

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

DIJ Method Talk *Social Science Study Group*



May 26, 2021, Wednesday, 6:30pm (JST)/11.30am (CEST)

Mental mapping: Rediscovering and reframing a geographical method for mobility patterns

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The diversification in and of urban spaces through rising mobility is inevitable, yet the actual capturing of socio-spatial urban transformation is still methodologically underexplored. Though much has been discussed and researched on transnational spaces and mobility patterns, little is known about the actual extent of these spaces beyond network maps that depict the global connectedness of transnational communities with each other. In fact, the social geographical approach that is intended to account for the physical as well as the social aspect of space (Massey, 2013) methodologically poses an intellectual puzzle.

Based on the analytical framework of Martina Löw (2001), I employed the novel methodological tool of *mental maps* in my research on global and local mobility patterns. I combined it with 45 interviews with transnational migrant professionals in Tokyo, ethnographic site surveys and geographical mapping of specifically mentioned areas within the city. The mental maps were drawn by transnational professional migrants in order to capture the extent and locations of urban transformations, i.e. transnational space(s) constituted locally within the global city of Tokyo, but also globally within the network in global cities. In my presentation, I will introduce the method of mental mapping and discuss how it can be connected to spatial theory to capture socio-spatial transformations and mobility patterns in Tokyo and beyond.

Sakura Yamamura (PhD) is a postdoctoral researcher at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. With expertise in migration studies, urban and economic geography, her work focuses on the spatiality of social and economic activities in migrant-led diversification of society, particularly in cities. She is the author of “Spatial Diversity in the Global City – Transnational Tokyo” (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming) and articles in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* and the *Oxford Handbook of Superdiversity*.

About

The DIJ Methods Talks are part of the Social Science Study Group, a forum for scholars conducting research on contemporary Japan. Meetings are held once a month and are open to speakers from all disciplines of the social sciences focusing on methods and methodological questions. The event is open to all.

Online Presentation

Registration is required at www.dijtokyo.org or kottmann@dijtokyo.org until May 25, 2021.

Log in data will be provided after registration.
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