



International Student Mobilities: Notes on Regional and Digital Flows in Asia

Dr Yi'En CHENG, Asian Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, Singapore

Abstract

International student migration in/of Asia are predicated on state-driven and market logics that play an important role in shaping and sustaining transnational student mobilities. The transnational flow of young people from the global South to the North is increasingly challenged by rising China-US geopolitical tensions and social antagonisms amidst the constant threat of contagion, and study destinations in Asia are ostensibly emerging as more viable than before. Such changes are provoking new responses from national governments and private education industries in mediating international student flows. The pandemic's impacts, which range from disruptions to learning and travel plans to the everyday xenophobic encounters and struggles to maintain livelihoods in student cities, are also altering aspirations to invest in educational mobility, as well as the meanings and values of mobility and immobility. In this presentation, I draw upon two interlinked pieces of my ongoing research on international student flows in the contexts of the Belt and Road Initiative and the COVID-19 pandemic to reflect on the transnational geographies and multi-scalar politics of student mobilities in Asia. The focus is on regionalisation and digitalisation, and the ways in which these processes are complicating existing infrastructures that mediate student mobilities.

Yi'En Cheng is Research Fellow in the Asian Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute. His research interests lie in the intersection across education, youth, and mobilities in Asian cities, with a current focus on Asian student mobilities and experiences in the contexts of the Belt and Road Initiative and the COVID-19 pandemic. More details about his research is available at <https://chengyien.wordpress.com>.