

Editorial

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How important are regional foci in a world that is defined by transfers and mobilities? This issue of *Transfers* features a special section that addresses this question and provides varied answers on the role regions play in the understanding of modernity, power, and practices of moving. The call for the special section, “Asia on the Move,” went out in spring 2017. Since then, questions of mobilities, migration, and transfers have not only gained increasing attention and importance, they have also been met with resistance by local groups, in politics and social development—often, in the global point of view, from quite unexpected directions, as in the case of Myanmar and Rohingya migration in 2018.

The call initially located Asia as a past and modern emblem of a region “on the move.” We invited discussions on the three M’s—mobility, migration, and market exchange—that both “movers” and the “moved” in Asia have invoked as welcome, even if sometimes wayward, friends, with whom Asian nations can and will define their roles in the world. Some movements were welcomed more than others. Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong emphasized the importance of enabling workers to migrate and companies to move in his speech of 7 May 2014.¹ The maturation of infrastructure—and those that facilitate the right kinds of movements—is high on the agenda of almost all countries, as Asian communities increasingly migrate and merge not only within Asia, but across the globe.²

The special section, expertly delivered and introduced by Mayurakshi Chaudhuri and Viola Thimm, speaks in particular, as Stéphanie Ponsavady remarks in her comment, to “intersectionality, polyvocality, and the multiplicity of histories in one region” and how such analyses “can reveal larger social dimensions.” Another important point remains the political dimension and its relevance for our analytics: the questioning of the continuing relevance of the nation-state and its shifting importance as the default unit of analysis highlights the fallacies of thinking in terms of actual borders and political regions. The individual article in this issue complements the special section with another example from Asia, as Ashley Carruthers introduces the cyclists of Vietnam.

Regionally variant trajectories help to sharpen argument against the fallacies of the “other” and *Transfers* looks forward to giving the go-ahead to regional portfolios on Australia, Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe, or Oceania. Ultimately, though, the aim of this issue of *Transfers* is not just regional: we



also hope to encourage readers to defamiliarize themselves from their naturalized norms, and help them rethink mobility globally.

With this issue, *Transfers* concludes an eventful year. Since 2017, when a new team took over editorship from Gijs Mom, the journal has, step by step, also invested in structural and technical changes. Submissions can now be uploaded directly online. Governance structures have been adapted to reflect the disciplinary dynamics of the field. This is then also the time and place to express our gratitude to the support offered by the advisory board. Each member brought not only important expertise but also crucial resources to *Transfers*. Their professional investment and personal dedication has been of immeasurable importance to the growing stature and visibility of the journal in and beyond the field. The editorial board has been reformed and restructured with members, old and new, to carry *Transfers* and its global agenda into its next life cycle. We welcome the growing internationalization of the board as well as its expanding range of disciplines, in particular anthropology and film studies, both of which have shown an increased interest in mobilities themes.

Several members of our editorial team are moving to pastures green and new, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their amazing input and dedication to the journal: Deborah Breen for her inspiring engagement on “Ideas on the Move,” Fabian Kröger’s expert management of media and images, and Dorit Müller for her simulating contributions as film review editor. Lin Weiqiang is taking up the editorial baton for Ideas in Motion as Neil Archer takes on film and media. Special thanks go to book review editor, Liz Montegary, for her amazing organizational input and for helping us form a team of four review editors, each in charge of different geographical regions, under the coordination of Anna Plysheva, who will also edit book reviews focussed on Europe and the UK. Mathilde Cordoba Azcarate covers books concerning USA and Canada, Marcus Filippello’s focus is Africa and Latin America, and Max Hirsh concentrates on the Asia Pacific region. Highly welcome, too, is our new literary and novel reviewer, Dave McLaughlin. The editorial board is looking forward to the new ventures of *Transfers*.

Notes

1. “Transcript of Speech by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Malay-Muslim Business Conference, 7 May 2014,” Prime Minister’s Office Singapore, last updated 12 June 2017, <https://www.pmo.gov.sg/newsroom/transcript-speech-prime-minister-lee-hsien-loong-malay-muslim-business-conference-7-may>.
2. See research by Elena Barabantseva, Małgorzata (Gosia) Jakimów, Caroline Grillo, Andrew Lawrence et al.