

Report on International Conference  
***Infrastructure Across Frontiers  
Logistics, Governance and Society***

Organised by  
Calcutta Research Group  
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung

**Sunday, 2 September 2018**

**Venue: Raas Manch, Swabhumi**

**9.15 am- 9.45 am**

**Conference Registration**

**9.45 am – 10.00 am**

**Inaugural Session**

Introduction: Apala Kundu, Research and Programme Assistant, CRG

Welcome Address: Anita Sengupta, Director, CRG

Inaugural Address: Ranabir Samaddar, Distinguished Chair, CRG

The inaugural session commenced with introductory remarks by Anita Sengupta. She began the session by recalling the three years journey of this project. The project examines a specific Indian logistic vision for the look or act east policy within the larger framework of Asian connectivity. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is a century of infrastructural alliances and which has restructured global governance. Beginning with the cartographies of connectivity in the Asian context, it went on to examine regional connectivity corridors, trade partnerships and preferential economic arrangements and the financialization of infrastructure and the construction of a seamless Asia through an examination of Asian infrastructural funding. It included two studies that examined Kolkata and the port of Kolkata as the logistical hub in the Look East policy. It then brought to the forefront possible fault lines that require policy engagement. Within this context it examined frontier towns in the Northeast, emerging conflicts and social governance and the question of mobility. During 2016-

2017, 12 researchers have been part of the project working on 10 themes. More importantly 27 experts have been involved in the project enriching its content.

Ranabir Samaddar, in his inaugural address shared his views on reading infrastructure in terms of social infrastructure unlike the way it has been dealt with in post-colonial West Bengal where development has been the priority. He distinguished between the usual infrastructural studies and social infrastructural studies and proposed questioning the legitimacy of human development reports that caused a disparity between human developmental norms and the actual situation. He discussed the paradoxical situation of West Bengal where in one hand we may find masses of people who values education and on the other hand we may find an exploitative educational system where teacher-student ratio is unequal and many students have been deprived from their educational rights. The social infrastructure also carries the same legitimating concern as educational. He questioned how long this paradoxical situation of governance and society will run and then he brought the age old debate of the need of educational infrastructure at the cost of rent. Samaddar exclaimed that the rent seeking behaviour marginalises the productive capacity of any social infrastructure. The locational choice of any infrastructure should be at the point of production and circulation and the value of rent should not be taken into consideration till the infrastructure hold enormous capacity of production. He concluded with a quote from Marx's volume of capital which emphasises the need of capital for the formulation of productive infrastructure.

**10.00 am- 11.30 am**

### **Panel Discussion I: Politics of Infrastructure: Agencies and Interests**

Moderator: Bishnu Mahapatra, Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda

#### **China's Belt and Road Initiative: A South Asian Perspective and a Case for Harmony with India's Act East Policy**

Subir Bhowmik, Eminent Journalist

Mr. Bhowmik initiated the discussion of China's Belt and Road Initiative in a global perspective. China's geographical deficiency has been tried to overcome by its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Despite being a vast nation, China has a very small coastline and therefore as the Chinese economy grew, in order to maximise imports and exports, China looked for more access to the oceans. Mr. Bhowmik said that Belt and Road Initiative has evolved out of various interactive processes with the frontier states of China, such as Yunnan. It is not like the "Look East Act East" policy of India, which is largely top down and is not a result of a consultative process. In terms of its scale of infrastructure, nothing can compare to the Belt and Road Initiative. He defined three allegations that have been levelled against the Belt and Road Initiative.

Firstly, as part of the BRI, the partner nations have undertaken a number of infrastructural projects which is extremely costly. For example, the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka has turned out to be an extremely expensive project for the Sri Lankan government and also the projects taken up in Cambodia have used up a large part of the GDP and the Malaysian government had to cancel BRI projects as they were failing to fund them. These nations have been driven into a "debt trap". Secondly, various projects under the BRI have a military angle. He gave another example of the Gwadar Port which cannot be seen just for the purpose of trade, it also has strategic significance for China. Thirdly, when the projects are under construction, the Chinese use their own labour, therefore countries like Bangladesh raise the question as to where their own labour would go? China has realised that if its vision to create a New Silk Route is to succeed then these allegations by the other countries have to be dealt with, the process of building the Silk Route cannot be China centric and the problems of the other nations have to be dealt with by use of dialogues. He gave another example of South Asia. All South Asian, except India and Bhutan had signed to join the Belt and Road Initiative. Though many problems have been raised by states, Nepal cancelled a project and so has Pakistan, however despite the existence of differences no State has withdrawn from the BRI, which is a problem for India. He noted that India also has serious issues with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as it passes through Pakistan administered Kashmir but China is insistent on India joining the BRI. In 2018 after the last Narendra Modi-Xi Jinping summit, the Chinese officially stated that having addressed all of India's issues, India is ready to join the BRI. India is a part of the BCIM Economic Corridor, and the BCIM is a part and parcel of the BRI. The BCIM has not been given enough attention by the countries involved. Bhowmik concluded with a statement of Ram Madhav that "We don't mind allowing Chinese investment in the North East". This could be seen as the operationalisation of the BCIM. He stated it could also be seen as the harmonisation of the BRI with a look of the "Look East Act East" Policy.

### **The Long Road to Urban Infrastructure Projects**

Mouleshri Vyas, TISS, Mumbai

Mouleshri Vyas started discussion from the point of intersection of development practices and community practices and the newer concern of social accountability with regard to social infrastructure. Her paper focuses on three aspects of huge multi-agency urban infrastructure projects – First, the backdrop of these projects and their fallouts which is termed as internal urban displacement, second, the setup of multi-agency projects and third, the social accountability for these projects. Cities have witnessed expansion of roads, railways and flyovers at an unimaginable scale. She took the example of Mumbai where TISS conducted a Social Impact Assessment study of the Mumbai Transport expansion and its social, economic and political dynamics. The whole idea of these projects was to make the cities clean and shining. As part of these infrastructural projects, people were moved to new locations, nine thousand households were affected by road and railway expansion, as land in the cities was taken over by government agencies for infrastructural projects. People were relocated to colonies in different parts of the cities. The social impact of this displacement was that the entire community had to be rebuilt. The social capital was lost as children dropped out of school and adjustments had to be made with the

new neighbours. Political capital was also in disarray as people were delinked from their local leaders. There was generated a complex web of activities as people had to rebuilt their whole lives. She added that the setup of multiagency projects includes the MMRDA, an organ of the state government which coordinates projects, and also includes the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, the contractors and builders who make such projects, the NGOs who maintain close communication with the community and the elected representatives of the people of the respective areas who do not have a say in such projects as these projects are not a consultative effort. However, none of these organisations can work in isolation and have to coordinate and communicate with each other and we must remember that all these agencies are resource bound and time bound. Individuals, who are affected by displacement, generally are left in a confused state as to who they should approach for addressing their problems as there is no single source of authority in these multi agency projects and the fallout of this is that people have to interact with different authorities at different points of time. Then she exclaimed the last aspect as social accountability. She argued the government has to be responsible to the displaced people in order to fulfil democratic and human rights. However, the question remains that how the state can responsible if the while process is fragmented and outsourced. Finally end with the suggestion that the grievances should be addressed affectively at the neighbourhood level by means of sunwai, jaankaari, janata ka manch and prasar, which could be proved as effective principles to maintain social accountability in urban infrastructure projects.

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

K.M. Parivelan, TISS, Mumbai

Parivelan started with the note that India and Sri Lanka are countries which have been historically well connected with each other. Coming to the topic he said that the construction of the Hambantota Port of Sri Lanka as part of the Chinese BRI has drawn a series of problems such as debt trap and displacement of people. However, the Indian government in order to compete with the Hambantota Port planned the construction of the mega infrastructural project, the Enayam Port which was to be an East-West Port, this was resisted by the local population of the region of Kanyakumari as it was a densely populated area and the construction would also be detrimental to the ecological diversity. He pointed to a Social Impact Assessment study that had been undertaken by TISS in twelve coastal villages which would be affected by the Enayam Port and summarised the results of the study.

The people in these villages held houses and had access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity. The population density of these villages were very high, there was unemployment as well as outwards migration. Culturally, there was a religious dichotomy between the Hindus and the Christians of the region. People in the region also believed that if the port was constructed, there would also be impact on agriculture. Natives who supported the construction of the port had favourable arguments such as, creation of employment opportunities, growth of import-export trade of India, improvement in the standard of living of people in that region and improvement in the border security. As the port would be constructed to counter the Hambantota Port, it would be strategically very valuable and thus would improve the security conditions in the region. The arguments against the Port were the deterioration of soil quality, and the loss of social cohesion due to displacement, in the communities which were hitherto well knit. Alternative demands that were raised

by the people were that, the location of the port should be altered and people of the region should be consulted before the investment is made. It is the high level of Chinese investment in Sri Lanka which makes India take part in such projects but these projects affect the people in a number of social, political and economic ways is something that is forgotten while these infrastructural projects are planned.

### **Infrastructure Financing In India, Role of IFIs'**

Madhuresh Kumar, National Alliance of People's Movement

Madhuresh Kumar initiated with a comparison of infrastructure creation with the development. He said, people think if there is growth of infrastructure, there will be development. However, it should not be seen as that. The question should be what is the social impact of these infrastructural projects? He continued with the example, that, in order to fund the infrastructural projects which India has been planning to undertake an investment of 230 billion rupees needs to be made. Every year, 9% of the GDP has to be completely devoted to infrastructure building, 5% of the GDP has been devoted to these projects. A number of Industrial corridors are being planned in India, such as the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Chennai-Vizag Industrial Corridor, Bangalore-Mumbai Industrial Corridor etc. Japan, France, Belgium and UK have invested in many of such corridors. Other infrastructural projects are - Project Bharatmala which aims to create a 420,000 kilometre highway. The Project Sagarmala aims to create an amalgam of 150 Coastal Economics Zones projects which have been decided without proper social analysis. These Coastal Economic Zones are not economically viable as there is not enough sea traffic to sustain these planned ports. Another project is the creation of National Waterways which will be an interconnection of 106 waterways in India, however no proper planning has been entered into with regard to this.

Currently, the World Bank has been investing in sanitation, agriculture and education in India. Other IFIs such as IFC, ADB, AIIB, NDB, US EXIM have invested majorly in energy and infrastructure sectors. A mega project which has received a very high investment by Singapore is the building of the Capital City of Andhra Pradesh, Amravati. This project will negatively impact the environment of the region and livelihood of the people. There is expected to be deforestation and involuntary resettlement of the people inhabiting the area. The Bullet Train from Mumbai to Ahmedabad is another major project.

The concerns which he raised with respect to these mega projects are related to the social as well as economic costs. A major environmental threat is posed by these projects- 80,000 trees would need to be cut and the stability of agriculture will be affected. He concluded by saying that the projects are not economically viable as too many projects have been planned in the same place for example, two ports are planned within a distance of 35 kilometres and there is not enough traffic to sustain these ports. The economic corridors and bullet train have also been planned in the same area. Thus, it is the people who will have to declare that they do not need such projects.

### **Question-Answer Session:**

**Bishnu Mahapatra** opened the session for comments and questions. He reflected the light on the nature of Indian democracy which knows what is really needed and what is perhaps done. He stated that although India's electoral democracy is doing

well but the nature of public democracy is oligarchic. The oligarchic nature of democracy on the face of election and institutional mechanism is fairly ineffective. He included the Marxian era of Capital volume- II, where there was a particular way of thinking infrastructure which had concealed labour as a component of infrastructural development. And the final argument that he made is that the way Indian states look at the institution of development which is nothing but infrastructural development is a mere politics and should be depoliticised.

**Gopal Krishna:** Is it a coincidence that such convergences are happening between formal and informal economies? International financial institutions seemed to be pushing such convergences and that projects the link of formalizing the economies.

**Aditi Mukherjee:** What is the nature of clientist politics that take place at the rehabilitation sites between the contractors and other intermediaries of the political parties and the displaced people?

**Madhuresh Kumar:** In 91 when the economy opened, the ADP pushed for privatisation in power sector. The privatisation is seemed as champion of increasing ADP. In last 15 years 500 giga watt of thermal power has been created and the revenue generated from this sector has been spent on acquisition of, acquisition of forest, coal mining sectors and other energy sectors. But the money spent on this sectors are yet to back to the system, the whole process is like demonetisation system where the money circulation is processed to benefit some particular entity or group.

**Mouleshri Vyas:** In terms of the 'dalals' in the clientist politics, they are the informal mediator who works in between the real estate agents and government agencies and takes the most feasible profit out of it. There is also NGOs who works for the deprived community of the society who works with MMRDA and still finds it quite challenging to sort out.

**11.30 am – 11.45 am**

Tea

**11.45 am – 01.30 pm**

## **Panel Discussion II: Beyond the Cosmopolitan: Infrastructure, Connectivity and Development**

Moderator: Manish Jha, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

### **Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure in Rural India**

Ishita Dey

Ishita Dey started by saying that he infrastructure largely has been an urban question and most of rural India is devoid of infrastructure and it is only the impact on the

rural areas which is studied. A question which she raised is the relationship between the rural areas and infrastructural development and why is there a pressure on rural populations to shift to renewable sources of energy while for the urban population there is an attempt to connect to the grids. In rural areas there is a dichotomy between infrastructure and technology- there are bulbs but not electricity, pipes but not sewers etc. these gaps arise due to the politics of infrastructure. The four propositions that she presented are- first, Infrastructure as a method to study the rural, second, the infrastructure in particularly vulnerable tribal groups, third, the poetics around infrastructure, fourth, energy politics and infrastructure. By 'infrastructure as a method to study the rural' she deepens the knowledge of the village as a social base where infrastructure is being developed. She suggested that the villages need to be looked at as the object of inquiry and not simply the subject of inquiry. Researchers will have to understand how the villagers perceive, use and desire infrastructure. There are 75 tribes in India which have been categorised as 'particularly vulnerable tribal groups' and there has been an attempt to 'conserve' them and help them develop by means of infrastructure creation. For example, in a village in Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh, social infrastructure such as schools have been built in order to help the tribe develop, however, the generalisation of the tribes across the length and breadth of the country who live in different ecological zones has been a great problem in their development. She added that poetics in infrastructure needs very little elaboration in contemporary times, irrespective of places we are greeted with a pair of glasses carrying the tagline of "Swachh Bharat" under the pet campaign of the current government, we see that toilets and sewer lines are being constructed in the country. A study of a gram sabha in Madhya Pradesh revealed that there is immense pressure in the villages to finish the construction of toilets. In Madhya Pradesh it was also seen that while trees have been cut down in forest to make roads, no investment has been made to increase public transport. Her proposed research aims to study the particularly vulnerable tribal village in Madhya Pradesh with respect to the decentralisation of infrastructural projects on one hand and the connectivity on the other hand.

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

Sanjay Barbora, TISS, Guwahati

Sanjay Barbora began with a description of Guwahati during the monsoons. He began by noting that when it rains torrentially, the cyclists, pedestrians and rickshaws try desperately to navigate through the rush of red water mixed with garbage that flows down from the hills to the cities. Sewer lines pretend to be rivers when it rains in Guwahati. He is anxious on the sight of these rains especially while he is driving and like most other citizens and he draw up a list of people who are responsible for maintenance of the city- the greedy builders, the corrupt metropolitan development authority, the Municipal Corporation, the redundant PWD, the useless government and ultimately the citizens who have no civic sense. Assamese intellectuals used to say that water-logging was good for Guwahati as it made us all socialists for a few hours discussing on the faltering infrastructure of the city. His brief talk is divided into two parts, in the first part he tried to suggest why the sight of waterlogged streets become such a compelling metaphor for helplessness of the people of

Guwahati and second part, I listed the main actors who are responsible for this state of affairs. Any street which looks mundane on a normal day, takes a sinister shape when it is covered in an inch of water, he added that 'it is hard to say how deep it can be and what could come a few steps ahead, there is also the possibility of getting stuck in live electric wires, and this worries the people of Guwahati.' Water logging has also resulted in death for workers and school going children, as was the case last year. Till 2017, the compensation amount for the families of those who died in the city's water logging was four lakh rupees which make people believe that there is nothing that can be done about it. Most deaths are followed by reprimands, some in the private sphere some in the corporate sphere and others are difficult to define. The public ones are easy enough as newspapers carry reports of people's anger in Assamese and English. This is often followed by bureaucratic reshuffle. It is generally the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) and the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) that are blamed for the water logging problem in Guwahati. However according to the official mandates, it is the GMDA's responsibility to overlook the maintenance of water bodies in the city. Moreover, GMDA's corrupt practices have led to ruthless, illegal constructions in the city further worsening the problems during monsoon season.

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

Atig Ghosh, Visva Bharati University

Atig Ghosh initiated the discussion by stating that Siliguri is a city in North Bengal which stands as a gateway to the North East of India. It is a heavily militarised area as it is the only existing land route to Sikkim and the North Eastern hilly regions. Because of its location, it has been a destination for investment not only from Indian sources but also international sources as an Asia Highway is being constructed here. The population of Siliguri is very high, according to the 2011 census, the population density of Siliguri was 11,000 persons per square kilometre. However, Siliguri cannot be taken as a case of sedentary urbanism. Its population mainly comprises of migrants and therefore, it has been termed as a "town in transit". He included that a large part of the migrant population in Siliguri lives in slums and it has been proposed by the municipal authorities to create colonies in the fringes of the cities in order to relocate these migrants. Migrants in Siliguri range from trafficked persons to asylum seekers and it was proposed by India, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal to create a free trade zone in Siliguri in order to carry out trade without any restrictions. Therefore Siliguri shows characteristics of the North East of India rather than the rest of West Bengal as it is a heavily militarised area which is attracting internationalisation. The trade in Siliguri comprises of goods procured both in a legal as well as illicit manner, the migrant traders make massive profits from the trade that they carry out in Siliguri, however none of this profit is invested back in Siliguri. The Hong Kong market created originally for Partition refugees now is a huge outlet for Chinese made goods. Narcotics and weapons traffic is also carried out in Siliguri. The bazaar economy in Siliguri has not been transformed into capitalist markets. The metropoliarities of Siliguri represent the futuristic archetype of a border city.

## **Politico-Ethnic Mood Swings and Infrastructural Developments in the Hills Darjeeling and Kalimpong**

Anup Sekhar Chakraborty, Netaji Institute for Asian Studies

Anup Sekhar stated that the time frame of his paper is from 2011 to 2017 but references from historical and archival sources have also been drawn in order to have a better understanding of the subject. He added, Darjeeling and Kalimpong have got distinct histories. Darjeeling came under colonial rule in the 1830s and Kalimpong came under colonial rule much later in the 1860s. According to archival reports, Darjeeling was called the cleanest city in the entire colonial place. In his paper, there is clear regimentation that had to be followed in Darjeeling. Darjeeling had specific rules for building bazaars, hospitals and houses. In 1884, spaces were worked out for dhobis, which showed that the colonial masters were also regimenting according to native class lines. Anup said that in contemporary times, the Gorkhas claim that hills are theirs but there exist a number of issues of infrastructure. There is a strong tendency to revive colonial regimentation and there is a campaign to "Make Darjeeling queen of the hills again". There is a sanitisation drive in Darjeeling which the municipality has taken up and notices have been given to shopkeepers in various bazaars to shut down their shops as colonial drains run near these shops. The Tibetan hawkers who carried out their business from the Keventers to the Mall Road were also given notices to vacate the space as they did not pay taxes directly to the municipality. Shopkeepers are charged a hefty amount every month for garbage disposal. These sanitisation drives have ultimately led to the coming up of malls by private business who are associated with political parties. According to Anup's findings the development in Darjeeling has shown some definite mood swings. Lastly he said that development means different things to different people and it is the society itself that sets up the issue of development.

## **Rural Infrastructure Connectivity and Development**

Dilshaad Hossain, Independent Researcher

Dilshaad Hossain began by noting that infrastructure is generally believed to facilitated better living conditions for both urban as well as rural populations. In recent times however, increasing technological connectivity has led to development which is based on communal terms. She took the example of the recent communal tensions which took place in the Basirhat and Baduria region in June 2017 in West Bengal, which is believed to have been started by a social media message following which the place turned into an epicentre of violence. During this time she had visited the region and found the situation to be polarised. Introduction of technology in rural areas was supposed to help the technology divide and bring about increased connectivity and development. However, in addition to bringing about better communication it has also amplified the existence of rumours which had helped spreading riots throughout history, for example, in the Revolt of 1857, rumours played a very important role in spreading the Revolt against the British. The current trend of circulating morphed pictures and videos on social media has played a very important role in spreading communal violence. She said that during the Basirhat episode, a number of morphed images were circulated, for example, an image of

couple being thrashed and taken up by the police was circulated stating that they were the parents of the accused, while in reality no such incident had taken place. She concluded by saying that it has become necessary to study the internet itself as a medium of communication.

### **Question-Answer Session:**

**Manish Jha** opened the session for discussion and he commented on the theme of the panel "Infrastructure Connectivity and Development" which focused on the complicated nature of the political economy and also questioned what has been the role of the stakeholders that broadly looked at state, media, governmental plans programmes and skills. The panel also reflected on the differences of rural and urban infrastructure.

**Gopal Krishna:** At what extent the infrastructural differences affected the livelihood of rural and urban people and how people are distinguished by their skin colour or looks in the town of Darjeeling?

**Ishita Dey:** What kind of neo-liberal slippage is there in the form of 'excess'?

**Atig Ghosh:** The shift from demand to desire is a slippage which produces an 'excess'. Question arises whether physical infrastructure can in any way contribute to human resource. Here, social infrastructure may act as another 'excess' term. Architectural space may help in making a distinction between urban and rural.

**Anup Sekhar Chakraborty:** It is interesting to note whom they identify or target as people to be moved out from a certain space because they are not perceived to be local. In case of the mall road shops, we saw most of the shopkeepers were Tibetan and some Nepali speaking people are from Bhutan and all of them were moved out because they were refugees and many other people were also moved out of many certain spaces because they were not seeming like locals.

### **01.30 pm- 02.30 pm**

Lunch

### **2.30 pm- 3.30 pm**

#### **Special Lecture: Data Centres as Logistical Infrastructure and the Geo-politics of Automation**

Speaker: Brett Neilson, Institute for Culture and Society,  
Western Sydney University

Chair: Ranabir Samaddar

**Ranabir Samaddar** begun the session by welcoming Brett Neilson and requested him to give his lecture which is on 'Data Centres as Logistical Infrastructure and the Geopolitics of Automation'.

## **Brett Neilson**

Brett Neilson began by introducing the audience to the idea of data centre, the science of its working, the continuities between the forms of power that manifests into facilities and certain customs of power and trajectories of the future. In recent critical studies logistics have been approached as a mode of power activity in production of space and subjectivity. Logistical revolution has made a distribution of productive processes and also has contributed in the mapping of expanding frontiers of logistics beyond the worlds of transportation and communication. Neilson stated that data farms has various storage system and accounting part of it requires high level of technological support, good manufacturing facilities and sustainable political form of topography and topology.

Neilson showed a power point presentation that combines the images of various data centres across the world and also explained the story behind its working. In one slide, he showed the Latin American Data Centre operator which involves many operating systems that comprises the operators of national money company, Santiago's transportation system and many other high-tech data farming technologies. This particular centre is a multiuser data centre which serves various different businesses. He also stated that many data centres tend to cluster for the infrastructural reason like the one of Chile. Chile is situated in Latin America, and involved in indulging data from neighbouring sub continents and focused in serving all of Latin America. In one particular slide he had a map which showed the logistical configuration of area that facilitates the incoming and outgoing of vehicles of a particular zone. This highly vehicle concentrated region is the resource of power supply to the data centre when there is a down fall in electricity. One of his slide had the picture of Sydney data centre which is the largest in the southern data sphere. It combined five or six data centres in one frame and works under the California Press Company. Another picture he showed had the Singapore data centre, which is again very important for data hub of South East Asia and it is surrounded by many data parks and guided by various government agencies. An unusual picture of data centre had a dumping ground beside, it is situated in Hong Kong and run by Chinese tech agencies. Neilson stated China has some dominance on artificial intelligence, machine learning and automation techniques which requires lesser labour dependent more accurate than others. Singapore has the main technical data hub of South East Asia. Singapore's data hub comprises many multi storage data centres and its processing unit has a special logistics for functioning. It can separate many conjunctive parts of data centres and it is also moveable to another trajectory. Neilson thoroughly and broadly explained how data information systems coordinate with logistical movements and emphasised the role of data centres as a storage and transport of goods and not the storage, transmission and the data processor. On question of Singapore and Hong Kong project he examined the relation between data centres, labour and territory, and how data centres drive contemporary process of global circulation and helps to create relation between labour forces that might otherwise seemed disconnected.

A picture in his presentation carried multiple flags of different empirical powers that is basically the implication of different entities working together as an integrated data hub. He commented that data centre is also the place where labourers are always facilitated and appreciated to enhance their skills and allowed go for further explorations. Labourers in the data contemporary centre are highly interactive to computers and sits on the client end of the installations and they are very curious about many different geographical sciences and frequently distributed across an array of national spaces.

Neilson made a clear distinction between revenue firm and data farm and explained the need why certain Latin American governments shifts their data entities for the improvement of logistics of the governmental spaces. He explained this by giving an example of political formation to infrastructural transformation of data centres in the colonies of Singapore. He made clear answer to the question, 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? He suggested that the locational choice of a particular data centres is not ultimately backed by the geo-politics of nations but the structural forms of infrastructures which requires a particular geographic landscape and atmosphere is another major factor for the locational choice of data centres. At time the locational choice has become a dominant factor for geographical or national integrities and also able to facilitate many supply chain, transportation and communication models that were otherwise not conceptualized with such depth.

Furthermore, he explored 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, a Chinese organisation, leads the opening of a digital free trade zone in Malaysia.

He examined the role of data centres in geopolitical scenario and also examined the extension of digital infrastructures that reconfigure regions in such a way that conceptualises the sovereign power to the state. In the course of machine learning and automation the speaker added that technological innovation enhances the power of capitalism and downsizes the labour hours to such an extent that it raises the question of humane cut human need. Finally he concluded by suggesting that an emergent sovereign form subsists in the capillaries of power and operational logic of computational machines special to data centres.

## Question-Answer Session:

**Ranabir Samaddar** opened the lecture to the audience for the question-answer session-

**Iman Kumar Mitra:** Why do you use data farm when we already have a term data mining which is more useful in extracting data?

**Rishi Jha:** What environmental characteristics are needed for the locational choice of data centres?

**Paula Banerjee:** The term extraction is often used in feminist theory. I would like to know that how much exploitation happens in the process of extraction.

**Brett Neilson:** Data mining and data farming are more of a naming exercise than a conceptual exercise. Farming is an activity for data extraction from various different sources while mining is an exercise where data is processed through cleaning and other manipulations of complex mathematical algorithms.

Environment is crucial to consider and location is another vital choice that one must consider in order to have good connectivity, infrastructure and logistical facilities and also where technologies can spin up the process and machineries are supported by the environment.

Extraction and gender are very much related. Extraction implies the kind of withdrawal or taking out something but exploitation is associated with surplus labour. Whether the gender relation is exploitative or extractive depends on the social differences, economic and political agendas, circumstances and more of availability.

**Ranabir Samaddar** made the final concluding note by saying that if we go back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, we would find the telegraph wires and poles of that time and it was precisely on Indian ocean and there were other kind of colonies like free merchant colonies and the imperial power were constantly trying to capture them. They were historic colonies in the sense there were Chinese fishermen, merchants from South East Asian and East Asian countries. Migrants of these lands used to live in coastal Indian region for three to nine months and the attempt of the colonial power was to bring them under the colonial system. The whole point is to relate this with sovereignty. One of the utopia of sovereignty is that one will be sovereign and rest will be non-sovereign. In terms of data centre it might not happen that there will be some entities who would be interested to opt out of this kind of world where the neo-geography of sovereignty is being created. On the question of automation one can say recall the era of Ricardo and Malthus when machineries were just introduced and this era of extraction when data farming or mining are taking place in combining new process of production and circulation. In this era of automation labourers are substituted in every possible way and therefore the rise of artificial intelligence is getting intensified. This debate is an age old debate and the lesson from this debate is that it is a polarizing. Labour comes in circle and it will reappear until the clear

extraction of certain mode is found which can permanently replace labour with machineries and create an utopia of labour removed economy.

**3.45pm- 5.00 pm**

### **Panel Discussion III: Data Centres in India**

Moderator: Brett Neilson

#### **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, they examined 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 explicated 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, they attempted 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, they had 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 they made meanings of the emerging forms of governance.

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

Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay

Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay in his paper followed 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 identified 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. He took the year 1951 as a key moment in the history of data in India, and his paper showed how the ISI emerged as a significant player in the science of government. It seek to understand the kind of relation this history may have over the contemporary phenomenon of data centres. This is a key site without which the contemporary arrival and valuation of big data appears unimaginable.

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

Ritam Sengupta

His paper depicts that data is essential for calculative procedures that works to improve the technical efficiency of the network by factoring elements like unaccounted-for usage and theft and 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, his paper makes certain more general observations about the management of loss as might be underway within the scheme of the WBSEDCL. His paper suggested that 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 shedding' in areas of low demand/revenue/high AT&C losses. His paper tried 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.

### **Question-Answer Session:**

**Brett Neilson** exclaimed that all the speakers have brought very interesting histories of city formation. They talked about historical technologies and the old landscape of infrastructure and processing. Data centre as huge energy supplying institution has been successfully established through all the discussion and he open up the panel for further discussion and question-answer session.

**Gopal Krishna:** there were two important data moments in the history of data science. One is big data moment and the other is small data moment. The census of 1872 captures the small data moment and the big data moment arrives in the post-independence era of 1978. How was the journey from small to big data moment and how did ISI moment differed from Census moment?

**Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay:** The longer paper has a section for NSS and ISI moments. Statistician R.A. Fisher and Statistician P.C. Mahalanobish had started experimenting on descriptive statistics and found limitation in the census data in the process of selecting sample population when the size of population size is infinitely large. But ISI moment worked on the replacement order and this moment is a great anthropological moment in Indian data history.

**Rishi Jha** threw light on the methodology adopted by him and his co-author which involved looking into the scenario of south Asian data centres by closely observing a data centre situated at Mumbai, India. Maximum data centres works for financial institution which regulates both the time series and regular datasets. These data hubs are mechanised for large data collaboration, storage, support and processing services and also operates with the clouds. So, technically it is admissible that data centres are the unit that can solve multi-governmental purposes.

## **PROGRAMME- DAY 2**

**Sunday, 3 September 2018**

**Venue: Raas Manch, Swabhumi**

**10.00 am- 10.30 am**

**Tea and Registration**

## **Panel Discussion IV: Infrastructural Alliances and Global Governance**

Moderator: Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay

### **Does Global Finance Matter For Infrastructural Alliances?**

Byasdeb Dasgupta

Byasdeb Dasgupta spoke about the relation between global finance and infrastructure alliance. He says that "In order 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 dictates today's market economy, state apparatus and policy planning. Accumulation of global capital today takes place through various circuits of global finance and Infrastructure Alliance is just one of them". Dasgupta spoke of the interlinking relationship between China and Pakistan through the Belt and Road Initiative and said that "The network of capital and global finance is different from the point of view of different financial contexts". He also took the example of the Marshall Plan, where grants and fees were given to the developing and third world countries, but the situation of global finance and the following Infrastructural Alliance is not the same for China-Pakistan.

"The flow of global capital between China and Pakistan is not unconditional and the interest rate is quite high. In case of Pakistan, China provides money and global finance for building different infrastructures such as roads and buildings. On the macro-economic scale, the surplus is divided into two different points, production and social. Production ploughed back to production itself through raw materials and salaries whereas Social Surplus goes to the state in the form of tax through commissions, NGO's and Corporate Social Responsibilities. In West Bengal, for instance, the Social Surplus is distributed through Roads, buildings and loans to students, known as Kanyashree. In case of China- Pakistan, if Pakistan fails to repay the money capital, then ownership of the social capital like railways, roads and buildings or Infrastructure Capital, goes to China. Pakistan has reported high economic growth in the last 4 years but the current account deficit is 5% more than its GDP. But to repay this debt, Pakistan has run out of its reserves and has taken international loans from organization's such as IMF.

Professor Dasgupta concluded by saying that Global Finance and Infrastructure Alliance are two different things and should not be confused.

### **Reading the Story Of Chinese Capital In Pakistan**

Arup Sen

Arup Sen began his dialogue by stating that global capital has different trajectories and Britain, France and Germany have dominated the global capital market 80% more than the other countries. He said that "Lenin had pointed out that the International Market and banks are dominated by the developed countries and the rest of the world is dependent on these countries and banks for its resources and finance, to a large extent. In recent years, China has emerged as a big Asian power and in the 1960's and 1970's, countries all over the world were influenced by the Chinese Road to Socialism. In context of China and Pakistan, Pakistan has not been rated positively by the international rating agencies and giants and their parameters included deficits, foreign currency and balancing economic and social sides. The main reason for Pakistan's poor grading is due to the high political instability. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a project worth 62 billion project and has short, medium and long term phases. All over the world, developing countries owe a debt to developed countries and till date, developing countries owe a debt of 90 billion dollars to China that is 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the world's total debt. Of this, Private capital invested in other countries by private companies in China is an estimated total of 1.5 billion US Dollars".

He took a few examples of Chinese E-commerce giants such as Alibaba owning a 100% equity in Dallas, Texas and international banks. He quoted that "The implementation of the China- Pakistan project requires severe planning and implementation. With the 2015 Constitutional Amendment Act in Pakistan, the military has established an almost parallel government in Sind and Baluchistan, with Executive and Judicial powers. This has led to further displacement – hostile and consensual and enough damage to the economy already" and concluded by saying that the Chinese flow of capital to Pakistan has led to many ills for China and subsequent development in Pakistan, although there is a different kind of governance and accumulation altogether.

### **The Financial Infrastructure of a "Seamless Asia"**

Iman Mitra

Iman Mitra in his paper looked 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 explored 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 his paper, he discussed the various forms of financial instruments which were helpful in reducing the gap between demand and supply of infrastructure all over the world. In the second section, he described the working of a particular financial institution which was being held as the main protagonist of infrastructural funding in Asia – the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) based in Beijing. In the last section, he focused on the impact of what we may call the 'financialisation of infrastructure' on the development projects in India which referred to the increase of the public-private partnership (PPP) activities in the infrastructure sector. The main thrust of his paper was on the

notion of a blueprint – a diagrammatic design of projects which is to be realised in future – as most of the proposed infrastructural development was at the stage of primary dialogue between different stakeholders. One of his proposition was on the social and geo-political development of a region which is equally important as the economic development and focuses more on regional cooperation than focusing just on strengthening economy. He stated that the United Nation Social Commission focusses on Asia Pacific and infrastructure development in this part of the world has both its advantages and disadvantages and concluded by saying that Infrastructure is not the only way for development of a Seamless Asia because if Infrastructure fails, many investors in different countries would lose their money.

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

Gopal Krishna

Gopal Krishna began his speech by stating examples of how the Second World War ships in the 1940's were damaged and eventually dismantled as there was an urgent need for steel in the United States, United Kingdom and Japan. Gopal Krishna further examined 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. Over the years there was a demand for steel across the world, for example, Spain and Turkey in the 1960's, Taiwan and South Korea in the 1970's and India, Bangladesh and Pakistan in the 1980's. He says "End of life ships carry economic values and liabilities. This creates a supply chain that gets 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 cycle". His paper questioned how it enabled 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 those end up incurring higher operating costs than their revenue. He stated that the Second World War ships were used to meet the requirements and demands of these countries. This ultimately led to a global material flow and helped in expanding business processes.

He emphasized that ship recycling helps cater to the national and international marine needs. He 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 could reveal the environmental and occupational health cost and the impact on communities in the vicinity of sites where ship recycling/dismantling takes place. His paper undertook an inquiry to the veracity of claims about the beneficial impact of ship recycling with regard to foreign ships and also traced the relationship of end-of-life vessels with laws such as UN's Basel Convention on Trans-boundary 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.

### **Question-Answer Session:**

**Ritajyoti Bnadyopadhyay** opened the session for further discussion to the panellists and the audience and he continued by saying that the panellists have done good interventions with the understanding of neo-liberal conjuncture in international politics. Neo-liberal conjuncture is a moment on which the boundary between the state and the market joined as the state aggressively taking up the market for operations.

**Subir Bhowmik:** How are the countries involved in the project looking into cases of livelihood loss and environmental damage with the presence of large military force and implementation of infrastructural growth?

**Byasdeb Dasgupta:** China has full consent to the militarisation of the economic corridor. The problem is seen in the context of how other outer states would consider the flow of finance.

**Apala Kundu:** The development project of the CPEC will lead to displacement of the Pakistani people, particularly in the provinces of Sind and Baluchistan, as you mentioned in your paper. Has either of the parties, China or Pakistan, addressed the issue of displacement or rehabilitation, to any extent, in their treaties or agreements?

**Arup Sen:** the main problem of displacement and rehabilitation is which transparency. Even if some kind of consideration is there for the military point of view with the law and order but no holistic point of view has been considered with the Gadwar Port's case where many fisher men and unskilled labourers

**Shatabdi Das:** Does 'Seamless Asia' imply a seamless financial institution like AIIB funding it? Are there no other player or financial institutes which may be expected to play complementary or supplementary roles? Could you elaborate on such alternate agencies or institutes?

**Iman Mitra:** I tried to study the phenomenon at ground level and this paper is mainly focused on AIIB. However, other institutions like ADB, ASEAN are also working along with a number of agencies under them.

**01.30 pm -02.30 pm**

**Special Lecture: On Infrastructures: The Cosco Container Terminals and the Surrounding Perama Hills**

Speaker: Nelli Kampouri

Moderator: Brett Neilson

Brett Neilson introduced the speaker and her theme of presentation from the standpoint of development of logistics and port services in southern Europe which is intertwined with the protection of the sanctity of Mediterranean people. Brett Neilson specifically directed it through the exemplification of the case of development of the surroundings of Perama hills following the establishment of COSCO, a Chinese enterprise in 2013.

### **Nelli Kamouri**

Nelli Kampouri opened her speech with the history of the construction of COSCO's subsidiary Piraeus Container Terminal. She mentioned that the process of setting up was initiated in 2013, a period that was termed by her as a transitional phase. She highlighted that the container board was divided into two parts - one part run by COSCO after a 2009 consensus between COSCO Board of Safety and the Greek Government, and the other was controlled by OLP - a company previously state-run and later turned into a CA company, operating under labour conditions as the public sector. Following a 2009 agreement, the port was transformed radically, in material ways and also in terms of anticipations and demands for the future of the port. Nelly's account was informative and shared the details of the agreement or consensus of 2016 that led to the initiation of the development of Piraeus Port Authority after a prolonged period of strike against COSCO since 2006. This agreement turned interesting because the management of port services including all container terminals had obtained control over the neighbouring docking area, cruise port and the property owned by people in the surroundings. Thus large area of land and a number of buildings went into the possession of management of COSCO that was developing 'the Port for all'.

With the coming in of COSCO labours continued to enjoy privileged labour conditions in the form of lucrative contracts, well-paid salaries, overtime payment for their services; the same workers who under OLP had faced considerable reductions in their wages due to economic crisis since 2009. Thus there was entitlement to privileges not even provided in the public-sector; the provisions were facilitated to the labour unions mainly for preventing strikes. Government supported those workers who needed to be transferred to the public sector, beyond the port area, although position of women and migrants were discriminated in the sense that they were limited to working in a specific sector. Nelli Kampouri went on to elaborate the subjects of handling national citizenship and labour rights at a time when Greece entered into a debt crisis in 2016. The principles inscribed into the 2016 consensus were framed in order to ensure that new recruits in the port would not be able to unionise and employ the same tactics that were used in the past to secure stable labour conditions. The obligations of the container board's authority did not address labour union rights and were also not documented into collective agreements: this culminated into serious issues of protection of labour rights. Workers in the port

have fixed and designated work time-periods, after their work hours sometimes they have to work into overtime due to uncontrollable port traffic hours.

Development in the port area sometimes leads one to the notion that the port has been colonised not by the Chinese but by the new force of machine domination, where instead of humans handling machines, machines and humans work hand-in-hand. Kampouri made an analysis of the consensus upholding a futuristic scenario of economic efficiency with new technologies creating skilled trade personnel and how new research and new infrastructure will transform the port into one of the largest in the Mediterranean. N. Kampouri referred to Ranabir Samaddar's book 'A Post-Colonial Enquiry into Europe's Debt and Migration Crisis' stressing on how the 2009-2016 debt crisis was typically a condition of post-colonial debt crisis and led to the waning of democratic will and people's will under the burden of political agenda. Therefore, Chinese investment in Piraeus at that time was taken as a way out of the crisis. On the other hand, in Greece, left-wing political leaders including SYRIZA, had considered the agreement with COSCO as a step backwards. Nelly Kampouri mentioned the significance of graffiti for expression by labours and leaders alike in Greece in her speech. Photographs by Michael Macgary who explored relationships between China and Africa titled "Chinafrica: under construction" were a part of the presentation, portraying the expectations of possibilities of Chinese investment, leading to a futuristic utopia in the European setting around Piraeus. The paper thus looks into Government efforts in recognising the rights of labours along with development that includes within its purview possibilities of socio-economic development together with enhancement of international political ties that instead of hampering sovereignty of a nation strides to foster harmony..

Nelli Kampouri commented, Georgio Grappi's influence on the research through his work on trans-national social strike, could be an interesting way to follow and take the research forward. A quote from Transnational Social Strike Fall 2017 depicts better future outlook in COSCO concluded the presentation, which read, "Logistics constantly builds an imagery of efficiency and smoothness related to the collectiveness of logistical revolution by hiding the reality of precarious labour."

### **Question-Answer Session:**

#### **Brett Neilson**

Brett Neilson opened the dais to questions while summarising that, the work lends a tour of the complexities surrounding the port of Piraeus, particularly those that have unfolded in the past couple of years. B. Neilson pointed out the quote from Transnational Social Strike Fall 2017 resonates in terms of many of the discussions in the conference.

#### **Ranabir Samaddar**

Ranabir Samaddar said that infrastructure has enormous production capacity yet destroyed and taken away from labour. Infrastructure brings a paradox in development where on the one hand company takes away all types of productive capacity and on the other hand the quality of product remains unchanged. Labour in

a conceived sense gives rise to the question of the use of visual medium as an instrument of protest; and labour has been generalised in terms of actively taking part in graffitiing. For instance, during Indian railway strikes of 1968-69, graffiti usage became popular. In the history of Indian railway strikes from 1970 to 1974, graffitiing became the most active form of protest and graffiti remained the catalyst of general protest. In the history of generality graffiti has been considered an important media of expression. In case of segmented protests at Piraeus is the absence of generality a passing phase, where gradually generality of labour will set in among port labour?

### **Nelli Kampouri**

Nelli Kampouri responded by saying that it was a difficult question and the answer depended on the way in which labour is perceived; not only specifically in case of Piraeus but the general picture in Greece. There has been a failure to acknowledge how important it is to provide allowances to workers. In case of workers in the cleaning sector of port, when there were strikes, the Greek government offered alternate jobs only to Greeks in the cleaning sector (who were part of the labour unions) in the public sector. With more than half of the number of workers in the cleaning sector being migrants, the labour unions did not accept the offer in anticipation of all their struggles to establish labour rights going to waste. This kind of generosity requires a different kind of spirit and understanding of what labour is. Whenever the existing generalities are challenged, difficulties arise. There may be a change gradually but it would require another generation because the current powers existing and functioning are so institutionalised and not challenged by the left wing government's propagations.

### **Gopal Krishna**

In terms of port development, does the concept of territorialisation and economic form of nation- state become less important or irrelevant in future?

### **Nelli Kampouri**

Territorialisation is a complex concept, not reflecting only sovereignty but also considers notions of spaces that are seamless. Therefore the process of territorialisation and deterritorialisation are intertwined – it not only has to do with sovereignty but also has to do with how economics is created and is seamless in many ways. To go back to the question of work economic forms and centrality of nation-states, in terms of development of labour struggles in Piraeus, nation-state was very instrumental in promoting notions of investments as necessary to overcome the problems of economy. In a sense it was a moment when deterritorialisation meant territorialisation – it meant that the Greek state would gain sovereignty if it was deterritorialised. It is a paradoxical situation which cannot be understood only in terms of investment.

### **Brett Neilson**

The words of Alexis Tsipras, implied that the struggle of Chinese people and Greek people is a 'struggle'. The fight for something that leaders around the world would

say is a 'fight' would be very different from the situation in Piraeus; so what role is the statement performing?

### **Nelli Kampouri**

The statement was made in the first phase of SYRIZA when the Greeks were trying to challenge European institutionalisation. The statement does not go very far to idolise that what many in Europe will see as post-colonial was seen by many Greeks as an insult. The statement presents an ambivalence of being in a condition when one is in sovereign debt-crisis which is post-colonial in many contexts. China's role as a nation that fights against colonialism today (as portrayed by Tsipras' words) would be an over-statement based on historical study of China. This statement was also made in a way to address the Chinese press. It is interesting to note that when the conference was given, there was only one newspaper from Greece, and mostly Chinese press members were present. The consensus of COSCO is not in conflict with the practices of institutionalisation in Europe. Thus it combines the notions of different people on a statement that most probably would not be made today.

### **Iman Mitra**

We see Indian ports countering the precarity of labour and job descriptions and the intricacies of not knowing what is right and what is wrong. The issues of dying labour regimes of efficacy, nationalism and smoothness, can they be brought under the same area of study?

### **Ranabir Samaddar**

There is always enquiry on the division between spectre and the imaginary and a desirable future. Development finds its way with time and also improves production; the possibilities of development widen the scopes of a desirable future, which includes port. Do we gain much by saying that there is a division between the real and imaginary?

### **Nelli Kampouri**

The futuristic desires make bearable the aspirations but they have to do with envisioning heights, especially when COSCO port is considered. There is trade of oil but the futuristic scenario brings in precarity. For those staying near the hills overlooking COSCO board the fulfilment of demands, and solution to their problems in a desirable future come in with the development of the port.

**The Conference concluded with a vote of thanks Presented by Shatabdi Das, Research and Programme Assistant, CRG**

