



Multimedia, Mobility and the Digital Southeast Asian Family

ABSTRACTS



Abstracts

Session 1 – Social media, educational mobility and digital family narrative

1. Singaporean Societies: Multimedia Communities of Migration

Raviv Litman

Abstract

The state of Singapore uses contractual obligations and incentives to maintain a long-term connection between overseas Singaporean students and their parents. Some of these methods go beyond the borders of Singapore and involve online communities. In 2012, the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore said of overseas students “they are part of our family while they are overseas and the valuable skills and exposure they gain while overseas will enrich our economy and society when they return”. In this paper, I talk about the worldwide state-funded and student-run Singaporean Societies and how they seek to govern overseas students’ relationship with family at home using interactive methods such as social media, finance, cuisine and more. Drawing from ethnographic and online methods of inquiry in the summer of 2015, I explore how students experienced Singaporean Societies as a tool to access social and financial resources while also committing to a closer relationship with

home. Students described in interviews and in online forums how they used these sites of state sponsorship to further their own goals for overseas community building and critical discussion of their positions as overseas students while also fulfilling their government’s expectations for maintaining ties to home and family.

Bio

Raviv Litman is a MA graduate of anthropology from the University of Victoria in Canada. In his undergrad, Raviv studied Pacific and Asian Studies with a specialization in Mandarin Chinese. Raviv wrote his thesis in 2016, titled ‘The parent tax: The governance of gratitude among transnationally educated sons in Singapore’. Throughout his masters and after graduation Raviv worked at the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives at Uvic as both a research assistant and as oral translator on projects related to migration.

2. Maintaining Virtual Homes: Social Media and *Pesantren* Families

Dr Faried F. Saenong

Abstract

Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia are considered homes, not only to their leader[s], *Kyai* or *Nyai*, the family members of the leader[s], and teachers, but also to students and alumni. In contrast to regular schools (non-boarding), *pesantren* are homes to students who physically live together for between three to six years. *Kyai* and elites of *pesantren* are known to emphasise that the *pesantren* population are one family. This familial bond remains in the hearts of some *pesantren* students after their graduation. Making use of social media, *pesantren* stakeholders and their alumni have established what van Dijck (2013) coins as “the culture of connectivity” in order to maintain a virtual home. Drawing on online and offline research from 2015-2016, this paper examines the role of social media in maintaining the identity and sense of belonging of *pesantren* alumni, including those living in the diaspora as international students. The paper observes the presence of various virtual groups managed by *pesantren* families through diverse social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook. This paper argues that social

media plays a significant role in reviving the familial bond of alumni toward their *pesantren* and its culture. Social media has also enabled this familial relationship to shape the hearts and minds of alumni. Social media platforms can be considered the new *pesantren* homes for alumni, especially those living in the diaspora.

Bio

Faried F. Saenong is currently the corresponding associate researcher at the UWISG of the University Waikato, New Zealand. He received his master's degree in Islamic Studies from Leiden University and the University of Manchester. He holds a PhD in Anthropology from the Australian National University. His publications include *Women, Gender, and Women's Religious Education in Indonesia* (2016) in Suad Joseph (ed). *Encyclopaedia of Women, Islamic Culture* (Leiden: Brill); 'Alid Piety in Bugis Texts on Proper Sexual Arts (2015) in C. Formichi & M. Feener (eds.) *Shi'ism in South East Asia: 'Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions* (London: Hurst); *Kindred Endogamy in a Bugis Migrant Community* (2012) in *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 30.

3. Documenting Motherhood: Interactions and Connections Among PhD Mama Indonesia

Dr Lily Yulianti Farid

Abstract

This paper examines online interactions on a Facebook Community Page and website among international female students from Indonesia who identify themselves as PhD Mama Indonesia. PhD Mama Indonesia was established in mid 2016 as an online platform to share stories and ideas among female students studying overseas, mainly in Australian universities. According to the website admin, the PhD Mama Indonesia is defined as a mother who is pursuing her doctoral degree overseas accompanied by her husband and children. As temporary migrants in Australia and elsewhere, these female students discuss their shared-problems and interests as mothers, wives and foreign students. The web admin interviews the PhD Mama members and invites them to write their own stories for the website. Success stories on how to balance PhD life and family have become the main focus.

Using content analysis and interviews this paper aims to discuss the use of digital platform among international female PhD students from Indonesia to establish a connection among 'mother cum PhD student'. This paper argues that the digital interaction and connection among PhD Mama

Indonesia reveals the challenges faced by middle class Indonesian females who are pursuing higher education overseas where culture, traditional values, religion and social factors influenced their perceptions on 'how to be a good mother and wife while pursuing a higher education'.

Bio

Dr Lily Yulianti Farid completed her MA (2003) and PhD (2015) in gender studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia. She received Australia Development Scholarship and Australia Leadership Award to pursue her postgraduate studies. Lily is a journalist, writer and the director of Makassar International Writers Festival and has published collections of short stories, including *Makkunrai* (2008), *Maiasaura* (2008), *Family Room* (2011), *Ayahku Bulan Engkau Matahari* (2012). She also translated Anita Roddick's *Business as Unusual* (2013) and *Linking People: Connections and Encounters Between Australian and Indonesians* (2017). She is now working as a research assistant at the Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne. Her research interests are: gender, media, politics and Australia-Indonesia relationships in culture, arts and literature.

Session 2 – Social media, wellbeing, gender and identity representation

1. Voice of Singapore’s Invisible Hands and Online Literary Works of Indonesian Migrant Workers

Adriana Rahajeng Mintarsih

Abstract

Rarely do migrant workers, especially female migrant domestic, get the chance to narrate their migration experience. Voice of Singapore’s Invisible Hands, a non-profit organization which promotes the rights and welfare of migrant domestic workers in Singapore, sees their potential and opens the opportunity. Using Facebook as one of the platforms to socialize its programs, it invites those who want to narrate their personal experiences untold by the media or academicians. It has continuously improve the skills of its students who are mostly from Indonesia through some English writing skills and literary training and/or workshop. These students have been writing short stories and poems about their homes, family, and culture although not all of them are written in English. Initially their literary works are intended for personal use and development. However, the literary works are often shared on the organization’s Facebook, and

it has helped its students to take part in a literary competition for migrant workers in Singapore. Using online ethnographic method, I am interested to see how both the organization and Indonesian migrant domestic workers make use of Facebook to promote the organization and their narration in the form of literary works.

Keywords: Voice of Singapore’s Invisible Hands, Indonesian migrant workers, literary works

Bio

Adriana Rahajeng got both her Bachelor's Degree in English Literature and Master's Degree in Gender Studies from University of Indonesia. There she has been teaching in English Studies Program, Faculty of Humanities, since 2009. Besides teaching, she has participated in some programs and community projects which provide free English lessons for disadvantaged children.

2. How does social media improve the well-being and awareness of challenges faced by Indonesian migrant domestic workers?

Dr Stevanus Wisnu Wijaya, Jason Watson and Christine Bruce

Abstract

This paper discusses the online practices and their related outcomes which improve the well-being and awareness of challenges faced by migrants amongst Indonesian migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. This study adopted virtual ethnography methodology to investigate online communities of Indonesian migrant domestic workers on Facebook. Data was collected from online observations and 19 participants were interviewed. The analysis shows that Indonesian migrant domestic workers discuss common interests and problems within the online communities. Discussing common interests and problems within online communities contributes directly to enhancing their knowledge and critical thinking skills of the challenges faced by migrants. Online discussion was also found to enhance the self-esteem of migrant domestic workers. They were also found to be socializing with others through the online communities such as developing social networks, maintaining family relationships, sharing feelings and providing or receiving emotional support. Their online practices contribute to the well-being of Indonesian migrant workers such as improvement in the feeling of connectiveness with their social environment, reduced feeling of high tension, and

an enhancement of their self-esteem. Discussions within online communities contributed to enhancing their awareness of migration challenges.

Keywords: Indonesian migrant domestic workers, online communities, virtual ethnography.

Bio (first author)

Dr Stevanus Wisnu Wijaya is a Lecturer at the School of Applied Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Universitas Prasetiya Mulya, Indonesia. He is interested in investigating the social phenomenon occurring as an impact of the widespread adoption of social technologies by the migrant community. For example, he has researched Indonesian migrant domestic workers' empowerment through social media since 2010, funded by Strategic National Competitive Grants from Directorate General of Higher Education at 2010. Following this, he was awarded a PhD scholarship to continue his research at the School of Information Systems, Queensland University of Technology, Australia in 2011 and then graduated in 2016. Drawing from a virtual ethnographic approach, his PhD research is aimed to develop a theoretical-based model of migrant domestic workers' empowerment in online communities.

3. Indonesian Muslim women's use of Facebook

Dr Graeme MacRae (on behalf of the late Vitri Hartono, Massey University, New Zealand)

Abstract

Since the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, the Indonesian media landscape has been radically transformed. The country is now a highly saturated media space in which people are exposed to numerous media from television programming to social media. In this article, I explore the meanings of Facebook for Indonesian Muslim women in which morality is a core concern. Facebook becomes a platform in which they address and (re)work their understanding of Islam and ultimately voice their sense of piety. Based on ethnographic research with Muslim women and Indonesian media, I discuss the way they are actively shaping their piety through Facebook, especially around the issue of veiling. Although some religious clerics have concerns regarding Facebook, suggesting that it could incite gossip and jeopardise marriages, my participants utilised Facebook to share and discuss Islamic tenets with other Muslim women.

Hence, Facebook is not merely experienced as a site for passing time or entertainment, but is also used as a medium through which Indonesian women shape and refashion their piety.

Bio

Dr Graeme MacRae is a Senior Lecturer in the School of People, Environment and Planning and will be presenting on behalf of his PhD student the late Vitri Hartono, from Massey University, New Zealand. Vitri Harsono, a New Zealand Indonesian, suffered a sudden stroke on campus on February the 11th 2017, leaving behind three wonderful children and an adoring husband. Her PhD on Muslim mothers in Semarang and Jakarta, Muslim parenting and the media (including Facebook), was almost finished. Her supervisors, Graeme MacRae and Sharyn Graham Davies (Auckland University of Technology), are working together to finalise her submission and publication of her research.

Session 3 – Transnational family members: online connection, communication and communities

1. Differential Communicative Mobilities: The Case of the Transnational Filipino Family in Melbourne, Australia

Dr Earvin Charles B. Cabalquinto

Abstract

Mobile devices and communications platforms play a pivotal role in engendering and sustaining relationships among geographically separated family members. The exchanges of personalized information – texts, photos and videos – bring family members spread across continents closer. Employing visual methods and drawing on in-depth interviews among 21 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in Melbourne, Australia, and their left-behind family members in the Philippines, this paper investigates the ways in which mobile device use produces differential communicative mobilities. The empirical study takes into account six aspects of uneven multimedia-based transnational communication: (1) Access; (2) Technical competency; (3) Quality of connectivity; (4) Rhythms; (5) Affective experience; and (6) Communicative space. I

contend that analysing these interconnected elements uncovers social inequalities perpetuated by using broadband-based mobile devices. In this regard, the article provides a nuanced approach in examining the mobile lives of the transnational Filipino family in a networked society.

Bio

Dr Earvin Charles B. Cabalquinto is a Teaching Associate in the School of Media, Film and Journalism (MFJ) at the Faculty of Arts, Monash University. He is also research assistant and a member of the 'Digital Mobilities in Asia' group in Culture Media Economy (CME), a new research unit at MFJ. His research interests include mobile and social media, mediated intimacies, digital creative spaces, place making and locative media, and asymmetrical mobilities.

2. Adjusting the Moral Compass, Keeping the Ethnic Bonds Alive: The Virtual Communities of Filipino Migrant Women in Japan

Dr Jocelyn O. Celero

Abstract

Filipino women's migration to Japan in the 1980s was a response to both the growing labor demand in Japan's entertainment and sex industries, as well as the crisis brought about by bride shortage in the rural villages. Their relations with Japanese nationals have led to the formation of Japanese-Filipino families and children. Unlike temporary female migrant workers elsewhere, Filipinas are increasingly seeking long-term and permanent settlement in Japan. Their marriage to Japanese, formation of a Japanese-Filipino family, and membership to local communities indicate gradual integration to Japan since the 2000s.

Coinciding Filipino migrants' growing tendency to settle in Japanese society is the proliferation of virtual communities as alternative spaces of communication among migrants worldwide. This paper builds on ethnographic research on the three online communities of Filipino migrants in Japan and in-depth interviews with (70) Filipino migrant mothers in Tokyo from 2010 to present. It examines the patterns of interaction of Filipino mothers online, focusing on their marriage, parent-child relationships and extended family ties in the Philippines. This paper aims to show evidence of online communities functioning as a transnational village (Levitt 2011), an alternative space in which Filipino migrant women to simultaneously reaffirm their affective ties and

sense of ethnic belonging to Filipino society. At the same time, it facilitates a dialogue on everyday cultural dilemmas Filipino mothers experience in leading a bicultural, transnational family through gathering gendered and ethnicized voices on how to build, maintain and 'normalize' marriage and family life in Japanese society.

Bio

Jocelyn O. Celero recently obtained her PhD program in International Studies at Waseda University-Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Tokyo, Japan. She also earned her Master's Degree in Global Studies at Sophia University in 2012 for her thesis on Filipino mothers' transnational, bicultural, and global-local patterns of rearing Japanese-Filipino children in Japan. The paper she will present to this workshop is a portion of her on-going research work on Japanese-Filipino families in Japan and the Philippines. She was a recipient of Monbukagakusho scholarship, a grant given by Japan's Ministry of Education. Prior to pursuing graduate studies in Japan, she has earned a Master's Degree in Asian Studies, major in Southeast Asia at the University of the Philippines-Asian Center in 2008. Her thesis was a comparative study on Muslim education in the Philippines and Malaysia. Her research interests include migration, ethnicity, identity, transnationalism, gender, and globalization.

3. Transnational family communication and digital devices: A case study

Dr Xuan Thu Dang, Associate Professor Howard Nicholas, Associate Professor Donna Starks

Abstract

Many studies of home language use often focus on macro-level language changes and verbal communication rather than on micro-level analyses of first-generation family communication, non-verbal communication and contribution of multimedia (Croucher & Rahmani, 2015). This paper reports preliminary results of a study which examines the communicative interactions of a first generation Australian-Vietnamese family currently settling in Melbourne. Through an in-depth analysis of a 20-minute video clip capturing diverse communicative resources used by each member during their watching a favourite English television program, we want to argue that the transnational family communication patterns are complex in terms of language use, gestures, movement and spatial positioning. The fluidity in wholeness of their interactions involves displays of languages (English and Vietnamese), verbal (in many cases involving translanguaging) and non-verbal communication, bodily (non)movement or even silence. Interestingly, digital devices (television and smart phone) play an important role in facilitating transnational family communication, intimacy and continuity. The Multiplicity Framework (Nicholas & Starks, 2014) is used to track the multimodal communication to show how such a simple interaction can provide a wealth of information about communicative acts in a natural multilingual context and the

positioning of digital devices within the communicative event as a whole.

Bio (first and second authors)

Xuan Thu Dang works as a lecturer of TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) for Hanoi University and a research fellow for various research projects at Deakin University. He has researched extensively in the area of technologies in English teaching and learning. His current research interests include English teaching and learning, teacher identity, teaching methods, staff professional development, mobility and transnationalism, innovative use of technologies in teaching, learning and research.

Howard Nicholas is Associate Professor in the School of Education, La Trobe University. He has researched child and adult second language acquisition (German and English) and the acquisition of German as a first language. He has researched extensively in the area of mobile technologies and education. He teaches in the areas of applied linguistics and language education. He has worked in Germany on various research projects and has undertaken Visiting Professorships at the University of Hawaii, at Manoa, Concordia University in Montreal and the University of Western Australia. From October 2013 to September 2014 he was Visiting Professor in English Language Education, Paderborn University, Germany.

Session 4 – Hope and affirmation of digital diaspora through social media

1. Engaging a Greater Hope: Rohingya in Malaysia and Hope in Social Media

Dr Eva Nisa

Abstract

Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar—formerly known as Burma—who historically faced a humanitarian crisis for decades, have recently suffered another episode of oppression. The condition of Rohingya Muslims has invited international attention and sympathy. This paper focuses on Rohingya Muslims living as refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia. Malaysia is a sanctuary for a number of Rohingya, particularly when compared to the previous conditions in their hometown, Arakan, where they were unable to freely perform Muslim acts of devotion. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Malaysia from 2015-2016, this paper will mainly focus on the efforts of Rohingya Muslims in Malaysia in reconnecting familial bonds with relatives with whom they have lost touch due to multiple crises. It analyses the role of social media in the life of Rohingya Muslims living in Malaysia as well as activists focusing their projects on Rohingya Muslims. In regards to escalating tension between the parties involved in the conflict and their supporters, this paper argues that social media does not only play

a decisive role in spreading hatred and hateful language against others, it has also been used by Rohingya Muslims as a means to help family in Myanmar and Malaysia living in a deprived conditions, by generating humanitarian awareness to the wider community- virtual and non-virtual.

Bio

Eva Nisa is currently Lecturer of Religious Studies at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Before commencing her current position, she was a post-doctoral research fellow for the Problematising 'Muslim Marriages' project. Currently, she is an affiliated researcher for the same project, focusing on unregistered marriage, online *siri* (secret) marriage, temporary marriage, and online Shari'a-compliant matchmaking platforms. Her other research interests are social media and *da'wa* (proselytisation), face-veiled women and Muslim activism, Muslim youth, Muslim fashion, migrant domestic workers, Muslim refugees and philanthropy.

2. Crowd Curated History: Vietnamese Refugee Diaspora on Facebook

Ms Anh Nguyen

Abstract

This paper examines the use of Facebook as a knowledge source and its historical significance in understanding refugee diaspora using the specific case of Vietnamese refugees dispersed globally since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. The phenomenon of creating Facebook transnational communities in diaspora is not new. Migrants have been the main social actors of using ICTs to form on-line communities that transcend time and distance. However, Vietnamese refugees explicitly use Facebook to share their historical authority about their experience and identity as refugees with pride and positivism. The paper explores the following propositions. Whilst Facebook provides a permanent place for these on-line communities, does a refugee on-line community constitute its own distinguished form of diaspora? Furthermore, how does this migrant community on Facebook contribute to a crowd curated history? Martin Sokefeld's application of social movement approach towards a definition of diaspora and Robert Craig's "Facebook hermeneutics," lend vital frameworks to this inquiry. Through a critical examination of Facebook postings about refugee reunions and moments of self and group recognition as former refugees, we witness how Vietnamese refugees affirm their survival in history. We also examine how Facebook functions as a site of memory that provides a space for their stories, myths, memorials and community activism. This paper

suggests that Vietnamese refugees on Facebook are creating a crowd curated historical account of their experience and present day perspective as the subjects and objects of the history in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. It illustrates how ICTs have empowered migratory and dispersed populations with access and agency to contribute to historical knowledge. Given the controversies regarding the treatment of refugees worldwide, allowing the subjects in the headlines, to share their authority may better guide our historical consciousness about immigration policies and practices in the future

Bio

Anh Nguyen was a Vietnamese child refugee raised in Carrollton, Texas. She graduated with a Masters of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity and Bachelors of Arts in English Literature from Bryn Mawr College. In 2002, she had a postgraduate fellowship from Harvard to conduct research interviews about the acculturation of Vietnamese in Australia. She then worked with Harvard School of Public Health on AIDS research and treatment in Nigeria, and became a bilingual legal aid advocate for Vietnamese immigrants in Boston. She currently works as Executive Assistant to the CEO of Native Title Services Victoria and is pursuing her PhD on the oral history of Vietnamese Australian child refugees in Australia.

3. Multimedia and mother-daughter relationship: Indonesian and Philippine women in Melbourne Australia

Dr Monika Winarnita and Dino Concepcion

Abstract

New capacities for multimedia forms of expression of belonging and communication have transformed the migrant experience (Morley and Robins 1995; Wilding 2012; Gifford & Wilding 2013). This paper examines the multimedia and online expression of identity, belonging and intergenerational family relationships of mothers and daughters from the Indonesian and Philippine community in Melbourne. In Australia these group of women are part of the third largest and steadily growing Southeast Asian migrant population who are also active participants in the international flows of media, communication and ideas. This paper asks how their identity, belonging and family relationships are expressed through their multimedia production. What do these multimedia production and stories tell us about the effects of migration and mobility on women's intergenerational relationships, particularly the mother-daughter relationship? By focusing on multimedia expression of Indonesian and

Philippine female migrants in Melbourne, the paper seeks to understand social and cultural change as it relates to issues of gendered identity, belonging and family relationships in a transnational context.

Bio

Dr Monika Winarnita and Dino Concepcion (PhD candidate, La Trobe University) are working together on a project with Associate Professor Raelene Wilding titled 'Multimedia, Migrant Identities and Family Relationships: A Qualitative Investigation' funded by Research Focus Area of Transforming Human Society, Migration and Mobilities cluster at La Trobe University. For this presentation Monika will also draw upon her current research as a Postdoctoral Fellow on the project 'Southeast Asian Women, Migration and Family in the Global Era' with the Department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria, Canada supervised by Associate Professor Leslie Butt.