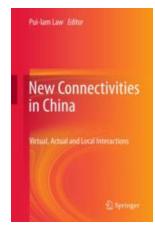Pui-lam Law (Ed.), **New Connectivities in China**: **Virtual, Actual and Local Interactions,** Dordrecht: Springer, 2012, 234 pp., $139.00 (hardcover).

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Pui-lam Law's edited volume, **New Connectivities in China: Virtual, Actual and Local Interaction**s, examines how new digital tools for networking are altering the local culture and social relationships in China. The book consists of 17 chapters, of which many are reprints of previously published journal articles. To bind these chapters together, Law distinguishes three levels of interactions: virtual, actual, and local. Although this "conceptual triplet" is not thoroughly elaborated and theorized by Law, it gives structure to the book and helps him weave the individual chapters into a coherent whole. Having summarized the content of the chapters, Law proposes that virtual interactions do not easily reshape the actual non-mediated world in China because of the resisting forces of local actors and civil society. Reading the book confirms that his argument is plausible and most likely correct.

Part I begins with Boxu Yang's chapter describing the distinctive relationship between nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and the Internet in China. According to Yang, NPOs should not be considered civil society actors by Western standards because they are managed in favor of the government. Next, Chung-tai Cheng elaborates on the multilayered Chinese culture and how it influences the perceptions of the Internet in China. Cheng contends that Chinese Internet users should not be considered to be fully individualized citizens as their online behavior is greatly influenced by tight social networks and by family members. Even though Cheng's argument is based on only one example, it is convincing. Part I ends with a chapter on the online representations of Chinese nationalism. David Kurt Herold claims that the Internet is neither working as the voice of the Chinese Communist Party nor working as a liberating and Westernizing force. Instead, the Internet is a channel for new "reflective nationalists" who support democratization as long as it happens on the country's own terms. All in all, Part I shows that ICT should not be seen either as the government's stooge or as an ultimately individualizing force in China. Instead, the distinctive feature of ICT usage in China is perhaps related to the role it plays in well-knit social networks and families.

Part II is about mobile phone use in Beijing. The first two chapters report the findings of a pioneering questionnaire survey conducted in Beijing in 2006. Both chapters are jointly written by Leopoldina Fortunati, Anna Maria Manganelli, Pui-lam Law, and Shanhua Yang. Whereas Cheng proposed that Internet usage is influenced by family and other social connections, Fortunati et al. argue that, in contrast, the mobile phone does not really serve to maintain family connections in China. The authors provide statistics that indicate the perceived importance of the mobile phone is reportedly higher if the mobile phone is considered to be enlarging the overall sphere of communication. In their second chapter,

Fortunati et al. propose that in China mobile phone use is more closely associated with the sphere of employment and work colleagues than it is in the West (no comparable statistics from the West are provided in this regard). However, one of their measures shows that parents are still contacted most frequently (almost once a day), and another measure indicates that friends or schoolmates, partners, parents, children, and other relatives are all reported to be more frequent recipients of mobile phone calls than colleagues and other work partners. Against this backdrop, the authors' argument about the greater importance of work-related communication compared with family connection is not rock solid and requires further study. Fortunati et al. present one more interesting finding when they argue that among low-income Beijingers the mobile phone is most frequently used to stay in touch with friends and schoolmates. Ke Yang's chapter, which brings Part II to an end, provides a partial explanation of this observation. According to Yang, feelings of loneliness and insecurity are what drive low-income migrant workers to maximize the size of their social circles through mobile phone use.

Part III of the book describes the role ICT plays in the daily life of migrant workers who have typically moved from rural to urban areas to find employment in factories. The study by Angel Mei-yi Lin and Avin H. M. Tong focuses on female migrant workers, for whom the mobile phone has begun to symbolize a new urban lifestyle. The study shows how urbanizing migrant women, who come from rural communities with predictable and stable social relations and who have early marriage looming in the future, may turn to virtual relationships and excitement-seeking through text-messaging. Yinni Peng's chapter on Internet use among migrant workers in the Pearl River Delta region has some similarities with the Lin and Tong analysis. Both studies bring out the significance of ICT as a counterbalance to demanding factory work.

Next, Raymond Ngan and Stephen K. Ma investigate whether the mobile phone supports migrant workers in their search of new jobs. Their research data also comes from the Pearl River Delta region. With the help of survey data and simple bivariate methods, they argue that mobile phone owners change jobs more often than nonowners. Their study also reveals that kin relations are the primary source of information for job seekers trying to find a first job upon arriving at a new location. When looking for a new job on the spot, local friends and job information disseminated through text messages sent by friends and coworkers become important sources of information. Ngan and Ma make another important observation: the younger generation of migrant workers is more liable to change jobs if a new job provides better working conditions and a higher salary.

Part III ends with a chapter written by Pui-lam Law on the use of camera phones among migrant workers. This concise study includes an informative literature review on photography and provides many insightful observations. One of these observations deals with generational differences. Whereas older people value photographs of their hometown and of themselves wearing a factory uniform, younger migrant workers want to distance themselves from their hometown and from their employer in photographs.

Part IV's title, "New Network and New Identification," might be considered a little confusing since only one of its chapters directly deals with identification. Boxu Yang's study, which envisages that with the rise of the Internet Chinese society perhaps has no choice but to start renegotiating its social structures

and dynamics, is more about the new patterns of social ordering. Yang argues that although the traditional code of behavior toward family members and superiors/subordinates is still prevalent in modern China, even these most ordered social relations and norms may be subjected to change when, for instance, the flow of people (e.g., migrant workers) and computer-mediated communication with "strangers" becomes more common. Chung-tai Cheng's chapter, which shows how people mobilize votes for their favorite contestants on a karaoke show on Chinese TV, similarly resonates with the concept of social order. Without clear guidelines and criteria for voting, mobile phone voting that reflects private feelings and preferences was considered to undermine the social order. According to Cheng, this was the reason why public authorities eventually prohibited mobile voting.

The chapter by Sanhua Yang and Jing Li best suits the "identification" theme of Part IV. This study argues that those Chinese people who have a white-collar occupation do not easily identify themselves with the white-collar workers' social class. According to the authors, the use of ICT products fosters their group identity, both in actual and virtual spaces. The chapter written by Larissa Hjorth and Michael Arnold, which closes Part IV, is less integrally connected to the identification theme. Their study reveals how young Chinese people who have moved away from home do not use social networking tools only to keep in touch with their friends and fellow students; perhaps more interestingly, they also actively transfer ICT skills to their parents and grandparents to ensure that intrafamily relationships can be maintained at a distance.

The last section on "New Connectivities and Chinese Social Context" brings together three studies that all stress the importance of the unique history and social order of China in the adoption and use of ICT. In fact, these issues seem to be common to almost every chapter of the book. Matteo Tarantino's chapter begins by portraying how the promise of the new technologies has been perceived differently in Western and Chinese cultures. He investigates, for example, Chinese science fiction to illustrate how the great potential of the new technologies is represented in the country. According to Tarantino, Chinese science fiction paints a picture of a brighter future than Western science fiction. In the West, where the distinction between human beings and nature is more clear-cut, new technologies are considered to be a medium for overcoming the limits of nature; in China, however, the beauty of new technology is chiefly associated with the possibility of bolstering the identity and unity of the nation.

The chapter by Wai-chi Rodney Chu and Yinni Peng shows that mobile phone use in China is not as influenced by the public/private distinction as it is in the West. Instead, mobile use is guided more by the principle of being polite to the interlocutor, even if this requires speaking in a loud voice in a public place. Jinqiu Zhao's chapter investigates ICT use in rural contexts. She presents two case studies, both of which illustrate how the Internet arrived in rural villages in China. Her results reveal that, after an enthusiastic start, villagers started to give up the Internet as the financial burden of maintaining Internet service became excessive. Despite this setback, Zhao believes that the benefits of the Internet will be discovered in rural locations as the Internet clearly serves the information needs of groups such as farmers and herb collectors. Just like Ngan and Ma's study on SMS services for job seekers, Zhao's research supports the idea that the successful adoption of ICT is very much dependent on how it can serve the specific information needs of individuals and social groups at the local level.

This edited volume is an excellent documentation of technology-mediated everyday life in contemporary China. The book vividly describes how the rapid technologization of China has overlapped temporally with urbanization, industrialization, and the expansion of the service sector. It also describes how this enormous and rapid social change is intertwined with the norms and values of traditional Chinese culture. For the theoretically and methodologically inclined reader, the limited presentation of research methodology and the very few explicit attempts to contribute to theory may come as a surprise. Of course, the theoretical and methodological lightness of the book may also be a deliberate editorial choice as it makes the book more accessible to a wider audience. On the whole, the book is well worth reading for all who are curious to know how the Chinese communicate today.