

The King has to Reign and to Govern: The Results of Accumulation Through Infrastructure

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The paper will investigate the changes in the processes of accumulation brought out by the reconfiguration of city spaces and mobilization of labour through infrastructure, in this case, the Indira Gandhi International Airport at New Delhi. The paper will look into following variables.

1. The first major issue to be investigated is the very nature of infrastructure and the role it plays in the circulation of commodities and hence political economy. The hypothesis that the paper will try and establish is that “infrastructure” is no longer mere “sunk capital” and that the conceptualization of Marx in Capital volume 2 needs to be revised accordingly. Marx divides constant capital into fixed and fluid capital putting infrastructure firmly into the category of fixed capital. The paper will show that infrastructure is now part of the fluid capital and that its role as fixed capital has considerably eroded. This makes it necessary for infrastructure installations to be produced instantaneously to keep itself intact. In that sense, infrastructure is raw material, a place for production and the commodity itself. This has a bearing on the kind of labour that is employed and organized both inside as well as outside the airport.
2. The paper will also investigate the mechanism of Public Private Partnership (PPP) that has emerged a favoured form of governance of large infrastructural installations. The hypothesis that the paper will try to establish is that the PPP is not simply a euphemism for privatization or surrendering of sovereignty.

Through the study of government documents, judicial orders the paper will show that the elusive nature and status of PPP makes infrastructure installations a new beast of governmentality that regulates the population in new ways. The subjects that are produced in the process and the power that is exercised on them can no longer be theorized as biopower and biopolitics. The resulting processes have also escaped the definitions of political society. The paper will try and come up with an understanding of the politics of a post-population era that is defined less by the relationship of the subject with the state or civil society or political society or some combination of these and more by the subjects relation to the nation. This is “counter-conduct.” The point is that if the truism of the restructuring of the state is indeed the case it is buffeted at every point with the restructuring and re-formation of the nation.

3. The subjects which embody these changes are the migrant labour and women workers in whose case the difference between “domestic work” and “gainful employment” has been blurred. The migrant labour by the trail he leaves jumping from one work to another, from one place to another, moving between village and the city and hence agricultural work and industrial raises the problem of “rationalizing of accumulation.” The point is that infrastructure and logistics go to a large extent in order to rationalize accumulation for capital. The discipline brought about by infrastructure and logistics upon the migrant labour makes it easy for capital to calculate and govern accumulation and at the same time rationalize the work which is otherwise relegated into “informal economy.” Not to forget that it also provides capital the ability to control how wages are consumed by the migrant labour. In the case of women workers at the airport especially cleaners it is quite clear that it has allowed capital to wean out a considerable workforce into its fold while keeping the nature of work as well as the condition of work almost the same from that of domestic work. It has “trained” this workforce to align itself with the aesthetics of infrastructure as

well as its temporal and spatial discipline. The paper will investigate this two types of workers.

4. Finally, infrastructure has reconfigured the space of the city as a site of governance. It has created parallel geographies physically as well as legally. It is in the interstices of the contradictions of these spaces that labour power is circulated and makes the new form of accumulation possible. Infrastructure allows for the mobilization of population, governmental agencies and commodities casting its net wide on the spaces that state has to rule by definition. Through the process of land acquisition and resettlement a new dynamics of caste and property relations are unleashed creating new political actors. The paper will investigate an incident of land acquisition for the Delhi airport.