

CONTESTED SPACES WORKSHOP

THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

A Workshop on the Politics and Representations of Space in South Asia

DAY 1 – MARCH 29

10:45 – 11:00

GENERAL WELCOME

MICHAEL COLLINS, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SUDEV SHETH, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

11:00 – 12:00

OPENING KEYNOTE

THOMAS BLOM HANSEN, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

PAPER TITLE

ON THE HISTORICITY OF SPACE AND URBAN IMAGINATION

Following Neil Smith's work on gentrification and Harvey's notion of dispossession, many urban scholars assume that with increased global capital flows, commodification and capitalization of land, however uneven, affects urban areas all over the globe, including South Asia. However, not all spaces are equally amenable to commodification or gentrification and in many cases the specific historical character of a neighborhood or a space tends to stick to it for many generations. What happened in a space, who lived there before, which community or class is associated with it, historically and in the present, leave markers that do not easily evaporate or change. Drawing on material from Mumbai, Aurangabad and also Durban (South Africa) I will show how religious markers and boundaries of race and caste mark space in an enduring way that gets etched onto the urban imagination, shaping the way gentrification and property markets function, and structuring the use and habitation of urban spaces in a durable way.

12:00 – 1:00

CATERED LUNCH

1:00 – 3:15

PANEL I: HISTORY AND SPACE

DISCUSSANT: FAISAL CHAUDHRY, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

CHAIR: DEVEN PATEL, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

PANELISTS

RAMYA SREENIVASAN, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Fractious households in Rajput polity, circa 1650 – 1850

RAMNARAYAN RAWAT, UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Parallel Publics: Towards a Dalit History of Democracy

JOEL LEE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The City Observes its Sweepers: Valmiki Jayanti in Lucknow

D. KARTHIKEYAN, PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENT, *THE HINDU*

Contentious Spaces: Guru Puja and the Production Political Community

3:15 – 3:45

COFFEE BREAK

3:45 – 6:00

PANEL II: EVERYDAY CONTESTATIONS

DISCUSSANT: AKHIL GUPTA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

CHAIR: KATHLEEN HALL, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

PANELISTS

JAMIE CROSS, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Landscapes of Speculation: Contesting the Future in India's Special Economic Zones

JONATHAN SHAPIRO-ANJARIA, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

'Civic Sense': Spatial Practice and Middle Class Political Subjectivity in Mumbai

SUDEV SHETH, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Contesting Boundaries, Remaking Space: The Politics of Change in Delhi's Urban Villages

LLERENA SEARLE, WILLIAMS COLLEGE

Transparency, quality, and control: Contested market making in India's private real estate development sector

DAY 2 – MARCH 30

9:00 – 10:00

OPENING KEYNOTE

AKHIL GUPTA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

PAPER TITLE

THE LAND QUESTION IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

Contrary to progressivist narratives, one of the oldest contested spaces in India has re-emerged as a hot button issue: land. India may have skipped the "stage" of manufacturing to become a world power in services, but it has certainly not skipped over fights concerning land. What is being contested fiercely today are uses of land, the appropriation of land for public purposes, and what is a fair price for land. Peasant groups and tribals are very differently impacted by these developments, and the paper will try to tease out some of the significant differences in how diverse groups relate to the land question in contemporary India.

10:00 – 10:15

COFFEE BREAK

10:15 – 12:30

PANEL III: SPACE, MEDIA, REPRESENTATION

DISCUSSANT: JANAKI NAIR, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

CHAIR: HOWARD SPODEK, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

PANELISTS

ASHER GHERTNER, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Contested slum futures: Aesthetic politics in Delhi's spaces of relegation

ANUPAMA RAO, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Political Aesthetics of the Dalit Political

KATHRYN HARDY, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Screening "Middle Class" Bhojpuri: Recentering Single-Screen Cinema in the Age of the Multiplex

DILIP DA CUNHA & ANURADHA MATHUR, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
Beyond Rivers and Riverbeds

12:30 – 1:30

CATERED LUNCH

1:30 – 3:45

PANEL IV: POLITICS IN SPACE

DISCUSSANT: THOMAS BLOM HANSEN, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

CHAIR: DAUD ALI, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

PANELISTS

LISA MITCHELL, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

From Dharna as Door-Sitting to Dharna Chowk: Contested Spaces and the Spaces of Contestation

HUGO GORRINGE, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Out of the Chervis: Dalits Contesting and Creating Public Space in Tamil Nadu

FRANCIS CODY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Tamil Newspapers and Street Politics

MICHAEL COLLINS, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

'Decentering Democracy': Locating Politics within the Local State

3:45 – 4:00

COFFEE BREAK

4:00 – 5:00

CLOSING KEYNOTE

JANAKI NAIR, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

PAPER TITLE

THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE NICE ROAD TO ACCUMULATION: SPECULATIONS ON LAW AND THE NEW URBANISM

Is the terrain of the law becoming increasingly monotonous, that is, placing its immense power and rationality at the service of capitalist transformations of space, rather than providing space for critical opposition to the spatial chaos of capitalism? The vastly altered field of forces, between the time when the production of infrastructural facilities, such as roads and highways, was seen as the domain of the state-run Public Works Department, to the national and international players now involved in infrastructure construction, has brought new kinds of pressures to bear on the judiciary. The long gestation period of the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) by the Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise (NICE) allows for speculations on this realigned terrain. It allows us to ask: are we on the threshold of a new urban form which the law is obliged to bring into being?

5:00 – 6:00

CONCLUDING REMARKS & DISCUSSION

LISA MITCHELL, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SHAHANA CHATTARAJ, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

6:00 – 9:00

CLOSING RECEPTION