

# MAX PLANCK RESEARCH GROUP “Ageing in a Time of Mobility”

Lecture Series 2021

Zoom Webinar



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## “Without technology we’d be very stuck”: Ageing migrants’ comobility capital in pandemic times

The onset of the global health pandemic has placed many individuals in constrained mobilities. People’s movements across the world have been curtailed by cross-border shut-downs, travel restrictions, and lockdowns. In a sense, various forms of spatial and temporal immobilities reflect the concept of what Hage Ghassan (2009) calls ‘existential immobility’ or stuckedness during a crisis. However, in a digital era, diverse individuals manage stuckedness by using digital communication technologies to sustain personal relationships and enact civic participation. This presentation presents how ageing people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Melbourne, Australia use a range of digital communication technologies and on-line platforms to maintain ties during a lockdown in 2020. Based on conducting a remote and in-depth interviews among 15 elderly CALD people, the study foregrounds the paradoxical consequences of what I call ‘comobility capital’ or how moving with others through mobile technologies (Southern, 2012) is transformed into economic, social, cul-

tural, and mobility capital (Moret, 2018). On the one hand, digital media use has enabled the provision of diverse intimate crisis care practices and cultural belonging, facilitating agentic experiences of managing a lockdown. On the other hand, differing access to resources, technological skills, and connections to social networks has undermined comobility capital, stirring feelings of exclusion and isolation. This point indicates how such form of capital is shaped by social differentiation (Moret, 2018) and ‘motility’ or the ability of an individual to move based on an one’s access to resources, skills and the appropriation of knowledge and resources to navigate specific conditions (Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye, 2004). Notably, I propose four comobile practices to uncover the contradictions of comobility capital, including streamed, ambient, interrupted, and obtrusive. In sum, this provocation problematises the politics of digital (im)mobility by critically investigating how people’s differing uneven comobility capital impacts ways of handling a state of stuckedness during and beyond a pandemic.

Please contact [Menster@mmg.mpg.de](mailto:Menster@mmg.mpg.de) to register and obtain the Zoom credentials.



**Dr Earvin Charles Cabalquinto** is a Lecturer in Communication at Deakin University. He is also a member of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. His research interests include labor migration, transnational communication, mobile intimacy, transnational caregiving, and the politics of digital (im)mobilities. His book, “(Im)mobile Homes: Family life at a distance in the age of mobile media”, is forthcoming as part of the Studies in Mobile Communication series of Oxford University Press. His current project critically investigates how ageing people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Melbourne, Australia use digital communication technologies for civic participation in a digital world. The project is funded through the 2020 Pilot Research Grant at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. To know more about his works, visit [www.ecabalquinto.com](http://www.ecabalquinto.com), or follow him on Twitter: @earvsc.



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