



# CONCEPTUALISING YOUTH MOBILITIES AMIDST SOCIAL CHALLENGES WORKSHOP

BCC, DEAKIN BURWOOD | 28 NOVEMBER, 2022

We are delighted to welcome you to attend the Conceptualising Youth Mobilities amidst Social Challenges Workshop. The workshop brings together over ten presenters from in and outside Australia. The workshop provides speakers and attendees with dedicated networking time and opportunities to connect with like-minded researchers at all stages of their careers, including early career and postgraduate. This one-day, hybrid and catered event is free of charge, and the online and in-person attendance is open to all, but registration for attendance is necessary.

In this one-day workshop, we will examine transnational youth mobilities amidst the social challenges of our contemporary world. How do young people construct belonging and place in a mobile world? What is the role of mobility in young people's negotiation of social challenges? How might emerging forms of mobility (re)shape perceptions of adulthood and aspirations for youth transitions?

The theme of Social Challenges is particularly timely considering the growing knowledge of the challenges that young people face as society emerges from COVID-19 associated lockdowns; grappling with, in many cases, pre-existing issues including mental health, employment, racism and inequality, among others.

The proposition is guided by the following keywords:

- Youth transitions
- Youth futures and aspirations
- Belonging
- Transnational ties
- Covid-19 and youth

The workshop will take place in collaboration between the Youth Mobilities, Aspirations & Pathways (YMAP) Project and the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University.

## Convenors

Professor Anita Harris  
*Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation  
Deakin University*

Professor Loretta Baldassar  
*School of Arts and Humanities  
Edith Cowan University*

## Organising Committee

Laura Gobey, Alexandra Lee, and Hao Zheng  
*Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University*

Deakin Burwood Corporate Centre  
221 Burwood Hwy, Burwood, VIC 3125  
&  
Online  
28<sup>th</sup> November 2022

9:00–9:15 **WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Professor Anita Harris  
Professor Loretta Baldassar

9:15–10:15 **KEYNOTE PANEL**

Speakers:  
Associate Professor Catherine Gomes (RMIT)  
Associate Professor Valentina Cuzzocrea (Università degli studi di Cagliari)

Discussants:  
Dr Dana McKay (RMIT)  
Dr Caterina Satta (Università degli studi di Cagliari)

10:15–10:45 **MORNING TEA**

10:45–11:45 **PANEL 1**

*Education influencers and insider knowledge: New forms of study abroad expertise mediating student mobility from India to Germany*

Dr Sazana Jayadeva (University of Cambridge)

*'The pandemic helped me!': Queer International students' identity negotiation with family on social media in immobile times*  
Hao Zheng (Deakin University)

Discussant: Dr Sylvia Ang (Monash University)

11:45–12:15 **ACADEMIC SPEED DATING**

12:15–13:00 **LUNCH BREAK**

13:00–14:00 **PANEL 2**

*Young migrants on the move – (re)constructing identities and aspirations*

Associate Professor Grace Spencer (Anglia Ruskin University)

*The role of place in young adult movement: examining the "missing" generation of Katoomba, NSW*  
Francesca Sidoti (Western Sydney University)

Discussant: Alexandra Lee (Deakin University)

14:00–15:30 **PANEL 3**

***Becoming adults elsewhere. The recent migration of young Italians to Australia***

Giulia Marchetti (University of Western Australia)

***Exploring the interaction between intergenerational relationships and youth mobile transition – A comparison between PRC-born Chinese (PRCC) Youth in Australia and Australia-born Chinese (ABC) Youth in China***

Yan Wang (Western Sydney University)

***Place for a Future? Examining transnational mobility as an enabling factor in young Asian Australians' (re)imaginings of the future***

Alexandra Lee (Deakin University)

Discussant: Hao Zheng (Deakin University)

15:30–16:00 **CLOSING REMARKS**

16:00 onwards **SOCIAL DRINKS (Self-funded)** at **Prohibition**  
(<https://prohibitionfoodandwine.com.au/>)  
1395 Toorak Rd, Camberwell 3124

## Keynote Speakers



### **Associate Professor Catherine Gomes (RMIT)**

*Catherine Gomes* is an ethnographer whose work contributes to the understanding of the evolving migration, mobility and digital media nexus. As a migration and mobility scholar, Catherine specialises on the social, cultural and communication spaces of transient migrants, especially international students, their wellbeing and their digital engagement. Catherine is editor of the Media, Culture and Communication in Migrant Societies book series (Amsterdam University Press) and founding editor of *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration* (Intellect Books). Catherine is also co-convenor of the Mobilities, Migrations and Diverse Communities (MMDC) research group. Catherine was also a recipient of an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher (DECRA) in 2013-2016. She is the 2021 recipient of the A Noam Chomsky Global Connections Shining Star Research Achievement Award for her book *Parallel Societies of International Students in Australia: Connections, Connections and Disconnections* (Routledge, 2022). In January 2023 Catherine will be Professor of culture and communication at RMIT University.



### **Associate Professor Valentina Cuzzocrea (Università degli studi di Cagliari)**

*Valentina Cuzzocrea* is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Cagliari, Italy. Her expertise gravitates around youth issues. Her last work has appeared in 'Higher Education' (with Ewa Krzaklewska), 'Scuola Democratica' (with Fabio Bertoni and Giuliana Mandich), 'Mobilities' (with David Cairns) and 'Journal of Youth Studies'. She has co-curated with Bjorn Schiermer and Ben Gook, 'Forms of Collective Engagement in Youth Transitions: A Global Perspective', Brill, 2021; 'Youth Collectivities: Cultures and Objects', Routledge, 2021, and, with Barbara G. Bello and Yuri Kazepov 'Italian Youth in International Context' (Routledge, 2020). She has been chair of the ESA RN 30 Youth and Generation.

## Abstracts and Bios

### ***Education influencers and insider knowledge: New forms of study abroad expertise mediating student mobility from India to Germany***

Dr Sazana Jayadeva (University of Cambridge)

This paper examines new forms of study-abroad expertise on social media and its role in mediating student mobility from India to Germany. More specifically, it explores how mutual-support Facebook and WhatsApp groups – used by prospective international students in India to support each other through the process of applying to German universities – have contributed to the emergence of new forms of freelance education consultancy, offered by Indians studying in Germany. In addition, the paper shows how some Indians studying in Germany have started ‘Study in Germany’ YouTube channels, aimed at supporting others interested in studying in Germany, and have become important ‘study abroad influencers’. The paper analyses how these new forms of study abroad expertise offer prospective international students social and cultural capital important for successful student migration, apart from shaping their imaginative geographies of Germany, and embedding them in cultures of mobility. Furthermore, the paper highlights how these new forms of study abroad expertise intersect with, and critique, a more ‘traditional’ study-abroad-expert: the professional education consultant. The paper draws on a digital ethnography of ‘Study in Germany’ Facebook and WhatsApp groups and YouTube channels, as well as interviews with the YouTubers and student consultants.

*Sazana Jayadeva* is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Cambridge. She is also an Associate Researcher at the GIGA Institute of Asian Studies in Germany. Sazana’s research revolves around the broad themes of education and inequalities, class and language, and student mobilities and social media, with a regional focus on India and Europe.

### **‘The pandemic helped me!’: Queer International students’ identity negotiation with family on social media in immobile times**

Hao Zheng (Deakin University)

This paper examines how Chinese queer females engage and interact with time and (im)mobility during the pandemic in Australia. The paper is based on my PhD research exploring Chinese queer female students’ queer and adult identity making in Australia. In this paper, I investigate how the pandemic *time* has benefited and obstructed Chinese queer females’ queer and adult identity making through exploring their narratives and social media discourses and practices. Specifically, I examine how the local and transnational lockdown created a period of ‘immobile vacuum’ that challenges the previous understanding of interpersonal relations and influences. The fieldwork was conducted during and after the lockdowns in Australia, providing unique

insights into how young Chinese queer females negotiate with the intensified 'in-betweenness' in this global pandemic and how they review and make meaning of the pandemic's impacts on their intimacies, family relationships, emotions, and social wellbeing.

*Hao Zheng* is a third-year PhD candidate at Deakin University. Hao's research interests are in the areas of gender and sexuality, intersectionality, transnational mobilities, digital media cultures and lesbianism. Hao has been working as a research assistant and sessional teaching staff in the fields of Sociology, Cultural Studies, Internet Studies, and Migration/Mobility Studies. Hao completed her B.A. (with First Class Honours) at the University of Melbourne. Her honours thesis examines Chinese lesbians' double marginalisation on social media. The paper developed based on her honours thesis has been published in the *Journal of Homosexuality*.

### ***Young migrants on the move – (re)constructing identities and aspirations***

Associate Professor Grace Spencer (Anglia Ruskin University)

Increases in global migration in recent times has promoted concern about the socio-economic, health and environmental implications of mobility, and migration is often framed as a contemporary social challenge – despite evidence of the opportunities it affords individuals, communities and countries. However, the experiences of young people who migrate independently of adults has been relatively underexplored. Young migrants often display their independence and autonomy as they self-navigate new contexts and experiences – blurring dominant constructions of childhood/adulthood. In this paper, we share insights from a qualitative study focusing on the lives and livelihoods of young migrants aged 15-24 years (internal and international) in Ghana and the possibilities for understanding empowerment. Our findings highlight the ways young migrants construct migration as an opportunity for a better life – irrespective of the significant socio-economic challenges they face. Navigating precarious work and living situations often resulted in the ongoing mobilities of young people as they actively sought opportunities to 'move out of' poverty. Investigating ongoing youth mobilities prompts new ethical and methodological challenges – calling on us to rethink how best to conduct research with young people who are frequently on the move. These insights offer new ways of conceptualising youth mobilities in ever-changing contexts.

*Grace Spencer* is an Associate Professor in Young People, Health and Social Equity at the Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK. Her programme of research focuses on young people's health and migration practices, empowerment and risk in contexts of vulnerability. She is recognised internationally for her contribution to the ethical and methodological complexities of conducting research with young people.



***The role of place in young adult movement: examining the "missing" generation of Katoomba, NSW***

Francesca Sidoti (Western Sydney University)

In Katoomba, NSW, young adulthood is widely understood by those who live there as occurring elsewhere: the “missing” generation of young adults aged between 19 and 35 years of age. Katoomba’s ‘mobility imperative’ (Farrugia 2016) suggests successful young adulthood requires significant geographic movement, either through extended travel or migration, and that adulthood is realised through such movement. This paper examines the role of place in these processes and argues that place, understood as embodied and agentic following the work of Casey (1993, 1996, 1997), is central to how young adults learn, practice, experience and understand movement. More than a setting or thing that can be left or returned to, place is enduring through the body and Katoomba young adults use the embodiment of place to challenge, reproduce and navigate the mobility imperative and negotiate their belonging. The research draws on qualitative methods—including observation, surveys, interviews and, especially, “moving” interviews with Katoomba young adults—to re-centre place in the analysis of young adult movement.

*Francesca Sidoti* is a PhD student at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. She studies the relationship between place and young adulthood in the regional town of Katoomba, NSW.

***Becoming adults elsewhere. The recent migration of young Italians to Australia***

Giulia Marchetti (University of Western Australia)

My contribution explores the recent migration of young Italians to and from Australia (immigrants in Western Australia and returnees in Italy) and the ways in which transnational mobility intersects with young movers’ transitions to adulthood (study paths, economic independence, independent living, coupling, becoming a parent). Drawing on the findings of my UWA PhD research, I adopt the mobile transitions approach (Robertson, Harris and Baldassar 2018) to explain the many influences of mobility on life course trajectories. More or less consciously, the desire to become adult “for real” may be one of the reasons to become mobile for many young Italians despite different educational and professional backgrounds and reasons for mobility. The 2008 global economic recession and the rise of new intergenerational inequalities have meant that Italy has become (again) a country of emigration, especially for its youth. However, a solely economic explanation overshadows other important factors that are central to youth mobilities studies including the existence of a global youth culture, the changing perception of space and boundaries created by new media, and new types of mobility experienced by younger movers. In my study, qualitative and visual research methods are applied, such as ethnographic (video-recorded) interviews, Photostories, analysis of tattoos.

*Giulia Marchetti* is a PhD candidate in Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Western Australia. Her research project will examine how transnational mobility can impact on identity and youth-to-adulthood transition among young Italians who have moved to Australia and those who have returned to Italy. Giulia's research interests centre on migration, refugees, racism, women, youth and ageing population in Italy.

***Exploring the interaction between intergenerational relationships and youth mobile transition – A comparison between PRC-born Chinese (PRCC) Youth in Australia and Australia-born Chinese (ABC) Youth in China***

Yan Wang (Western Sydney University)

Each year millions of young people of different ages, backgrounds and ethnicities leave their home countries temporarily or permanently. China and Australia are both significant hubs for incoming and outgoing mobilities. Australia is the third-largest destinate country for PRC-born Chinese youth; meanwhile, young ABCs increasingly consider China a destination for transnational sojourns as China continues to rise as a global powerhouse.

For both PRCC and ABC young people, experiences of childhood, adolescence and adulthood influenced by intergenerational relationships with their parents impact their transnational mobility and transition between Australia and China. Comparing the experiences of PRCC young people who come to Australia and ABC young people who travel to China, this study unpacks the disjunctures and connections around transnational mobility and transition to adulthood under different cultural contexts of intergenerational relationships within the global Chinese diaspora.

This research is based on qualitative data from 34 participants, including PRCC and ABC youth and some of their parents in Australia and China. It adopts multiple methods with in-depth interviews, participant observations, and photovoice. The findings compare six interconnected dimensions related to intergenerational relationships – the youth aspiration, the mobility trajectory, the transition to adulthood process, the independent discourse, the cultural idea of filial piety and the parents-care arrangements.

*Yan Wang* is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. Her research project will focus on transnational mobility among Australian youth who move to China, and the Chinese young people who move to Australia. Her PhD thesis topic is "How do intergenerational relationships shape transnational mobility and transitions to adulthood for PRC-born Chinese and Australia-born Chinese youth?" She examines the intergenerational relationships between transnationally mobile young people and their parents (or grandparents and other older relatives) and their influence on how young people conceive of and manage their transition to adulthood while transnationally mobile. Yan is passionate about



contributing to the development of theory in relation to migration, youth and ageing population in China, as well as reforms in public policy and social welfare. She has a Master of Research in Management at Lanzhou University and a Bachelor in Economics at Lanzhou University of Finance and Economics.

***Place for a Future? Examining transnational mobility as an enabling factor in young Asian Australians' (re)imaginings of the future***

Alexandra Lee (Deakin University)

Based on emerging findings from my PhD study, this paper examines young Asian Australians' experiences of futurity and transnational mobility. Specifically, it explores transnational mobility as an enabling factor in their imaginings of the future; interrogating the ways that encounters with new places and social contexts might prompt young people to reconstruct their relationships with futurity and indeed their possible future selves, beyond the (im)possibilities they had been surrounded by growing up in Australia as marginalised subjects. Through a framing of place as constituted by social relations in time-space, and therefore intertwined with futurity itself, the paper unpacks the role of overseas places in participants' reconstructions of possible futures and ultimately of hope (Cook and Cuervo 2019). It examines how moving to different places, and the different positionings in social relations that this entailed, enabled them to access different relationally-constructed frameworks for understanding their experiences (Fricker 2007), and ultimately their (future) selves. Finally, it examines how these practices might be employed to facilitate a return to Australia, to reimagine different possible futures here.

*Alexandra Lee* is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Deakin University. Her research areas include youth mobilities, multiculturalism, racism, and Asian Australian identities. She is also a research assistant with the Alfred Deakin Institute (ADI) and affiliated with the CRIS Consortium and Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY).