



International Workshop Forced Migration and ICT: Key Concepts for Future Research

Organized by
Research Centre on Migration and Mobility (CUHK)
and
Co-sponsored by
School of Journalism and Communication (CUHK)

Date: April 6 & 7, 2017

Venue: The C-Centre, NAH313, Humanities Building, New Asia College, CUHK

This workshop, organized by Saskia Witteborn, Associate Director of the Research Centre on Migration and Mobility and Associate Professor in the School of Journalism and Communication, gathers prominent scholars in the field of forced migration and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The goal of the workshop is to discuss key concepts driving research with refugees, technology, and digital practice in various parts of the world. Each speaker will propose one key concept, which encapsulates theoretical and methodological moves (ranging from traceability, digital cosmopolitanism and digital resettlement, to communication rights, agency, participatory research, the arts, digital privacy and security). In addition to the conceptual and methodological discussions, empirical evidence and practical interventions, the participants will look at the intersections between migration and forced migration, including the question of how to define *forced migration*, and highlight research on displacement and technology from a global perspective.

PROGRAM

Thursday, April 6

9.00 **Pick-up Presenters** (Dr. Celia Chen, reception area of Hyatt)

9.15-9.30 **Coffee/Tea**

9.30-10.30 **Welcome** by Eric Fong (Director, Research Centre on Migration and Mobility), Anthony Fung (Director, School of Journalism & Communication), and Saskia Witteborn (Associate Director, Research Centre on Migration and Mobility & Associate Professor, School of Journalism & Communication, CUHK)

Introduction of Participants

10.30-12.30 **Conceptual Moves**

Sandra Ponzanesi (Utrecht University): Digital Cosmopolitanism
Raelene Wilding (La Trobe University): Digital Resettlement
Gordon Mathews (CUHK): Economic Asylum Seekers and Social Media
in Hong Kong

13.00-14.15 **Lunch** (presenters only)

14.30-16.30 **Methodological Moves**

Dana Diminescu (Télécom ParisTech): Migration Traceability
Carleen Maitland (Pennsylvania State University): Connectivity
Vivian Wenli Lin (City University of Hong Kong): Using Participatory
Arts-based Methods

17.45 Bus leaves from Hyatt for **Field Trip and Dinner** (presenters only)

Friday, April 7

9.15 **Pick-up Presenters** (Dr. Celia Chen, reception area of Hyatt)

9.30-10.30 **Conceptual Moves Cont.**

Arul Chib (Nanyang Technological University): Seeking Agency
Hannah Thinyane (UNU-CS): Using CCAT to Understand Migrant Use of
Technology

10.30-10.45 Coffee Break

10.45-11.45 **Conceptual Moves Cont.**

Koen Leurs (Utrecht University): Communication Rights from the
Margins
Sealing Cheng (CUHK): The Art of Possibility

12.15-13.30 **Lunch** (presenters only)

14.00-15.30 **Network Discussion** (led by Saskia Witteborn)

16.15 Bus leaves from Hyatt for **Field Trip and Dinner** (presenters only)

Presenters:

Dana Diminescu

Associate Professor
Sociology, Engineering School
Scientific Director of DiasporasLab
Télécom ParisTech
Université Paris-Saclay
France

Sandra Ponzanesi

Professor
Gender and Postcolonial Studies
Department of Media and Culture Studies
Utrecht University
The Netherlands

Arul Chib

Associate Professor
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication
and Information
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Carleen Maitland

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Koen Leurs

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Raelene Wilding

Associate Professor
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Vivian Wenli Lin

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Gordon Mathews

Professor
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ABSTRACTS

Digital Cosmopolitanism: Connectivity and its Discontents

Sandra Ponzanesi (Utrecht University)

We live in an increasingly interconnected world, in which mediation and mediatization bring with them new forms of cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitization (Christensen & Jansson, 2015; Georgiou, 2013). Recent cases of forced migration to Europe, for example, has shown that smartphones and digital connectivity are not just a privilege of the happy few but easily accessible and affordable tools whose widespread use has changed not only the nature of migration but also the sense of identity and belonging (Ponzanesi & Leurs, 2014). We are talking today not of the disenfranchised but of the ‘connected migrant’ (Diminescu, 2008), a new citizen of the world, who is both rooted and routed, and whose global interactions are marked by the use of social networks. This allows physical distance to be bridged by digital proximity creating new paradigms for the understanding of the affective turn online (Garde-Hansen & Gorton, 2013; Pink, 2009), which significantly changes the experience of forced migration and the idea of connectivity. It also significantly reshapes the notion of cosmopolitanism as based on trespassing and transgressing borders not only through displacements but also through shared imaginaries on the moves, as theorised by Arjun Appadurai (1996), and further elaborated upon by a rising field of digital diaspora studies which crisscross and overlap with that of digital cosmopolitanism (Gilroy, 1993; Franklin, 2013; Zuckerman, 2013). Yet the ubiquity of virtual connectivity does not mean an end to social inequalities, which are reproped in the online world in transformed but not unmitigated forms of racism, segregation and securitization, which can lead to new forms of isolation and radicalization for subaltern subjects (Fernandez, 1999; Gajjala, 2012; Nakamura, 2002; Spivak, 1988). This contribution proposes to interrogate new forms of digital cosmopolitanism(s) by investigating how digital connectivity operates in the everyday life of forced migrants, contributing to a renewed understanding of self, other and the world while accounting for new forms of divides and exclusion.

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Sandra Ponzanesi is Professor of Gender and Postcolonial Studies, Department of Media and Culture Studies/Graduate Gender Programme, Utrecht University and Head of Humanities at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Among her interests is the reception of the postcolonial field in relation to the cultural industry, the understanding of the notion of Europe from a postcolonial perspective, postcolonial cinema studies, and the exploration of digital literacies of migrants in transnational contexts. She is currently project leader of the ERC consolidator grant “Digital Crossings in Europe: Gender, Diaspora and Belonging.” She is the author of *Paradoxes of Postcolonial Culture* (SUNY, 2004) and *The Postcolonial Cultural Industry* (Palgrave, 2014). She is also editor of *Gender, Globalisation and Violence. Postcolonial Conflict Zones* (Routledge, 2014) and co-editor of *Migrant Cartographies* (Lexington Books, 2005), *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* (Routledge, 2011), *Deconstructing Europe* (Routledge, 2011) and *Postcolonial Transitions in Europe. Contexts, Practices and Politics* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). She has also guest edited several special issues: ‘Postcolonial Europe: Transcultural and Multidisciplinary Perspectives’, *Social Identities. Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* (17:1, 2011); ‘Digital Crossings in Europe’, *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture* (4:2, 2014), ‘The Point of Europe’, *Interventions, International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (18:2, 2016) and ‘Postcolonial Cinemas in Europe: Migration, Identity and Spatiality in Film Genres’, *Transnational Cinema* (17:2, 2016).

Digital Resettlement: The Role of New Media in Forced Migrants’ Negotiations of Place, Identity and Social Relations

Raelene Wilding (La Trobe University)

Sandra Gifford (Swinburne University)

Very few refugees are provided the opportunity for permanent resettlement; those who are, commonly have their families dispersed across nations, holding variable legal statuses, with unequal opportunities for economic, political, social and cultural wellbeing (Gifford et al., 2009). In addition, the process of resettlement places forced migrants under assimilatory pressures to erase the past in order to access a new future (DIAC, 2008; Ehmer, 2017; UNHCR, 2012). However, new media are transforming the experiences of forced migrants as well as the practices and policies of the resettlement programs that support them (Andrade & Doolin, 2016; Wilding, 2006; Wilding & Gifford, 2013). While some programs use digital media in ways that reproduce assimilatory and tendencies, even these programs are subject to resistance and

transformation by the practices of resettled migrants. Families and communities dispersed by forced migration now exist within a polymedia environment, using a wide array of information and communication technologies to keep in touch with people and places around the world (Madianou & Miller, 2012). Their uses of new technologies are transforming the practices, policies and experiences of resettlement. While insecurity remains a likelihood (Leurs, 2014; Opas & McMurray, 2015), also possible is the production and distribution of multimedia that capture the textured embodied realities of past lives and ordinary routines that offer new foundations of the corporeal self and of multilayered, dispersed social and cultural fields (Bozdag, 2014; Brinkerhoff, 2012; Gifford & Wilding, 2013; Robertson et al., 2016; Wilding, 2012). In this paper, we draw on insights from a 3-year project on the uses of new media by young people with refugee backgrounds to explore processes of identity and belonging within the context of humanitarian resettlement in a digital age. We argue that the affordances of digital media technologies can open up new opportunities for forced migration and resettlement to become a project of continuity as well as disruption, one in which the narratives and experiences of people and their places – past, present and future – emerge as new multilayered and textured experiences evoked by digital recording, distribution and reception, with the potential to empower forced migrants in new and unprecedented ways.

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Dr. Raelene Wilding is Associate Professor of Sociology at La Trobe University, Melbourne. Her research uses a range of qualitative methodologies to interrogate the intersections of migration, families, and communication technologies. Her work investigating migrant experiences of transnational aged care was published in the book *Families Caring Across Borders* (with Baldassar & Baldock, 2007, Palgrave). More recently, her research with young people from refugee backgrounds has been published in a range of journals, including *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *Continuum*, and *Global Networks*. This work explores the transformation of resettlement outcomes and experiences that is the consequence of a changing polymedia environment. Wilding is now conducting research with elderly migrants and non-migrants from diverse cultural and refugee backgrounds, in order to better understand the role of new media in practices of care and support across generations, time, and distance.

Economic Asylum Seekers and Social Media in Hong Kong

Gordon Mathews (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

In this paper, based on research in Hong Kong's Chungking Mansions, I discuss the effect of social media on asylum seekers' lives, and link this to why people become asylum seekers. There are 12,000 asylum seekers in Hong Kong, the majority from South Asia, and some from sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia. They can obtain a monthly government stipend of HK\$2700. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work, and face jail if caught, but because the stipend is minimal, most must work; the chances of getting caught are small. Asylum seekers in Hong Kong have an extremely low chance of obtaining refugee status: under 1%. In the meantime, they must wait for many years to have their cases decided. In the early 2000s, most families in asylum seekers' home countries had no access to the internet—communication took place through precious minutes on phone cards. Only by 2013 did smart phones enable frequent communication back home and ready access to news from home. This made asylum-seeking much more bearable for the asylum seekers I know. Social media has encouraged economic asylum seekers in Hong Kong. Asylum seekers estimate that 80% of asylum seekers simply seek better economic opportunities overseas. Many Indians had earlier come to work as tourists, but this necessitated costly flights back home to renew their visas. Now, because they can have constant communications with home, some have decided that it is better to become asylum seekers, working in Hong Kong and supporting their families back home until their claims are rejected. The Hong Kong government understands this situation full well, but looks the other way because illegal labor helps some Hong Kong businesses. Many asylum seekers accept this situation because they can support their families for an indefinite period with better wages than they could make back home. And social media

makes this situation for asylum seekers much easier with its links to home and information. Personally, I believe that economic asylum seekers are entirely justified in their life efforts. But I have been told that I must never write a book about Hong Kong asylum seekers because I know too much.

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Gordon Mathews is Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has written *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (Chicago 2011) and the forthcoming *The World in Guangzhou: Africans and Other Foreigners in South China's Global Marketplace* (Chicago 2017). He has taught a weekly class of asylum seekers in Chungking Mansions for the past twelve years.

Migration Traceability

Dana Diminescu (Télécom ParisTech)

I would like to suggest ‘migration traceability’ as a new model for the analysis of migration. What I mean by this is a trajectory of migration, written like a logbook or a diary, the outcome of the digital traces, which the migrant leaves at different points en route when using a digitalised environment. It is the outcome of the correlating of this data recorded by various digitalised sensors. These data are summarised in the form of codes, collected, and stocked on various computer storage media. Migration traceability is a story told by compiling a multitude of contextual sources and flows of personal information, which require an increasingly higher degree of automatic processing. *Migration traceability* differs from the migration trajectory prior to the digital age in several respects. As a reminder, in mathematics and physics, the trajectory is the line described by any point of an object in motion. In sociology, trajectory refers to the successive social positions, which an individual occupies during his or her lifetime, or a part of it. In the sociology of migration, the trajectory represents the totality of the successive social positions, which an individual or a group occupies during their journey in physical space. The migration trajectory therefore has a geographical dimension along with a social dimension, which is linked to the migrants’ career, that is, the successive social positions occupied by an individual during his or her life on the move. It transcribes a dialectic of both movement and settlement. It is at one and the same time ‘objective’, measured by means of statistical categories – defined by the successive positions occupied in the life of the migrant, and ‘subjective’ – expressed in the narration of life histories. *Migration traceability*, while remaining a trajectory as defined above, simultaneously introduces a new qual./quant. methodology. This integration of quantitative and qualitative research locates the approach fully within the field of the digital humanities and computational social sciences, close to knowledge management and the processing of *big data*. Today, it is now possible to recover a multitude of digital traces: these are linked to journeys, interaction, opinions, monitoring. These traces,

standardized by encoding, enable processes of memorization, calculation and time-stamping. The statistical processing (which is objective) and the life history (subjective) can therefore be ‘narrated’ automatically. On the one hand, *migration traceability* has a representational dimension, which enables the reconstitution of a migratory itinerary in real time (but also extending over long periods, even over generations since the digitalisation of the archives). On the other hand, it ensures an objectivity and a predictive property which is particularly sought after by decision makers in all strategic domains – governments and NGOs, the media, and businesses. In my contribution, I will be presenting migration traceability, focusing on refugees and asylum seekers through several empirical examples.

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Dana Diminescu is Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in Sociology at Télécom ParisTech's Engineering School. At present, she is visiting researcher at UCLA. She is known for her work on the “connected migrant.” Her empirical work enabled her to approach varied fields, ranging from uses of mobile phone and voice IT, Internet, m-transactions by migrants in a variety of transnational and local use situations: mobility and mobilisation, integration strategies, cross-bordering, web diasporas, ethnic business, migration lifecycles, and for a number of epistemological and methodological innovations in her research, questioning classical theories in migration studies. In particular, she designed and coordinated the e-Diasporas Atlas project, which was first

runner-up of its category for the 2012 Digital Humanities Awards (www.e-diasporas.fr). She has also designed the JokaJobs application for the Y-generation job-seekers.

Connectivity

Carleen Maitland (Pennsylvania State University)

Forced migration is experienced as a form of disconnection from the people, places, and things that once constituted home. This disconnection can be permanent, temporary or intermittent. In the vacuum, new connections emerge. They too may be temporary or intermittent, and in some cases may become permanent. While these (dis)connections may occur through a variety of communication modes, ranging from the interpersonal to the mediated, here the focus is on connectivity occurring through network technologies. While mediated communication for forced migrants is often analyzed at the application layer, focusing on various social media technologies, here the focus is on the network layer. As noted by Norman (1998), network infrastructures have unique properties making them an essential yet often invisible part of our lives. Forced migrations' (dis)connections make network connectivity highly visible and highly visceral. This analysis examines connectivity through the lens of social informatics, which views information technologies as sociotechnical systems (Kline, 1985), where technologies are not seen as mere tools, but instead as artifacts of a complex set of factors shaping their design, deployment, and use. Viewing networks as complex systems of configurable technologies (Sawyer & Rosenbaum, 2000), including both standard and configurable components (Kling, 2001), enables an analysis that seeks generalizable insights as well as those associated with the idiosyncratic elements of context and individual differences. The analysis provides insights into network connectivity as access to a layered modular architecture (Yoo et al., 2010). As such it sheds light on the effects of various forms of modularity, including its access, platform, functional and analytic forms. In so doing, it disambiguates issues of access from network ownership and control. Importantly, the analysis examines security as a tool for commercial gain as well as state control and examines the cost of connectivity born by migrants in terms of their own privacy and security.

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Dr. Carleen Maitland is an Associate Professor in the College of Information Sciences and Technology at Penn State University, USA. She is an expert on humanitarian

organizations' use of information and communication technologies, having conducted research on and for UN organizations, including UNCTAD, OCHA, and UNHCR, as well as the U.S. State Department and USAID, to name a few. Outcomes from her work, conducted in the U.S., Europe, the Middle East and Africa, have appeared in over 100 refereed journals, books and conferences. In 2014-2015, Carleen served as Associate Dean of her college and from 2010-2012 she served as a Program Manager in the U.S. National Science Foundation, both in the Office of International Science and Engineering and the Office of Cyberinfrastructure.

Remaining Anonymous: Using Participatory Arts-based Methods to Visualize the Stories of Migrant Women

Vivian Wenli Lin (City University of Hong Kong)

I combine methods from the fields of documentary film, cine-feminism, and participatory action research to analyze the various ways in which media created at project sites offer alternative perspectives to the lives and labor of marginalized women. These are voices that are usually unheard, which speak to a diverse collective experience of today's transnational economies and cultures. Using new forms of media and mobile technology to engage communities as a participatory research method has increased with the ubiquity with the introduction of the smartphone. The accessibility, technical ease, and multi-purpose functions of the smartphone can leave technology *with* the participants, enabling participatory media projects with a sense of sustainability long after the project is complete. When working with communities concerned with issues of security and safety such as refugees or asylum seekers, how can mobile phone technology still be used as a participatory arts-based research methodology? I will introduce participatory media projects conducted by Voices of Women (VOW) Media, an organization that I co-founded with Nepalese media artist and activist Pooja Pant. VOW Media has conducted projects with migrant sex workers in Amsterdam's Red Light District, daughters of migrants growing up Dutch, undocumented migrants and asylum seekers, and victims of human trafficking. Since 2012, VOW Media has expanded their work to Hong Kong, Indonesia, Nepal and India. Communities in these countries utilized participatory arts-based methodologies in order to produce audiovisual media works grounded in life stories. The objective was to encourage migrant women workers to participate fully in the storytelling process both creatively and technically. The result of this process is what Claire Johnston (1999) calls a "counter cinema" that challenges negative portrayals of marginalized women in the mainstream media, particularly those that contribute to social stigmatization, through the expressive potential of alternative voices.

My doctoral dissertation, *Visualizing Our Voices: Self-made Audiovisual Media by Women from Social, Economic and Cultural Margins in the Era of Global Migration* is an analysis of this "counter cinema", that demonstrates how participatory action research within a cine-feminist approach can unveil hidden experiences of women's migration. Key research questions were: How can participatory media making contribute to the self-empowerment of communities of migrant women? Can self-made media dispel myths, stereotypes or misrepresentation? What are the harmful consequences to the communities it effects? The research findings and outcomes demonstrate that these communities can

use their videos for advocacy, affirm identity, reduce associated stigmas, and as a tool for political and economic empowerment. In addition, marriage migrants, refugees and asylum seekers can use their media works to connect to home, and foster transnational familial ties. In summary, self-made audiovisual media contributes to an affirmation of identity, artistic expression and empowerment of migrant women and their communities.

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Vivian Wenli Lin received her Ph.D. in Media Art at the City University of Hong Kong’s School of Creative Media for her dissertation, *Visualizing our Voices: Self-made Audiovisual Media by Women from Social, Economic and Cultural Margins in the Era of Global Migration*. Vivian received a Masters in Fine Arts from the Sandberg Institute in The Netherlands where she co-founded Voices of Women Media in 2007, an organization that offers multimedia workshops to marginalized communities of migrant women – including teenage girls, asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking, and sex workers. Vivian’s prior education includes a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Asian American Studies from the University of California at Berkeley, where she apprenticed under documentary filmmaker, Loni Ding. In addition, she received a Masters in Professional Studies at New York University’s Interactive Telecommunications Program where she co-founded the award-winning project, *Fortunes for Cookies*, a self-portrait video workshop for young women from the Chinatowns of New York City. In 2017, her doctoral research was presented in the form of an exhibition titled, *Visualizing the Voices of Migrant Women Workers* with Dr. Julie Ham at the Department of Sociology at The University of Hong Kong, funded by the Interdisciplinary Knowledge Exchange (KE) Project Fund, 2016-2017.

Seeking Agency: Mobile Use among North Korean Women Defectors in South Korea

Arul Chib (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)

Juhee Kang (United Nations University Computing and Society, Macau)

Richard Ling (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)

Every year hundreds of North Koreans cross the *Tumen* River at the China border in search for a better life offering basic freedoms from repressive patriarchal control. While some stay in China, Russia or other Southeast Asian countries, others manage to enter South Korea. These defectors imagine a stark departure from the totalitarian socialist regime to a progressive, egalitarian, and modern society. ICTs, particularly mobile phones, contribute to this rather dramatic transition from the most digitally disconnected society to one of the most digitally oriented countries in the world. This study explores how female North Korean defectors use mobile phones, beginning with their mobile usage in North Korea, across their migration trajectories, to their integration into South Korean Society. Framed within structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) from a gender perspective (Svensson, 2016), we inquire into the role of mobile phones in the struggles and negotiation by female defectors for greater agency vis-a-vis situated social structures. The methodology consists of in-depth interviews with 20 North Korean women defectors, who comprise over 70 percent residing in South Korea. We find clandestine mobile use across the migration trajectory and as part of the defection process, including restricted and dangerous access to mobile phones via smuggled Chinese mobile phones in North Korea. We find mixed evidence of female defectors' social and economic integration into the South Korean society, with mobile phones providing restricted agency (Nguyen, Chib, & Mahalingam, 2016; Peter, 2003). The data suggests that mobile phone usage in the affluent digital environment in South Korea has led to greater informational capabilities and empowerment of North Korean women while facilitating their isolation, deception, and social segregation caused by perceived discrimination by the dominant group. We discuss theoretical implications of balance created by mobile phones between creating bounded solidarity (Ling, 2008) and bounded cosmopolitanism (Chib & Aricat, 2016). We argue that despite the increased digital capabilities created by the transit from North to South, North Korean defectors' use of technology continues to be restricted within the boundary of the social power structures within which they are situated.

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Dr. Chib has been the Principal Investigator and Coordinator of the SIRCA III (*Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance*) programme since 2008, mentoring emerging researchers from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Dr. Chib's research in ten countries has been profiled in the media ranging from the United Nations Chronicle to the Singaporean press. He presented the keynote speech at Media Health Communication 2012 at LMU Munich and at Global Fusion 2015 at Texas A&M University. He was General Chair of the 7th International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies for Development, and on the organizing committees of IFIP 8.6 2013 and ICTD 2012.

Dr. Juhee Kang (PhD, Michigan State University, 2014) is a Research Fellow at the United Nations University Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS) in Macau SAR, China. Her research focuses on using information communication technologies for international development (ICTD), particularly understanding technology user behaviors of the socioeconomically disadvantaged in developing countries. Her research interests involve mobile user behaviors, technology adoption and use among the poor, ICT for forced migrants and women migrant workers (e.g. North Korean defectors), social media for development, and higher education pedagogy on ICTD. Prior to joining UNU-CS, Juhee was a research specialist at the United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for ICT for Development (UN-APCICT), a regional office of UN-ESCAP. She also has various research experiences across academic, private and public sectors including Samsung Electronics Research Institute UK, International Telecommunications Union (ITU), LINREasia, Korean Internet and Security Agency (KISA), etc. Juhee holds a B.A. in Public Administration from Yonsei University (South Korea), a M.A. in International Communications and Development from City University London (UK), and a Ph.D. in Media and Information Studies from Michigan State University (USA).

Improving What Freedoms? Using CCAT to Understand Migrant Use of Technology

Hannah Thinyane (United Nations University Institute on Computing and Society)

Amartya Sen (2001, p. xii) explores the relationship between development and freedom, arguing that the expansion of human freedom should be viewed “as the primary end and the principle means of development”. A common critique of Sen’s Capability Approach is in its overemphasis on individual freedoms and lack of (explicit) concern with power relations and unjust social structures. Zheng and Stahl (2011) propose the use of a Capability Approach from a Critical Theory perspective, which brings with it a rich theoretical repertoire for understanding the constraints of human agency. Instead of focusing on individual agency, Zheng and Stahl propose to focus on of *situated agency*, that expresses the idea that agency is “not only a product of specific socio-historical settings, but also situated in a sometimes invisible or taken-for-granted network of ideology, and participate[s] in the production and reproduction of these socio-historical structures and ideological tenets” (p. 75). Zheng and Stahl later propose the Critical Capability Approach of Technology (CCAT), combining the strengths of Capability Approach and Critical Theory, to evaluate the social implications of technology. When discussing migration, scholars take a number of different approaches. Richmond (1988) uses Giddens’ (1976) concept of structuration to develop a paradigm of international population movements which calls for a balance between debates over structure and agency in migration. In doing so he criticizes the dichotomy introduced with the terms voluntary and forced migration, citing that except for in rare cases, there is always a degree of agency involved in a person’s decision to move. Instead he suggests a continuum between *proactive* and *reactive* migration, according to the degree of agency that is exhibited by the individual. This research proposes the use of CCAT to draw from the findings of three case and design studies in the area of migrant use of technology. Our three cases represent different points on Richmond’s continuum, with the aim to understand how technology can be used to empower migrants’ situated agency and enable them to enhance their conditions. In particular, this research aims to explore how technology can support the “substantive freedoms” of low skilled migrants, that is, the “real opportunities to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have” (Sen, 2001, p. 293).

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Dr Hannah Thinyane is leading the Migrant Tech Research Group, and is a Principal Research Fellow at the United Nations University Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS) in Macau SAR, China. Her research aims to understand how technology can be used to empower migrants' situated agency and enable them to enhance their conditions. This research focuses primarily on low skilled migrant workers who are in vulnerable situations. Dr. Thinyane's research interests are mobile computing, human computer interaction, and the use of ICTs for development.

Communication Rights from the Margins: Forced Migrants & ICTs

Koen Leurs (Utrecht University)

In the dominant Western imaginary, forced migrants live precarious lives. In the midst of the so-called 'European refugee crisis' the great vulnerability of young refugees in particular became apparent from the many documented instances of death, trauma, exploitation, lack of access to education, medical assistance etc. Pan-European humanitarianism and solidarity with those experiencing human rights violations has however been replaced with discourses of securitization, Islamophobia, fear and disavowal. Notwithstanding, the rights of forced migrants are written down in various international human rights instruments and standards such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention of the Child and EU Human Rights Guidelines. Situated in the geo-political context of Europe, this intervention problematizes human rights from the perspective of young forced migrants and their communication rights. 'Human rights' is an umbrella term for an interdependent and indivisible assemblage of civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights. Communication rights offer the fundament for the implementation of these rights (Wang, 2016; Hamelink & Hoffman, 2008). First, this article argues that a conceptualization of communication rights from the perspective of forced migrants reveals the Euro-American universalism of human rights epistemologies. Recent European policy initiatives were commonly concerned with recognizing offline and online rights of Europeans. In the case of young refugees, they were concerned with the protection and provision of services, denying entirely their active agency. A communication rights perspective can serve to recognize agency, empowerment, dignity, family life and communicative freedom (Hamelink & Hoffman, 2008), which is of great importance to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the situation of forced migrants. Connected migrants indeed may actively claim the right to communicate, associate, and preserve one's identity and family relations online – across borders and through digital means they prefer. From the perspective of speech-act theory, these digitally networked participatory practices can be considered as enacting digital right claims (Isin & Ruppert, 2015). In making such claims to communicate, forced migrants go against the grain of human rights as they are hierarchically positioned as subalterns along the lines of nationality, geography, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age and generation. A second key aim of this study is to empirically investigate the views of young refugees on their communication rights as they navigate the digital communication infrastructure. Empirically, the focus will be twofold: 1) mapping the issues young forced migrants consider most important in relation to their communication rights, and 2) young forced migrants' views on remedying communication rights

violations and their views on stakeholders concerned (schools, officials, local governments, private sector, etc.).

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The Art of Possibility: Talents Displaced and Refugee Artists in Hong Kong Sealing Cheng (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

This paper examines the meanings of performance art as a tool of community-building and empowerment for asylum-seekers and refugees (ASR) in Hong Kong. ASR are not allowed to work or engage in any form of economically productive activities, and are therefore forced to be dependent on welfare and charity in a life that resembles what Agamben calls the "bare life." In this context, it is understandable that charities and nongovernmental organizations targeted at ASR frames the discussion of ASR as humanitarian subjects, deserving of better protection for basic rights. Few resources could be devoted to exploring the artistic talents and yearnings within the ASR community. This paper discusses the formation of Talents Displaced: a group made up of asylum-seekers, refugees, and their allies in Hong Kong that has been performing a mixture of rap, DJ, dance, and African drums in different venues in Hong Kong since December 2016. It examines how art has become the main channel through which two refugee artists make sense of their lives and their existence as a kind of unwelcome guests in the Chinese territory. They produce distinct art forms, yet the ways their art becomes a form of instrumental action (Gell, 1998) are prominently connected, invoking certain universalistic values of love and humanity but also implicitly referring to the lack

of such values in their host society. As such, the art they produce is not only a form of self-expression but also a means to influence the thoughts and actions of others. The social dimension of their art is intrinsically linked to the agency and locality of the artefact, as well as the social location and aspirations of the artist. The analysis of this paper stands at the nexus of these intersections, and examines the complex intentionalities and knowledge production by the two artist-refugees, and how their performances could constitute the art of the possible, in the light of Appadurai's (2013) "ethics of possibility."

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Sealing Cheng works on issues of gender, sexuality, migration and displacement, as well as human rights and the law. Her early work focused on how nationalism and sexuality impinged on the citizenship regime and sex work policies of South Korea. Her current research focuses on experiences of African asylum-seekers and refugees as creative and desiring subjects in Hong Kong.

Notes on the Organizer: Saskia Witteborn is Associate Professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at CUHK where she directs the MA in Global Communication. Her research with migrants in Asia, North America, and Europe has appeared in the *Journal of Communication*, *Cultural Studies*, *Crossings*, or the *Journal of Refugee Studies* and in edited volumes, such as *Circuits of Visibility* (NYU Press, 2011) or the *Handbook of Global Media Research* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). She is interested in theorizing mobility, technology, and situated practice, with a focus on the concept of *digital migration*. She has made theoretical contributions to the political economy of mobility and space, digital heterotopia, emotions and the digital, or grouping processes and place. She is currently co-editing the Sage Handbook on Media and Migration and has editorial board experience with the *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *Culture, Communication & Critique*, and the *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*. Her research has been supported regularly by grants and discussed in the English and Chinese-speaking media. As Associate with the University of Washington Center for Local Strategy Research and as Associate Director of the Research Centre on Migration and Mobility at CUHK, Saskia is generally interested in culturally grounded approaches to communicative action around agendas for change.