *Ecology and Society*, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *Higher Education* and *Asian Population Studies*.

**The Impossibility of Being Female, Chinese, and
a Doctoral Supervisor in Western Academia:
A Critical Examination of Zhihu Comments**

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While it is well known that being female and a doctoral supervisor is akin to dismantling the ‘father’s house’ in the highly masculine-dominated doctoral supervision sphere in the West (Grant, 2023), what happens when this female doctoral supervisor is also ethnic/racially Chinese? Drawing on qualitative data (around 450 comments) collected from China’s largest question-and-answer knowledge sharing platform, Zhihu, this article argues that these doctoral supervisors are confronted with a double bind of irreconcilable demands between being ‘the official ideal woman’ (Liu, 2014, p. 21) as shaped by China’s patriarchal traditions and being the ‘ideal doctoral supervisor’ in Western academia which is ‘a normatively masculine position’ (Grant, 2023, p. 2). Moreover, these Chinese female doctoral supervisors are subjected to unequal gendered labor division in the domestic sphere and in academia, compelling them to either having to sacrifice their career for family thus compromising their doctoral supervising capacity and reputation, or remaining single and without child and be regarded as ‘problematic’ and ‘undesirable’ doctoral supervisors. Together, these demeaning portrayals of the female Chinese doctoral supervisors reflect the deeply patriarchal and misogynistic as well as self-racist tendencies displayed by the social media users of Zhihu.

Cora Lingling Xu (PhD Cambridge) is Associate Professor at Durham University, UK. Cora is a sociologist interested in education mobilities and social inequalities. Her research examines how the intersection of class, gender, ethnicity, rural-urban divides, time, and geopolitics can shape social agents’ educational and life trajectories. Cora draws heavily on social theories to inform her empirical research, including Bourdieu’s theory of practice, sociology of time, and postcolonial theories. She is an executive editor of *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. Cora was a visiting scholar at the Centre for International Higher Education (CIHE), Boston College, USA, in Spring 2025. Her latest book, *The Time Inheritors* (SUNY Press, 2025) reveals the role of time in reproducing inequalities as students navigate rural-to-urban, cross-border and transnational education across and beyond China.

Dangerous Destinations: Gender, Place, and Security in Parents' University Plans for their Children

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There continues to be a gender gap in international student migration from South Asia, which has been linked to the patrilocality of many South Asian families and gendered concerns about daughters' safety if they travel overseas on their own. But studying at a university in their origin country can also be dangerous for female South Asian students. When studying in either the home country or overseas may pose safety concerns, how do South Asian expatriate parents navigate the university selection process for their daughters? To explore this question, we conducted an online survey of 106 South Asian expatriate parents in the UAE with university-age children who had three broad destination options: sending their children back to their home country for university; sending them to a university in the UAE; or sending them to a third country, often in the West. Our survey results, follow-up in-depth interviews with 30 of these parents, as well as interviews with four university admissions consultants, revealed that many expatriate parents, particularly mothers, believe in giving their daughters and sons equal educational opportunities. In fact, a higher proportion of daughters in our sample were sent overseas to universities in the West, compared to sons. At the same time, parents still exhibit gendered concerns for their daughters, when it comes to post-migration decisions like destination selection, housing, and proximity to family friends or relatives. Despite these concerns, some parents argue that the UAE is *too* safe and that their children need to learn how to deal with danger to develop their independence and survival skills. Overall, our research reveals that parents navigate a balance between protecting versus toughening their children, which in some cases, justifies sending them to "dangerous destinations".

Anju Mary Paul is Professor of Social Research and Public Policy at New York University Abu Dhabi. She is an international migration scholar with research interests that include emergent migration patterns, particularly to, from, and within Asia and the Middle East, gender and labor, globalization, domestic work, and migration policy. She is the award-winning author of *Multinational Maids: Stepwise Migration in a Global Labor Market* (Cambridge University Press 2017) and *Asian Scientists on the Move: Changing Science in a Changing Asia* (Cambridge University Press 2021).

Sanam Parwani is a recent graduate of New York University Abu Dhabi, where she majored in social research and public policy. She focuses on mixed-methods research at the intersection of gender, health and migration, with a particular interest in impacts on South Asian and South Asian diaspora communities. Currently, Sanam serves as a research coordinator at Children's National Research Institute (Washington D.C.) studying gender diversity and neurodiversity among youth and young adults.

**“It is the Land of Opportunity. It is the Land of Safety”:
Female International Student Mobilities and Corporeal Learning in Singapore**

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Singapore has a reputation as a safe place, and this perceived safety can have a significant impact on the freedom of mobility that young people are granted. As these freedoms are often dictated by gendered norms, young women experience greater change when they move from a place of perceived danger to one of safety. This is often experienced corporeally, as the body feels both safety and the excitement of freedom in the new environment. For young women who move to Singapore for their education, they navigate their own newfound feelings of freedom derived from physical safety, as well as expanded freedom from parental surveillance. However, they also encounter moments of limitation upon this newfound sense of safety. Emerging from a larger project investigating the role of spaces within and beyond the school in fostering feelings of (un)belonging amongst Indian international students, this paper draws on 28 interviews with female students studying in Singapore at the high school and undergraduate levels. We argue that Singapore’s perceived safety enables young women to form connections to the city and their peers on their own terms. However, this corporeal learning of safety still contests against parental surveillance and other perceived risks that exert limits on their ability to completely exercise their newfound freedoms.

Emma Grimley is a research assistant at the College of Integrative Studies, Singapore Management University. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Yale-NUS College in Urban Studies and Anthropology. Her research interests can be broadly summarised as how the individual, everyday experience of urban life interplays with wider questions of identity, citizenship, and belonging. She has a particular interest in international education, especially at the pre-university level, looking at how early experiences of migration and exposure to ideals of ‘global citizenship’ shape personal development and feelings of connection to particular places. She is currently a collaborator on a project looking at feelings of (un)belonging and integration amongst Indian international students in Singapore and Toronto, as well as working on a project investigating the development, transfer, and implementation of smart city policies across Southeast Asia.

Provincializing Patriarchy

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Patriarchy had been widely studied across the globe. However, more recently, recognition of the ways in which political and economic structures too influence gendered oppression and how this is mediated by the welfare state has led researchers to use the language of gender regimes when it comes to gender in the global North. This has meant that the language of patriarchy is primarily used to understand the global South. This paper reverses the gaze by looking at the British IT workplace through the eyes of migrants. It identifies ways in which migrants encounter patriarchy in the UK. We provincialise patriarchy through their gaze. Provincialising is an analytical practice that involves undoing Western categories, assumptions, and paradigms as the normative truth and instead viewing these categories as they operate in Europe through the lens offered by another region. It requires attending to the spatio-temporal implications of underpinning concepts and categories that influence how patriarchy is generally understood and unsettling them. Towards this, we first, we use the tactic of making the familiar strange. This is done through exploring what migrant Indian women saw about patriarchy in the global North workplaces. Secondly, we highlight how this is experienced through interactions between production and social reproduction. Finally, we multiply the nature of patriarchy by exploring how it is racialised. Across these three moves, we follow Chakrabarty's operationalisation of Guha's gesture of inversion by reading for abundance in the global South and identifying how patriarchy's spatio-temporal attachment to the UK is usually obscured. The paper concludes by pointing out why such spatio-temporal moves are necessary for geographical research.

Gunjan Sondhi is Senior Lecturer in Geography and Director of the Centre for Global Challenges and Social Justice (GCSJ) at The Open University. Gunjan's expertise lies within the interplay of gender and class within skilled and educational mobilities focusing on Asia, Europe and North America. This work reorients gender and migration research by drawing on migrant experiences to understand patriarchy and other structural inequities in the destination countries. Gunjan has successfully led several funded projects, engaged in public policy discussions and is widely published, bridging academic inquiry with societal impact, having published in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Global Networks*, *Population Space and Place*, and *Migration Policy and Practice*, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) publication. She is a board member of the International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe (IMISCOE) Standing Committee on Reflexivities in Migration Studies.

Parvati Raghuram is Professor in Geography and Migration at the Open University. She has published widely on gender, migration and development and on postcolonial theory. Her recent work explores the migration of skilled and lesser-skilled women, particularly Indian migrants. Her report on Indian Women migrants in the EU was published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2022. One of her recent projects, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), is titled "Decolonising Peace Education in Africa", in which she examines care ethics—an area of long-standing interest. Additionally, she participates in projects such as "Migration for Inclusive African Growth" and "Writing International Student Migration in Africa". She won the prestigious Murchison Award of the Royal Geographical Society in 2016. In the UK, she actively serves on the steering group of the race working group at the Royal Geographical Society. She is also the Chair of the Executive Board of International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe (IMISCOE), and co-edits the book series *Mobility and Politics* (Palgrave), while serving as an associate editor of *Geographical Journal*.

Governmentality of Women's Aspirations and Mobilities for Higher Education in Asia

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As higher education is increasingly framed as a pathway to women's empowerment and social transformation in international policy and development narratives, targeted interventions have emerged to expand participation for disadvantaged young women. Through a case study of an all-women college dedicated to empowering women from underserved communities across Asia, including in-depth interviews with students, alumni, and staff, this paper examines the role of the college in shaping women's aspirations for higher education and motivating their educational mobilities. Drawing on a Foucauldian governmentality framework and the concept of "doxic aspiration" (Zipin et al., 2015), this study demonstrates how institutional practices within a student recruitment operation function as technologies of government, shaping aspirations and enabling mobilities. Key among these technologies is a mission-driven discourse that interacts with other strategies, including targeted partnerships, alumni ambassadors, publicity efforts, scholarship provision, and unconventional admissions approaches. Collectively, these practices steer women's aspirations towards education at the college, motivating their mobility domestically and internationally. By analysing the interplay of these practices, this research highlights how women's aspirations and mobilities are structured through institutional frameworks of governmentality, contributing to broader discussions on gendered educational mobilities in the context of higher education and international development in Asia.

Chern Yin Lim's research interests include youth aspirations, student mobilities, gender, higher education, and international development in the context of Asia. She examines how discursive and non-discursive practices, particularly within higher education institutions, interact with individual agency and life-course factors to shape the aspirations, mobilities, and life trajectories of disadvantaged young women. Her work also considers the conditions fostering individual transformation and social change, alongside the complexities and unintended consequences of these practices. Currently, her research focuses on these themes within the underexplored intersection of higher education and international development. Prior to her doctoral studies, she engaged in over two decades of work in various capacities within education and international development in Asia, including teaching, project management, programme evaluation, and policy advocacy. These diverse experiences continue to inform her academic perspectives and current research interests. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the National University of Singapore.

Surmounting Path Dependency: Educational Migration of Women, Mobility and Facilitation in South India

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Drawing from an ongoing research project on migration brokerage in India, my proposed paper will look at the growing number of independent women migration through the channel of educational migration and role being played by the educational consultants in facilitating such atypical mobilities from the state of Kerala in south India. Disrupting the prevailing entrenched male led migration pathways, these women (educational cum labour) migrants becomes the primary migrants allowing their husbands to follow them as dependents, enabling them negotiating their gendered subjectivities in significant ways. Looking at such migrations from two communities, the Muslims with hardly any history of independent women migrations and the Syrian Christians with some such histories, the paper ethnographically trace the struggles, strategies, investments, mediations, distinct pathways and differential outcomes of such migration to the West in the skilled and professional categories. The paper will also unravel the liminal institutional framework that enables such mobilities through educational consultancies – as different from a prohibitive legal infrastructure in India for women emigration for overseas employment – more so in the case of consultancies run by Muslim entrepreneurs driven by Islamic reform, changing perceptions of female mobility, pragmatism and business opportunity.

V.J. Varghese is a historian, working on modern south India with reference to the making of regional, economic and community modernities. Transnational migrations have been one of his sustained interest areas. He teaches at the Department of History in the School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, India. He has co-authored *Dreaming Mobility and Buying Vulnerability: Overseas Recruitment Practices in India* (Routledge) and co-edited *Anjuru Varshathe Keralam: Chila Arivadayalangaal* in Malayalam (Tapasam/DC Books), *Migration, Mobility and Multiple Affiliations: Punjabis in a Transnational World* (Cambridge University Press). He was Charles Wallace India Trust Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh (2018); Research Excellence Visiting Fellow at the Central European University, Budapest (2017-18); Visiting Senior Research Fellow, at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore (2014) and an ESRC Visiting Fellow at the University of Sussex (2010-11).

**Navigating Trauma and Memory:
Understanding the Impact of “Comfort Women’s” Legacy on
Educational Mobility in South Korea**

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The legacy of the “comfort women”, who were subjected to sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese army during World War II, continues to shape social and cultural dynamics in East-Asia. This paper examines the historical experience of the “comfort women” and the transgenerational trauma dissipated to their younger generation, to address questions of the impact of this trauma on intergenerational educational mobility and aspirations, on their descendants and the collective community. Research on transgenerational trauma highlights how systemic violence affects descendants through psycho-social and cultural pathways, potentially constraining their educational aspirations and achievements. This study situates the “comfort women’s” case within broader frameworks of historical injustice and gendered violence, exploring how collective memory mediates the impact of transgenerational trauma on succeeding generations of survivors. It investigates whether these multi-generational legacies of trauma orchestrate as unique barriers in navigating social pathways. Furthermore, it examines the narratives surrounding the reading of the “comfort women” by addressing concerns of body, sexuality and their naming in gender discourses; and explores methodologies to integrate these insights into an intrinsic pedagogical framework.

Shreyashi Sharma is Research Scholar in the Department of English, Cotton University, Guwahati, Assam. She completed her MA in English literature in 2021 from the Centre of English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her areas of interest include gender studies, memory studies, war literature and media studies. Her PhD area is focused around the “comfort women” issue, with particular focus on South Korea. While many scholars draw on existing research in Holocaust studies to examine the “comfort women” issue, she seeks to establish a distinct foundation for further inquiry, emphasizing an Asia-centric discourse that integrates theories of gender and memory.

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS & CHAIRPERSONS

Bernice Loh is Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She currently works on an interdisciplinary project on cross-national families and youth in Singapore, focusing on their integration, identity and social resilience. Her research interests include transnational families, mixed marriages, youth and youth identities and social inequalities. She has published on marriage migrants, cross-national families, youth, girlhood and young femininities in Singapore.

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Exequiel Camarig Cabanda is Research Fellow at the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies (NUS Nursing), Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS). He is a policy scientist whose research focuses on health human resource policy, the mobility of health workers, and the interconnection of health, migration, and higher education. Before joining the Alice Lee Centre, Dr Cabanda served as Research Fellow at Asia Research Institute, where he worked on a Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded project analyzing three nurse migration pathways: India to Canada (two-step), Vietnam to Germany (triple win), and the Philippines to Singapore (bus stop). In addition to his academic work, Dr Cabanda has an extensive experience in government and financial institutions, with a focus on development finance, planning, corporate finance, and policy research. He is currently a special issue editor for several journals, including *Applied Mobilities*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, and *International Migration*, where he covers research themes such as migration infrastructure, intra-Asia parenting and sending-state regimes, and international skilled migration.

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