

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## There and back again: The staggered pathways of Asian migrants

**Dr Shanthi Robertson from the Institute of Culture and Society has received a Discovery Early Career Researcher Award from the Australian Research Council to investigate changing migration patterns between Asian countries and Australia. The project will examine how the subjective experiences of temporary migrants are affected by Australian immigration policies, the new patterns of travel and time that are emerging, and will develop ways to analyse individual temporal-spatial pathways in an increasingly globalised mobility landscape.**

'The number of temporary visas authorised in Australia has skyrocketed in recent years, often surpassing the number of permanent ones', Dr Robertson explains, 'However, the complex policies surrounding temporary visas means that many migrants are jumping from one type of visa to another as their circumstances change – resulting in what could be called “staggered pathways” of mobility. And, the line between temporary and permanent migration has begun to blur: many permanent residencies are now granted to temporary migrants already living here, and some permanent residents are moving between Australia and other countries as circular migrants.' Dr Robertson will attempt to map these staggered pathways by recording not just the spatial aspects of migrant mobility, but the temporal aspects as well.

In-depth interviews will be conducted with 40 migrants from Asian countries who have held temporary visas with working rights in Australia. Some participants will be currently residing in Australia, and others living overseas. Textual and visual items (for example, photographs) from each participant will be collected and put into a digital



map of their journey, with emphasis on “temporality” – a person’s subjective experience of time – in relation to Australian immigration regulations. These maps are anticipated to produce intersectional data on aspects of the participants’ lives, such as their choices under various visa restrictions, their experience of “being temporary” on a personal level, and their changing sense of belonging in Australia and abroad.

A map of the temporal journeys of Asian migrants to Australia would provide vital insight into how the government can address the workplace vulnerabilities of temporary migrant workers, understand differences between migrant and local communities, and strengthen business ties between Australia and Asian trading partners.

**Project Title:** Staggered pathways: Temporality, mobility and Asian temporary migrants

**Funding has been set at:** \$336,009

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