

Other papers dealt with the Chinese concept of “neutrality” and the changes that China was forced to implement during the war. In defining China as neutral, the country had relied both on the neutrality of Japan and the USA, and disregarded Japan’s commitment towards Great Britain. China thus facilitated the “legality” of the Japanese occupation of Shandong. The Japanese battle against German Qingdao on Chinese soil used detailed maps that continue to be used in Qingdao’s urban planning today.

Although China was “neutral,” it exported a sizeable workforce both to Europe, mainly France and Belgium (Paul Bailey), and to Russia (Olga V. Alexeeva) during WWI. The French work-study program that is famous in China because of its participants Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, actually had a predecessor during WWI. Another Chinese community was also established in France. While some Chinese workers remained in France voluntarily after the war, the Chinese in Russia were trapped in the Russian Revolution and unable to go back for years.

Two-thirds of the panels (panels III to VI) and discussions were held in Chinese. In his closing remarks, Zhu Jiaming, one of the conference organizers and a dissident former member of the think tank of Zhao Ziyang, summed up the suitability of the University of Vienna to run a conference on China in Chinese: “That is because we have freedom (*ziyou*) here.”

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Manoeuvring Through Physical and Virtual Spaces: Mobility and New Media in Asian Cities

National University of Singapore, 04.–05. August 2014

The workshop “Manoeuvring Through Physical and Virtual Spaces: Mobility and New Media in Asian Cities: Mobility and New Media in Asian Cities”, was held at the National University of Singapore from 4–5 August 2014, and jointly organized by the Migration Research Cluster, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Asian Migration Research Cluster, Asia Research Institute, and the Department of Communications and New Media. The workshop explored how migrants’ lives, practices, communication, networks, movements, and economic ventures are influenced by new media (the internet and mobile communications). It considered how migrants actively participate in and shape various virtual spaces, further questioning how their online interactions alter the contours of their everyday activities, societal integration, individual identities, and emotional bonds to the cities they migrate to or pass through. The papers of the workshop shed light on the role of ICT use by migrants from various cultural, educational, professional, and socio-economic backgrounds, with differential levels of ICT access, and varying migration motivations and intentions, aspirations, and expectations.

The workshop offered a multi-disciplinary perspective on the topic by showcasing research by communication and media scholars, geographers, sociologists, and anthropologists, all working in the field of mobility, media, and the city. The workshop was designed as a small and intimate gathering with selected experts comprising both established and emerging scholars, so as to enable discussion and mentorship. Most of the sessions consisted of two papers and they addressed the following themes: social change brought about by new media, empowerment and recognition through mediated communication, migrant adaptation and assimilation via mediated communication channels, the communication of affect through mediated platforms, student migration and their translocal networks, as well as the role of mediation in

place making and perception. All paper sessions were followed by a 15 minute response from NUS scholars, which further stimulated the following lively discussions among the audience.

The contributions and discussions highlighted, firstly, the necessity to critically reflect on the mantra of change that is associated with the upsurge of new media. Secondly, some papers particularly investigated how the politics of space and migration relate to migrants' access to and utilisation of new media as well as the emotional and social ramifications of their utilisation. Thirdly, other contributions revealed how constructions of class and the position in the neoliberal division of labour become influential factors in mobile subjects' chances for and specific ways of new media utilisation and choice. Fourthly, the relevance of different intersections and mutual conditioning of online and offline spheres were addressed, among them those between online and traditional print media, mediated and non-mediated experience and perception of space and place, online and offline communication, networking, and encounters. Overall, the papers underlined how important it is to consider the specificity of socio-cultural space in each individual case.

Heather Horst and Sandra Kailahi's paper showed how mobile money used by Tongans in Auckland is embedded in existing structures of exchange and fosters the persistency of trans-local relational spaces. Other contributions revealed how they help to maintain previous (power) relations to networks in the places of origin. Sun Sun Lim and Becky Pham highlighted how digital communication of Vietnamese students in Singapore with family and friends back home can impede their acculturation in the receiving society. Yinni Peng revealed how digital communication can help Mainland Chinese parents to maintain control over their children who relocated for studying to Hong Kong, but also promotes new types of agency on behalf of the students who develop various strategies to circumvent supervision over a distance. Jozon Lorenzana's paper on the representation of middle class Filipino migrants in Delhi and Bangalore in online social media and print media outlined how the interplay of both mediated spaces promoted mutual recognition between Filipinos and the host society. Tabea Bork-Hüffer focused on the reciprocal effects of non-mediated and mediated place experiences on the place perception and sense of place of highly-skilled transnational migrants in Singapore.

Three papers explored domestic workers' utilisation of new media. Kakit Cheong and Alex Mitchell's paper on Filipino domestic workers in Singapore as well as Cara Wallis' paper on Chinese domestic workers in Beijing highlighted new media's potential for empowering the workers and for emotional support via digital storytelling or communication. Maria Platt, Brenda Yeoh, Choon Yen Khoo, Grace Baey and Theodora Lam specifically looked into how access to ICT can become a linchpin for negotiations between Indonesian domestic workers and their Singaporean employers and can be used as a measure of control just as a means of empowerment.

The workshop has underlined the need to further inquire into the specific qualities of the nexus of mobilities and new media. The participants agreed that there is further need to discuss and clarify the relations of the migration and mobilities paradigm as well as for studies that compare findings between different types of mobilities, different types of migrant groups and regional case studies.

Tabea Bork-Hüffer, Sun Sun Lim, Brenda Yeoh and Cheng Kwan Yee Queenie