

***Infrastructure Across Frontiers  
Logistics, Governance and Society  
September 2 – September 3, 2018***

**Panel Discussion – I**

**Politics of Infrastructure: Agencies and Interests**



***Bishnu Mohapatra*** is a social theorist and poet, an educator and a commentator on society, governance, policy and culture. He was born in Odisha and spent his early years in its rural hinterland. He was educated in Odisha, Delhi and Oxford. Bishnu taught politics for more than twenty-five years in University of Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Azim Premji University. He has held visiting appointments at Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, National University of Singapore, University of Kyoto, Japan, and National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. He has lectured at several universities in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. From 2002 to 2010, he headed the governance portfolio of the Ford Foundation's South Asia office in Delhi. He does his social science in English and his poetry in Odia. Bishnu has published in the areas of identity politics, democracy, minority rights, urban politics, civil society and social capital. He is currently researching on cities and its multiple imaginings in history. He is also in the process of initiating a collective research project that seeks to understand the conceptual universe embedded in India's Bhasa literature. Bishnu is a well-known Indian poet. He has authored four books of poetry and has translated two volumes of Pablo Neruda's poetry into Odia. A volume of his poetry in the English translation – *a fragile world* – was published in 2005. Professor Bishnu Mohapatra has a Master's degree in Political Science from University of Delhi, an M.Phil in Politics from Jawaharlal Nehru University and a D. Phil. in Politics from University of Oxford.

## **China's Belt & Road Initiative: A South Asian perspective and case for harmony with India's Act East Policy**

*SubirBhaumik*

This paper depicts the stock of the existing South Asian perceptions of the Chinese Belt and Roads Initiative (BRI) and explore how it can be harmonized with India's Act East Policy to create a win-win situation for both India and China and their immediate neighborhood, in view of the consensus reached at Wuhan. It also argues that (a) a Sino-Indian consensus on regional development is usually welcomed by neighbours of the two nations (b) it brings the focus back on economic integration and draws the two nations away from crippling strategic competition (c) a consensus on regional development will benefit the peripheral regions of the two nations, specially India's East and Northeast and China's Yunnan province.



**SubirBhaumik**, former BBC's bureau chief (East-Northeast India), is now senior editor with Dhaka-based [bdnews24.com](http://bdnews24.com) and consultant editor with Myanmar's Mizzima News. He has worked for Reuters and Time magazine, Press Trust of India and Ananda Bazar group. He has been a Queen Elizabeth House fellow at Oxford University (1989-90), a fellow at East-West Center, Washington (2004) and Eurasian-Nets fellow at Frankfurt University (2009). He is the author of *Insurgent Crossfire: Northeast India and Troubled Periphery: Crisis of India's Northeast* and has edited *Living on the Edge* and *Counter-Gaze: Media, Migrants, Minorities*. He writes regular columns on regional issues and defence and security for leading Indian dailies like *Telegraph*, *Times of India*, *the Hindu* and *Economic Times* and does special features for BBC and Al Jazeera Online. He is closely associated with the Track 2 Kolkata-Kunming (K2K) process involving Indian and Chinese border states and is a member of the Calcutta Research Group.

## The Long Road to Urban Infrastructure Projects

*Mouleshri Vyas*

In the past two decades, large infrastructure projects in cities in India have resulted in displacement of thousands of households, whose homes have been demolished to make way for wider roads, flyovers, and additional railway lines. What is significant is the fact that it is sections of the urban poor who are displaced, that the displacement is involuntary in nature, and that the projects are managed and implemented by multiple government and non-government agencies. As they struggle to deal with the change in their conditions, these factors shape the lives of large sections of the displaced urban populations for several years. With the project implementing agencies mediating the relationship between the State and citizens, it becomes more complex.

This paper is based on two impact assessment studies, carried out in 2003 and 2008 of Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project/ Mumbai Urban Transport Project that were funded by the World Bank in Mumbai. It highlights social, economic, and political dimensions of the experience of Project Affected Households with resettlement and rehabilitation in the new areas and colonies in the city. With a lens of social accountability and transparency, it attempts to examine implications of such a multi-agency project for the relationship between the State and citizens.



***Mouleshri Vyas** is Professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Her area of interest includes teaching, training, research, and field support in the broad area of community practice; and specific to community development, organizing, informal labour, communities and development. She has done her Bachelors with Economics Major; Masters in Sociology with specialization in Urban and Rural Community Development; and doctoral research on self-help groups of youth, and dimensions of their participation in community.*

## **Challenges emanating from Competing International Transshipment Ports in Sri Lanka and India**

*K.M. Parivelan*

The Hambantota Port is a maritime port in Sri Lanka. The first phase of the port was opened on 18 November 2010, total estimated construction cost of the Phase 1 of the project is US \$361 million and out of which, 85% has been funded by Exim Bank of China. The construction of the port commenced in January 2008. It will be Sri Lanka's largest port, after the Port of Colombo. The Port of Hambantota will serve ships travelling along the east-west shipping route. It is in this context that as part of sagarmala project in India, that the new transshipment port is proposed at Enayam in 38 thousand crores Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, India.

This paper looks in to the emerging competition and cooperation between India and Sri Lanka in setting up International Transshipment ports in emerging global markets. There is thorough competition on one side and at the same time it is pertinent to look in to the displacement angle of people concerned from LARR perspective. The social impact assessment (SIA) method is used to understand the impact for proposed Enayam port and desk review for Hambantota port.



**Dr. K.M. Parivelan**, Chair Person & Associate Professor at NCEHRE, School of Law, Rights and Constitutional Governance, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is also a member of selection committee to Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellowships, TISS-Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Prof. Parivelan is Research and Dissertation Coordinator at School of Law, Rights and Constitutional Governance, and also the coordinator for Trainings and Capacity building at Nodal Centre of Excellence for Human Rights education- Conducted two Vertical Interaction Courses for senior level IPS Officers in collaboration with Bureau of Police Research and Development, MHA, Govt. of India. He has done Graduation in English Literature from Loyola College, Masters in Politics and International studies from School of International Studies, JNU; M.Phil. from School of International Studies, JNU; and Doctoral from School of International Studies, JNU.

## **Infrastructure Financing in India, Role of IFIs**

*Madhuresh Kumar*

There is a consensus among the International Finance Institutions that infrastructure constitutes a primary element for pushing growth. The assumption being perpetuated is that there is a huge infrastructure gap in emerging countries particularly in Asia and removing of infrastructure bottle necks including dilution of regulatory mechanisms which govern the labour market, environment and land laws including that of land acquisition laws is essential for 'Ease of doing business' which will improve the investment climate. Besides institutional and regulatory issues, lack of finance is often viewed as a major reason for slow pace of infrastructure development in most of the developing and Less Developed Countries.

According to McKinsey (2016), the world needs to invest \$3.3 trillion annually (or about 4% of present annual global GDP of US \$84 trillion) in economic infrastructure until 2030. Asian Development Bank has also estimated an infrastructure gap of about \$ 26 trillion over the 15-years from 2016 to 2030, or \$1.7 trillion per year. It is estimated that India would require an annual infrastructure investment of US \$230 billion (INR 14,95,000crores) every year till 2020. This is about 9% of India's present GDP, and over 50% of the total annual budget expenditure proposed (of about INR 29,20,484crores) in the Feb. 2018 budget. It is to be noted that while the global infra investment needs are projected at about 4% of global GDP, for India, this is a huge 9% of its GDP. Over the last five years, India has been spending about 5% of its GDP on infrastructure. These huge estimates are served to propagate the need for Development Finance particularly the private finance for which nations will have to create the investment climate through deregulation and ease of doing business.

These estimates form the basis of the pitch by International Finance institutions and the majority of investments from multilateral development banks and funds, international development agencies, Exim Banks and so on in to projects like Industrial Corridors, PCPIR, Sagarmala, Bharatmala, Bullet Train, metro trains, expressways, national waterways, airports, smart cities and so on.

The presentation would focus on the investments coming from different agencies, the projects being undertaken and the impact on the communities and resources.



***Madhuresh Kumar** does campaigns and policy advocacy work with the National Alliance of People's Movements in India. He is a researcher and social activist, specializing in globalization and human rights issues. Madhuresh works with the Blue Planet Project team and helps to monitor and promote the realization of the human right to water in India and around the world.*

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**Panel Discussion – II**

**Beyond the Cosmopolitan: Infrastructure, Connectivity and Development**



**Manish K. JHA**, the vice president of the CRG, is Professor and Dean of School of Social Work at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He teaches courses on Community Organisation and Development Practice, Social Action and Movement and Social Policy, Planning and Programmes. His research interests include issues of development and governance, urban poverty and migration, social justice, social exclusion and human rights. He had authored a book *Human Rights: Agencies and Agenda* (2003) and co-edited a book *Traversing Bihar: Politics of Development and Social Justice* (2014). He has authored several papers on Food security, Social Action, Marginality and Justice, Disaster and Development, Politics of social justice, etc. He has been recipient of Commonwealth Academic Fellowship (2009) at the School of Oriental and African Studies, UK; Erasmus Mundus Academic Fellowship (2011) at University College Dublin, Ireland; UKIERI visiting Fellowship (2013) at Durham University, UK and Palme Professorship (2013) at Gothenburg University, Sweden. He is a member of several research organisations and has been actively engaged with development practice, policy advocacy, and relief and rehabilitation work in post disaster situation.

## Politics and poetics of Infrastructure in Rural India

*IshitaDey*

Infrastructure has always been a symbol of urbanisation and rural sectors has always been deployed from this infrastructural affect. The reason for aligning the politics and poetics of infrastructure has come from the rural of need of 'SarakBijliPani'. The paper tried to unpack the relationship between rural sectors and infrastructure and also explained the reason for taking these two in the same frame. This paper is a compilation of area studies that has been done in the regions of Madhya Pradesh, Jhargram and Chattisgarh and found a series of proposition that needs to be unfolded for the sake of limiting rural urban infrastructural gap. The paper also discussed about the rural infrastructure and electrification. The gap between these two has largely existed in the decolonised areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. The paper found that a careful distinction lies in these regions about the concept of infrastructure and technologies. Rural household considers the technology without considering the importance of infrastructure and that makes the formation of rural sector fragile. There is also a story of exploitation by the government officials and certain political leaders in the issue of electrification and infrastructural importance. In this paper infrastructure has been used as a method to study rural areas to address the gap lies in their administrative system what can easily be reshaped with the help of modern infrastructure and technology.



**IshitaDey** is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Development Practice, Ambedkar University, Delhi. Her areas of interests are food studies and labour studies. She has also worked on conditions of labour in IT/ITES industry in an urban township – Rajarhat, Kolkata and labour in Special Economic Zones. She has co-edited a volume *Sustainability of Rights after Globalisation* (Sage, 2011) and co-authored a work *Beyond Kolkata. Rajarhat and the dystopia of urban imagination* (Routledge, 2013).

## **Building Blocks, Talking about Guwahati's water logging**

*Sanjay Barbora*

Every monsoon Guwahati experiences waterlogging of a kind that renders the city immobile. Torrents of water flow down from the hills to the south and east of the city, while clogged waterways and sewage brim over to transform roads into rivers. This is not a new phenomenon and had begun to be discussed in the late 1970s and 1980s when the city expanded towards the south. Parag Das, one of Assam's foremost intellectuals and journalist, who wrote about everything that could be called a social fact, had an interesting view of these floods. He claimed that the annual waterlogging was the only time that citizens of Guwahati could practice socialism, as the water seeped through all houses and required everyone – from minister to wage earner – to make exactly the same concessions and gestures. In my talk, I dwell on the various human and infrastructural factors that go on to create a particularly debilitating soaked ecology in the city. In doing so, I ask how and where the universes of urban planning and infrastructure collide in the building of the city.



***Sanjay Barbora** is currently working as an Associate Professor at TISS' Guwahati campus. Research interests include agrarian change, resource conflicts, media studies and human rights. Having worked as a human rights activist on issues pertaining to militarization of Northeast India, I managed an advocacy and research based media initiative on peace building in South Asia from 2005 to 2011. Other than my stated academic interests, I continue to be energized by my involvement in community media and radio journalism, as well as the democratization of public spheres.*



## Metro- polarities: Siliguri in the Grip of Neoliberal Transformation

*Atig Ghosh*

The paper looks into the (re)emergence of Siliguri in North Bengal, India, as a major urban centre through its logistical and infrastructural re-articulation under the sign of neoliberal developmentalism. This transformation of a quaint town into a massive urban hub is explored through the overlapping thematic foci on geo-strategy, population and labour, communication, trafficking, tea, and business— big, small and shady. In the process, a redefinition of the idea of North Bengal is attempted, even as the exploration of the entanglements of crime, control, communication, and capital leads to a conceptualization of what it means to talk about border economies and its “travelling” actors, and how inexorably borderlands seeps and segues into the so-called mainland to bring about powerful economic transformations.



**Atig Ghosh**, Assistant Professor, VisvaBharati University and Member of CRG and former Research and Programme Associate, CRG (Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group). He also taught history on a part-time basis at the West Bengal State University (Barasat). Having studied history at the then Presidency College, Calcutta, and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, he received his doctoral degree from El Colegio de México, Mexico City. His doctoral research was lodged around conjoint concerns of political economy and cultural anthropology in the context of small-town (mofussil) Bengal in the nineteenth-century. Presently, he is researching statelessness and its socio-ontological textures and tangles in the intractable fastnesses of the Indo-Bangladeshi enclaves.

## **Politico-Ethnic Mood Swings and Infrastructural Developments in the hills Darjeeling and Kalimpong (2011-2017)**

*AnupShekharChakraborty*

Development means many things to many people and that is why when posed with a question what is Development? A definitive response precedes a pause or silence and evokes a certain amount of discomfort. The concept is often vaguely treated as “everybody knows what is Development” followed by a predictable response ‘development is economic...it is institution....it is growth’. Following a restive trend the rationale for a separate state for prominent contending communities in the region has been put forward geared to protect linguistic and cultural identities and also facilitate rapid development. The rationale of ‘development’ is highly contested. Whether autonomy should precede development or development should precede autonomy or both should complement each other; whether being/becoming part or connected to a cosmopolitan economy is at all advantageous to the ‘local’ etc., remains highly debateable. The Morcha supporters shouting: “We don’t want development. We want Gorkhaland”<sup>i</sup>, during West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee’s visit to Darjeeling on 29 January, 2013 well sums up these contestations and complexities. Amidst these indelible stubborn cartographic aspirations of autonomies the discussions in the paper gleans into multiversal infrastructural development issues<sup>ii</sup> in the hills of Darjeeling and Kalimpong.



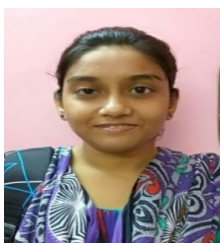
**AnupShekharChakraborty** , Assistant Professor at the Netaji Institute for Asian Studies (NIAS), Kolkata, department of Political Science & Political Studies. His doctoral work was on identity politics in the North East Indian state of Mizoram from the University of Calcutta. He was awarded the ‘India Social Science Research Award 2009’ by Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) and India Development Foundation for his research work on ‘Politics of Social ‘Exclusions’ and ‘Inclusions’ in Mizoram’. His Research Interests includes gender and spatial politics, migrations and diaspora, media and culture studies, community and development studies.

## Rural Infrastructure Connectivity and Development

*Dilshaad Hossain*

Infrastructure and technology are the basics of development and they facilitate better living conditions. This paper would focus on the increasing technological connectivity which is leading to development based on communal terms in the rural infrastructural space, specifically throwing light on the state of West Bengal. For the purpose of the research work, the communal fallout in the Baduria – Bashirhat region, in July 2017 shall be spoken about as an example of one of the recent instances in the villages of the state. The place had turned to be an epicentre of violence between Hindus and Muslims over an offensive cartoon on a social media platform, hurting the Islamic sentiments. The paper shall deal with the insurgence of the electronic media in our lives and how they have helped in provoking the communal air. Introduction of technology in the rural pockets, at face value was supposed to bridge the digital divide and bring about an increased connectivity and development. However, is it so? Discussion shall be done how news about communal riots disseminated so quickly before partition when the entire rural population used to live in an age of relatively slow communication, quantitatively.

In this context, what makes the Internet so specific in igniting a communal rumour as against the previous modes of transmission? The present trend of circulating morphed images and videos shall be analysed in the paper with concrete instances. Internet used on the mobile phones help in these circulations at a heightened level, primarily the social media applications. Anonymity becomes one of the objects of study and therefore, the analyses throughout the paper would identify and explain its importance in contemporary situations. Therefore, it becomes prudent to study the internet as a medium that is giving birth to a new kind of meaning to the phenomenon of communalism itself.



***Dilshaad Hossain:*** *Dilshaad Hossain is currently working as a Field Research Investigator for an ICSSR funded research project at Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, headed by Professor ManabiMajumdar. She has completed her master's course in the month of May, 2018 from Presidency University, Kolkata, in Sociology. She pursued her bachelor's degree from St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata, in Sociology. Apart from these, she has also worked as a research assistant for Professor Zaid Al Baset of the Department of Sociology of St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata. During the course of the work, Dilshaad assisted him in his fieldwork for the research on Muslims of Kolkata, especially in enabling conversations with female respondents. She also transcribed 5 interviews of over 1.5 hours each. She pursued two internships in the year 2014 and 2015, one at The Telegraph and the second one at the urban unit of Child In Need Institute (CINI ASHA). She did her schooling from Our Lady Queen of the Missions School, Park Circus and Salt Lake. Presently, she is also applying for her Ph.D. alongside the work she is engaged in.*

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**Special Lecture**

**Data Centre as Logistical Infrastructure and the Geopolitics of Automation**

*Brett Neilson*

Recent critical studies have approached logistics as a mode of power active in the production of space and subjectivity. Emphasizing the historical origins of logistics in military activities and the late twentieth century 'logistics revolution' that made distribution a constitutive part of productive processes, this work has mapped the expanding frontiers of logistics well beyond the worlds of transport and communication. Nonetheless, the iconic materiality of the shipping container has exerted an influence on these studies. In its empirical moments, critical research on logistics has focused on sites such as shipping ports or warehouses. Despite a strong discussion of how data information systems coordinate logistical movements, the emphasis has been on the storage and transport of goods and not the storage, transmission, and processing of data. This lecture seeks to reverse this situation by investigating the role of the data centre as a key infrastructural site of logistical coordination. Drawing on research conducted in Singapore and Hong Kong as part of a project examining the relation between data centres, labour and territory, the aim is to understand how data centres drive contemporary processes of global circulation and create relations between labour forces that might otherwise seem disconnected.

As highly automated environments, data centres are largely devoid of human workers. The labour forces that interact with the computers housed in data centres are rather located on the client end of these installations and frequently distributed across an array of national spaces. How do data centre operations generate economic territories, and what are the significance of these spatial and technical arrangements for capital's interactions with regimes of labour and life across regional terrains? I suggest that the dominance models of the supply chain or production network are not adequate to conceptualize such interactions.

Furthermore, I explore the geopolitical implications of how data centres facilitate the amassing of data derived from user activity across wide geographical vistas. Because such data can train artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies with the capacity to displace labour forces, the question of data ownership and control becomes crucial. Countries such as China that have pursued data protectionist policies are in a strong position to develop and export automated services as opposed to countries that have data siphoned away by Silicon Valley giants. This gives rise to a geopolitical race between the US and China to control artificial intelligence services and standards. Such competition is prominent in South East Asia, where Alibaba, for instance, leads the opening of a digital free trade zone in Malaysia. I consider the role of data centres in this geopolitical scenario and ask to what extent digital infrastructures make worlds and reconfigure regions in ways that bear upon conceptualisations of sovereign power harnessed to the state. To close the lecture, I suggest that an emergent sovereign form

subsists in the capillaries of power and operational logic of computational machines special to data centres.



**Brett Neilson** is Professor in the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. He is author of *Free Trade in the Bermuda Triangle ... and Other Tales of Counter globalization* (Minnesota UP, 2004) and (with Sandro Mezzadra) *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor* (Duke UP, 2013) and *The Politics of Operations: Excavating Contemporary Capitalism* (Duke UP, 2019). With Ned Rossiter, he edits the book series *Low Latencies for Fibreculture Books* and *Open Humanities Press*. Recently with Ned Rossiter and Ranabir Samaddar, he edited the volume *Logistical Asia: The Labour of Making a World Region* (Palgrave, 2018). He has led the following international research projects: *Transit Labour: Circuits, Regions, Borders* (2009-2011), *Logistical Worlds: Software, Infrastructure, Labour* (2013-2015), and *Data Farms: Circuits, Labour, Territory*.

## **Panel Discussion – III**

### **Data Centres in India**

#### **Data, society and the City: Technology, Territory and Population**

*Manish Jha and Rishi Jha*

The rapidly urbanizing world reflects the dynamism of urban agglomeration and city-centred growth. World cities have been traditionally recognized with the dominant economic models and have traversed from being industrial to Fordist to post-Fordist to the technological to logistical cities of today. These cities are now categorized and conceptualized as 'intelligent city', 'information city', 'wired city', 'knowledge city', 'smart city' and 'digital city'. These ideas and articulations share convergent technological perspectives, information and communication centrality, and dependence on cloud computing, big data, Internet of Things (IoT) and modern techniques of data management. Catering spatiality to these processes, cities like Navi Mumbai represent integrated cyber-physical spaces of institutions and strategic meeting points of extraordinary circulation of technology, operations, logistics, and services, which directly and indirectly caters to governments, businesses and citizens. Through the paper, we explain how specialized landscapes within Navi Mumbai that cater to collection, interpretation, storage, dispersal and control of data and information flows and how it is mediated through dedicated geographies and physiologies of 'data centres'. The paper explicates how data infrastructures as data centres and cities mutually produce an intensified relationship through which function, administration and governance of one-another is operationalised. Through trajectory of Navi Mumbai, the paper connects the city's processes, infrastructure development, patterns of governance, and land use patterns with the genesis of institutionalization, operations, and professional aspects of the data centre. How data centre, its geographical location, and physiological operation can provoke and influence our understanding of the city, its activities, transformations, social fabric, infrastructure, and overall governance? Additionally, we attempt to explore how the city and its various aspects are intertwined or en-messed in the mega processes of data production, analysis, consumption, and exchange? In an attempt to explore this, we have inquired how the city becomes central to state and corporate governance through processes and operations manifested in the security-finance-governance complex of data infrastructures and how do we make meanings of the emerging forms of governance.



**Manish K. JHA**, the vice president of the CRG, is Professor and Dean of School of Social Work at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He teaches courses on Community Organisation and Development Practice, Social Action and Movement and Social Policy, Planning and Programmes. His research interests include issues of development and governance, urban poverty and migration, social justice, social exclusion and human rights. He had authored a book *Human Rights: Agencies and Agenda* (2003) and co-edited a book *Traversing Bihar: Politics of Development and Social Justice* (2014). He has authored several papers on Food security, Social Action, Marginality and Justice, Disaster and Development, Politics of social justice, etc. He has been recipient of Commonwealth Academic Fellowship (2009) at the School of Oriental and African Studies, UK; Erasmus Mundus Academic Fellowship (2011) at University College Dublin, Ireland; UKIERI visiting Fellowship (2013) at Durham University, UK and Palme Professorship (2013) at Gothenburg University, Sweden. He is a member of several research organisations and has been actively engaged with development practice, policy advocacy, and relief and rehabilitation work in post disaster situation.

**Rishi Jha** is a doctoral researcher at School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (India) and Lund University, Sweden. His doctoral work is on urban redevelopment and resistance in Indian megacities. His primary areas of interests are urban poverty, citizenship, cities of the global south, state and civil society. He comes with Master in Social Work in Community Organization and Development Practice from TISS and working experience with government-led poverty alleviation programs and NGO-interventions in India.

## **Data Economy, Big Data and the Data Centre: The Early History of the Indian Statistical Institute**

*RitajyotiBandyopadhyay*

The paper follows the anticipations of the 'Big Data' phenomenon in three inter-connected developments in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, i.e., the emergence of algorithm as the science of computation, the birth of the idea of an integrated 'national economy' as a central 'object' of the postcolonial governmentality, and the triggering of the Cold War 'Big Science' initiatives that required data management at a cosmic scale. The project identifies the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in Calcutta, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in Pune and the Planning Commission in Delhi in the 1950s as sites where these three developments interfaced in 1950s. Taking the year 1951 as a key moment in the history of data in India, the project further shows how the ISI emerged as a significant player in the science of government. It then seeks to understand the kind of relation this history may have over the contemporary phenomenon of data centres – a key site without which the contemporary arrival and valuation of big data appears unimaginable.



***RitajyotiBandyopadhyay** is Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research, Mohali. He has been Postdoctoral Fellow/Lecturer, State and Democracy Research Group, Centre for Modern India Studies, University of Gottingen (October, 2012-July, 2013) Postdoctoral Associate, Urban Research and Policy Programme, NIAS, Bangalore (November, 2010 - September, 2012). He did his PhD in History (Jadavpur University/ Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, India, and partly at Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley) He has a Post Doctoral Fellowship at National Institute of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. 2009 – 2010: Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral-and-Professional-Research-Fellowship, housed by University of California, Berkeley, USA. 2006 – 2009: Sasakawa Young Leaders' Fellowship Fund Doctoral Fellowship, housed by the Department of History, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, India. 2008: SYLFF-FMP Doctoral Visiting Fellowship, housed by El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico. He is the author of *The Rule of the Street: Institutions and Informality in Calcutta in the Long Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, (Under Contract).*



## Counting loss: An Ethnography of Recently Introduced Data Management Schemes in West Bengal, India

*RitamSengupta*

Data is essential to calculative procedures that work to improve the technical efficiency of the network by factoring in elements like unaccounted-for usage and theft that can be potentially debilitating to the 'health' of an electricity distribution system. In significant ways, the kinds of incessant data-fed calculation and consequent, anticipatory technical enhancement/planning support that complements the ambition of providing universal, 24x7, quality power in contemporary West Bengal, even as this power continues to 'leak' through older and new channels of populist and 'welfarist' rule. In light of certain indicative pointers towards the role of data as processed between the headquarters and the Divisional/district levels, the paper makes certain more general observations about the management of loss as might be underway within the scheme of the WBSEDCL. The data-innovation has also come at a time when an erstwhile paradigm of providing power with provisional checks and balances, like pre-mandated 'load sheddings' in areas of low demand/revenue/high AT&C losses. The paper tries to trace an understanding of the management of loss as backed by the new availability of data as might be part of the now Data Centre-led centralised operations of the WBSEDCL.



*data.*

*RitamSengupta* is a research candidate at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences. His broad area of work is the making of an infrastructural and logistical economy in twentieth century India with a specific focus on the coming of electricity and its significance in planning, industrialization and agricultural development. At MCRG he worked on a project about Data Centres in India in terms of the legality and political economy of emerging regimes of

## Panel Discussion - IV

### Infrastructural Alliances and Global Governance

#### Does Global Finance Matter for Infrastructural Alliances?

*ByasdebDasgupta*

Is there any relation between global finance and infrastructure alliance? Or does today's infrastructure alliance require global finance? To answer this question one has to first look at the architect of global finance as it has unleashed its web across national boundaries and as it dictates today the market economy, state apparatus and policy planning, if not the political also at the national level. Accumulation of global capital today takes place through various circuits of global finance – infrastructure alliance is just one among them. Infrastructure alliance between nations, where one nation provides the necessary financial capital to build the infrastructure which connects two or more nations, is one of the recent expressions of financial circuits globally and it serves the purpose (political as well as economic) in creating the local and global hegemony of the finance providing nation or institution. Finance capital always tries to find new avenues for global capital accumulation. And infrastructure alliance is one such new avenue. If we take the example of China-Pakistan corridor where China is the provider of necessary finance capital to Pakistan to build the said corridor we can contemplate that it will provide the necessary connectivity between the two nations to serve the interest of Chinese financial capital which is in this case is global in nature. The said corridor may in coming days entail many avenues to Chinese capital politically as well as economically to get multiplied several times. Global finance looks for ways and means for multiplication always. And infrastructure alliance in the name of garnering logistic support to the concerned country may provide a new avenue of (surplus) accumulation. In doing so, infrastructure alliance may in a new way shape the economic geography of the nations in South in coming days.



***ByasdebDasgupta** did his Ph. D in Economics from Centre for Studies in Economics and Planning of JNU, New Delhi. At present Professor of Economics at University of Kalyani. Working in the area of global finance, political economy of labour and development. He has contributed in several journals and edited books and has written some books on labour. He has served as Visiting Fellows in several universities/institutions in Europe and Asia.*

## Reading the story of Chinese Capital in Pakistan

*Arup Kumar Sen*

The journey of global capital has different trajectories. The global financial institutions dominated by the USA represent the conventional route of movement of global capital across the world, particularly in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The recent trajectory of cross-border movement of finance capital shows that the nation state also plays a significant role in the globalization of finance.

In recent years, China has emerged as a big Asian power. In the 1960s and 1970s, the radicals all over the world were moved by the “Chinese Road to Socialism”. Now, the effects of capitalist transformation in China and its geopolitical interests are being felt in the countries of South Asia.

China’s geopolitical ambitions in South Asia are reflected in the launching of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. The key agreement for the listed projects was signed in 2013. The CPEC is “a series of projects intended to modernize Pakistani infrastructure and strengthen its economy through construction of transport networks, energy projects and special economic zones”. The estimated cost of the projects is more than 60 billion dollars. The time span of giving shape to the CPEC is 2014 to 2030.

The different dimensions of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - gigantic infrastructure projects in Pakistan launched with the support of Chinese State and private Capital-would be probed to understand the dynamics of finance capital and the neoliberal paradigm of governance.



**Arup Kumar Sen** is Associate Professor at the Department of Commerce, Serampore College, Serampore, Hooghly, West Bengal. He is a member of Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata. His area of specialisation is Finance and Management and research interests include Labour History and Political Economy. He has published various research papers on capital, labour, mode of labour control in colonial India, finance capitalism and politics of rural governance. He is the author of ‘Nandigram: A Tale of Developmental Violence’ (EPW 2008), ‘Finance Capitalism and the Spectre of Crisis’ (Mainstream 2008), ‘Politics of Governance in Rural West Bengal’ (The Calcutta Journal of Political Studies, April 2007-March 2009).

## The Financialised Infrastructure of a “Seamless Asia”

*ImanMitra*

The paper looks at the connection between networks of finance capital and infrastructure-led development in Asia, especially in the backdrop of India’s Look East (Act East) Policy. It will explore three broad themes: the surge in infrastructure development in the region, the linkages between finance capitalism and infrastructure development, and the working of financial institutions in facilitating infrastructure. In the first section of the paper, I shall discuss the various forms of financial instruments which are thought to be helpful in reducing the gap between demand and supply of infrastructure all over the world. In the second section, I shall describe the working of a particular financial institution which is now being held as the main protagonist of infrastructural funding in Asia – the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) based in Beijing. In the last section, I shall focus on the impact of what we may call the ‘financialisation of infrastructure’ on the development projects in India with reference to the increase of the public-private partnership (PPP) activities in the infrastructure sector. A main thrust of this paper will be on the notion of a blueprint – a diagrammatic design of projects to be realised in future – as most of the proposed infrastructural development is still at the stage of primary dialogue between different stakeholders. The point of this paper is not to challenge the actuality of the vision that propels such activities but to show how vital it is for the architects of these plans to get embroiled in the networks of global financial capitalism.



**Iman Kumar Mitra** did his PhD on the history of reception and popularisation of the economic discipline in colonial Bengal from Jadavpur University and the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC). His research interests include politics of translation, pedagogy and category formation in colonial and postcolonial South Asia, and urban history and migration. His publications include ‘Exchanging Words and Things: Vernacularisation of Political Economy in Nineteenth-century Bengal’ in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (Vol. 53, No. 4) and ‘Recycling the Urban: Migration Settlement and the Question of Labour in Contemporary Kolkata’ in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (Vol. LI, Nos. 26 & 27). He has edited an anthology of essays titled *Accumulation in Postcolonial Capitalism* with Ranabir Samaddar and Samita Sen (Singapore: Springer, 2016). He is currently based at CSSSC as the ICAS-MP Postdoctoral Researcher.

## **Trade in End-of-life ships: An Inquiry into the Impact of Reverse Logistics in Ship Recycling and Shipping Industry**

*Gopal Krishna*

The paper examines the flow of end-of-life ships from the point of origin to the point of consumption in order to meet requirements of businesses and consumers. The end-of-life products carry economic values and liabilities. The paper dwells on these values and liabilities in a situation where the supply chain has been extended to incorporate reverse logistics in order to capture value at the end of the value chain and reintroduce it into supply chain. This aspect of global material flow gives birth to a vicious circle as well. The paper factors in this circle and situates the trade in end-of-life ships in the context of the environmental footprint of the business processes in the life cycle of shipping operations. The reverse supply chain in ship recycling/dismantling enables extraction of financial value out of dead and obsolete vessels of negative value. The paper examines how it enables the beneficial owners of shipping companies to escape the burden of keeping such vessels afloat without sufficient operational value towards the end-of-life of vessels because they end up incurring higher operating costs than their revenue. The paper will draw on my field work with reference to foreign vessels like Le Clemanceau, RIKY, Blue Lady and Exxon Valdez which reached Gujarat's Alang beach and Platinum II which reached Gopnath anchorage in Gujarat's Bhavnagar. The reverse supply chain of large built-to-order products like vessels becomes a source of secondary steel. The secondary steel is produced in some 1800 re-rolling mills which are functioning all over India in places like MandiGobindgarh, Fatehgarh Sahib district, Punjab and Rajkot, Kutch, Hariza and Surat in Gujarat. It is a key link in the supply chain of iron and steel production. It has been argued that it reduces exploitation of natural resources for primary steel. It has also been claimed that the ship recycling/dismantling industry saves a lot of time and logistics cost. The reverse supply chain reduces the carbon emission and reduces damage to the environment. A life cycle assessment of the ship recycling/dismantling can reveal the environmental and occupational health cost and the impact on communities in the vicinity of sites where ship recycling/dismantling takes place. The paper undertakes an inquiry into the veracity of claims about its beneficial impact with regard to foreign ships and the relationship of end-of-life vessels with laws such as UN's Basel Convention on Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, 1989 which is in force, Shipbreaking Code 2013 which is in force, IMO's Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 which is yet to come into force and the proposed Safe and Environmentally sound Recycling of Ships Bill, 2018.



*Dr Gopal Krishna is with Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna Centre as a Fellow. He is a member of the National Advisory Council of Indian Academy of Social Sciences which organizes Indian Social Science Congress annually. He is the editor of [www.toxicwatch.org](http://www.toxicwatch.org) and [www.asbestosfreeindia.org](http://www.asbestosfreeindia.org). He is a public policy and law researcher. He has co-authored books like *Disputes Over Ganga*, *Kosi Deluge: The Worst is Still to Come*, *The Return of the Giants*, and *Omnishambles of UID*. He has been working on the issue of hazardous wastes and end-of-life ships since 2000 and has been an applicant in the Supreme Court in this regard. He did his PhD from Centre of Social Medicine & Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. As part of his doctoral thesis on industrial disaster of Bhopal, he has done a performance audit of public institutions like legislature, judiciary and executive and unaccountable and undemocratic institutions like corporations. He has been a visiting faculty to Comptroller Auditor General (CAG) of India's International Centre for Environment Audit and Sustainable Development (iCED), Jaipur, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar as part of UGC Refresher Course, Cluster Innovation Centre, Delhi University and Forest Research Institute, Dehradun. He has presented papers at World Asbestos Congress in Tokyo, World Congress on Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Kunming, China, at the auditorium of Canadian House of Commons in Ottawa, Canada and at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium and Strasbourg, France.*

*He has been an invitee as an expert before several Supreme Court Committees on municipal and hazardous waste. He has also been invited as an expert to appear before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science, Technology, Environment and Forests, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, Parliamentary Petitions Committee and Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution. He has been invited by German Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, European Parliamentary Committee on Environment and a European Parliamentarian's Group. He has been an invitee to the meetings of several UN treaties (Basel Convention, Stockholm and Rotterdam Convention) including UN Forum on Business and Human Rights and WTO Ministerial in Nairobi, Bali, Geneva, Dhaka, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Kathmandu, London and Chittangong.*

*He has worked with Down To Earth, Management Development Institute, Gurugram and some environmental organizations based in Brussels, Bangalore, Delhi and Manila. He is a columnist with publications like *The Tribune*, *Rediff.com*, *livelaw.in*, *Moneylife.in*, *Hindustan Times*, *Samayantar*, *Yathavat* and *PrabhatKhabar*. He has been highlighting the implications of emergence of automatic identification technology and Big Data based empires of commercial czars. He has been writing on various aspects of corporate crimes and war on ecosystem including the disastrous consequences of interlinking of rivers since 2003.*

***Infrastructure Across Frontiers  
Logistics, Governance and Society  
September 2 – September 3, 2018***

**Special Lecture**

**On infrastructures: The Cosco Container Terminals and the  
Surrounding Perama Hills**

The paper explores the relationship between the development of the infrastructures in the container terminals of the port of Piraeus and the surrounding area of Perama after the concession to the Chinese state company Cosco. The gradual transformation of the port into a complex logistical hub organized under a two-tier labour regime intersects with the (under)development of the surrounding area, where unemployment levels remain extremely high. While the COSCO concession becomes a vehicle that relocates Piraeus outside the Greek territory, the hills overlooking the container Port manifest challenging desires and insecurities that emerge from the economic dead-end of the Greek sovereign debt crisis. Within this context, the paper explores the possibilities of borderline subjectivities and struggles.



**Nelli Kampouri** is working as a senior research fellow at the Centre for Gender Studies, Department of Social Policy, Panteion University, Athens Greece. She has worked in several EU funded projects, including GeMIC, Gender, Migration and Intercultural Interactions ([www.gemic.eu](http://www.gemic.eu)), Mig@net Transnational Digital Networks, Migration and Gender (<http://www.mignetproject.eu>), and Gender, science and technology (Foundation for Research and Technology -FORTH). More recently she conducted research on logistics in the port of Piraeus as part of the Logistical Worlds: Infrastructure, Software, Labour platforms (<http://logisticalworlds.org>) and worked as a consultant for the International Labour Organization. Her research, teaching and publications focus mainly on the intersections between gender theory, migration, precarity and social movements. Today she is mostly interested in seeking ways to think of the “crisis” in Greece through the lenses of postcolonial theory and decolonial movements.

