Transregional Academy
September 29–October 7, 2018
Singapore

Program

Infrastructures, Regions, and Urbanization
# Contents

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Infrastructures, Regions, and Urbanization

Transregional Academy
September 29 – October 7, 2018, Singapore

Concept Note

Infrastructure has become a lively domain of scholarship. Whilst often seemingly mundane and quotidian, the politics, histories and geographies associated with infrastructures invite critical scrutiny and are a mirror to wider, socio-economic, historical-geographical and natural trajectories. Infrastructure has both tangible, material forms, such as roads, cables, wharfs, power and water grids and more intangible forms, such as formalized and informal civil society socio-political networks and institutions. Infrastructure can be seen as a form of spatial-temporal “fix” within the circulation of capital, goods and services. Infrastructures connect places with different capabilities and power. Especially, if you integrate a stronger value chain or/and global production network, crucial questions arise about who, where and what will be able to appropriate value. Infrastructures consolidate and transform uneven development, regional value regimes and landscapes at diverse, interacting and often contested scales. These include territorial states, regional organizations (such as ASEAN, the EU or APEC and the Trans-Pacific Partnership), cross-border formations (such as the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth Triangle, sometimes known as SIJORI) and cities.

The academy is organized jointly by Forum Transregionale Studien, Max Weber Stiftung, Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, National University Singapore, Max Weber Foundation Research Group on Borders, Mobility and New Infrastructures and the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore, and chaired by Andreas Eckert (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Weiqiang Lin, James D. Sidaway, Jonathan Rigg (all National University of Singapore), Simone Lässig (German Historical Institute Washington DC), and Franz Waldenberger (Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, Tokyo).
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**Program Table**

**TIME**

- **09:30-11:00:** Introduction
- **11:30-13:00:** Coffee Break
- **13:00-14:00:** Lunch
- **14:00-15:30:** Thematic Discussion (TD)
- **15:30-16:00:** Project Presentation (PP)
- **16:00-17:30:** Plenary Lecture
- **18:30:** Welcome Dinner

**INTRODUCTION**

- **Breakfast at the hotel**
- **Coffee Break**
- **Lunch**
- **Coffee Break**
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**SCHEDULE**

- **09:30-11:00:** Introduction
- **11:30-13:00:** Coffee Break
- **13:00-14:00:** Lunch
- **14:00-15:30:** Thematic Discussion (TD)
- **15:30-16:00:** Project Presentation (PP)
- **16:00-17:30:** Plenary Lecture
- **18:30:** Welcome Dinner
**Program**

**Saturday, SEP 29**

Arrival

**Sunday, SEP 30**

Venue: Village Hotel Albert Court, 180 Albert Street, Singapore 189971

**09:30-11:00 Welcome Breakfast**

**11:00-15:00 Excursion**
Meeting Point: 11:00 Hotel lobby

**Monday, OCT 1**

Main Venue: Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore , AS8 Level 4 10 Kent Ridge Crescent, Singapore 119260

08:30 Departure from the hotel lobby

**09:30-11:00 Welcome and Introduction**
(Room 04-04)

**Welcome Address**
Botakoz Kassymbekova (Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin), Jonathan Rigg (Asian Research Institute, National University Singapore)

**Introduction “Infrastructures, Regions, and Urbanizations”**
Franz Waldenberger (Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, Tokyo), Simone Lässig (German Historical Institute Washington DC), James Sidaway (National University Singapore)

**11:00-11:30 Coffee break**

**11:30-13:00 Thematic Discussion**

**Group I (Room 07-60)**

**Belts and Roads Unleashed: Discussing Emerging Territorial Logics of Transregional Infrastructures**
Texts: James Anderson “Borders in the new imperialism” / Alexander Cooley, *The Emerging Political Economy of Obor*
Introduction: Dina Krichker & Felix Mallin

**Group II (Room 07-61)**

**Infrastructures, Socialities, and Differences. Labor and the Global Urban Condition**
Introduction: Somayeh Chitchian

**13:00-14:00 Lunch**

**15:30-17:30 Project Presentations**

**Group A (Room 07-60)**

**Nick Smith**
(Yale NUS College, Singapore)
*Learning to Urbanize after Socialism: China’s Experiments in Planning, Development, and Governance in the 1980s*
Comment: Matthew Archer

**Group B (Room 07-61)**

**Jonathan Balls**
(Australia India Institute)
*Solar Micro-grids and the Democratic Infrastructures of Sustainable Development*
Comment: Norman Aselmeyer
Group C (Room 04-04)

**Mushahid Hussain**  
(Cornell University)  
*Translating Modernity: Planning Practice, Urban Informality and Place-making at the Edge of Dhaka City*  
Comment: Jasnea Sarma

**18:30 Welcome Dinner**

Mamanda Restaurant (Malay Cuisine)  
73 Sultan Gate, Singapore 198497

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**Tuesday, OCT 2**

08:30 Departure from the hotel lobby

**09:30-11:00 Project Presentations**

**Group A (Room 07-60)**

**Sonja Ganseforth**  
(Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, Tokyo)  
*Occupying Infrastructures: Contested Development in Palestine*  
Comment: Busarin Lertchavalitsakul

**Group B (Room 07-61)**

**Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman**  
(Researcher, Guwahati Campus, Assam)  
*Infrastructure Development in Northeast India: Examining Inequality and Exclusion in the Development Promise of Progress and Prosperity*  
Comment: Anton Nikolotov

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**Group C (Room 04-04)**

**Brijesh Chandra Tripathi**  
(Indian Institute for Technology Bombay, Mumbai)  
*Claims of the Poor for Justice and the Right to the City in Technology-driven Planning in Urban Spaces: A Case Study of Mumbai*  
Comment: Saikat Maitra

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

**11:30-13:00 Thematic Discussions**

**Group 1 (Room 07-60)**

*Indicators, Infrastructure, and the Evaluation of Global Sustainability*  
Introduction: Matthew Archer

**Group 2 (Room 07-61)**

*Infrastructuring Borders and the Borders of Infrastructure: Critical Perspectives from Asia*  
Texts: Harel Shapira, “The Border Infrastructure of the Global” / Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, “Natural Resources and Capitalist Frontiers”  
Introduction: Busarin Lertchavalitsakul & Jasnea Sarma

13:00-14:00 Lunch
14:00-15:30 Project Presentations

Group A (Room 07-60)
Matthew Archer
(Copenhagen Business School)
Sustainable Supply Chains in the Age of Big Data
Comment: Meghan Downes

Group B (Room 07-61)
Norman Aselmeyer
(European University Institute, Italy)
Nairobi: The Making of a European City, c. 1890–1914
Comment: Carrie L. Cushman

Group C (Room 04-04)
Sarah Beringer
(Deutsche Historische Institut Washington)
The Green Nexus: Analyzing the U.S.-China Partnership on Clean Energy and Climate Change
Comment: Mushahid Hussain

Group B (Room 07-61)
Anton Nikolotov
(Freie Universität Berlin)
A Marginal Platform: The Social Worlds of a Marketplace in Moscow
Comment: Somayeh Chitchian

Group C (Room 04-04)
Jasnea Sarma & Dina Krichker
(National University Singapore)
Infrastructures on the Edge – Let the Borders Speak for Themselves
Comment: Fabian Prieto-Ñañez

8:30 Departure from the hotel lobby

09:30-11:00 Project Presentations

Group A (Room 07-60)
Stefan Hübner
(National University Singapore)
From Tokyo Bay to Climate Change: Why Industrial Oceanic Urbanization has Boomed, Busted, and Resurfaced since the 1970s
Comment: Sonja Ganseforth

Group C (Room 04-04)
11:00-11:30 Coffee Break
13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Thematic Discussions

Group 1 (Room 07-60)
Planetary Urbanization: The Infrastructurization and Industrialization of Hinterlands and “Natural” Spaces as an Outcome of Urbanization
Introduction: Stefan Hübner

Group 2 (Room 07-61)
Maintenance and Informal Infrastructure
Texts: Teresa PR Caldeira, “Peripheral Urbanization” / Brian Larkin, “Pirate Infrastructures”
Introduction: Fabian Prieto-Ñañez

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break
16:00-17:30 Project Presentations

Group A (Room 07-60)

Meghan Downes
(Monash University Australia)
Media, Marketing, and Morality in the Meikarta Development Project
Comment: Nick Smith

Group B (Room 07-61)

Somayeh Chitchian
(Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity/Harvard University)
Logistification of Migration: Infrastructures of Mobility, Containment, and Rebellion
Comment: Mirza Zulfikur Rahman

Group C (Room 04-04)

Saikat Maitra
(Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, India)
In the Shadow of the New Town: Urbanity, Marginality and Environmental Justice in Rajarhat
Comment: Sarah Beringer

11:30-13:00 Project Presentations

Group 1 (Room 07-60)

The Universal and the Particular in Urban Theory
Introduction: Nick Smith

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

13:00-14:00 Lunch

Thursday, OCT 4

08:30 Departure from the hotel lobby

09:30-11:00 Thematic Discussion

Group 1 (Room 07-60)

Built Environments for Consumption
Introduction: Saikat Maitra

Group 2 (Room 07-61)

Busarin Lertchavalitsakul
(Naresuan University, Thailand)
Contested Land Relations and Medical Services Dependency: Ambiguous Infrastructures in the Myanmar-Thailand Borderlands
Comment: Stefan Hübner

Group B (Room 07-61)

Carrie L. Cushman
(Wellesley College)
Infrastructure Comes Alive: Miyamoto Ryūji’s Photographs of Kowloon Walled City
Comment: Jonathan Balls

Group C (Room 04-04)

Fabian Prieto-Ñañez
(University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
Connected on Our Own Terms: Satellite Dishes, Media Consumption and Technological Entrepreneurship in Colombia (1979–2005)
Comment: Brijesh Chandra Tripathi
14:00-15:30 Thematic Discussions

Group 1 (Room 07-60)

**Temporalities of Urban Modernity: Views from the Rural-Urban Fringe**
Introduction: Mushahid Hussain

Group 2 (Room 07-61)

**Experimentations and Becomings of Emerging Urban Worlds**
Introduction: Anton Nikolotov

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

16:00-17:30 Plenary Lecture

(Room 04-04)

**Infrastructures, Regions and Urbanizations of Malay Liverpool: A Critical Relational Geohistory**
Speaker: Tim Bunnell (National University Singapore)
Discussants: Jane M. Jacobs (Yale-NUS College, Singapore), Julia Lossau (University of Bremen)
Chitra Venkataramani (NUS)
Chairperson: Lin Weiqiang (NUS)
—See pages 10-12

Friday, OCT 5

08:30 Departure from the hotel lobby

09:30-11:00 Thematic Discussion

Group 1 (Room 07-60)

**Infrastructure in the Media/ Media as Infrastructure**
Introduction: Meghan Downes

Group 2 (Room 07-61)

**African Mobilities**
Texts: Clapperton C. Mavhunga, “Which Mobility for (Which) Africa?”
Introduction: Nick Smith

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00 Roundtable Discussion

(Room 04-04)

**Infrastructure as a Method?**
Panelists: Tim Bunnell (NUS), Franz Waldenberger (DIJ Tokyo), Simone Lässig (DHI Washington), Weiqiang Lin (NUS), Hiromi Inagaki-Wagner (NUS), Jane M. Jacobs (Yale-NUS College, Singapore), Shaun Lin Ziqiang (NUS), Julia Lossau (University of Bremen), Simon Rowedder (NUS), Chitra Venkataramani (NUS)
Chairperson: James D. Sidaway (NUS)
—See pages 10-12
13:00-14:15 Lunch

**14:15-15:00 Closing Discussion**

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**Saturday, OCT 6**

09:30 Departure from the hotel lobby

**10:00-12:30 Excursion**

Sightseeing Trail at Katong

**12:30-14:00 Farewell Lunch**

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**Sunday, OCT 7**

Departure
The Infrastructures, Regions and Urbanizations of Malay Liverpool: A Relational Geohistory

Thursday, 4 October | 16:00 – 17:30 | Seminar Room 04-04

Abstract

In work on historical connections between the British port city of Liverpool and Southeast Asia, I have argued that dockside places articulated precocious “transnational” and “transregional” social relations. Long before social scientists even began to use such terms, for example, a clubhouse established by Malay seafarers in Liverpool plugged its members into long distance maritime social networks. These extended not merely back to the seafarers’ homeland region of (what we today call) Southeast Asia, but also to port town places around the world, most notably across the “Malay Atlantic” to New York City. In this presentation, I will use relational historical geographies of Malay Liverpool to engage with the three key terms that frame this Transregional Academy: infrastructures, regions and urbanizations. First, I map the rantau of seafaring Malays not as an areally-delimited “region” but as a globally-dispersed and interconnected sailortown. Second, I examine seafaring labour as a constituent part of global sailortown – Malay sailors contributing to but also exceeding commercial infrastructures of connectivity. Third, I consider the extent to which such infrastructures may be cast as evidence of extended urbanization. Challenging the conventional terracentricity of urban studies, recent work on planetary urbanization invites consideration of maritime infrastructure – sealanes and oceanic highways – as urban phenomena. My research on Malay Liverpool in turn begs an important geohistorical question of the burgeoning planetary urbanization literature: when were the oceans urbanized?

Roundtable Discussion

Infrastructure as a Method?

Friday, 5 October | 11:30 – 13:00 | Seminar Room 04-04

Synopsis

In a widely debated book, Kuan-Hsing Chen (2010) proposed Asia as Method signalling a constellation of postcolonial stances in an East-Asia focused account of modernity. In or through Asia and other geographical domains and vantage points, what are the consequences, value and pitfalls of foregrounding infrastructure as an object, process or means of critical scholarly investigation? Each panellist will reflect briefly on these questions in the light of their own work and/or the discussions at this Transregional Academy.
About the Speakers

Tim Bunnell is Professor in the Department of Geography and Chair of the Global Urban Studies cluster in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at NUS. Tim’s research centres upon issues of urban development in Southeast Asia, and that region’s global connections. His latest books are From World City to the World in One City: Liverpool through Malay Lives (Wiley, 2016) and Urban Asias: Essays on Futurity Past and Present (Jovis, 2018 – co-edited with Daniel P.S. Goh).

Jane M. Jacobs is Professor of Urban Studies at Yale-NUS College, Singapore. Before joining Yale-NUS she taught at The University of Melbourne and University of Edinburgh. She is the author of Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City (Routledge, 1996), Cities of Difference (Guilford, 1998), Uncanny Australia (MUP, 1998), and Buildings Must Die: A Perverse View of Architecture (MIT Press, 2014), as well as numerous scholarly papers. Trained as a geographer, the enduring concern of her scholarship has been the relationship between society and space, including the social shaping of urban built environments, the politics of heritage, and the practices of everyday habitation at both the city and the domestic scale. Her current research is a socio-technical history design innovation in Singapore’s large-scale housing provision system, 1960-1995.

Julia Lossau is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Bremen. The special focus of her professorship is urban geography, but she is also interested in cultural and political geographical approaches. Epistemologically speaking, her work is driven by a general interest in contradictions and, more specifically, in postcolonial theories. Her current research project explores the connections between places through materialities, technologies and social practice, focusing on Singapore and Bremen as case studies. She has recently co-edited a book on urban infrastructures (Infrastrukturen der Stadt, 2017, Springer VS). Her own contribution to this book explores the uncanny qualities of urban underground infrastructures, arguing for a perspective which is more sensitive to infrastructural aesthetics.

Chitra Venkataramani is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. Chitra obtained her PhD in anthropology from Johns Hopkins University and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Lakshmi Mittal South Asia Institute at Harvard University. She has a background in architecture and visual design and is currently working on a book manuscript titled, “As the Plan Unfolds: Drawing, Time, and Ecological Politics in Mumbai,” which traces how fisher communities in Mumbai secure their right to housing and coastal infrastructure through the production of maps and plans. Her work intersects urban studies, visual culture, ecology, and science and technology studies.

Hiromi Inagaki-Wagner is a PhD candidate of the Department of Geography at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Prior to the PhD research, she was based in Bangkok, Thailand, for over 8 years, primarily working on issues of climate change and e-waste in Southeast Asian countries. She holds B.A. in English Literature from Waseda University in Tokyo and M.A. in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands. At NUS her doctoral research project is entitled “Siam Energized: Territory, bioenergy production and Electricity transmission in Northeast Thailand”.

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It seeks to blend archival research (including in US archives for the Cold War period) with grounded fieldwork, informed by historical geographical materialism, political ecology and approaches to territory as a political technology.

Simon Rowedder is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at National University of Singapore (NUS), working with the Max Weber Foundation Research Group on Borders, Mobilities and New Infrastructures. He completed his PhD in Southeast Asian Studies at NUS. His dissertation explored how small-scale cross-border traders perceive, and operate within, the borderlands of Yunnan, northern Laos and northern Thailand. He particularly develops the perspective of Lao traders whom he considers central to the functioning of this borderland economy. During his 11-month multisited fieldwork, Simon was affiliated with the Regional Center for Social and Sustainable Development (RCSD) at Chiang Mai University (Thailand). Simon’s longstanding interest in Yunnan-Southeast Asian borderlands is rooted in one year of studying at Yunnan University (China) as an undergraduate. Following his undergraduate degree in International Cultural and Business Studies with focus on Southeast Asia at the University of Passau (Germany), he received his master’s degree in Asia-Pacific International Relations from the Research School for Southeast Asian Studies, Xiamen University (China).
Working Groups

Group A

Matthew Archer (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark)
Meghan Downes (Monash University, Australia)
Andreas Eckert (Humboldt University Berlin)
Stefan Hübner (National University Singapore)
Busarin Lertchavalitsakul (Naresuan University, Thailand)
James Sidaway (National University Singapore)
Nick Smith (Yale NUS College)
Sonja Ganseforth (Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien Tokyo)
Shaun Lin Ziqiang (National University Singapore)

Group B

Norman Aselmeyer (European University Institute, Italy)
Jonathan Balls (Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne)
Somayeh Chitian (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity/Harvard University)
Carrie Cushman (Wellesley College)
Simone Lässig (Deutsches Historisches Institut Washington)
Felix Mallin (National University Singapore)
Anton Nikolotov (Freie Universität Berlin)
Jonathan Rigg (National University Singapore)
Mirza Zulfiquar Rahman (Researcher, Guwahati Campus, Assam)

Group C

Sarah Beringer (Deutsches Historisches Institut Washington)
Mushahid Hussain (Cornell University)
Dina Krichker (National University Singapore)
Weiqiang Lin (National University Singapore)
Saikat Maitra (Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, India)
Fabian Prieto-ñañez (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
Jasnea Sarma (National University Singapore)
Brijesh Tripathi (Indian Institute of Technology Bombay)
Franz Waldenberger (Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, Tokyo)
Participants and Projects

Matthew Archer
Sustainable Supply Chains in the Age of Big Data

This essay describes an early stage research project that examines the effects of sustainability certifications like those developed by Fairtrade International and the Rainforest Alliance in the tea supply chain. It draws together theories of infrastructure from anthropology and accounting to suggest that supply chains can be understood as a kind of infrastructure that connects different places, objects, ideas, people, knowledges, etc. This is not a novel observation on its own, of course, but by combining this insight with recent developments in critical data studies, the essay explores the possibility of an ethnography of sustainability certification regimes that attends to the datafication of both supply chains and sustainability (corporate sustainability as well as sustainable development).

Matthew Archer (b. 1989) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Management, Society, and Communication at Copenhagen Business School. After earning his bachelor’s degrees in international studies and Chinese at the University of Mississippi and an MSc in environmental economics at the London School of Economics, he completed a PhD at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. His research has appeared in *Semiotica, Lo Squaderno, Energy Research & Social Science*, and *Cultural Anthropology*, and he has presented papers at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, the Association of American Geographers, the European Association of Social Anthropologists, the Association of Social Anthropology, and the Royal Anthropological Institute.

Norman Aselmeyer
Nairobi: The Making of a European City, c. 1890–1914

This article offers a new interpretation of Nairobi’s early history. The city that grew out of a railway station is commonly thought of as a European city. In historiography, the city has therefore served as a prime example of a colonial city shaped by racial segregation. However, Nairobi’s first years were more complex. I argue that the area covered by the town has been a contested space that political actors or inhabitants tried to control through processes of exclusion. In the period covered by this article, 1890–1914, the place experienced several instances of conflict and crisis which led to the end of a prevailing spatial hegemony. Each dominating power redefined the citizenry of Nairobi’s space and thus caused exclusion. From 1906 onwards, residential segregation was gradually introduced after the white settler community took control of the town.

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Jonathan Balls

Electricity-centered Clientelism and the Contradictions of Private Solar Micro-grids in India

Most discussions about solar micro-grids focus on sustainable energy and development goals and the technical aspects of electricity generation, storage, transmission, and distribution. Very few explicitly examine the ways in which their introduction upsets and reshapes entrenched practices of electoral politics and citizen claim-making around electricity access and development. In India, as in many parts of the world, electricity represents the most visible symbol of economic development and social well-being. Democratic politics in many developing countries are linked to demands for access to electricity and the development of electricity infrastructure. The meshing of electricity, development, and democratic politics in post-independence India has produced a politics of clientelism in which parties have sought to gain voter support with promises of cheap or free electricity. Although this ‘electricity-centered clientelism’ has expanded supply, it has simultaneously contributed to skewed spatial access, unreliable supply, and high debt burdens for state-owned electricity distribution companies. This article examines histories of clientelism and the contradictions emerging from the introduction of private solar micro-grids in rural areas of the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It shows that while solar micro-grids avoid electricity-centered clientelism, significant numbers of poor rural households in their supply areas are both excluded by their user-pays approach and are unable to demand fair access through political representatives. This presents a key challenge for the roll-out of decentralized renewables, highlighting a need for alternative governance and support programs at local levels that ensure private solar micro-grids can deliver reliable electricity to poor households.

Jonathan Balls works on energy, development, and economic geography, with an area focus on India. His research has focused on the off-grid solar power and solar micro-grid markets in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, bottom of the pyramid capitalism, frugal innovation and entrepreneurship, and the political economy of electricity in India. He completed his DPhil in Geography at the School of Geography and the Environment, at the University of Oxford in 2016. In the summer of 2016 he worked on a collaborative research project ‘Mapping Power’, which focused on the politics of the electricity distribution sector in India at a state level. The project looked at how electricity, development, and political practices are enmeshed, with a focus on twelve states in India. Jonathan carried out research in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand for this project. Jonathan started a three-year ‘New Generation Network’ postdoctoral position at the Australia India Institute and School of Geography, University of Melbourne, in November 2016. In this position, he is working on two research projects. First, a project looking at how private solar micro-grids in rural India are advancing affordable and reliable electricity in rural areas, and their impact on people’s ability to access electricity as a public good. Second, a project looking at the Indian ecosystem of funders and incubators supporting and shaping businesses and social enterprises engaged in ‘frugal innovation’ for the bottom of the pyramid market in India.
Sarah Beringer


On June 6th 2017, only a few months into his presidency, Donald Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord, the first binding climate change mitigation agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The announcement marked a clear break from the climate-driven ‘clean’ energy agenda Trump’s predecessor Barack Obama had put forward – both domestically and internationally. For Obama, the Paris Accord signed by 175 parties in December 2015 had been a central success of his presidency. Yet, the deal would not have been possible without consent from China, the world’s largest greenhouse gas emitter. Leading up to the Paris accord, a U.S.-China green energy cooperation had been officially declared in the context of a joint announcement of the two countries’ intended nationally determined contributions (INDC) to a multilateral deal in 2014. This ‘Green Alliance’ has sustained – mostly on the subsystemic level – even after the U.S.’s withdrawal from the Paris Accord and despite increasing tensions over security questions in the South China Sea as well as a waning trade war. This project thus analyzes incentives – both political and economical – that led the U.S. as largest energy producer and China as largest energy consumer to form this partnership despite their strong rivalry in most other spheres, including trade disputes over green technology products. The analysis concentrates on the years of the Obama Administration (2009–2017), but takes into account prior developments and recent progresses such as the announcement of a strategic partnership between China and California in the absence of a continued federal strategy in the U.S.

Sarah Beringer is Research Coordinator at the German Historical Institute Washington DC. Before joining the GHI in 2016, she held positions as Postdoc and Research Associate at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany and was a visiting scholar at Florida International University in Miami. In her research she focuses on issues in international political economy, particularly transnational aspects of energy, climate change and green technology as well as trade and investment regulation and policy. Her regional focus is on the U.S. and emerging economies. Her current research project analyzes U.S. and Chinese climate change and green energy policies and their potential for bilateral cooperation. She is the author of Handelspolitik in einer Multipolaren Welt. Der wirtschaftliche Aufstieg Brasiliens und die handelspolitischen Beziehungen zu den USA (Springer, 2015) and co-editor of EU Development Policies: Between Norms and Geopolitics? (Palgrave MacMillan, forthcoming) and The United States in International Relations (WVT, forthcoming).
Somayeh Chitchian

Logistification of Migration: Infrastructures of Mobility, Containment, and Rebellion

Considering the logistical reorientation of the economy since the 1960s, this project focuses on the extended logistics corridors and infrastructures of connectivity as complex (post)colonial and racialized geographies of both migratory mobilities and regimes of violent bordering. In other words, this project looks at the extended landscapes of cross-border human mobilities and their strategic channeling and/or containment through the entangled civilian/military logistics infrastructures and supply chain capitalism as fields of accumulation, dispossession, and value extraction. This project asks: how does the contemporary (post)colonial logistics space produce its political figure on-the-move—i.e., “the migrant”? This paper, centralizes the question of the urban as one of infrastructure, logistics, and migration and through the notion of the “urbanity of movement” deconstructs both the category of the urban beyond that of “the city” together with the complex category of the spatio-political figure on-the-move beyond that of “the migrant” and thus problematizes the fixed and static ontologies which have been central in both urban- and migration-research. Through the lens of infrastructures of human movement, this paper deconstructs Castells’ concepts of “space of flow” vis-à-vis “space of places” (1996) and, instead, posits the in-between figure in the infrastructural space of in-between as the central foci of analysis with the aim of hybridizing “the city”/non-city and “the migrant”/non-migrant categorical dichotomies.

Somayeh Chitchian is an architect, urban researcher and doctoral fellow at Harvard University, Graduate School of Design. She is also a doctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Germany. Her research focuses on the contemporary extended corridors of migratory mobilities and uses decolonial cartography as a critical tool of representation and analysis. Chitchian’s work lies at the intersection of critical urban theory, migration research, and border studies and uses de/postcolonial thought and critical race theory as its framework of analysis. Her research studies the intersection of logistics space and infrastructures of migratory mobilities as extended geographies of both violent bordering regimes and practices of resistance and rebellion. The central question guiding her doctoral work is: How does the contemporary logistics space (re)produce its political figure on-the-move—i.e., “the migrant”? Chitchian is a trained architect (B.Arch. and M.Arch.) from Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands and holds a Master in Design Studies degree (MDes) in Critical Conservation (with distinction) from Harvard University Graduate School of Design. Her master thesis research “Middle Eastern Immigration Landscape in America” won Harvard ESRI Development Center the Student of the Year Award in 2014. During her years in the Netherlands, she practiced as an architect at several firms in both Amsterdam and The Hague, where she collaborated on various residential and cultural projects, as well as the design of advanced building envelopes. At Harvard, she has held various appointments as teaching and research fellow. Currently, she is working on her doctoral thesis as a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute.
Infrastructure Comes Alive: Miyamoto Ryūji’s Photographs of Kowloon Walled City

Miyamoto Ryūji (b. 1947) is popularly known as the “ruins photographer” of Japan. His work centers on transformations in the cityscape – demolition sites, the handmade shelters of the homeless, and post-disaster landscapes – structures and sites in the process of formation or deformation that can be related visually by the trope of the ruin. This project intersects postwar architectural and urban studies with the close visual analysis of Miyamoto’s photography to show how ruins have served as a visual trope to challenge modernist narratives of progress and to offer up alternate readings of the late-modern city in Japan. In this context, his photographs of infrastructure within the notorious Hong Kong slum, Kowloon Walled City, can be understood as an example of a photographer looking abroad for alternative, informal approaches to urban housing in the late 1980s. An examination of the Kowloon Walled City photography asks what happens when infrastructure is detached from its original function via its representation in photographs, or loosed from its material context in the space of the art gallery. How can infrastructure-as-image come to represent a population, create new urban imaginaries, or define alternate ways of being in the world? This collection of photography shows how entrenched biological metaphors for infrastructure make its material compositions amenable to narratives of human resilience, creativity, and agency. The historical and visual analysis of Miyamoto’s prolific photographs of Kowloon in the final years before its demolition reveals how the visual affect of infrastructure operates on diverse actors who continue to speak for the Walled City’s former population and condition its existence.

Carrie L. Cushman is the Linda Wyatt Gruber ’66 Curatorial Fellow in Photography at the Davis Museum at Wellesley College. She completed her PhD in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University in 2018 with a specialization in the history of Japanese architecture and photography. During her time at Columbia, Carrie was the recipient of the 2015 Meyerson Teaching Award and the 2017 Chino Kaori Memorial Essay Prize. Her dissertation research was completed through the generosity of a Fulbright Graduate Research Fellowship and a Mellon Humanities International Travel Fellowship. Carrie’s current book project is entitled, Transient Ruins in Late-Modern Japan: The Photography of Miyamoto Ryūji.

Media, Marketing, and Morality in the Meikarta Development Project

This paper takes the ambitious ‘Meikarta’ development in West Java as a case study for examining shifting relationships between infrastructure, media, and the natural environment in Southeast Asia. Located to the east of Indonesia’s capital city of Jakarta, and billed as the ‘Shenzhen of Indonesia,’ Meikarta is being marketed as an entirely new city, a 500-hectare property development with 100 hectares of open green space, 250,000 units of residential property, seven new industrial estates, six major infrastructure projects, and 1.5 million
square metres of prime commercial space. The developers, Lippo Group, who also own several major media outlets in Indonesia, have heavily advertised the project during 2017–2018, and much of their marketing strategy relies on the contrast between the smoggy, congested, and morally corrupt present-day Jakarta and the safe, clean, and efficient future Meikarta. By analysing the official advertising campaigns, subsequent media coverage, and critical responses to the Meikarta project, I seek to highlight the significant role of media and popular cultural representations in shaping how people engage with and understand infrastructures, urbanization, and environmental problems. In doing so, I also address broader questions around what has been dubbed ‘the infrastructural turn’ in media, communication and cultural studies, and offer insights into how the challenges and opportunities of rapid urbanization and infrastructure development in Southeast Asia become a key part of powerful recurring media narratives around morality and modernity.

Meghan Downes is a research fellow in the School of Social Sciences at Monash University Australia. Her research areas include environmental and digital humanities, urban youth, and the politics of media and popular culture, with a particular focus on Southeast Asia. She has previously held a postdoctoral research fellowship at the National University of Singapore’s Asia Research Institute, in the interdisciplinary Asian Urbanisms research cluster. She completed her PhD at the Australian National University and is also the recipient of two Australian government Endeavour Awards for her research on contemporary Indonesia.

Sonja Ganseforth

Occupying Infrastructures: Contested Development in Palestine

Since the 1990s, Palestine has attracted intense attention from international development institutions. Development has come to be a powerful dispositive shaping politics and spaces in the West Bank and Gaza. Based on the perspectives of post-development theories, I argue that the disparities and sometimes absurd effects of developmental interventions become particularly clear through the lens of uneven power relations in occupied Palestine. Japanese official development assistance has also come to put a spotlight on Palestinian development, choosing it as the prime location for a Japanese peace initiative for the Middle East conflict(s). The Japanese flagship project, the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity”, in the Jordan Valley aims to promote export-led industrial development and foreign investments through the establishment of an agro-industrial border park. Conceptualized as a joint project with Japanese, Palestinian, Israeli and Jordanian partners, it is supposed to further regional peace and understanding via economic cooperation. This coherence with dominant discourses of development, peace and security makes the project an exemplary – yet highly contested – case for development politics in Palestine, even if the project remains rather unknown beyond the local context and has failed to introduce Japan diplomacy to the negotiating table on the Palestinian – Israeli conflict. Based on repeated field research in Palestine, this contribution analyzes how multi-scalar infrastructures are contested in the underlying dynamics of development projects, with actors from Tokyo to Ramallah and Tel Aviv trying to
leverage these projects in order to assert their particular interests. I argue that this is not a straightforward process, as fundamental, far-reaching decisions are intertwined with highly localized, small-scale negotiations aimed at infrastructures at different scales and occupying different spaces.

**Sonja Ganseforth** is senior research fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) in Tokyo. She has received her doctorate from the University of Leipzig and the DFG graduate school “Critical Junctures of Globalization” after studying Arab Studies, Japanese Studies and German as a Foreign Language in Leipzig, Kyoto and Damascus for her Magister degree. Her dissertation dealt with Japanese development politics in the Middle East and was published with Transcript (Bielefeld) in 2016. Her main research interests include critical studies of development, the social and economic geography of the globalization of agrifood systems, rural livelihoods, maritime territoriality, property rights in natural resources and the political ecology of food. At the DIJ Tokyo, she is conducting research on Japanese fisheries in the context of major global transformations.

**Stefan Hübner**

From Tokyo Bay to Climate Change: Why Industrial Oceanic Urbanization Has Boomed, Busted and Resurfaced since the 1970s

Climate change and rising sea levels will have a substantial impact on urbanization. Since the second half of the 20th century, the resource hunger of megacities has extended the urban fabric to the oceans, resulting in their industrialization and infrastructuralization. Particularly, industrial oceanic energy production (offshore oil and gas drilling, floating wind parks and floating solar panels) and industrial oceanic agriculture (fish and seaweed farming) have strongly increased and diversified ocean economies once characterized mainly by hunting and gathering in the form of fishing. Even more, supported by climate change marketing, industrial urbanization is slowly moving offshore through floating houses, coastal city infrastructures, and floating city prototypes. This article focuses on oceanic industrial urbanization projects in the Pacific region during the 1970s and today. It addresses the question of why a group of Japanese and American academic, political and economic elites – in particular Kiyonori Kikutake and John P. Craven – designed and tested two floating city prototypes in the Pacific region (Hawaii and Okinawa) during the 1970s, but eventually had to abandon them. The article also analyses why marketing for industrial oceanic urbanization projects has reemerged since a decade ago. In the process, the article investigates continuities and discontinuities between the 1970s, characterized by late high modernist social engineering and resource extraction, and the present situation in the Pacific region, shaped by climate change considerations due to the threat of rising sea levels and libertarian ideology aimed at reterritorializing parts of the Pacific through special economic zones.

**Stefan Hübner** is a historian interested in colonialism, modernization, and development policy. Currently, he is a research fellow at the National University of Singapore’s Asia Research Institute and (in 2019) a U.S. SSRC Transregional Research Fellow at the Harvard
Mushahid Hussain

Translating Modernity: Planning Practice, Urban Informality and Place-making at the Edge of Dhaka City

In regions like greater Dhaka, the rural-urban link today cannot but be treated as the complex continuum of relationships that it actually represents. Consequently, it is difficult yet necessary to identify the interface which retains the fact of the distinction between the “rural” and the “urban”, the changes and continuities they represent, without collapsing their forms. The rural-urban interface is therefore a methodological vantage point from where I ask – why is such a place logically necessary, and for whom? How is such a place being made historically, and by whom? This interface is of course both metaphorical and real, symbolic and material, a field site from which the ethnographic present across various spatial scales articulate the temporal rhythms, meanings and contestations through which different social actors interact in practice. My research is not methodologically concerned with evaluating against specific imaginations and models of the urban-form actual and potential transitions to some planned city that is more environmentally sustainable, socially just and so on, even though such quintessentially “developmental” outcomes are desirable on numerous grounds. Rather, it aims to discern specific everyday practices of different social actors as they translate the complexities of imagining, experiencing and enacting places in a present where urban futures have not yet arrived, and rural pasts are not quite forgotten. The “rural-urban interface” therefore attempts to encapsulate analytically these generative moments of translation. In this paper, I mainly draw on excerpts from a recent conversation with an urban architect/planner conducted as part of my ongoing fieldwork. The objective is to attempt a preliminary illustration of how respective practices of social actors like planners, among many others, translate the rural-urban interface as a lived place beset with contradictions and possibilities.

Mushahid Hussain is a PhD student in Development Sociology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. His current research explores everyday practices and idioms of meaning that make places, developmental plans, political platforms and markets at the fringes of an urbanizing region in central Bangladesh. This confluence
provides a point of departure for tracing historically the processes of state-making, global economic reintegration, socio-ecological transformations and cultural shifts characterizing critical aspects of a political economy of development in South Asia.

Dina Krichker

Violent Frontiers: Narrating the Spanish Moroccan Border in Melilla

Border violence remains a profound issue for millions of migrants all over the world. Attempts to resolve this problem have often been reduced to scaling down the quantity of border crossers through securitisation practices. However, this strategy proves to be a failure, not least in the case of Melilla, a small Spanish enclave in North Africa. The city of Melilla is surrounded by a 12 km long iron fence that separates the Spanish and Moroccan territories, and is the most southerly border of the European Union. In 2016, this border became an epicentre of clashes between the flows of migrants and border security forces, which attracted much media attention in the context of the European migrant crisis. My PhD research seeks to explore institutionalisation of violence in Melilla. In order to do so, firstly, the history of violence on the border will be traced, and secondly, the current manifestation of violence in the border space will be analysed. To achieve these objectives, the study employs two key methods: an in-depth archival research, and ethnographic observation. The choice of methodology was conditioned by both theoretical value and practicability of the methods. The study speaks to the wide array of scholarly literature on borders and violence. In particular, it seeks to draw on a “Border Biographies” approach introduced by Nick Megoran, and to advance it by foregrounding people’s narratives. This conceptual switch will allow a more humanistic understanding of the border violence. Ultimately, this research advocates for construction of peaceful frontier environments, as scrutiny of the border violence’s origins will equip us for more effective steps towards achieving this goal.

Dina Krichker is a PhD candidate at the National University of Singapore in the Department of Geography. Prior to her doctoral studies, she obtained her Master’s degree in Geopolitics from King’s College, London after an undergraduate education in Russia. Her research interests lie in the area of border studies, and her doctoral project examines the proliferation of borders in the urban space of Melilla, the small Spanish enclave in Morocco.

Busarin Lertchavalitsakul

Contested Lands and Medical Services: ‘Border Bureaucracy’ and ‘Ambiguous Infrastructures’ in the Myanmar-Thailand Borderlands

A formal border checkpoint is a recent infrastructure established by Thailand in 2015, in one of formerly ethnic conflicted Southern Shan State bordering the northwestern province of Mae Hong Son. The checkpoint is aimed to more officially manage cross-border flows, yet ambiguity in controlling the border is everyday affecting the livelihoods of ethnic groups of
Wa, Shan, and Pa-o living on the edge of two states. These people always imagine and utilize the fluid frontiers militarized by the United Wa State Army and the Myanmar military, while negotiating with the Thai state’s bureaucracy. With the political transition in Myanmar toward the improvement of basic infrastructure in peripheries in concurrence with the regional integration promoted by the Thai state, residents on both sides of the borders have adapted their lives towards constantly structural changes. While the Wa ethnic armed group is forced by the Myanmar military to remain in the battlefronts, troops and civilians desire to move into interior for a modern life. The recent situation encourages the residents on the Myanmar side to depend on resources and services from Thailand. However, the establishment of border checkpoint creates the ‘border bureaucracy’, from which crossers experience inconsistent immigration control border security. Another aspect, the access and the use of forestlands and natural products have become contested since the Thai military tries to limit people from benefiting those resources liberally. Employing an anthropological approach, I investigate the spatial control imposed through the operation of checkpoint seen as ‘ambiguous infrastructure’ influenced by the changes of political climate in peripheries, and Thailand’s border bureaucracy that have shaped cross-border mobility, the use and access to land, road, and services.

Busarin Lertchavalitsakul is a lecturer at the department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Naresuan University, Thailand. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the areas of development studies, borderland studies, migration and mobility, and food and culture. Her recent works extracted from her PhD dissertation on the Shan migrants’ cross-border mobility are published in peer-reviewed journals such as *Journal of Burma Studies* (2014), *SOJOURN* (2015), and in the collected volume *The Informal Economy: Exploring Drivers and Practices* (2017, Routledge).

Shaun Lin Ziqiang

Impacts and Responses to China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Southeast Asia

Shaun’s current research is on impacts and responses of China’s Belt and Road Initiative in Southeast Asia, with present writings on Singapore and Thailand. Shaun is also currently engaging on transboundary environmental governance issues in Southeast Asia. He is presently a Co-PI for a small educator grant investigating the political geography of the hydrological flood pulse in Cambodia in relation to transboundary environmental challenges faced by the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake.

Shaun Lin Ziqiang is a Max Weber Foundation postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. He obtained his PhD from the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), University of Wollongong in 2016, and earned his honours degree in Geography from the National University of Singapore in 2011. He has also worked as a policy officer in the International Division at Maritime Port Authority of Singapore. Shaun has published a number of journal articles relating to environmental geography, border studies and maritime political geography on Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean in *Geographical Journal, Geopolitics, Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, and *Political Geography*. 
In the Shadow of the New Town: Urbanity, Marginality and Environmental Justice in Rajarhat

My article explores how an infrastructural project for a massive urbanization scheme in the Indian province of West Bengal impacted forms of socialities accruing around the land earmarked for development. From the early 1990s, urban regeneration programs for the city of Kolkata in West Bengal identified the adjoining region of Rajarhat as a green-field site suitable for constructing a ‘world-city’ from scratch. Rajarhat’s expansive wetland ecology, which sustained a thriving agrarian economy, was characterized as an unproductive ‘pre-modern’ environment that could be easily converted through capital investments in urban infrastructural development. The process of urbanization and the consequent decimation of the wetlands through the construction of infrastructures like roads, power-grids, sewage pipelines and buildings have transformed the former farmers of Rajarhat into environmental refugees wracked by poverty, ground water contamination and the loss of cultivable lands for economic sustenance. Rajarhat, however, still awaits the miracle of urban development to morph itself into the promised world-city, despite the degradation of the wetlands or the pauperization of the marginal farmers. The collapse of the housing market in the region over the last decade has effectively transmogrified Rajarhat’s world-city fantasies into an apocalypse of capital flight. Acres of dilapidated shells of high-rise condominiums interspersed with derelict shanties of landless peasants stand as the material traces of an encounter between speculative capital, urban infrastructures and wetland ecologies reaching a gridlock in contemporary Rajarhat. The tattered landscape of contemporary Rajarhat signifies the internal contradictions of speculative neo-liberal capital in India today – promising ‘world-class’ urban infrastructures while actually delivering ecological, social and economic ruination. Thus my research explores how massive infrastructural projects can end up producing unanticipated blockages and impasses, rather than substantiating contemporary India’s fantasies for smoothly flowing global cities. Through ethnographic research, I, moreover, suggest how the experiences of dispossession, intrusive infrastructural development and economic precariousness is now enabling political mobilization by affected farming communities in Rajarhat for demanding the termination of the urbanization project and the restitution of the available land for re-cultivation.

Saikat Maitra is an Assistant Professor on contract in the Public Policy and Management Group in the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta in India. Prior to joining his current institution, Saikat was a postdoctoral fellow in the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS) at the University of Göttingen in Germany. He obtained his PhD in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin in the USA. He is currently finishing his ethnographic monograph on the connection between various forms of dispossession and the fashioning of a post-industrial labor subjectivity amongst underclass urban youth populations in contemporary India. Saikat’s primary research interests are in anthropology of labor, urban studies and postcolonial theories.
The Political Geography of Sea-level Rise in Kiribati

My doctoral thesis advances a critique of the political economy of climate change in the geographical context of the Pacific Islands region. Informed by multi-sited, qualitative research undertaken in Kiribati and Fiji during 2016, it subjects the nexus of environmental politics, institution-building and finance-led resolve mechanisms that has emerged in the wake of anticipated rising sea-levels to rigorous scrutiny. In doing so, my research uncovers the ways in which these developments are intrinsically linked to the emergence of new forms of ocean-space enclosure and resource extractivism – especially through ocean conservation and future deep-sea mining projects. In ideological, political and financial terms, these processes are buttressed by a plethora of regional and cross-regional economic visions and projects operating at different geographical scales. By both global and regional standards, one of the most important initiatives that is currently underway in this regard, is the ‘Blue Economy’ or ‘New Ocean Economy’. This novel economic paradigm hails the reorganization of, and centralisation of control over, the production of value generated by ocean-space related industries, as well as the integration of hitherto underdeveloped coastal and oceanic regions into the global capitalist economy. A range of multilateral governance and finance institutions has positioned themselves at the fore of the resulting initiatives. For its proponents, the new model signals a revolution in marine-based economies that will bring about a win-win-win situations, in which the wants and needs of coastal communities can be reconciled with cosmopolitan concerns for ‘ocean health’ and profit generation all at once. Critical inspection, however, shows that the grounded outcome of these initiatives is the incremental commodification, parcelling and privatisation of ocean space, and hence rather the exacerbation of inter and intra-regional developments. Identifying prospects for the organization of a coherent political counterforce to these tendencies therefore crucially hinges on grasping the contradictions internalized by the evolving dialectic.

Felix Mallin is a joint-PhD student in the Departments of Geography at King’s College London and the National University of Singapore. He is currently completing his dissertation research on the political geography of sea-level rise in the central Pacific, having conducted field work in Kiribati and Fiji. His wider research interests include the critique of political economy and theories of uneven geographical development. He holds an MA in Geopolitics from King’s College London and a BSc in Geography from Bonn University. Prior to his doctoral studies, he worked as a political advisor for the Republic of Vanuatu at the UN in New York, and as a visiting researcher for the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Brussels.

A Marginal Platform: The Social Worlds of a Marketplace in Moscow

Since rynki (marketplaces) have replaced the Central State Planning Committee as major economic infrastructures for goods supply and distribution, they continue to be important platforms for small scale traders, regional peripheral economies and marginal, migrant dwellers. Undocumented workers from Central Asia find
housing and work in these hubs or compete to secure spots at the entrance gates and passageways to beg for alms from its workers and visitors. This dissertation explores the significance of one such major marketplace in Moscow. Based on 14 months of participant observation research in the network of marginal markets, workers dorms and households, I describe how the places facilitate the acquisition of multiple hustling and calculative skills; enable a degree of social upward mobility; cultivate certain affects and bodily sensorial dispositions; foster a form of conviviality and potential conflict. The ethnography is set in the context of the new border regimes that come in place with the emerging Eurasian Economic Union. While the datafication of migration seeks to control deportable subjects through a form of digital virtuality, I explore how the social worlds of the markets practice other kinds of being virtual.

Anton Nikolotov is an experimental anthropologist currently completing his PhD at the Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University Berlin. His research interests are situated at the borders of urban anthropology of migration, critical border research and affect studies. Having background in art practice (BA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins College London) and MA in Cultural Theory and History from Humboldt University Berlin, Anton is exploring the transformations of precarious social worlds of migrant traders and alms seekers in a major marketplace in Moscow.

Fabian Prieto-Ñañez

Connected on Our Own Terms: Satellite Dishes, Media Consumption and Technological Entrepreneurship in Colombia (1979-1998)

My project focuses on the circulation of satellite TV reception technologies by local entrepreneurs in Colombia during the 1980s and 1990s. Satellite dishes and Community Antenna Television (CATV) allowed the flow of foreign television channels to different populations, who organized themselves to collectively pay for the necessary infrastructure. As such, satellite earth stations, extended the availability of content for different populations in Colombia, representing a challenge to Colombian National Television. While initially, the influence of content coming from foreign countries concerned the government, later these systems became a platform for pay-per-view services and in some cases, for the emergence of local channels of community TV. My research not only examines the role of these systems in changing media consumption, but also the different roles these infrastructures played in everyday life in Colombia. My research focuses on the social life of these still visible but mostly forgotten infrastructures (Von Schnitzler, 2016), as a way to understand media consumption in a country like Colombia. As sites for understanding how politics work, infrastructures can reveal international and local social aspirations, particularly in Latin America, where infrastructure can symbolize perfect designs or represent monuments of political abandonment (Hetherington & Campbell, 2014). In this way, a media studies approach to infrastructures emphasizes the circulation of signals as “a
critical shift away from the analysis of screened content alone” (Parks & Starosielski, 2015).

**Fabian Prieto-Ñañez** is a PhD candidate in Communications and Media at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He studies satellite television and the circulation of satellite reception technologies in Colombia since the 1980s, with a focus on the Caribbean region. His research explores entrepreneurship and technological disruption related to media consumption. He is interested in examining the social life of artifacts, and in particular, how they are considered obsolete. Before starting his PhD studies, he worked on histories of computing in Latin America, especially on professional education and governmental policies in Colombia during the 1980s.

**Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman**

**Infrastructure Development in Northeast India: Examining Inequality and Exclusion in the Development Promise of Progress and Prosperity**

The pace of infrastructural development in Northeast India has been on the uptick since 2008. The past development experience in Northeast India has oscillated between complete neglect to sporadic interest based on particular needs of economic enclaves and military preparedness and strategic presence. From a scorched-earth policy of New Delhi in frontier areas such as Arunachal Pradesh, to the Trans-Arunachal Highway Project aiming to connect remote border areas, for instance, exemplifies the shifting priorities. The infrastructural development priorities in Northeast India have seen a lopsided pattern, and this project examines the core questions about the balance between the promise of economic prosperity and social inequalities, especially when India is engaging with Japan to intensify its infrastructure development via its Act East Policy. The social infrastructure requirements for the various tribal communities of Northeast India, along the basic developmental indicators of public health and hygiene, sanitation, education facilities across all levels, access to safe drinking water, banking institutions, markets and job opportunities, have to be strengthened in order to enable the people of the region to absorb the economic benefits in a sustainable manner. The central and state governments of India cannot ignore the apprehensions and fears of local communities about the manner and method of infrastructure development that is being conducted in Northeast India. Infrastructure development in Northeast India has had the effect of coupling unequal spaces within, and the path to ‘progress’ and ‘prosper- ity’ cannot hop, skip and jump such inequality. This project examines the aspect of building trust and sustain a process of participative development in Northeast India, which is in harmony with local communities’ socio-cultural and economic aspirations and their knowledge of the region’s ecology. Local communities in Northeast India collectively face a democratic deficit in meaningfully participating in infrastructural development decision-making, and this project examines existing/alternate institutional frameworks.
**Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman** holds a PhD in Development Studies from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, Assam. He completed his MA in Philosophy from the Diplomacy and Disarmament Division, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; his MA in International Relations from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and his BA in Political Science Honours from Hindu College, Delhi University. His areas of interests include research on Northeast India, mainly on issues relating to transboundary water sharing and hydropower dams, roads and connectivity infrastructures, conflict and insurgency, peace building, development politics, migration and cross border exchanges. His research specialization is on border studies in Northeast India and transboundary water sharing and management issues between China, India and Bangladesh. He is committed to grassroots based alternative community work and development models. He has travelled extensively in parts of Northeast India for research work. He has led research teams in Northeast India, and has travelled parts in China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Thailand and Myanmar for research. He has worked as a consultant on many research projects in Northeast India. He has teaching experience as Visiting Faculty, and has participated in several workshops and academic conferences. He is an avid photographer and traveller.

**Jasnea Sarma**

**Infrastructures on the Edge – Let the Borders Speak For Themselves**

This paper explores the material and discursive nature of the “border Infrastructures” globally. It then empirically and comparatively situates border infrastructures in two volatile border spaces in Asia and Africa – the Spanish Moroccan border in Melilla and the India-Bangladesh border in Assam. Based on ethnographic research, we first explore the internal, external, formal, informal, human and non-human ways in which infrastructures of the border have multiplied, materialised and evolved along with the concomitant politics of bordering. Second, the paper brings out ideologically and politically diverse ‘bottom’ voices and narratives not from the state or those who make policy decisions on these structures, but from those who directly constitute or are impacted by them – including guards, police, migrants, border residents and crossers/smugglers, tribunal workers and villagers. With these, we animate how space, place and finally violence is lived, symbolized, experienced, resisted and naturalised in and around border infrastructures. Guided by Ben Anderson’s and Ed Soja’s call for comparing these seemingly incompatible spaces across two continents, we urge the reader to critically contemplate their similar histories of border violence and migration crises and use that to complicate the globalised/proliferated nature of violence above and below the fence – and what that means for human mobility in an age of migration. Jasnea Sarma and Dina Krichker co-authored this paper and present it together.
Jasnea Sarma is a PhD candidate in Asian Studies and Political Geography at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Her PhD thesis titled “Seeing From the Periphery – Small People, Big Resource, and the Lines in Between” uses ethnographic methods and GIS mapping in several sites on India and China’s borders with Myanmar to critically analyse spatial transformations in sites which not only traditional borderlands (remote/ethnically conflicted/refugee and humanitarian grounds, illicit economies, and militarisation) but are also evolving as nascent ‘resource frontiers’ (geopolitically and geo-economically strategic for states and capitalist extraction). Jasnea is most interested to narrate these transformations through remote or unrepresented borderland voices and bring them into dialogue with critical border theory. For this academy, Jasnea will present a paper coauthored with Dina Krichker (NUS).

Nick R. Smith

Learning to Build Cities and Subjects in Late-Socialist China

How did China learn to urbanize? This paper explores the origins of contemporary China’s rapid urbanization through an investigation of the Shekou Industrial Zone, the first development zone to be established after the beginning of the reform era in 1978 and an urban laboratory for testing development practices from Hong Kong and Singapore. Rather than a linear transition to market-driven urbanization, Shekou reveals an uneven process of trial-and-error, in which the development of urban spaces and urban subjects were dialectically intertwined. On one hand, Shekou’s leaders learned to capture land value through the provision of infrastructure and services, the separation of work and residence, and the development of commodified housing for newly mobile workers. On the other hand, they sought to craft new urban subjects who were economically and politically independent of the Chinese party-state and who could thus act as both producers and consumers of urbanization. What emerged was a new “common sense” of development that was socially and spatially constituted through Shekou’s urban transformation.

Nick R. Smith is an Assistant Professor of Urban Studies at Yale-NUS College in Singapore. Smith is an ethnographer of urban transformation, planning, and policy, with a focus on institutional change in China and Southeast Asia. His past research has focused on peri-urbanization and village planning in contemporary China, and his current work explores experimental urbanization practices in Shekou, the first development zone to be established after the beginning of China’s reform era in 1978. Smith received his PhD in Urban Planning from Harvard University in 2015.

Brijesh Chandra Tripathi

Claims of the Poor for Justice and the Right to the City in Technology-driven Planning in Urban Spaces: A Case Study of Mumbai

The paper discusses how the Development Plan (DP) of the city of Mumbai prepared by its municipal corporation systematically silences the voice of the poor in the planning process. Although the draft of the DP pleads the need...
to find strategies for promoting a holistic and inclusive city, it has instead fuelled speculation, uncertainty, and fear in the minds of urban poor living in spaces deemed “illegal”. The planning process emphasizes visual representations of the city in the form of maps to reconfigure urban spaces and sections of society. Switching from the old paper-file system of documentation predominantly in bureaucratic custody, the state now claims to encourage transparency and public participation in city planning by releasing digital maps and other data relevant to the DP into the public domain through the internet. This is at best a selective encouragement of citizen participation, tilted strongly in favour of the middle classes and elites since the poor not only lack the digital literacy to access such information but also the financial resources to access the internet. Yet, the urban poor are trying to negotiate with the situation by sharing digital information through their social networks. The interface with technology is reinforcing the social networks of the poor in urban spaces. By examining the poor’s strategy through social struggle, this paper attempts to understand the claims of the poor living in the areas deemed “illegal” about their right to the city and justice in its planning.

Brijesh Chandra Tripathi hails from the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. He is presently a doctoral candidate at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Bombay), Mumbai, India. He has previously worked with the Department of Rural Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh. He is interested in capturing the perception of justice among the poor in Ambujwadi, an illegal and endangered slum in the Western suburbs of Mumbai. He engages with the scholarship of critical theorists and philosophers on recognition and urban space to understand the role of power in social struggles and political mobilizations for claims of recognition and the Right to the City. Using space as a site of mediation for the dignity of the poor, he is trying to provide a social justice perspective on the right to inhabitation through ethnographic work, with focus on the poor’s gradual movement towards substantial citizenship. Brijesh received his MA in Social Work from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. During his Master’s, he interned with a collective of workers handling Solid Waste Management (SWM) across Mumbai. He had a short stint as a community worker with the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority on SWM. These experiences were instrumental in generating his interest in study of urban spaces.
Andreas Eckert

is Professor of African History at Humboldt University Berlin (since 2007) and has been leading the “IGK Work and Human Life Cycle in Global History (re:work)” research center since 2009. Before that, he was Professor of Modern History with a focus on African history (2002-2007). As Visiting Professor and Fellow, he worked at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Indiana University in Bloomington, and Harvard University. Andreas Eckert also writes for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and DIE ZEIT. He has been Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Forum Transregionale Studien.

Simone Lässig

has been the director of the German Historical Institute (GHI), Washington DC, since 2015. She is currently on leave from the University of Braunschweig, where she holds a professorship in modern history, and from the directorship of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. In 2009-2010, she was a visiting professor at St Antony’s College, Oxford. She is co-editor of the journal Geschichte und Gesellschaft and founded the Journal for Educational Media, Memory, and Society (JEMMS), which she edited until 2015. Her first book, a study of the campaign for electoral reform in Saxony, won the 1996 Horst Spring Prize for the best book in Saxon history. Her second book, a study of the embourgeoisement of German Jewry, was awarded the German Historical Association’s biennial prize for best second book in history (habilitation) in 2004. Her main fields of research are modern Jewish history, the history of knowledge, educational media, digital history, and biography as a historical genre. Simone Lässig serves on the boards of several organizations and research institutions, and is currently working on two research projects: a study of a German-Jewish family from the early nineteenth century to the present, and a study on religion as an agent of change, preliminarily entitled “Jews, Middle Class Culture, and Social Transformation in Germany, 1800-1860.”

Jonathan Rigg

is Director of the Asia Research Institute and Professor of Geography at the National University of Singapore. He works on issues of agrarian transformation, poverty, vulnerability, migration, disaster and livelihoods in the Asian region, and has undertaken fieldwork in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal and Sri Lanka. His book Challenging Southeast Asian development: The shadows of success was published by Routledge in 2015 and explores the underside of rapid economic growth and structural change. His latest book, More than Rural: Textures of Thailand’s Agrarian Transformation, will shortly be published by Hawaii University Press and draws on three decades of field-based research in Thailand.

James D. Sidaway

has served as a Professor of Political Geography at NUS since January 2012. Previously he was Professor of Political and Cultural Geography at the University of Amsterdam and prior to that a Professor of Human Geography at Plymouth University, UK. During the 1990s, he was a lecturer at the University of Birmingham, UK. Sidaway studies the interactions of cities, development, geopolitics and states, influenced by a wide range of postcolonial writing and theory.
His other main research interest is the history and philosophy of geography. Bringing all these together is an enduring fascination with the relationship between geography and a range of area studies traditions. Recently this has led him (with NUS colleague Chih Yuan Woon) to study the reception of China’s “Belt and Road” initiative. Since June 2017, Sidaway has been involved in a new Research Group on Borders, Mobility and New Infrastructures, supported by the Max Weber Foundation: http://www.maxweberstiftung.de/en/ueber-uns.html. Their foci are: Changing borderscapes in Southeast Asia (and between Southeast Asia and the wider world); air, land and sea; Cross-border infrastructures and new scales and spaces of interaction.

Weiqiang Lin is Assistant Professor at the Department of Geography, NUS, with a specialised interest in air transport, logistics and the production of infrastructures. His work straddles between social-cultural geographical approaches (affect, materiality, practice, assemblage and food) and geopolitical ones (critical logistics, supply chain capitalism and territorial contestations). It is his belief that many aspects of contemporary life are shaped by mobilities, (air) transport, and their peculiar infrastructures. In extension of his longstanding fascination with airspace production in SEAsia, he recently embarked on a new project to trace the infrastructural underpinnings of the air logistics of food in Singapore and China (especially along new ‘OBOR’ corridors). He also has a cognate interest in migration infrastructures. Weiqiang was a recipient of the UK Commonwealth Scholarship from 2011 to 2014, and was an NUS Overseas Postdoctoral Fellow (tenable at the University of Toronto) in 2015. He is also a member of the editorial board of Mobilities.

Franz Waldenberger is Director of the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) in Tokyo. He is on leave from Munich University where he holds the professorship for Japanese Economy at the Munich School of Management and the Japan Center. His research focuses on the Japanese Economy, Corporate Governance and International Management. He has published numerous articles and books on the Japanese economy. He is editor-in-chief of Contemporary Japan and member of the editorial boards of other Japan and Asia related social science and economics journals. He was visiting professor at Hitotsubashi University, Osaka City University, Tsukuba University, the University of Tokyo and Shimomura Fellow at the Research Institute of Capital Formation of the Development Bank of Japan. He is member of the German Japan Forum and member of the board of the Japanese German Business Association (DJW).
Bibliography


General Information

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**Venue:** Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore (AS8 Level 4, 10 Kent Ridge Crescent, Singapore 119260), https://ari.nus.edu.sg/Page/ContactUs

**Hotel:** Village Hotel Albert Court (180 Albert Street, Singapore 18997, http://www.stayfareast.com/en/hotels/village-hotel-albert-court)

**Trip from the airport** to the hotel is paid for.

**Drives** between the hotel and the venue and back will be provided.

**WiFi** network at the hotel and the venue is free.

**Your** stay in the hotel includes breakfast.

The closest **MRT station** to the hotel is “Rochor”. For public transport you can buy an EZ-Link Card upon arrival in Singapore. This stored-value card works on the MRT trains, public buses and taxis (TransCab and Premier taxis only). It costs SGD 15, which comes with SGD 7 stored value and SGD 3 refundable value (the SGD 5 left is non-refundable). You can buy the card and top up the value at most MRT stations.

**Pre-paid SIM cards** (S$10 to S$50) are available at 7-Eleven stores, Cheers convenience stores and at the Singapore Post. The three mobile phone service providers are SingTel, MobileOne (M1) and Starhub. Singapore doesn’t use area codes; to call a number within Singapore, simply dial the eight-digit number.

**Vaccinations,** recommended by the WHO, are the following: typhoid, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, cholera, rabies, and influenza. Please do not forget to bring and use frequently: insect repellant & sunblock.

**Insurance** is provided by us only in case you booked your ticket with us.

**In case of illness:** please contact Barbara, she will help you find a doctor close to the venue/hotel.

Information on Singapore

**Currency Exchange**

Singapore’s currency is the Singapore dollar (S$ or SGD). Money changing services can be found at Singapore Changi Airport, shopping centres and hotels around the island. There are also an abundance of automated teller machines (ATMs) which accept most major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

**Drinking Water**

It is safe to drink water straight from the tap in Singapore. However, for those who prefer bottled mineral water, local supermarkets and grocers always have ample stock.

**Electricity**

The standard electrical current used in Singapore is 220-240 volts AC (50 cycles) and you can use power plugs with three square prongs here.

**Language**

English is the language primarily spoken in Singapore. Mandarin, Malay and Tamil, together with other dialects, are used as well.
**Smoking**
Smoking is prohibited in all air-conditioned areas, such as malls and eateries, as well as a 5-metre radius from any entrance/exit and bus shelter. There are designated smoking areas in some outlets and open air eateries.

**Tax Refund Schemes**
Tourists can claim a refund on the 7% Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid on your purchases if you spend more than $100 in a single receipt at any participating shops that display the “Tax Refund” logo. More information can be found at the Tourist Refund Scheme page on the Singapore Customs website at www.customs.gov.sg.

**Tipping**
Tipping is not widely practiced in Singapore as most hotels and restaurants apply a default 10% service charge.

**Transport**
The public transport in Singapore is well connected with commuters able to choose between train, taxis and buses.

**Mass Rapid Transport (MRT)** is a fast and efficient form of transport, with a train arriving every few minutes. Fares range from S$1.40 to S$2.50, from vending machines at the stations. Operating hours vary a little but trains run from around 05:30 to midnight. It is recommended to check what time the last train leaves from the respective stations if you are planning a late night.

**Bus** fares range from S$1.40 to S$2.50. If you are paying in cash, please ensure you have the correct fare, as bus drivers do not give change. Alternatively, you can purchase an Ez-Link card, which is a stored-value fare card, from bus interchanges and MRT stations. EZ-Link Cards may be used for bus and MRT fares.

**Taxis** can be flagged from hotels and taxi stands, as well as on the streets (if there are no taxi stands nearby and traffic is not disrupted), or make a phone booking with one of the many taxi companies in Singapore. https://www.taxisingapore.com/. Advance booking numbers (booking surcharge varies from S$8.00 to S$18.00):
- Comfort Taxi / CityCab   (65) 6552 1111
- SMRT Taxi   (65) 6555 8888
- Prime Taxi   (65) 6778 0808
- Trans-Cab   (65) 6555 3333

In Singapore, taxi cab fares must be charged by the taxi meter and are based on a flag down rate and the distance travelled. The flag down rate ranges from S$3.00 to S$5.00 (depending on the type of taxi). A location surcharge may also apply. Please check with the driver or taxi company on the surcharge and ask for a receipt at the end of the trip. During peak periods (e.g. 7am to 9.30am and 5pm to 11pm on weekdays), rainy days or festive seasons, demand for taxis rises. Try booking a taxi by phone. Do note that a booking fee is applicable.
Weather
Singapore is hot and humid all year round, with temperatures usually reaching over 30°C, so naturally we rely heavily on air conditioning to help us combat the heat. It is recommended that you bring along a sweater or cardigan, as the frigid air-conditioning can get quite unbearable sometimes. You should be prepared for rain at any time, which can be torrential but usually brief.

Wi-Fi and Connectivity
Wi-Fi hotspots are also widely available at various public areas in Singapore. To get connected, register for an account with your foreign mobile number at any Wireless@SG hotspot and you will receive your login details via an SMS message. Overseas charges may apply.

If you wish to continue making calls and sending messages on your mobile phone, a good option will be to purchase a Singapore prepaid SIM card. All three local mobile telephone service providers – Singtel, M1 and Starhub – offer a wide variety of packages, so take a little time to decide which plan suits your needs best.

Useful Telephone Numbers
Police: 999
Ambulance & Fire Brigade: 995
Non-Emergency Ambulance: 1777
About us

The Transregional Academy is a format of the Forum Transregionale Studien and part of the strategic cooperation with the Max Weber Foundation – German Humanities Institutes Abroad. They are supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF).
The Academy is organized in cooperation with the Asia Research Institute (National University of Singapore), the National University of Singapore, and the German Institute for Japanese Studies.

The Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien is a research organization that promotes the internationalization of research in the humanities and social sciences. The Forum provides scope for collaboration among researchers with different regional and disciplinary perspectives and appoints researchers from all over the world as Fellows.

The Max Weber Stiftung – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland promotes global research, concentrated around the areas of social sciences, cultural studies, and the humanities. Research is conducted at ten institutes in various countries worldwide with distinctive and independent focal points. Through its globally operating institutes, the Foundation is able to contribute to the communication and networking between Germany and the host countries or regions of its establishments.

The Asia Research Institute (ARI) was established as a university-level institute in July 2001 as one of the strategic initiatives of the National University of Singapore (NUS). The mission of the Institute is to provide a world-class focus and resource for research on the Asian region located at one of its communication hubs. ARI engages the humanities and social sciences broadly defined and especially interdisciplinary frontiers between and beyond disciplines.

For more information please visit:

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