

Book Review: Fresnoza-Flot, A., & Liu-Farrer, G. (Eds.). (2022). *Tangled Mobilities: Places, Affects, and Personhood Across Social Spheres in Asian Migration*

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Cai Chen^{a*} 

^aUniversité libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

*corresponding author: cai.chen@ulb.be

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The edited volume *Tangled Mobilities* is a long-overdue call to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted lived experiences of migrants from, into, and within Asia. This continent has traditionally been a migrant-sending area and is now witnessing dynamic mobilities with diversified socio-economic profiles of people on the move, new migration regimes and pathways, as well as a “complex logic of migration” (Liu-Farrer & Yeoh, 2018, p. 9). Veering away from theories developed from Euro-American experiences, the editors propose the analytical framework of “tangled mobilities” to capture local specificities of Asian migration while building bridges with existing scholarship on (im)mobilities and migration.

This framework conceptualizes mobility as a dynamic, tangled social process in which different strands constantly intersect and interact. These strands are conceived by editors as “different elements (animate and inanimate), components (ideas, representations, practices, imaginaries, and affects), and forms of mobility (spatial, social, temporal, intimate, and temporal)” (p. 4). Each of these strands constitutes a tanglement itself and they become entwined with each other in an unfolding process that leads to multidimensional movement or stasis of individuals. Taking the study by Marilla (Chapter 3) for example, we observe how the mobility of home objects (inanimate elements) is related to the mobility of Belgian-Vietnamese couples (animate elements) over time and across space. Furthermore, Marilla demonstrates one the one hand how the multi-scalar spatial mobility (within the home, from private to public space, and crossing national borders) of objects reveals couples’ home-making processes, migration trajectories, personal experiences, affects, and life aspirations (components); and on the other hand, how entwined geographic and social mobilities of

Belgian-Vietnamese couples are interconnected with the spatial mobility of objects (forms of mobility). Likewise, many other forms of mobility are discussed and analyzed in different ways in other chapters of the volume, for instance, economic mobility (Chapters 5 and 9), sexual or intimate mobility (Chapters 1 and 8), legal mobility (Chapters 2, 7, and 10), and temporal mobility (Chapters 4 and 6).

The tangled nature of mobilities constitutes the core of all chapters in the present volume, which illuminate collectively the intricate link between mobility and personhood, the value of an affective lens of analysis, the relational mobility and stasis, and interweaving social spheres that individuals inhabit and traverse. For instance, the study by Kudo (Chapter 6) explores the transnational family-making trajectories of Japanese-Pakistani couples and their children through a generational lens. First, she reveals how the geographic mobilities of these transnational families are shaped by Japanese state regulation of binational marriages along with religion-shaped and gendered social norms. As Kudo puts it, Japanese-Pakistani binational union is “tangled with law, economy, and religion” (p. 137), which has a subsequent impact on their personhood and social incorporation. Kudo explains in her chapter that many Japanese women became “paper Muslims” (p. 140) to fulfill the marital requirements imposed by state policy to register their marriage in Japan so that their Pakistani spouses could obtain a legal migratory status. Some of them even became practicing Muslims at later stages of their lives, through which they could earn the acceptance of their family-in-law. Second, Kudo illustrates how gender, religion, migratory status, and other intersecting power relations influence the way in which Japanese-Pakistani families arrange transnational caregiving and mobilities (education or career) for their next generation, such as relocating to Pakistan or other countries, becoming transnationally split families, and organizing short-term visits of an extended kin. Last, Kudo argues that the entanglement of different forms of mobility transforms the personhood of the children of binational couples. She describes that experiences of transnational home-making and marital breakup of parents trigger the dynamic self-making process of the next generation of Japanese-Pakistani couples and inform how they perceive, navigate, and negotiate their multiple aspirations in intimate and familial realms.

The case studies presented in this volume offer rich insights into the increasing complexity of Asian migration, “characterized by the entanglements of diverse migration paths, places, personhood, and affects” (p. 7). Empirically, this volume assembles a wide variety of case studies covering multiple subregions of Asia, addressing distinct migration flows from, into, or within Asia, and involving diverse actors from different socio-economic backgrounds (gender, social class, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, age, generation, marital status, education, etc.). While these studies are conducted from either an anthropological perspective or a sociological viewpoint, their strength lies in detailed and vivid accounts of the lived experience of (im)mobile individuals and interdependent lives, as well as their aspirations and emotions over time and across space. Methodologically, this volume demonstrates the advantages of an ethnographic approach in researching migration and migrants’ multifaceted lived experiences. Although the geographical focus of this volume is Asia, life stories of migrants presented by contributors and their theoretical reflections have relevance to global human movement phenomena and broader transnational migration studies.

Critically built on recent mobility scholarship and informed by Asian migration experiences, this volume advances a holistic and grounded conceptualization of mobilities and migration studies, revealing the interconnectedness, codependency, and interactivity of mobilities and mobile persons from a processual approach. This conceptualization is interdisciplinary in nature and draws on intersectionality, transnationalism, and other perspectives. The analytical framework of “tangled mobilities” is not reserved for Asian migration studies, as all phenomena of/related to (im)mobility presented in this book are not exclusive to the Asian continent. By contrast, it serves as a springboard for scholars from/in other geographical contexts to revisit recent mobility scholarship and turn their attention to the theoretical and conceptual contributions that Asian migration brought to the thriving global studies of migration and mobilities. Practically, this refreshing analytical framework finds resonances in what Castles (2007) proposed as “a critical but socially engaged sociology of migration” (p. 362). It overcomes methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002) and builds bridges between social science research and state policy, paying attention to the interplay between social structure and human agency across nation-state borders as well as multi-scalar (local, national, and international) social transformation resulting in an individual’s movement or stasis. Moreover, the additional discussion of policy implications and COVID-19 influences at the end of this volume makes it a timely and practical book for both scholarly and non-scholarly audiences, especially for engaged citizens, professionals, and policymakers who are interested or involved in transnational migration.

In conclusion, *Tangled Mobilities* constitutes an original contribution both theoretically and empirically to the burgeoning (im)mobilities scholarship (Schewel, 2020; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Moreover, empirical cases in this volume provide a compelling argument that future research employing the framework of “tangled mobilities” should engage the emotional and temporal dimensions of mobility (Cwerner, 2001; Groes & Fernandez, 2018). However, this volume leaves an unsolved problem for researchers to rethink precise data gathering techniques through which we could capture the complexities of mobilities while disentangling tangled mobilities (Wyss & Dahinden, 2022). The book will drive further scholarly discussions and pave the way for new research on yet understudied human mobilities.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cai Chen is a PhD researcher at the Laboratory of Anthropology of Contemporary Worlds (LAMC) at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB, Belgium), where he has been conducting research on everyday ethno-racial power dynamics within Chinese-Congolese couples living in D. R. Congo. He holds an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree in Transnational Migrations (MITRA) and previously worked on migration trajectories and lived experiences of Chinese gay students in France.

► Contact: cai.chen@ulb.be