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Migration, Mobility & Displacement is an online, open-access, peer-reviewed journal. It seeks to publish original and innovative scholarly articles, juried thematic essays from migrant advocacy groups and practitioners, and visual essays that speak to migration, mobility and displacement and that relate in diverse ways to the Asia-Pacific. The journal welcomes submissions from scholars and migrant advocacy groups that are publicly engaged, and who seek to address a range of issues facing migrants, mobile and displaced persons, and especially work which explores injustices and inequalities.

We welcome submissions and inquiries from prospective authors. Please visit our website mmduvic.ca, or contact the editor for more information.

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

FENG XU

Before you is the inaugural issue of Migration, Mobility, & Displacement (*MM&D*), which we hope you will find to be as stimulating as we have. The publication of any academic journal is an intense learning experience for the editorial and support staff, well before it is of any use or interest to its readers. That was certainly our experience in preparing this inaugural issue of *MM&D*. In the practical business of setting up and running a publication, the stellar staff at the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives (CAPI) took center stage: the editorial board and I are deeply grateful to them. I also wish to extend my own thanks and gratitude to my editorial colleagues for their sacrifices and talent at this stage.

Staff and editorial staff alike experienced mounting excitement with the submission of the manuscripts of our first contributors, as well as the abstracts for our inaugural conference, “Migration and Late Capitalism” (June 2015). Our hearty thanks go out to the thoughtful input of our anonymous reviewers, and of course to the wide-ranging wisdom of the contributors themselves.

An inaugural editorial is an opportunity for manifestos, or at least for explanations. Why launch an online, open-access, and peer-reviewed journal on migration, mobility, and displacement, from a base at the University of Victoria’s Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives? As many of our readers will encounter the journal before they encounter Victoria, it is worth stressing that the history of this small provincial capital is rich with experiences of migration and mobility, and displacement and CAPI provides a remarkable intellectual home for *MM&D* to come alive.

Located at the southernmost tip of the west coast of Canada, Victoria is a storied place of intersection of Asia-Pacific and North American influences, of indigenous nations and diverse waves of in-migration. It began on *Lekwungen* territory in 1843 as a fur trading post of the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC), anticipating the 1846 partition of the Oregon Territory between Britain and the United States. A gold rush soon generated a parallel center of settlement in the lower Fraser Valley just across the Salish Sea. James Douglas, the HBC’s chief factor at Fort Victoria, became the first Governor of the twin colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, which were joined in 1871 to enter the Canadian Federation as the Province of British Columbia, with Victoria as its capital.

Victoria is thus among the oldest non-indigenous Pacific Coast centers north of San Francisco. But before Victoria’s founding, Vancouver Island was already a lively center for trade and the movement of people. The *Lekwungen* and *T’sou-ke* peoples participated in a vibrant and broad network of exchange and mobility extending up and down the coast and into the interior. These networks are woven into wider networks of treaty, kinship, and exchange, and later connected with Spanish, Russian, British, American, and even Asian interlocutors.

The three main themes of this journal's title resonate strongly with the region's subsequent history:

- the displacement, dispossession, and resistance of *Lekwungen* and other indigenous people in the face of British commerce, settlement, and gunboat diplomacy;
- the Canadian government's policies of concentrating and immobilizing indigenous people on reserves and displacing their children to residential schools under policies of confinement, tutelage, and assimilation;
- the early emergence of a vibrant Chinatown, and Chinese community in Victoria and the surrounding region that, along with other important Asian communities, competed in size with the early European population of British Columbia;
- the early draw of Hawaiians, Americans (including African Americans and other racialized minorities), British and others by sealing, whaling, and trade;
- the Canadian Government's pre-WWI interdiction of chartered ships, including the *Komagata Maru*, carrying primarily Sikhs, testing imperial citizenship in relation to South Asian anti-colonial politics, and racist Canadian immigration laws;
- the rise in Victoria's Chinatown of the world's first Empire Reform Association, a network of late-imperial Chinese expatriates seeking to encourage social and political reform under the late Qing dynasty in China;
- during the Second World War, the internment and dispossession of Japanese Canadians from the coast to the interior British Columbia, and for some, "repatriation" to a post-war Japan that many Canadian-born internees had never known;
- the ongoing role of Asian and Latin American migrant workers in coastal agriculture, caregiving, and tree-planting industries;
- the recent stand-off at Esquimalt Harbour, Victoria, involving the *MV Sun Sea*, a ship carrying Sri Lankan Tamils, which turned federal treatment of boat-borne asylum seekers towards Australia's model (the "Pacific Solution") and led to 492 asylum seekers being detained in Vancouver;
- the recent wave of highly mobile Asian students, especially Chinese students, to study in high schools and universities in Victoria and the lower mainland;
- Victoria as a tourism and retirement paradise for Canadians, Americans, expatriate British and other European residents of Asia, and increasingly, citizens of many Asian countries;
- the latest debates over Canada's recently expanded Temporary Foreign Workers Program, which twice broke into national headlines. Once over a Chinese coal-mining project in the BC interior and again over a chain of fast-food restaurants in Victoria. These events prompted the federal government to deepen the precarity of temporary work for many foreign workers in Canada.

In short, Victoria has its own window on migration, mobility, and displacement, especially as these are expressed in relation to the Asia-Pacific.

A word or two is perhaps also in order about the stakes that Asia-Pacific peoples have in the themes of this journal. If we confine ourselves merely to sampling contemporary issues, we find abundant subjects to pursue throughout the Asia-Pacific:

- the displacement, dispossession and resistance of indigenous people in southeast Asia, Australia, and elsewhere in the face of deforestation, new plantation economies and resource extractive activity, particularly mining;
- the displacement of people by wars and internal conflicts (e.g. the Afghanistan war);
- the displacement of people amidst climate change (e.g., Bangladesh, Pacific Islands of Vanuatu, and the Maldives);
- tourism and education migration to Australia, Japan, and Singapore;
- temporary labour migration along diverse corridors from and within the region;
- massive internal migrations in mainland China and other rapidly industrializing nations, and the deep internal social divisions that many migrant labourers face in their new places of work and daily life;
- migrant workers' struggles to be treated in receiving countries and regions as whole persons with everyday needs and aspirations, rather than merely as disposable labour power (e.g., mainland China, Hong Kong and Bangladesh);
- the feminization of migration, including light industrial workers and highly gendered cohorts of caregivers in migration from the Philippines and Indonesia now working throughout and beyond the region;
- the mobilization of border regimes in migrant receiving countries in the Asia-Pacific to manage migratory movement.

MM&D intends to contribute to debates and understandings about these and similar issues. In keeping with *MM&D*'s policy of welcoming diverse offerings, this inaugural issue includes a photo essay that captures major themes in migration, mobility and displacement, an interview with a well-known migrant activist, and an absorbing selection of academic articles.

In the first article, Peter Nyers engages critically with the "autonomy of migration" literature on the question of political agency and subjectivity among migrants and refugees. Traditional concepts and frameworks are inadequate to account for the dynamism of migrants' struggles against "detention, deportation, and other border controls; campaigns for regularization and status; the revival of sanctuary cities; and global struggles for freedom of movement." While citizenship is often an exclusionary category too tightly associated with state sovereignty, and thus of little use in the "autonomy of migration" literature, Nyers argues that it remains a powerful concept and resource for "illegal" migrants. When undocumented migrants act as if they are already citizens, this very act re-constitutes the political.

Scott Watson's article critically interrogates the criminalization narrative in national and international campaigns against human smuggling. According to

Watson, states have shifted their criteria for determining smuggling. Where once motives (profit or humanitarian) mattered alongside legality of entry, the latter has become the sole criterion. This forecloses assistance to border crossing on humanitarian grounds. Watson argues this enables states to detain and deport people, simply for transgressing the border. The new criminalization narrative also makes human movement more dangerous, and subjects smuggled persons to precarious and exploitative situations.

In her interview with *MM&D* editor Jo-Anne Lee, migrant activist Harsha Walia reflects on her much-discussed concept of border imperialism. According to Walia, this concept foregrounds several aspects of a distinctive critical approach: 1) a shift in focus from migrants “violating” borders to states’ violence and brutality towards migrants, notably expressed in and through borders; 2) a shift from immigration as a “domestic” issue to interrogating “systemic issues such as wars, empire, oppression and gender-persecution” that have generated the displacement and dispossession behind much migration; 3) a new light shed on racist immigration discourses that turn into a legal discursive binary between “legal” and “illegal” migrants; 4) enhanced exposure of the detention of migrants that is inter-linked to border militarization and the criminalization of border-crossing; and 5) indications of capitalism racialized in relation to migration; migration is shaped by the demand for migrants as cheap labour within national economies and transnational value chains.

Walia also calls for movements towards decolonization to be brought into conversation with others striving for a better and more just world in mobility. In her view, decolonization is a rich and under-appreciated source of radical thought, in that deeply rooted indigenous knowledge provides an alternative radical vision to Euro-centric utopias, with their exclusive preoccupation with novelty. She concludes the interview by underscoring the centrality of an ethical relationship between the migrants’ justice movement as a political movement and indigenous movements towards sovereignty and self-determination.

Rather than treat state sovereignty as the primary adversary of undocumented migrants’ struggles, Prem Kumar Rajaram centers on both state and capitalism. Undocumented migrant labour and those “at the sharp end of austerity measures,” such as the disabled generally and the Roma in Europe, all experience marginalization under neoliberal capitalism. Neoliberal capitalism considers them to be “surplus population,” unproductive and therefore discarded. Rajaram argues that this common marginalization in the history of labour and capital is essential in understanding the possibility for political change.

Sherry Xiaohan Thorpe and Xiaobei Chen, as well as Ping-Ann Addo, re-focus migration studies on families. Thorpe and Chen argue that Canada’s Super Visa scheme for parents and grandparents (2008) has abandoned family reunification in favour of temporary visits. This scheme rests on bio-political concerns in defining family in Canada’s immigration policy; grandparents and parents are not considered family, because their migration is not considered to be in Canada’s economic

interests. In a neoliberal era, family members are to be responsible for their own affairs, while borders and populations alike fall under increasingly tighter control.

Ping-Ann Addo's article insists on families' agency in migration, globalization and transnationalism. She critically engages remittances in the nexus of migration and development promoted by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Her work is a rich ethnographic study of Tongan women migrants' active participation in textile-based wealth creation, which occurs through their insistence on their own values in the ritual economy, and in their resistance to wealth as cash and commodities both in the capitalist cash economy and in remittances that labour migrants send home. Her study also shows that remittances flow from homeland to hostland as textile wealth, and that "these economic migrants do not simply identify as "workers," but enact identities as members of families, nations and cultures whose embeddedness in robust communities does not end, [and] may be augmented and further complicated by transnational migration and diaspora."

Jakarta-based photographer Andri Tambunan captures the human suffering and also the human resilience of those displaced by Typhoons Haiyan and Yolanda. But several other themes also stand out in this photo collection. Tambunan is witness to Asia's experience of mass urbanization and peasant land-loss, the migration of men and women, and of persons of all ages. He attests to the infrastructures and technologies that overcome distances and facilitate movement: the place of roads, buses, cars and trains, and iPhones in human mobility is unmistakable, whether in Chongqing or Jakarta. The diversity of these images captures the spirit of wide-ranging inquiry and observation to which our journal aspires.

The movement of people is a global condition, and yet it presents in distinctive ways in every locale. Migration, mobility, and displacement constitute a troika of concepts to capture its heterogeneity. Economic dimensions of this movement have been a rich and fruitful area of investigation, as have been questions of social and political power, and the multifaceted role of networked families and household strategies in migration. We are all witnesses in recent decades to the seeming paradox of the institutional facilitation of ever more frictionless flows of capital, goods and services, combined with the increasingly fine-tuned national and global management of the flow of people. Power differences are central to characterizing the movement of people: some people are able to move freely while others are less able, or can move only with substantial restrictions. Migrant-receiving countries increasingly manage migration to meet their economic needs through legal regulations, graduated citizenship status, and border regimes.

We hope this inaugural issue will mark the beginning of many fruitful and wide ranging discussions surrounding migration, mobility, and displacement.