

Panels and Roundtables

**International Conference
Borderlands Spaces: Ruins, Revival(s) and Resources**

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**American University of Central Asia
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PANELS

‘Circulations’ along the Indo-Myanmar Borderlands: Networks of Trade, Religion and Identity

Convenor and Chair: **Joy L.K. Pachuau**, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

The paper draws from the idea of ‘Circulation’ put forth by Claude Markovits et al (2003) who define it as the flow of people and goods over long distances bringing about long term transformations. The idea of circulation also pertains not only to local networks but also global connections, tangible and intangible that impinges on it. The papers in the panel will address the issue of Connections in the Indo-Myanmar borderland, particularly focusing on Mizoram (India) and Chin State (Myanmar). The reality of the border gives the idea of connections a particular salience in the understanding and construction of the region. These borderlands are characterized by a complex process of continuities and ruptures in the memories and relationships of people inhabiting them. We approach the making of the border as a process that is inherently dynamic and a space that generates connections, old and new while also functioning as a space of enclosure.

All the papers in the panel recognize the significance of the border between the (formerly) Lushai and Chin Hills that was created during the colonial times. A mere administrative border was then transformed to an international border with the emergence of new nation-states. A paper in the panel will provide an ethnographic study of the people who inhabit the borderland in order to understand everyday negotiations. This is pertinent as borderland communities have also become stratified, socially and economically, which have implications for the way in which different individuals or groups relate themselves to the border. Two other important connections that we see are in the form of political re-configurations as well as in religious self-identifications. A paper in the panel discusses the so-called ‘Chin-Lushai-Kuki’ ethnonym to unpack the making and un-making of those identities, keeping in mind the salience of modern border-making exercises. The paper on religion discusses the development of parallel, yet discrete syncretic movements across the Chin-Mizoram border sharing global connections and yet infused with local ideas and motifs. Finally, while we pay attention to this transformation of the border between the colonial and post-colonial, we are also interested in exploring the connections and ruptures that existed predating colonial rule. This is done through drawing connections of trade, especially in firearms across the region.

Trade and the question of border opening: the context of Zokhawthar village, Indo-Myanmar borderland **Roluah Puia**, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, India

This paper positions itself in Zokhawthar, a borderland village in Mizoram-Myanmar border to understand the State agenda for the opening of India’s Northeastern border through the Act East policy. Border policies and their management, particularly in the Northeastern region, is always an extension of the logic of national security. While policies such as Act East are conceived to re-open the borders, the paper intends to look at how these efforts are responded to by the inhabitants of the Mizoram-Myanmar borderland. A significant aspect of the Act East policy is the big push that it tries to make through the opening of the Northeastern border. As such, trade becomes an essential component that is pivotal to its success. In this context, the paper explores two inter-connected issues in relation to trade. Firstly, the paper notes that the opening of the border is marked by the very reproduction of border. Although border crossing has become easy for the inhabitants of the village, the state enforces the border through regulation, affirming its presence and control. Hence, the notion that a ‘border’ is present exists among the borderland inhabitants. Secondly, in a borderland inhabited by a heterogeneous population with differential access to state power, the meaning of the borders, its function and effects differ across groups, ethnically and economically. The paper thus engages with how these border policies affects borderland inhabitants by examining the practices of trade conducted in the region.

The Making and Un-making of ‘Chin-Kuki-Mizo’ identity in the Indo-Myanmar Borderlands **C Zonunmawia**, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

The Making and Un-making of ‘Chin-Kuki-Mizo’ identity in the Indo-Myanmar Borderlands

This paper tries to revisit and interrogate a long history of the Mizo socio-political imaginaries from the pre-colonial to post-colonial periods. It will focus on the Mizoram-Chin State border in particular to try and understand the genealogy of authority/state among the Mizo and the role of state in making and unmaking of Mizo identity in South Asian borderlands. At the same time, there will be an attempt to venture out possible

alternative views and understandings of this long historical processes while challenging the popular notion of authority right from the pre-colonial narratives till today. It also interrogates the processes of constructing politico-territorial boundaries among the Mizo and its related communities in those geographical spaces to highlight how nation-building projects through various government schemes and policies are being implemented with mixed reactions as well as consequences. People from both sides having the claim of shared historical past and cultural affinity, one needs to look at how different networks are made and disrupted through various forces in those contiguous regions.

This paper will also make an attempt to throw some lights on how individuals and communities tried, and failed to reconcile their notions of primordial affiliation which are not necessarily determined by strict territorial boundaries and their newly constructed political identities within nation-states after decolonization. One of the main focus of this paper is to trace the genealogy of state/authority in the processes of making and unmaking of a collective identity which is intricately manifested in a small community like the Mizo, and the incomplete or continuous project of nation-building through various legal-institutional mechanisms like tribe/clan classifications and periodical census carried out by state agencies of India and Myanmar from colonial period till date.

Dreams of Utopian Futures: the case of Pauchinhau and Zoramthar

Lalruat Kima, Academy of Integrated Christian Studies, India

Pauchinhau, a visionary Sokte Chin from Tiddim in Burma, had a series of dreams between 1900 and 1910. These dreams engendered a syncretic movement that fused western Christian motifs with local particularities. Growing exponentially by the 1930s, the movement emerged as a formidable rival to the Christian missions in the area. A few decades later, Saikhuma from South Vanlaiphai in Mizoram dreamt of Zoramthar, a 'New Zo-land'. Even though Saikhuma kept his dream to himself, his family publicized it so effectively that there have been multiple iterations of that dream circulating even in 2017. Both Pauchinhau and Saikhuma are perceptive readers of their location; their idiosyncratic readings imagine "much better circumstances." While the details of these "better circumstances" vary, what is it about the dream that makes it the preferred medium to articulate the readings of their location? What is it about the liminal fringes of nation-state formations that seem to accentuate local issues as existential crises so that an existing or an emerging order needs to be reimagined? This project will explore these questions by focusing on what utopian futures might tell us about the layered and intersecting social formations of their present.

Fire-arms and state-making: Connections across the Indo-Burma borderlands

Joy L.K. Pachuau, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

The paper will explore the contours of exchanges that took place within a sub-region of the Himalayan Borderlands. Even as 'Zomia' studies have spawned literature that invites an analysis of the kinds of intra-regional interaction that took place, the paper will especially analyse the kinds of links that occurred along the Mizoram-Burma border in the period immediately preceding the colonial period.

Notwithstanding the reality of the contemporary border between Mizoram and Burma in political and economic terms, the pre-colonial situation was vastly different. It was a period when tribes, chiefs and villages asserted their superiority over others by organizing themselves as bigger federations through wars but also through alliances. Such assertions led to migrations and movements of people showing the fluidity of territorial boundaries. One of the ways in which superiority could be asserted was through the incorporation and importation of firearms into the region also suggesting the interconnections of trade and alliances that could facilitate such movements. Such exchange also required interactions with the more permanent state systems at Ava, stretching as far as Yunan but also even to the smaller states of Manipur, Tripura as well as the Arakan. The paper will thus focus on the intra-regional connections through the kinds of exchanges that took place that led also to the crystallization of political units in the region.

Asian Rice-Scapes: Topographies, Tastes and Technologies - I

Convenor: **Surajit Sarkar**, Ambedkar University Delhi, India

Chair: **Dhariti Narzary**, Ambedkar University Delhi, India

Discussant: **Erik de Maaker**, Leiden University, the Netherlands

This panel takes the territoriality and sociology of rice as a starting point to explore how these define ethnic, economic and political spaces. As the prime staple of Asia, rice is an essential resource and commodity, and its control wields political power. Cultivating rice requires dedicated knowledge, skill and experience, whereas it also induces specific economies of production, taxation, and consumption. Rice also provides a foundation for tangible heritage, and is a source of cultural identity for communities in the rice-growing world. The panel intends to 'think with' rice to explore rice related legacies, resiliencies and revivals. The sustained academic questioning of methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller 2002) has produced alternative approaches to territory and people that question states and their borders. This panel focuses on how rice cultivation creates what might be called rice-scapes: spaces that are defined by specific modalities of rice cultivation, distribution, and consumption.

Wet rice cultivation, typically practiced on fertile clay in densely populated riverine plains and deltas has historically been conditional to the emergence of cities and states in Asia. Inducing trade and migration across territories, rice related knowledge and transactions have always exceeded specific polities. The high population density of wet rice cultivating areas is in sharp contrast with uplands that are used for the cultivation of dry rice, typically located at the sparsely populated peripheries of states. Dry rice harvests are comparatively meager, but the produce is locally highly appreciated if not revered for its taste and texture.

Throughout Asia, the disparities between different modalities of rice cultivation have given rise to ethnic and indigenous boundaries. In fact, rice related topography frequently legitimizes political borders with wet rice and dry rice cultivators located on opposite sides. These boundaries have frequently obtained such permanence that they obscure cultural, social and religious linkages. Focusing on the production, economy and culture of rice, the panel intends to rethink divisions and interconnections between hill communities and plains dwellers. Extending the canvas, and creating a comparative perspective, the panel also includes a contribution on the transformation of rice cultivation in riverine West Africa. In what respects can histories, migrations and utilizations of rice techniques, but also the economic and religious symbolism of rice, contribute to the development of new perspectives on the emergence of cultural, social and political boundaries in Asia?

Blurring Boundaries: Narratives of rice cultures and transformation

Surajit Sarkar, Ambedkar University Delhi, India

Swidden or dry cultivation of rice marks a mobile people or community, and the shift towards terrace farming (part-wet) marks a shift towards a permanent settlement. In the highlands of North East India, conversations with Chakesang rice cultivators in Phek district, Nagaland indicate how settled villages and local population pressures made cultivators from the 1950s and 1960s increasingly adopt terrace farming.

Over decades of trial and error, these communities have developed a unique cultivation system suited to their local environment. In a practice borrowed from the earlier dry rice system, cultivators change the local rice varieties every few years to keep the yields up. The paddy field has become a symbol of wealth and social status because of the high and stable yield of paddy rice and increasing land prices. However, communities usually continue some aspects of swidden cultivation, because only a limited amount of land is suitable for paddy rice, people need non-rice crops, or because older people prefer the taste of upland rice.

In the Brahmaputra valley, despite the increasing use of hybrid high yielding varieties in lowland wet-rice cultivation, Tai-Ahom stories of the rice varieties introduced in the 13th century for wet rice cultivation can still be seen and heard. Conversations with millowners in the wet-rice zone of the Upper Brahmaputra valley led to insights about disappearing rice varieties, based on their un/suitability for processing in the mill. The increasing focus on rice for sale through local market-commercial networks indicates a redefinition of the rice grain as economic commodity, and a threat to local nuances and understandings of many varieties, even across lowland-highland boundaries. This paper uses oral narrativirroy

es of lives and livelihoods around rice, a cultural core of communities across Asia, to examine the place of Diversity, Cultivation and Homogeneity in the transforming borderlands.

Asia to Africa: Mapping Seed Depletion in the West African Basins

Mohomodou Houssouba, Centre for African Studies, University of Basel, Switzerland

This paper examines narratives around seed conservation and circulation among traditional rice-growing communities in West Africa. Indeed, only a half century ago, scores of local varieties of paddy rice were cultivated along the Senegal and Niger rivers. Today, at best six varieties are grown. Two varieties that have recently been imported from Asia now dominate irrigated surfaces as cash crops. This shift is the result of a transformation driven by fundamental changes related to climate and taste, if not fashion, with regard to rice production and consumption. Along the Niger Bend, for example, traditional rice used to be grown over an extended cycle culminating in a harvest season spread over five to six months, corresponding to three crop periods ending the early, medium and long maturation cycles. A drastic shrinking of cultivation and harvest cycles triggers a parallel decline in resiliency among rice growers. As a matter of fact, farmers now limit the cycle, and have at best a single month of harvest. Moreover, they tend to privilege the Asian varieties that yield the sort of thin grain that is now in high demand on the market. In contrast, local red rice is now considered too labor-intensive and heavy for the favorite rice-based meals of the growing urban population. Although local varieties are recognized as more nutritious and in some cases higher yielding, white rice is by far the preferred product of contemporary consumers. In exploring multiple facets of the long-standing practice of conserving rice seeds and the consequences of its looming demise this paper explores questions such as: To what extent is dwindling seed diversity in the region an irreversible process that should be allowed to run its course? And what does the current trend teach us about the African-Asian connection in rice production?

Asian Rice-Scapes: Topographies, Tastes and Technologies - II

Convenor: **Erik de Maaker**, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Chair: **Dharitri Narzary**, Ambedkar University Delhi, India

Discussant: **Surajit Sarkar**, Ambedkar University Delhi, India

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Maintaining Autonomy through Shifting Cultivation among the Karen of Northern Thailand

Malee Sitthikriengkrai, Center for Ethnic Studies and Development, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

This paper analyzes the upland rice shifting-cultivation system traditionally practiced by ethnic Karen people in the Thai highlands. The system consists of a short period of cultivation followed by a long fallow period, allowing the land to regenerate. Karen people and academics agree that this type of cultivation is environmental friendly as it naturally improves the quality of the soil. However, the Thai State rejects this perspective claiming that it causes deforestation and large-scale forest destruction. The government promotes the replacement of swidden farming by permanent cultivation in the lowlands. This often leads to policies that separate people from the forests. Whereas the government policy, which initiates wet rice cultivation in the lowlands yields only a single product suitable for marketing and trade, many Karen groups request to maintain their traditional farming techniques as each cultivation cycle not only provides them with rice, but also with diverse agricultural products. Most ethnic Karen people, however, practice their traditional farming methods to maintain their self-sufficiency.

Nonetheless, the cultivation of upland rice and the wet rice cultivation in lowland fields do not exist in a dichotomous relationship. This article analyses the combination of the two cultivation systems in Huay Hin Lad Nai village, Waing Pa Pao district, Chiang Rai, where a Karen group has integrated both systems within an intermountain valley. The co-existence of both systems can be seen as the community bargaining with the authorities who are trying to restrict their shifting cultivation.

Along these lines, the paper emphasizes that shifting cultivation is not only a system that provides food security but also food sovereignty to strengthen the autonomy of Karen communities. In a broader sense, it aims to illustrate that the Karen, in particular and humans in general, can harmoniously co-exist with nature.

Shifting Cultivation and Shifting Power of Traditional Leaders (samang) in the Highlands of Northern Thailand

Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, RCSO, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Rice cultivation has been seen as social identity of peoples of Thailand. Highlanders largely engage in hill rice cultivation whereas lowlanders practice wet rice cultivation. This dichotomy mirrors the asymmetric power relation between ethnic highlanders and lowland Thai people: the savage and the civilized.

This paper will discuss the way the Lua, an indigenous people of Northern Thailand, practice their traditional rotational shifting cultivation and how their rice growing practice has gradually been marginalized by lowland civilization. It specifically describes the role of "samang", a traditional leader who regulates the use of forest land for rice production, blesses the newly married couple, settles disputes, and performs community's ritual ceremony after harvesting season. Samang's role has diminished since the coming of Christianity in the community and state development projects. However, his role has recently been revived and re-invented in the process of local quest for Lua identity.

Rice in the Border Areas of Assam and Bhutan: A comparative perspective

Dharitri Narzary, Ambedkar University Delhi, India

The Bodos settled along the Bhutan foothills of the eastern Himalayas have had a long history of interaction with the Bhutanese with whom they share multidimensional spaces. Spatially, this proximity meant co-existence and economic interdependence. Politically, there are records of the Bodos living along the border under the Bijni king paying tribute and taxes to the Bhutanese king. However, the Bhutanese are represented in Bodo folklore as plunderers of grain and other resources. On the other hand, Bodos tend to consider the Bhutanese as culturally backward.

The Bodos continue to identify themselves as farmers of rice, though a large section of the society has taken to other modes of livelihood. While rice is staple for both the Bhutanese and the Bodos, it is notably central to the traditional life ways of the Bodos. This paper seeks to enquire how rice helps the Bodo community to articulate its identity vis-à-vis the upland Bhutanese. Is it because of the specific social and religious significances and meanings of rice for the Bodo? Or is it due to topographical differences, and their implications for people's lifestyle, that the Bhutanese as hills people are perceived differently by the Bodo?

This paper focuses on the rice culture of the Bodos: How rice is a commodity, as a family resource, as an object with higher spiritual meaning, a metaphor as goddess of wealth (Mainao) and a lifeline of the common peasants? I will discuss the traditional practice of community farming, resource sharing (community produce), rice cultivation techniques, social customs as well as cultural and religious rituals where rice plays important role. In exploring the socio-cultural and economic contexts of rice, my paper will try to answer the question: Does the rice culture of the Bodos explain how they perceive themselves as distinct from the Bhutanese?

Rice as a Cultural Resource: Symbolism, Distinction and the Rethinking of Ethnic Boundaries

Erik de Maaker, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Ethno-nationalist movements tend to derive their rationale from primordialist interpretations of ethnicity and indigeneity that suppose an idiosyncrasy of people, language, culture and territory (Gutpta & Ferguson 1997). This perception of ethnic communities as 'islands' is rooted in colonial state making, and continues to inspire political mobilization (Karlsson 2003). These movements consistently advocate the institutionalization of ethnic boundaries that delineate these imagined communities, be it in the drafting of new 'self-governing' administrative units, or the imposition of legal boundaries that define group membership (VandeKerckhove 2009). Yet beyond this strategic relevance, exploring cultural difference does require us to consider what Barth (1969) referred to as the 'cultural stuff', the ideas, practices, tastes and knowledge that people share, which do not necessarily operate along clearly defined communal boundaries.

Over the last half a century or more politics in North East India has been dominated by movements organized along ethnic lines. One of the (many) ethnicities that this pertains to are the Garo. In my paper I move beyond the focus on ethnic boundaries, to explore a main trope of Garo ethnicity, which is the cultural significance of rice. Archetypically, Garo are perceived as an upland people who are particularly engrossed with swidden rice. Indeed, the Garo community religion perceives rice as a source of life, the cultivation and harvest of which at once demands sacrifice and sacrilege. As economic reorientation and religious conversion, among others, redefine and transform people's ideas about, economic access to, and technical engagement with rice, to what degree does it continue to act as a cultural resource? In what respects do these cultural practices, knowledges and ideas create a Garo cultural sphere that is distinct, or continues to be distinct from that of 'neighbouring' ethnicities?

Belonging and Resources in the Eastern Himalayan Borderlands

Convenor and Chair: **Charisma K. Lepcha**, Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University, India

The Eastern Himalayas have always been a contact zone for humans, animals, and the environment, rather than just being a mountainscape marked a view of being peripheral and remote. Spatial ties bound rivers, brooks, hills, forests, and human settlements in both north-south and in east-west directions. People wandered across the rugged hill terrain and beyond to valleys, mountains and plains in search of either fortune or better access to resources in order to survive amid limiting environmental conditions. They created the conditions for their livelihood which was in line with the resources available in the region. Such histories of resource use and adaptation to ecological conditions also marked their relationships with states and sources of political power. Agrarian tenures, taxation, and tribute marked the production of communities, states, and territory. Trans-ecological corridors, cultural strips, diverse portfolios of livelihood strategies, statemaking and spatiality all emerge as important themes for study in the Eastern Himalayan Borderlands as they were gradually incorporated into wider systems of European colonization and modern nation-building. This panel seeks to comprehend questions of belonging, resource use, ecological and cultural transformation and colonial territorial formation within the Eastern Himalayan borderlands over the past two hundred years.

Agrarian Resources and Territorial Dynamism along the Anglo-Gorkha Borderlands in the Early Nineteenth Century

Bernardo A. Michael, Messiah College, United States

In the early 19th century, the Anglo Gorkha borderlands presented a dynamic zone of interaction, peppered with a host of petty kingdoms that were in various stages of incorporation into the imperial order being erected by the Himalayan kingdom of Gorkha (present-day Nepal) and the English East India Company. Consequently, the shared frontier of these states registered multi cornered contests to gain access to and control over material resources such as land, labor, tribute, and taxation. Such contests were also infused with symbolic concerns pertaining to the maintenance of status, honor, and the reproduction or transformation of political hierarchies. These intertwined forces left their spatial impressions on the layout and organization of territory leaving patches of the borderlands a shifting mosaic of lands owing allegiance to multiple centers of authority. This paper will explore specific contests over entitlements to agrarian tenures, tribute, and taxation in order to understand their impact on the geographical construction of states at a time of colonial encounter. In 1814, territorial disputes along this frontier led to the outbreak of war between Gorkha and the English East India Company ending with the defeat of Gorkha in 1816. These territorial disputes which revolved around struggles to define, access, and control agrarian resources also encoded disagreements over the geographical construction of the state. The colonial state would ultimately seek to resolve these spatial dilemmas by undertaking surveying and mapmaking projects that would lay out neatly emboxed territorial divisions with linear boundaries.

Dzongri-Goechhla Area in the Sikkim Himalaya: transformation from trans-ecological corridor to cultural strip.

Uttam Lal, Department of Geography, Sikkim University, India

The mountain ecosystem of the Sikkim Himalaya has been subject to transformation through human activity. Such human interventions have unfolded within a larger theatre dominated by the elements of nature. The Dzongri-Goechhala area is a site of dramatic changes in altitude, climate, soil type, and vegetation over very small distances. This has made it imperative for the people who inhabited the area to adapt by forging multifarious socio-economic linkages. These relationships assumed the form of trans-ecological linkages in nature across the seeming fortress of snowfields and high mountain ridges that were punctuated by various passes. The role of fortresses was crucial. As is the case, fortresses are never merely meant to keep out or fence-in people; rather these have been meant for filtering the movements of people so as to regulate the socio-political and economic attributes of a society. Located at the geographic crossroads between Tibet and Nepal and adjacent to Bhutan, this place regularly registered the footfalls of people from these areas until recently. Owing to the environmental constraints, the area traditionally depended upon grazing domestic animals like yaks, sheep, goats etc. However, the area underwent change post 1960s owing to the International boundaries getting transformed into hard-borders and the banning of grazing in Sikkim in 1998. The formal declaration of the place as part of Kanchendzonga Biosphere reserve, lead to rehabilitation of dwellers of the area. Thus, rendering the area as just a cultural strip rather than a grazing and allied activities based thriving space.

This paper traces linkages between rise and fall of places, resource use and movement of people. The study incorporates Snow-ball Sampling and Focused Group Discussion to understand the perception, attitudes, practices and preferences pertaining to resource usage & space-relation besides using Remote Sensing & GIS to understand the physiography of the area.

Rivers for Lepcha as Resources and Source of Resistance

Charisma K. Lepcha, Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University, India

Rivers have not merely been channels of drainage but also the arteries of interconnectedness and transportation. This has been more so in case of the Himalayan rivers which negotiate great ecological diversities where river valleys work as suturing threads, bringing goods and people to interact and compete.

This paper looks into the livelihood strategy of the indigenous Lepcha as their Eastern Himalayan borderlands became an important space of encounter where historically different people and cultures are clashing and negotiating their beliefs in order to affirm their existence (Pratt 1991).

The Lepcha are scattered across India, Bhutan, and Nepal; dividing the community into different territories and also linking them across state borders with shared indigeneity and the famed story of common origin. The Lepcha claim to Kanchenjunga becomes interesting while realizing that it is not the snow but the snow melt that gave birth to rivers which hold an important place for Lepcha livelihood. They depended on rivers and streams to sustain themselves. So when the state proposed to dam their rivers, the Lepcha were the first to resist.

Often they have conveniently been erased from historical and socio-political narratives of the Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalaya. If the history of Sikkim begins from the establishment of the Namgyal dynasty in 1642, the history of Darjeeling begins from 1907 when the demand for Gorkhaland was first submitted. There has therefore been no space for the mute minority to voice their belonging in these borderlands. Instead the clash between the state and the Lepcha meant that they were further marginalised and needed to find newer ways of exploiting their resources.

This paper argues that the conflict with the state meant that the Lepcha were compelled to create alternative spaces of negotiation to add meaning to their existential conditions and their sense of belonging

Between authoritarian ruins, democratic revivals and profitable resources: Myanmar's borderlands as contested spaces

Convenor and Chair: **Giuseppe Gabusi**, University of Turin and T.wai - Torino World Affairs Institute, Italy

Discussant: **Stefano Ruzza**, University of Turin and T.wai - Torino World Affairs Institute, Italy

Over the past few years, the military-dominated Republic of the Union of Myanmar has undertaken a three-pronged transition strategy with regard to politics, the economy, and internal security, apparently leading to a democratic 'revival'. These transitions are intertwined, as each one affects the others, revealing a complex reform path whose eventual success should not be taken for granted. Moreover, in this process, sweeping changes are taking place alongside some elements of continuity, which creates multiple challenges for the country, trying to escape from historical dynamics of human insecurity, political disenfranchisement, economic stagnation, environmental depletion and social inequalities. One element representing continuity is represented by the aged-long wars in Myanmar's periphery. In fragile states like Myanmar, where minorities often have little or no stakes in the central government, the institutional framework tends to perpetuate dynamics of conflict and violence. Since state structures and actions are not accepted as legitimate and are therefore contested, conflict can be framed as the emergence of an alternative political and economic space, thus creating an arena for competing influence. In particular, as many ethnic minorities still feel disenfranchised, and as the legal and illegal exploitation of natural resources (like timber, jade, and gems) continues unabated, Myanmar's borderlands attract the appetite of different political, economic and security actors – e.g. the army, local governments, ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), national and transnational entrepreneurs, and crime organizations. Furthermore, nested between two economic and political giants like India and China, Myanmar's periphery is also subject to foreign pressures which complicate the dynamics of contestation. This panel reflects on how the ruins of the past and the 'democratic' revival are interacting in Myanmar's borderlands to generate new patterns of political, security and economic narratives and actions – a crucial exercise to understand the future direction of Myanmar's multiple transformations.

Feeling the pressure: The border factor in Myanmar's interaction with China and India

Giuseppe Gabusi, University of Turin and T.wai - Torino World Affairs Institute, Italy

In 2013, China and India established among themselves an Economic Corridor (BCIM EC) that would cut across Myanmar and Bangladesh. Soon afterwards, these two countries joined the Sino-Indian venture, aimed at establishing a structured trans-border co-operation. The political and economic weight of China and India is such that weaker countries like Myanmar – geographically squeezed in-between – feel the pressure to bend to its giant neighbours' interests. While the formal process of co-operation is in place, many obstacles remain at the international, national and local level. The paper looks at borderlands in Northern Myanmar as contested places, where the presence of a variety of political and economic actors not necessarily expressing their loyalty to the central government in Nayipyitaw complicates the interaction of the country with China and India. The paper aims at evaluating if and how Myanmar is able to keep a distance to both neighbours in order to protect its own interests. In which fields would it be possible? In which not? How Northern borderlands as contested places are constraining Myanmar's "room to maneuver" in formal regionalization processes involving also China and India? The paper draws also from fieldwork research in Yangon, Nayipyitaw, and in Shan and Kachin states.

Turning borderlands into economic powerhouses? Case-studies from the Sino-Myanmar border

Anja Senz, Heidelberg University, Germany

The borderlands at Yunnan province (China) and northern Shan state (Myanmar) have been remote areas of economic (and political) periphery for quite some time. While since decades all sorts of resources have been channeled out of Myanmar, in recent years, a massive and accelerated resource extraction characterizes the area. Various raw materials (timber, jade, agricultural products) flow from the Myanmar side of the border into Yunnan province and further to the Chinese heartland, which transformed Chinese border towns into well connected economic powerhouses, while people across the border see themselves in need to defend their land and their resources. A weak Myanmar state, infrastructure investments from China, a green border and high economic demand have contributed to this situation. The paper will analyse development and change of social spaces at the borderlands of Myanmar and China by looking on economic developments and the accompanying narratives (BRI, BCIM EC) as well as the changing perceptions of "Chinese". Case studies of migration and trade from Northern Shan state and Yunnan province – based on fieldwork conducted between 2015 and 2017 – will be analysed according to institutional settings that contribute to the creation of new social spaces. Do such

spaces reduce the level of informal economic activities and conflicts in the Sino-Myanmar borderlands? Who are the main actors contributing or challenging such institutional settings?

Myanmar: Peace process as borderland management

Stefano Ruzza, University of Turin and T.wai - Torino World Affairs Institute, Italy

Since independence in 1948 Myanmar government found difficult to extend its authority in border areas, mostly inhabited by ethnic minorities. Governance of borderlands has traditionally been contentious in Myanmar, generating long-protracted insurgencies fought from ethnic armed organization (EAOs) against the central government. This latter, in turn, stroke back using counter-insurgency techniques and while sometimes it agreed on cease-fires, this lead to further government empowerment through the means of ceasefire capitalism (Wood 2011). Peace and un-contentious border governance have not been achieved in the wake of the relinquishment of power from the military junta, in 2011, and not even after the National League for Democracy (NLD) landslide electoral victory in 2015. However, both post-military governments attempted to launch comprehensive peace-processes going beyond the use of counter-insurgency and cease-fires only (although both these tools remained widely in use). This paper re-apprises the evolution of Myanmar's peace-process as a tool for governance of borderlands. It traces its root in pre-liberalization times, follows its evolution through both the Thein Sein (2011-2015) and Aung San Suu Kyi (2016-now) led governments, and evaluates it vis-a-vis the attempts to launch alternative peace processes sponsored by EAOs. It uses both data available in published sources and gathered through repeated fieldworks taking place both in Myanmar's center (Naypyitaw and Yangon) and in its periphery (Kachin and Shan state).

Myanmar's borderlands as political centre stage

Nicholas Farrelly, The Australian National University, Australia

During Myanmar's difficult decades of direct authoritarian rule, which ended in 2011, the country's borderlands provided an essential window into the rest of society. Information was refracted through the experiences, often traumatic, of the people, many from ethnic and religious minorities, who sought sanctuary along the country's frontiers. During the period of nascent democratic practice, it made sense that with more access and greater open-ness the world's understanding of Myanmar could draw more consistently on the experiences of the political and commercial centres: Naypyitaw, Yangon and Mandalay. Events of the past two years highlight, however, the enduring importance of borderland sites for reflection on the character of Myanmar society. Why are the borderlands still centre stage? To offer a response, this paper looks closely at recent experiences in Rakhine State and Kachin State to explain the persistence of nationalist, chauvinist and exclusionist politics from a range of different perspectives. While it offers a conceptual framework, the paper also draws heavily on field research conducted over the past 12 years across Myanmar's borderlands, and in Naypyitaw.

Borderland commodities: In and out of the legal shadows. Part I

Convenor and Chair: **Emilia Roza Sulek**, University of Zurich, Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies, Switzerland

Commodities enter and leave the legal shadows like continents on an in-flight route map; sometimes they are shaded by dark nights of inattention, and at other times they face the bright sunlight of the state's 'gaze'. However, commodities are not doomed to remain in the shadows forever, and many of them change their status depending on the current political situation, local interests, and other factors. What happens when a legal commodity becomes illegal one day, or when a commodity, which has previously been illegal, is 'lifted' to the level of legality and is allowed for official circulation?

How does this change the modus operandi of the trade, production networks, and the whole commodity chain? What does it mean for the consumers?

It is not a secret that many commodities thrive in the shadows thanks to different kinds of support they receive from various actors working in the same state institutions who are responsible for delegalizing them. This shows that big pictures consist of small pieces and that impersonal constructs such as the 'state' or the 'government' are a mosaic of people who make their own choices and foster their own interests. It is therefore impossible to draw a line between the 'state' and the 'society': blurred zones and a lack of transparency create space for economic operations which are not always legal and are yet flourishing. Different levels of legality and licitness (or their lack) complicate the situation further. Perhaps being legal is sometimes not so important and being illegal creates bigger profits?

This panel invites contributions analysing different commodities, those of geo-political 'borderlands' as well as those from the 'borderlands' between legality and its lack thereof. We invite presentations based on field research as well as those contributing to this topic on a theoretical level. We welcome contributions about any relevant commodities, such as natural resources, 'drugs' and medicinal products, objects of art, foreign currency and money in general, or illegal literature. Of particular interest are commodities which underwent a change of status, from legal to illegal or vice versa.

Geopolitical borderlands, where the state is perhaps not very 'effective', or at least has a different structure than the 'Western' model, are a fertile ground for shadow commodities. But even in the most 'effective' state, there is enough space in the shadows. This panel is therefore open to any region, time perspective, and discipline.

Small-scale illegal gold extraction in Kyrgyzstan

Gulzat Botoeva, University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

This paper looks at how small-scale gold mining in the Naryn region of Kyrgyzstan forms one of the sectors of the shadow economy. Gold is one of the main natural resources of Kyrgyzstan and although the commodity itself is not illegal, the way how it is mined or panned and later extracted makes it part of the illegal economy. In order to present the context in which small-scale gold is produced, this paper will discuss three interrelated themes: the role of gold mining in local communities and how gold is extracted from mountains and river beds, the role of the state and state actors in the illegality of small-scale artisanal gold mining, and the local discourse on international investment in legal gold mining among the local mining communities. This paper contributes to debates on shadow and illegal economies by discussing how state representatives take an active part in shaping and sustaining small-scale illegal gold mining, highlighting the rising tension between local mining communities and international investment companies over the rights of land located in the high pastures.

The study that has formed the basis of this paper was conducted in Naryn oblast, Kyrgyzstan, in the summer of 2016, where twenty interviews were collected in four different villages. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with some of the representatives of local administration, representatives of NGOs and local people that mined/panned gold.

Land as a legal and illegal commodity in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Eliza Isabaeva, ISEK-Social Anthropology, University of Zurich, Switzerland

In the immediate aftermath of the Tulip Revolution in 2005, the outskirts of Kyrgyzstan's capital city Bishkek became a site of mass land seizure for establishing residence. This has resulted in the emergence of peripheral

settlements which have been identified by the state as illegal settlements. Land plots which used to be previously properties of state municipalities turned out to be in the illegal possession of needy Bishkek residents. Demolition of such illegal settlements and eviction of dwellers have not taken place. Instead, the state has demonstrated toleration towards these settlements. Consequently, illegal settlements in Bishkek represent 'gray zones' where dubious activities take place. One salient example can be the example of land deals in my field site, the de jure illegal settlement called Ak Zhar in the fringes of Bishkek. In Ak Zhar, those dwellers who have a land plot or a house, albeit without property documents for their possessions, sell their properties. Together with their clients they have initiated a document they call raspiska, a piece of paper in which the seller records in his own words the sale and its terms. The fact that land sales occur, despite Ak Zhar's illegal status, signal that the sellers and buyers of properties in Ak Zhar do not foresee any risks for their 'illegal' activity. Contrarily, Ak Zhar dwellers invest big hopes that the state will soon legalize Ak Zhar and grant property documents. The proposed paper argues that the blurred boundaries between legality and illegality in Kyrgyzstan produces gray zones like Ak Zhar where dubious activities continue taking place.

Hierarchies, vulnerabilities and spaces of freedom: Citizenship dilemmas in the India-Bangladesh enclaves

Deboleena Sengupta, Independent Research Scholar, India

Amol Paul, a Bangladeshi enclave dweller, always wanted to marry an Indian woman so that he could obtain an Indian identity card with ease. He did get married with an Indian lady, but it did not get him to his goal. He found an amazing opportunity only when his brother-in-law had died. Officially his brother-in-law never died, but only got a different look as Amol put his photo on the dead one's Identity card.

The territorial arrangement where a fragmented territory of one sovereign power is located inside another sovereign's territory is conceptually and legally defined as an enclave. After the partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947, such enclaves had largely remained landlocked, and surrounded by newly formed states of India and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

By 1950s, with the introduction of Passport and Visa system, the situation became complicated to such extent that the home states had surrendered trying to establish their authority over these territories. Thereby, the enclaves had become abandoned zones. But then, what we learn from Amol is that life did not cease to exist.

This paper shall be an effort to understand the citizenship dilemmas of the enclave dwellers, as their lives revolved around moments of legality and illegality. Therein, an effort would be made to understand the entire idea of citizenship as a commodity, where the enclave border acted as an important determinant for the kind of bodies which could be allowed to enjoy this space for economic operations. Besides, the enclave also provided a space to its people- to adapt, reject and negotiate with the interests of the two states. Thus, this paper intends to locate the moments of citizenship of the enclave dwellers which challenged the binary of legality/illegality in their everyday transactions.

Borderland commodities: In and out of the legal shadows. Part II

Convenor and Chair: **Emilia Roza Sulek**, University of Zurich, Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies, Switzerland

Commodities enter and leave the legal shadows like continents on an in-flight route map; sometimes they are shaded by dark nights of inattention, and at other times they face the bright sunlight of the state's 'gaze'. However, commodities are not doomed to remain in the shadows forever, and many of them change their status depending on the current political situation, local interests, and other factors. What happens when a legal commodity becomes illegal one day, or when a commodity, which has previously been illegal, is 'lifted' to the level of legality and is allowed for official circulation?

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Dhow routes: Navigating regulatory regimes across the Indian Ocean

Nidhi Mahajan, University of California-Santa Cruz, United States

Ever since 9/11, the Indian Ocean has become a flashpoint for international security. Governments and international authorities have assumed that the predominantly Muslim merchants and sailors of the littoral are complicit with militant groups such as Al-Shabaab. As a result, the sailing vessel or dhow trade that has historically operated across South Asia, the Middle East and East Africa has become subject to increased regulation and restriction. Although dhows carry legal and licit cargoes of everyday household goods such as rice, wheat, fruit, dates, medicinal supplies, and cars, dhows themselves have become objects of suspicion as they are assumed to be involved in smuggling weapons and people. While the commodities dhows carry change based on shifting political conditions and the vagaries of markets, I show that state attempts to control the transregional dhow trade have pushed it into the shadow economy, where the lines between legal/illegal, licit/illicit trade are blurred, ultimately leading to increased insecurity. Yet, this is not a new phenomenon, as dhows were associated with illegality even in the nineteenth century. Tracing historical continuities and discontinuities as participants of the dhow trade encountered multiple regulatory regimes across East Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, I analyze the historically bounded, mutually constituted relationship between states and shadow economies. Ultimately, I show how these contestations over regulation of the dhow trade are a vantage through which to understand how mobility and sovereignty are negotiated at the maritime margins of states across the Indian Ocean.

Arak and freedom: the Tibetans, alcohol and the space between states

Ruth Gamble, La Trobe University / Yale University, Australia

Archaeological and textual sources suggest the Tibetans have a long history with both beer and distilled alcohol. It was proscribed by mainstream Buddhist morality, but the monks who wrote polemics against it also established it as a marker of dissent. For many lay and tantric practitioners, especially those who migrated south into the borderland areas of Kongpo and Pemako, the consumption of alcohol became both an act of opposition to authority and an identity marker.

This community now resides on both sides of the Sino-Indian border, and both nation-states have imposed laws that restrict and control the alcohol trade. In this context, the production and consumption of unlicensed, local alcohol remains a marker of dissent and a trans-border, local identity. Locally-produced alcohol is often described as purer and healthier than its mass-produced but legal equivalents. In some communities, the continuing levels of alcohol consumption are having serious effects on the inhabitants' health, but disassociating this consumption from identity is proving difficult. This paper will examine the local histories of alcohol consumption, their cultural importance and the way they valorise transgression.

Interpretation of Borderland: an emic insight from Myanmar

Georg Winterberger, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Myanmar is the quintessence of a country in transition. In 2011, the military government gave power to a civilian one. International observers were surprised to realize that the country really changed its political agenda. This was surprising, because the new government was filled with former generals, who resigned their positions in the military to be able to be part of the new government. In the meantime, a more real civilian government took over after the landslide victory of the opposition party in November 2015. The political transition has consequences mainly in the economic and legal landscape of Myanmar. The legal situation is far from clear. While the former military government left legislation full of gaps (it allowed the military to fill these gaps as they liked it), the current government wants to revise it totally but is facing so many problems and deficiencies in the country that it will take time to clear the legal situation. This contribution wants to analyse how everyday people handle this very unclear legal situation. As an example, the author will follow a trader, who buys his merchandise in Thailand and therefore has to cross the border often. He faces an unclear situation not only at the customs but at the check points on the way back to his home town as well. The trader tries to do the best out of the situation, which is not always the legal way.

Smuggling in the Digital Era: How New Technology Changes the Landscape of Myanmar-Thailand Ruby Smuggling

Akkanut Wantanasombut, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

It was said, since a century ago, that 'Myanmar is a resource-rich country'. That is not an exaggerated says at all even for today if we consider the fact that, up to the year 2015, approximately 75 percent of the official total export value is coming from the natural resource extraction industries. Ruby is one of the most gemstones found in Myanmar. According to the official export statistic, gemstones account only 6.59 percent in 2015. However, the Global Witness recently reported that the value of the illicit jade trade alone, probably worth US\$31 billion, suspiciously went to the pocket of few military-connected business firms. While jade mainly goes to China, Ruby finds its destination to Thailand.

Thailand is one of the world's leading gemstones producing and marketing hubs. After decades of heavily extracted of her own, rubies are rarely found in Thailand. Since then the Thais started to source rubies abroad. It is believed that, nowadays, the majority of Rubies selling in Thai market are smuggled across the border from Myanmar. Rubies were usually smuggled and sold in gems market at Thai border towns. However, the process of ruby smuggling has been recently changed by the coming of a smartphone. This paper examines how the process of Ruby smuggling from Myanmar to Thailand has been changed by the new communication technology, and how it affects the traditional gems traders.

Crossfire at the Crossroads

South Asian borderlands in between ancient routes and new frontiers

Convenor and Chair: **Mara Matta**, SAPIENZA University of Rome, Italy

Borderlands have always been areas of great economic, strategic and military interest. However, for the people who have been living across them for centuries, these increasingly regulated and policed frontiers represent fluid zones bustling with cultural exchanges and commercial activities. Conceived as geographical semiospheres (Lotman 1984), they may be considered as semiotic spaces limited by boundaries, yet they remain liminal, porous places where constant processes of transaction and exchange take place. Notwithstanding the constant reshuffling of geopolitical allegiances, the borderlands preserve their controversial dimension, remaining complex semiospheres that shun homogenization and tend towards hybrid and transcultural dimensions, positing themselves as sites 'at the crossroads of' but often caught 'in the crossfire of' history and cultural politics. The liminality and fluidity of borders render politics indeterminate giving rise to new regime of meanings and change.

This panel aims to read the borderlands of the geopolitical semiospheres across South Asia as geographical, linguistic, religious, political and cultural spaces of dissent and resistance, that defy simplistic definitions and top-down reorganization meant to regulate – and often suffocate – those fruitful processes of translation at the grassroots level that may help creating a more just and less conflictual strategy of development and peace-building. Working at the crossroads of some of the most troubled borderlands in South Asia, namely those areas in between India and Bangladesh, India and Nepal, and Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma), the contributions of this panel try to map a new space for dialogue, to historicize conflicts and to understand the complex dynamics of the borders beyond the hegemonic frames of the government agencies and the simplistic solutions of global organizations. In particular, the panel looks at the ways these borderlands have been turned into dangerous war zones, contested spaces where militarization and exploitation are becoming increasingly more present and where civilians are attacked and made to bear the burden of erasing a history of co-existence, privileging instead the invention of rigid traditions and exclusive cultural boundaries.

Of Fences and Flexibility: Interrogating the Bangladesh-Myanmar Borderland

Meghna Guhathakurta, Executive Director, Research initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB), Bangladesh

Whilst everyday struggles of the borderland tend to look beyond the state and nation, the securitization (sometimes over-securitization) of the border areas are inscribed into the hegemonic relations of the contemporary nation-state. The contractions between the two realities are often manifest in the lives and living of populations inhabiting the borderland. I shall look into this syndrome in the context of the Bangladesh-Myanmar borderland.

The porous nature of Bangladesh's borders has created a kind of cartographic anxiety between the neighboring states of both India and Myanmar which have led them to build high electrical fences possibly to stave off massive influx of population from the heavily populated Bangladesh state. This has not worked. Despite the high fences in the Myanmar –Bangladesh border, a flow of boats and people have been a regular feature, a semi open-border regulatory system has been in operation, where a Bangladeshi can get a 48 hour border pass from authorities in the south eastern most district town of Teknaf to visit or conduct limited trade within a 10 km periphery. Such arrangements have however often collapsed in times of tense situations when unwanted influx of refugees have crossed borders out of persecution, repression and violence in the territory they inhabited.

Here I take a deeper look at inhabitants on Bangladesh side of the border with Myanmar from the perspective of everyday struggle in the borderland and the hegemony of state and see how the violence impacts on them, for it is this feature that has time and again drawn our attention to this otherwise quite remote and neglected part of the globe.

Spaces of Tolerance and Group Rights in Bangladesh

Habibul Haque Khondker, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates

Bangladesh has been praised for sheltering the Rohingya refugees who were forced out of Myanmar in late August and September 2017. An outpouring of humanitarian response from the government and the general public enhanced Bangladesh's image internationally. It is in that context, the present paper seeks to examine to

what extent the concepts of “group differentiated rights” (Kymlicka 1995) and respect of the minority rights based on Charles Taylor’s idea of “politics of equal rights” (1994), are applicable to Bangladesh, a fledgling democracy. The paper would broaden the question of tolerance of the cultural rights of minorities in Bangladesh to include the sections of the population who live in the borderlands, a liminal space. International borders, created in an arbitrary fashion, divided communities and families in Bangladesh. The metaphor of space is salient because it captures both the physical, geographical space or territory that divided people bestowing citizenship rights to the majority and marginalizing thus creating minority; and the cyber space that created a cyber minority, known as bloggers, many of whom have been victims of intolerance and violence that resulted in the death of a number of bloggers (Graham-Harrison and Hammadi, 2016) for expressing their views, which sometimes went against the grain of the majoritarian views. The paper examines, why at some level Bangladesh society shows a certain level of openness and tolerance of difference and at another intolerance. The paper also explores to what extent the divergent responses can be explained by the rooted culture or whether a new cultural politics resulting from the influence of the revivalist form of Islamic religion. The paper argues that the spaces of tolerance and group rights need to be expanded simultaneously by deepening the institutions of democracy and fostering a new social compact based on recognition and respect for multicultural rights.

Graham – Harrison, E and Hammadi, S. (2016) “Inside Bangladesh’s Killing Fields: Bloggers and Outsiders Targeted by Fanatics,” *The Guardian*

Kymlicka, W. (ed) (1995) *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, C. “The Politics of Recognition,” in A. Guttman (ed) *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dark sides of an open border. India-Nepal relations across the open border in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake.

Daive Torri, Heidelberg University, Germany

Five months after the Nepal earthquake, unrest related to the promulgation of the new Constitution of Nepal reportedly caused the sealing of the India-Nepal open border, thus imposing a de facto economic blockade on a country already torn apart by the consequences of a natural disaster and a very volatile political debate. Amidst protests turning violent and fuel shortages, many voiced concerns about the real motivations behind the closure of the border. Internal and external political factors seemed to entangle the two countries into a conflictual stance, while several observers denounced it as a case of political interference between neighbors. The unofficial blockade, and the following humanitarian crisis, gained global attention (see UN and EU resolutions) and opened new scenarios, like the reinforcement of ties between China and Nepal. This paper aims at the analysis of border dynamics in times of humanitarian and political crisis, highlighting the alleged or factual role of the various actors involved, ranging from international to state authorities, from local politicians to political activists, from armed outfits to smugglers.

Bidrohinis: Indigenous Women of Bangladesh in the Crossfire between History and Dreams.

Mara Matta, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

There are many accounts and reports on the abysmal situation of the indigenous people of Bangladesh, mostly curated by NGOs, human rights organizations and scholars of history and anthropology. However, very little has been written from the indigenous women’s perspective, somehow contributing to the idea that the Jumma women of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh or belonging to other indigenous communities (like the Rakhines living along/across the borderlands with Myanmar) are ‘silent’ witnesses of their day to day tragedies. However, starting from the powerful notes left by Kalpana Chakma in her Diary before being ‘forcefully disappeared’ on 12 June 1996, the indigenous women of Bangladesh have continuously raised in protest against displacement, harassment, disenfranchisement, induced poverty and progressive annihilation of political and cultural rights. Deploying their life stories to contradict and talk back to History, indigenous women have committed themselves to the fulfillment of dreams of justice and have employed cultural practices as powerful tools of dissent.

Based on fieldwork recently carried out in Rangamati and in Cox’s Bazar, particularly among the Chakma and the Rakhine communities, this paper wishes to document the important role of active agents of resistance, reform and change that the indigenous women of Bangladesh have been enacting during the last decades. It has been more than twenty years since the Army and the State of Bangladesh have turned Kalpana Chakma into a ‘ghost’.

However, her presence and her voice have never faded and her words and legacy, today more than ever, has become the hunting voice of justice for the indigenous women of Bangladesh.

Fragile Infrastructures, Secure Nation: On the making of ruins in highland borderlands

Convenor and Chair: **Alessandro Rippa**, LMU Munich, Germany

Discussant: **Agnieszka Joniak-Lüthi**, University of Bern, Switzerland

In the highlands of Asia, construction of roads, railways and airports in previously inaccessible and peripheral territories represents a major element of nation building. The Pamir Highway, for instance, was fundamental to Soviet governance in Central Asia. A similar argument can be made for the roads and railway connecting eastern China and the Tibet Autonomous Region. In Kashmir, roads and airports were for the most part the results of strategic considerations, and the role of the army in their construction, use and maintenance remains crucial. Today the strategic motivations for infrastructure construction are increasingly downplayed by the discourse of transnational connectivity in trade and development which transportation infrastructures, reportedly, automatically generate. Often brought under the umbrella of so-called “economic corridors” such massive infrastructures are, we are told by the proponents of such projects, means for commercial and cultural exchanges, not devices of securitisation.

On the ground, such promises meet a harsh reality, in which infrastructures are conspicuous for their fragility and on-going disintegration. We argue that this intrinsic fragility of infrastructures, as well as the central role of maintenance should be more explicitly addressed, both empirically and conceptually. In this panel, we discuss the implications of such fragility in border regions, where infrastructures have for decades served as the main means of nation-building for border communities.

Conceptually, we contend that infrastructures should be analysed from within their social, material and political environments and entanglements. Construction is from the beginning accompanied by a parallel process of ruination, and maintenance often becomes the main way of engagement for the lowland state. Infrastructural fragility, it could be argued, both reflects the contentiousness of any nation-making process, while also providing the state with an opportunity to secure its presence across contested borderland spaces. A challenge, as well as an opportunity.

Papers in this panel will explore this contentious nexus, and discuss the following themes:

- the ontological fragility of infrastructures and how it affects the maintenance of state materiality in the highlands of Asia;
- ethnography-based case studies of the politics of maintenance;
- what happens when different layers of ruins, often the result of different state interventions, co-exist in a particular space;
- how are promises of peace, modernity and wealth discursively inscribed onto infrastructures and navigated vis-à-vis mundane experiences of disruption and decay.

The Longest Construction: Building and Shattering the Borderlands of the Pamir-Karakoram

Till Mostowlansky, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland

Literature on the borderlands of the Pamir-Karakoram – encompassing parts of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and Tajikistan – often follows a specific chronology which highlights the importance of Soviet projects of modernization. From this perspective, beginning in the 1930s the construction of infrastructure in what is today Tajikistan fundamentally altered social and material configurations in these borderlands. Chinese and Pakistani construction projects commenced only decades later, putting the Afghan Wakhan at the very end of the line, with infrastructure improvement and maintenance seen to only begin in the post-Taliban era. While such a view follows the larger logic of the expansion of state power in the region, it also tends to hide lesser-known histories of construction in the borderlands. This paper seeks to explore one such strand of construction, in particular via a local Urdu-Persian history from northern Pakistan (“The Construction of the Central Jamaatkhanah of Gilgit”) which depicts the building of an Ismaili Muslim assembly hall and educational institutions in the area. Drawing on translocal connections to the Ismaili Imam (“Aga Khan”) and highlighting the role played by elites in Bombay and beyond, the process of construction began in the 1930s. It lasted almost two decades and was marked by political and material dissolution. As I show in this paper, the arduous construction of these infrastructures was closely intertwined with the geopolitical events of the establishment of Soviet power as well as the partition of

India. In drawing attention to these ties, the paper provides a glimpse into the pre-history of the Aga Khan Development Network in the Pamir-Karakoram, and its large-scale interventions in northern Pakistan (1980s-) and Tajikistan (1990s-) that link contemporary international development with the ruins of Soviet and Pakistani infrastructures.

Between Permafrost and a Hard Place: Loss and Livelihoods amidst Post-Soviet Infrastructural Decline

Mia Bennett, University of Vienna, Austria/UCLA, United States

In Western media accounts of Russia, narratives of crumbling and decaying infrastructure pervade. Photographs of decrepit Soviet structures, from quotidian bus stops to monolithic factories, exemplify a growing fixation with “ruin porn” and the post-industrial sublime. Recently, these depictions have included Siberia and the Russian Arctic, where The Guardian recently featured photographs of “slow-motion wrecks”: buildings in Norilsk, a major Russian Arctic mining city, cracking and failing as the permafrost underneath them melts with climate change. Yet, environmental explanations for the fragility of Russian infrastructure are insufficient in the face of massive investments in railroads, pipelines, and even potentially a multistory skyscraper in the city of Yakutsk, which sits entirely on permafrost. It should also be noted that in many of these regions, nomadic peoples who could have once moved in response to environmental shifts have now been forcibly settled into permanent structures, weakening their adaptive capacities. Across the border, China, flush with cash, is building infrastructure on permafrost, including the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, opened in 2006. Political determination and sufficient capital significantly reduce environmental obstacles and the perception of risks. Yet as countries like Russia and China undertake expensive megaprojects regardless of climactic risks, the odds are that one day, these may have to be condemned. An important consequence often lost in popular depictions of ruins are the people who remain in places that have become abandoned, disconnected, and newly remote. This paper draws on ethnographic research on sites of infrastructural ruins in post-Soviet spaces, with focus paid to the Russian Far East, and a review of visual narratives of these areas to make two arguments: first, how the fragility of infrastructure is not only environmentally produced, but also politically engineered, and second, how individuals living in landscapes of fragility cope with disconnection and the “disenchantment” of infrastructural ruination.

Coal roads in Pakistan and the contradictions of modernity

Mustafa Khan, SOAS, University of London, United Kingdom

In Tharparkar, south-east Pakistan, over 200 kilometres of roads are being constructed to facilitate access to a coalfield intended to provide power to an electricity-starved country. The new roads are often sold as harbingers of great change and signs of modernity. Industry and the much sought-after prize of foreign direct investment are just around the corner. I was often told that the Thar would become a “Dubai”, which represents an ultimate symbol of modernity. Scholars have argued that neo-liberalism’s achievements are double: narrowing the window of political debate, while promising prospects without limit. In Tharparkar, the immediate effect has been increased land speculation, with little tangible improvements with regards to local employment for example. I argue that the ‘transition rhetoric’ being used by the state and the local political elite has no relation to the actual economic and political processes, except to veil interests of the elite groups. The roads built so far already show a steady deterioration, as the existing state structures lack the necessary means through the agency of tax collection to put in place a regime of maintenance. This infrastructural fragility often exposes state weakness in this borderland locale, but the very ruination allows the state to secure its presence across contested spaces through the “need” to “develop” these regions. The material from Tharparkar demonstrates that roads as symbols of ‘modernity’ can be used to deconstruct some of the contradictions at the heart of many modernization myths

Boon and Bane: Fencing off livelihoods in Ulaanbaatar’s Ger Districts

Björn Reichhardt, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin / Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Germany

Throughout the past century, processes of urbanization have generated lasting effects on living conditions and social structures in Mongolian society. The in-migration of hundreds of thousands of new residents running parallel to insufficient urban planning have lead Ulaanbaatar to evolve into a metropolis shaped by multilayered socio-spatial division. Formerly a nomadic, monastic settlement, the city’s basic structures consisted of *ger* (yurt) districts – residential settlements that are now pushed to Ulaanbaatar’s periphery. The introduction of a land law that authorizes citizens to own 0,07 ha of land has once more increased the influx of newcomers leaving their rural livelihoods behind for a life in densely fenced yards. Being excluded from the infrastructures of urban life that once attracted them to the city, the majority of *ger* district residents experience cultural disintegration and face sweeping uncertainties. Only in recent years, city authorities and private investors invented measures

to curb the dispersal of the *ger* districts, including a city ban to stop migration from the land, and construction programs with the objective to supplant fenced parcels with multi-story apartment blocks. In both cases, improvement and change failed to appear. In light of this, fencing off land developed as major strategy to secure livelihoods. The fence, therefore, becomes a crucial instrument for navigating social fragmentation and infrastructural deficits.

How, then, do fences act as material realities in their social, political and geographic contexts? Are these borders merely protecting those on the inside or does being walled also prevent residents from reaching the outside world? Accordingly, questions arise about how people in uncertain environments conceive of their fenced properties. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, this paper aims at exploring both sides of the fence in Ulaanbaatar's *ger* districts and reflects upon the various forms borders and boundaries can take by highlighting their efficacies.

Friend or Foe, Challenges or Opportunity?: Demystifying Northeast Asia and its Neighbours

Convenor, chair and discussant: **Naomi Chi**, Hokkaido University, Japan

The acceleration of globalization and the innovations in communications and transportation technology have deemed the 21st century to be a “borderless” world. While goods and services are able to cross borders more readily than in the past, and the use of social network systems (SNS) such as Facebook and Twitter have been crucial in mobilizing people as well as transmitting information to the masses in real time, there are still many regions around the world where the borders are seemingly impermeable and hermetic. One of them exists in Northeast Asia—the 38 parallel that demarcates the two Koreas. The recent provocation of North Korea with its missile launching and nuclear programme has ever so much increased the tension and remains as a significant challenge to the region; however, much of what we know about North Korea and its relations with its neighbours are somewhat limited and in many respects “mystified” not only the country but also the region itself. However, much of the literature written on North Korea and its relations with countries in Northeast Asia looks at state actors concerning traditional security issues, thus, to “demystify” the region this panel will attempt to look beyond the physical state borders and to examine the non-state actors in terms of people’s everyday lives (Jones and Johnson, 2014). This is not to minimize or mitigate the actual challenges concerning this particular border in Northeast Asia. Rather, it is an attempt to re-conceptualize and expand our understanding of this particular border. This interdisciplinary panel invites experts on Northeast Asia to seek the following objectives: to consider this region not only as a challenge to security and stability to the region but as a potential border site for extracting “resources”, source for new emerging identities in Northeast Asia; to explore the non-state actors in terms of people’s everyday lives; and to provide new insights concerning this region and its borders. More specifically, experts will present on the following themes based on their empirical studies: (1) the history of the mobilization of human resources in Northeast Asia; (2) current situation of the mobilization of human resources, more specifically the North Korean migrant workers in Mongolia and Russia; (3) the identity and mobilization of human resources of North Korean defectors to South Korea; and (4) the identity, everyday lives and how the tensions in Japan-DPRK relations are affecting the Zainichi Koreans.

History of Mobilization of Human Resources in Northeast Asia: North Korean Migrant Workers in Sakhalin in 1950s~1960s

Hyein Han, Sunkyunkwan University, South Korea

During the Japanese colonial period, ethnic Koreans were considered as Japanese imperial subjects, and they were brought to Japanese territories to work as labourers. Many of them were taken to Karafuto (currently Sakhalin) of the southern Kurile Island to work in the coal mines. At the end of World War II, nearly 200,000 Japanese and ethnic Koreans lived on Karafuto, and from September 1945 Japanese people repatriated to Japan, however, over 20,000 ethnic Koreans were not allowed to repatriate to Japan nor to the Korean peninsula.

The repatriation of Japanese people took place at the same time as the Soviet Union invaded what is now Sakhalin and by 1948 all of the Japanese repatriated to Japan. However, the Soviet authorities were in need of human resources to further develop the island, therefore, the authorities relied on the ethnic Korean who “remained” in Sakhalin as well as turned to North Korean migrant workers to compensate for the lack of labour. In 1948, it is said that over 40,000 ethnic Koreans and migrant workers from Korea lived in Sakhalin. However, the sending of migrant workers from North Korea worked to their advantage as well, through the remittance of foreign currency to North Korea as well as to strengthening its ties with the Soviet Union.

Thus, the objective of this paper will be twofold: (1) to examine how the Soviet Union tried to utilize the ethnic Koreans as well as North Korean migrant workers as valuable human resources to develop their territories; and (2) to analyze how the North Korean regime made efforts to utilize their people and take advantage of their migrant workers to Sakhalin as well as trying to “nationalize” not only the Sakhalin Koreans as well as the ethnic Koreans in Japan to obtain human resources for their new nation.

Site for Human Resources?: North Korean Migrant Workers in Mongolia and Russia

Mitsuhiro Mimura, The Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia (ERINA), Japan

North Korea is perceived to many as being impermeable and hermetic; however, contrary to such popular notion migrant workers (also referred to as guest workers) have crossed this impervious border to not only to escape poverty and seek for better opportunities but also as part of the bigger national project of remitting foreign currency back to North Korea. The North Korean regime is utilizing its own human resources to obtain the much needed foreign currency, however, this works towards the advantage of the hosting countries as

North Korean migrant workers provide cheap and accessible labour working in the 3D (Dangerous, Dirty, Difficult) jobs in Russia and Mongolia. The objective of this paper is to explore the challenges and prospects of North Korean migrant workers in Northeast Asia and its implications. The paper is based on extensive field work conducted in both Mongolia and Russia.

Self-identity and Mobilization of North Korean Refugees in South Korea

Sincheol Lee, Sunkyunkwan University, South Korea

As of 2017, there are 28000 North Korean refugees in South Korea. Of these, 23000 are above 20 years of age. Many of these people have received at least elementary school education and in most cases have received over 9 years of formal education in North Korea. In other words, they have received enough education to form their basic “North Korean” identity.

North Korean refugees (excluding those high profile defectors) have found a home in South Korea since 1997, and since then a “re-education programme” for 3 months at “Hanawon” (settlement support center for North Korean refugees) has been implemented for them. This center is responsible for trade education as well as language education for the refugees, and since 2004 have provided history education to “reconstruct” their identity. Moreover, since 2009, the Korean government has started to provide “full-time” education for North Korean youths for the same purpose. All of these efforts have been implemented so that the North Korean refugees could be “re-educated” and reconstruct their “identity” so that they can settle into South Korean society. However, even though such efforts have been put into place, North Korean refugees still find it difficult to integrate to South Korean society and many of them seek to find refuge in a third country but often fail or at worst return to North Korea. This paper will attempt to illustrate the paradox of North Korean refugees who find refuge in South Korea to obtain mobility, yet often times find themselves immobile.

Victimization of Ordinary People in their Everyday Lives: Case of the Zainichi Koreans and the Influence of Japan-North Korean R

Jihyun Kim, Kobe University, Japan

The history of Japanese colonialism has a direct impact on the status of the ethnic Zainichi (literally means living in Korea) Koreans in Japan today. Although some Koreans had already lived in Japan in the beginning of the 20th century, the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910 brought about a large scale of Korean migration to Japan. However, the end of the war and the division of the two Koreas in the homeland “divided” the Korean community in Japan, the Zainichi Chosenjin (those who affiliate with North Korea) and the Zainichi Kankokujin (those who affiliate with South Korea).

This presentation will explore the Zainichi Koreans in Japan, and attempt to shed light on their identity and community building in Japan. Special attention will be given to the Korean ethnic schools (or Chosen Gakko) as the school plays a crucial role in their community. The paper will focus on Hyogo Prefecture, which is one of eighteen prefectures that has been tactical in maintaining the subsidy for the school and identifying the Zainichi Korean issue as part of the “multicultural coexistence” of foreigners in Japan rather than singling out Zainichi Koreans, which is surfacing as a social cleavage in recent years (i.e. increase in hate speech crimes in parts of Japan). Moreover, this paper will also explore how the Zainichi Korean community is affected by the tension and the conflictual relations between Japan and North Korea.

Genres of Border Tourism: Politics, Practices and Perspectives

Convenor: **Radhika Gupta**, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Chair: **Farhana Ibrahim**, Indian Institute of Technology, India

Discussant: **Sahana Ghosh**, Harvard University, United States

Even as some Asian borderlands are experiencing new forms of trans-border connectivity others continue to face (en) closure due to perpetual nationalist anxieties. In recent decades borderlands have emerged in national public imaginations in new and numerous ways. Triggered by specific events such as wars, new infrastructure development, or ongoing political conflict borderlands have become new sites of exploration for citizens of the 'heartlands'. In such contexts, while the imaginative horizons of borderland dwellers remain capacious, spilling beyond geo-political boundaries, they are forced to look inwards to state centers and 'majority' citizens to sustain identities and livelihoods. Long-held tropes attached to borderland geographies and ecologies such as remote, harsh, and exotic are seized by those inhabiting borderlands as resources for making claims upon the state, generating new economies and self-representation. Ruins of the past – castles, graves, deserted villages – are being packaged into cultural forms such as border museums and trails. Debris of the present --material traces of recent wars and political occupations -- are not only memorialized by the state but being creatively commodified by borderlands dwellers themselves. New spaces and routes have opened up through the intersection between securitization and tourism.

This panel will explore contemporary genres of border tourism that have emerged in Asian borderlands. Despite heavy securitization borderlands in India and China, for example, have been witnessing a surge in 'domestic' tourism. They are no longer the stomping grounds of merely the intrepid adventurer or the tired bureaucrat for whom the border is often a punishment posting. These forms of tourism have been facilitated by infrastructure such as new roads and airports built by the state as well as generated new infrastructure by borderland dwellers. This panel discuss the politics, practices and often paradoxical perspectives surrounding border tourism stretching from the western Indian border in Kutch to farther north in Kargil and then move eastwards to Nepal's bordering regions with China to Chinese tourism in Taiwan.

Questions this panel will contemplate include: How have these new cultural and economic productions reconfigured historical dynamics of interactions between 'insider' and 'outsider'? What do theories of 'travel' mean for the study of 'culture'? What new forms of mobility have these recent assemblages produced? What new trails have they opened up within securitized spaces of borderlands? How can we conceptualize tourism as a political practice? What can the lexicon of border studies and tourism studies contribute to each other?

Border tourism and the citizen-voyeur: mobility, exchange and relations of surveillance on a South Asian borderland

Farhana Ibrahim, Indian Institute of Technology, India

"The entire country has burst in upon us!" Thus exclaimed one of my informants: a middle-aged woman who had observed the comings-and-goings on this borderland through two major wars and countless cycles of drought. She had a keen sense of who chose to travel through unpaved roads, dust, and hot desert winds to her village on a remote outpost of the Pakistan-India border. The Indian state's security apparatus—military and border police, intelligence officers, and civil administration—transacted with its border residents regularly. These transactions took place over meetings and memos as much as through exchanges of hospitality, information, and gifts. Surveillance of border populations went alongside discourses of development and security. In the late 2000s this border—once off-limits to civilians as a 'restricted zone'—was opened to border tourism through the securitization of leisure travel. Scores of tourists now visit military checkpoints and drive through vast desert landscapes dotted with advertisement-style hoardings extolling the heroism of the army and border residents describe feeling as though they are being observed in a zoo. This paper addresses the harnessing of new discursive forms of state security to earlier genres of mobility and surveillance in these borderlands under the rubric of border tourism. It asks, how are relations of surveillance forged within idioms of exchange—of governance, commerce and livelihood, but also increasingly through circuits of leisure and 'nationalist' travel? The paper suggests that perhaps the anguished response to increased tourism as entrapment— even as it attracts revenue and employment opportunities for borderland residents—recalls the erasure of former interactions that underscored the centrality of the border village in the mutual maintenance

and production of security; where it was not always possible to detect host and guest, state and citizen, observers and observed.

Roads and Trails: Creating Routes in the Himalaya

Kabir Mansingh Heimsath, Lewis and Clark College, United States

Despite decades of political upheavals, military conflict and natural disasters, tourism in the high Himalayas is going strong. From certain tourists' point of view, the primary danger to their Himalayan experience comes from decidedly un-'Himalayan' infrastructure development. This paper investigates the seemingly conflicting ideologies but shared routes of road-building and trekking paths in the border areas of north-central Nepal. At the same time that environmental and tourist agencies promote eco-cultural sustainability through walking trails, development organizations and state administrations push socio-economic development with the construction of feeder roads through exceptionally 'remote' regions. I follow official discourse and planning paradigms through published sources and interviews while tracing the inclinations of trekking tourism through participant observation and discourse analysis over the past thirty years. In addition to questioning the economic benefits, social transformations, and cultural impacts enacted by roads and trails, I wonder whether these projects involve the same 'place' at all? This paper suggests that the practiced reality of borderland mobility forces us to move beyond static notions of place towards a more robust theoretical engagement with the ideologies of creative place-making.

Commodifying the border, reversing the gaze: Tourism in Kargil

Radhika Gupta, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Located along the 'line of control' between India and Pakistan in the Indian controlled province of Kashmir, Kargil has closely experienced three wars since the partition of the sub-continent. With each of these wars the de facto border became less permeable. Today heavy militarization and mountain geography deter licit and illicit cross-border mobility. As a result Kargilis have been forced to look inwards towards mainland India for economic sustenance and symbolic recognition. While they bemoan the loss of a time of unfettered mobility the past has been converted into a resource of symbolic and use value. Imperial and national frames of representation – remote place inhabited by the noble savage, high-altitude battlefield, exotic and backward -- have been creatively commoditized to promote varied forms of border tourism. Kargil is slowly becoming a popular destination for tourists from mainstream India indulging in a new genre of war tourism. Kargilis engage this external gaze from multiple angles. Examples range from the memorializations of the Kargil War to a Silk Road museum to a 'Museum of Memories' in a border village recently de-classified as 'inner-line'. This paper will analyze how borderland dwellers in Kargil challenge singular, homogenizing representations of the region through creativity fomented by closure. We see here a different kind of 'border work' at play. The fetishization of the border by the state to reiterate its sovereignty is seized by borderland dwellers to produce unexpected configurations between border tourism and the politics of state security.

Hyperbuilding Highland Asia I

Ethnographic engagements with emerging infrastructural (geo)politics

Convenor: **Matthäus Rest**, Max-Planck-Institute for the Science of Human History, Germany

Chair: **Galen Murton**, James Madison University, United States

Highland Asia lies at the crossroads of what is positioned to become the largest infrastructural intervention in history. While large-scale development projects are not new in these mountain regions, China's recent announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)/One Belt One Road (OBOR) suggests a considerable jump in scale and, as most of the construction will be take place abroad, a new key component for Chinese foreign politics. Such construction is usually thought of as infra-structure – that which lies below and is envisioned to undergird future economic activity and development. However, in contemporary China, and especially with BRI/OBOR, building infrastructure has itself become a means to keep GDP above target. In this context, the infra of infra-structure is being superseded by what we call hyper-building: a more self-referential form of construction concerned as much with the here and now than with the future. Moreover, hyper-structures are highly visible interventions that are not intended to remain hidden, or underground.

A key strategic target for hyper-structural change under BRI/OBOR includes the areas along Asia's highest mountain ranges. While a coherent framework for BRI/OBOR remains uncertain, its political-economic power has already become a discursive force and the ramifications of expansive infrastructure projects are now producing tangible social and political consequences in many places across Highland Asia. A growing network of roads, railways, and airports are opening areas long deemed remote, and an expanding grid of power stations, electric lines, and pipelines increasingly carry resources from the historically peripheral borderlands to state centers.

In order to complicate more macro-level and policy driven conversations that perpetuate "infrastructural enchantments" with BRI/OBOR (Harvey and Knox 2012), this panel brings ethnographic attention to specific highways, railroads, hydropower projects, and airports. Our goal is to examine notable yet often-ignored places that have already been changed and might prefigure future changes through BRI/OBOR. In more theoretical terms, we seek to examine the poetics and the politics of infrastructural forms (Larkin 2013), and to explore how the spectacular politics of hyperbuilding (Ong 2011) is as relevant to remote infrastructure projects as to Asia's megacities. Bringing infrastructure studies back to the ground and highlighting the geopolitical centrality of often overlooked places, this panel presents four ethnographically-grounded case studies of infrastructure development in Highland Asia as a timely and critical assessment of the emerging politics of China's BRI/OBOR project.

Hyper-structure: Re-thinking large-scale infrastructure development in Highland Asian borderlands

Alessandro Rippa, Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

Galen Murton, James Madison University, United States

Matthäus Rest, Max-Planck-Institute for the Science of Human History, Germany

Infrastructures are back. From the 2016 US Presidential elections to China's growing overseas investments, promises of infrastructure development are often at the forefront of political debates across the globe. The borderlands of Highland Asia have been for decades at the centre of ambitious infrastructure projects and speculations. From the Soviet construction of roads and airports in the Pamirs, to India's substantive investment in hydropower development, large-scale projects are not new. However, the scale and ambitions of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)/One Belt One Road (OBOR) promises a dramatic departure from earlier interventions. Therefore, an analysis of a number of large-scale projects (ongoing and planned) in the region is not only timely, but also offers a critical point of entry for a more grounded analysis of BRI/OBOR. Through a close reading of the literature and extensive fieldwork experiences in northern Nepal, the Tibet Autonomous Region, Xinjiang and Yunnan, in this presentation we argue that rather than distinct infra-structures or super-structures, the big, new material infrastructures that are dreamed of, planned and constructed across the highlands of Asia can be better conceptualized as hyper-structures. What marks hyperstructures as distinctly different from other everyday infrastructure is, we argue, a scale and symbolism that often exceeds their economic rationality. Hyperstructures in Highland Asia are driven by something more than economic interests, and their conspicuousness rather reflects the coming together of different motivations and claims.

Flight and Fight: Aviation and Mobility in Nepal

Tina Harris, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

There has been a significant increase in new flight paths, low-cost airline fleets, and growing investment in airport infrastructure across Asia over the past decade. These developments in ‘hyperbuilding’ have been attributed to changes in labour mobility and the (often China-driven) creation of new markets and economic corridors through seemingly ‘remote’ regions of Asia. In Nepal in particular, new Gulf and Southeast Asian airline routes through Kathmandu accommodate growing groups of migrants who work in Doha and Kuala Lumpur, as well as more Nepali-speaking cabin crew. Expansion and improvement plans for Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu proceed in tandem and in tension with continuing national post-earthquake reconstruction. Sino-Nepali joint ventures in aviation and infrastructure are becoming more common via the backdrop of the China-led One Belt One Road initiative. This paper uses ethnographic case studies in order to explore how we can theoretically and methodologically understand the relationships between three overlapping spheres of growth in aviation infrastructure and geopolitical change in Asia: 1) broad developments in cross-border and airspace infrastructure across Asia and the Middle East, 2) the increase and expansion of air routes and airports to, from, and within Nepal, and 3) the experiences on the ground (and in the air!) of those who directly experience such changes in Nepal: flight attendants, air route and airport planners, and migrant workers.

Speed, time, and ruin in images of China’s “ghost cities”

Max Woodworth, Ohio State University, United States

An iconic image of China’s urban-industrial expansion is the urban high-rise. Yet images of the same type of building now also circulate as referents of the troubled political economy of urban land development. In particular, images of high-rise buildings and freshly built, but unoccupied urban forms have proliferated in connection with reports about the over-production of urban property and the creation of so-called “ghost cities,” a process driven by pervasive financial speculation. The high-rise as a symbol of vibrancy, growth, and progress in many instances is now the antithesis of China’s urban juggernaut; the residential and office tower is shown as an empty ruin and signifier of failed development. Following Yablon’s (2009) notion of the “untimely,” and set against recent reports of a dramatic counter-urbanization taking place in China, this paper examines images of the new high-rise ruin. By focusing on the photo-documentary work of several photographers, it explores how “emptiness” is depicted in images of the high-rise to critique the financialization of urban space. This paper considers, on the one hand, how such images of emptiness in architectural form aim to reveal the giddy speed of financial speculation amid China’s capitalist transition. On the other, it explores how, in the steadfast avoidance of depicting people, such images of empty monumental forms expose limitations of these photographs as critiques of abstract capitalist space by replicating the erasure of actual communities that persist within these ostensibly empty zones.

Hyperbuilding Highland Asia II: Ethnographic engagements with emerging infrastructural (geo)politics

Convenor: **Matthäus Rest**, Max-Planck-Institute for the Science of Human History, Germany

Chair: **Alessandro Rippa**, Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

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Infrastructure development in Kazakhstan: Changing networks in the Sino-Kazakh borderlands

Verena La Mela, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany

The "International Center of Boundary Cooperation" (ICBC) is a duty-free shopping zone located in the proverbial middle of nowhere. Surrounded by deserts and mountains, the ICBC was erected between China's Xinjiang province and Kazakhstan's southeastern hinterlands. Fifteen years after it was founded, ICBC grew into a small city, donning skyscrapers and large shopping complexes. Today, the ICBC is an economic link connecting both countries as well as, more broadly, East Asia with Central Asia and Europe, making it a key component of Beijing's One Belt, One Road initiative. Simultaneously with the construction of the above mentioned institutions, a planned town, Nurkent, was developed as well as a nearby dry port and a train station. The settlement is inhabited by migrants from Kazakhstan who work at the adjacent Khorgos Gateway dry port, the train station, or in the construction of the new Western Europe-Western China highway. This paper ethnographically examines two case studies located in the towns Nurkent and Zharkent. In Nurkent's case, a boom in new facilities can be witnessed and in Zharkent, a trading town established at the end of the 19th century, the decay of old commercial activities can be seen. Both cases indicate how personal and local social networks are affected by the infrastructural change and will therefore provide ethnographic insights into the tangible social consequences of infrastructure development in Central Asia today.

Upper Mekong Electricity Developemnt

Ling Zhang, Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, China

When the economic co-operation program between the riparian states of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) was established, it was well recognized that full scale regional electricity trade represents an unprecedented opportunity for economic and environmental benefits for individual countries and the entire region. After decades of insignificant volumes of cross-country electricity trade, GMS countries have not reached consensus

on a couple of important issues for building a regional power trade market. Recently, due to the “new normal” of Chinese economic development, areas with rich hydro-resources and large scale development have moved from power deficit to power surplus, therefore, both governments and the power companies are seeking ways to export excess electricity to the neighboring countries with increasing power demand. This may lead to a new round of discussion. This paper is designed to discuss the potential and prospects of GMS regional power trade from a legal perspective. It examines the power sector regulatory and policy environment in the GMS countries in the context of cross-border power trade. Drawing on international experience of national and regional trading arrangements, the paper will try to identify key issues influencing rapid development of cross-border power trade and will provide specific recommendations to address these issues.

Walking on an empty road: Geographies of movement and mobility in Tsum

Nadine Plachta, Heidelberg University, Germany

Konstantin Ikonomidis, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Denmark

This presentation explores how a new road in Tsum, a high-altitude valley located in Nepal's Gorkha District, can alter socio-economic strategies and resource management for a borderland population. In autumn 2013, a bulldozer was flown into Tsum to build a road to connect the region with China and the Nepalese lowlands. The project is still under construction but when completed, it will add to Nepal's expanding network of roads. According to a national rhetoric that supports development, this north-south trade and transit corridor is expected to improve the livelihoods of the local community by linking spaces across borderlands. But what do villagers whose lives the road is intended to benefit think about the new pathway that follows an old trade route but is still empty of vehicles? With renderings that speculate how the road possibly can transform local livelihoods, an architect and an anthropologist began a joint research project on infrastructure interventions. They carried images to Tsum that display visualizations about the future in order to allow interviewees to grasp a different kind of tomorrow. Conversations emphasized spaces and practices of mobility and the shifting of identities through altered geographies of movement. They also reflected cultural and economic flows through borderlands. Besides addressing the promises and threats of connectivity that infrastructure expansions carry, this presentation aims to demonstrate that a collaboration across disciplinary boundaries can help to develop a new perspective in the study of roads and mobility in areas of Highland Asia that were once considered remote and peripheral to centers of state power but are now in the focus for the enactment of national authority and territorial control.

Infrastructural ruins in the Asian Borderlands

Convenor and Chair: **Mona Chettri**, Aarhus University, Denmark

Co-convenor and Discussant: **Duncan McDuie-Ra**, University of New South Wales, Australia

Co-convenor: **Michael Eilenberg**, Aarhus University, Denmark

Asian borderlands are fast becoming sites of rapid infrastructural growth as both state and non-state actors are engaged in an accelerated bid to 'develop' and 'open' border regions. Here exploitation and extraction is often couched in the language of socio-economic development and infrastructure is seen as a tangible representation of development, economic progress and modernity. Infrastructural development is enabled by a wide range of actors and institutions with varied motivations and expectations. It creates new layers of bureaucracy and governance thereby generating opportunities for exploitation, negotiation and interaction for both state and non-state actors alike, often in unexpected ways.

Despite the promise and vision of prosperity, infrastructural development has led to different forms of ruins and decay in the Asian borderlands. As infrastructure becomes an important variable that different communities have to consider, negotiate and/or bypass, infrastructure acquires an 'affective' character. The process of infrastructural development facilitates the emergence of new constellations of solidarities and conflict; it enables new forms of expressing and experiencing violence and creates a nebulous legal environment that assists its proliferation.

The impact of infrastructural development can be as varied as the actors and institutions themselves. While environmental degradation has emerged as the most visible form of ruin, infrastructural ruins can range from economic marginalisation, erosion of cultural identity to forced migration. Infrastructural development in the Asian borderlands has led to the creation of new forms of exploitation and inequalities, exacerbated pre-existing socio-economic vulnerabilities, unleashed various forms of politics and accelerated environmental degradation. And yet, despite the decay and ruins, the desire for and of infrastructural development continues unabated. The panel focuses on different types of infrastructural interventions across the Asian borderlands to illustrate, understand and analyse different types of ruins and ruptures created by infrastructural development. The papers in the panel analyse both direct as well as indirect impacts of infrastructural development. The panel aims to discuss the creation of diverse environmental ruins; the physical, symbolic and affective impacts of infrastructure on communities; the processes that enable their proliferation; the conditions and desires that necessitate the construction of specific forms of infrastructure; and the socio-political changes and politics that have emerged as result of infrastructural development.

Asphalting the Frontier: Modernist Configurations of Order and Control on the Indonesian-Malaysian Border. **Michael Eilenberg**, Aarhus University, Denmark

Through the lens of large-scale road development, this paper explores the incomplete and continuous colonization process of the Indonesian borderlands on the island of Borneo. I examine the infrastructural ruins and ruptures of territorial planning, corporate expansion, sovereignty and modernist configurations of border development.

When Indonesian President Jokowi announced that he would run for president in 2013 he promised that should he win he would instigate an infrastructure revolution and develop the neglected border regions. He promised thousand kilometers of roads and the construction of new special development zones in the remote borderlands to cater plantation, mining and tourism development. In 2015 these promises began to materialize and the patchy network of dusty and unpaved logging and plantation road along the border was from one day to the other 'upgraded' to the status of a 'national highway' and became an important part of the grand plan of connecting all the provinces of Indonesian Borneo through the creation of the Trans-Kalimantan Highway in the core of the island - 1,900 kilometers - to be completed in 2019.

This paper investigates what happens when these infrastructure dreams or hallmarks of developmentalism do not materialize as intended or their continuous construction becomes a permanent state. It asks the questions: How does such territorial planning shape and entice capital expansion and privatization? How are these modernist infrastructure projects organizing local motilities, connectivity and pace of life on the border? For example, roads are powerful symbols of modernity, promises of economic growth and political/territorial integration. But also means for directing state power and asserting territorial claims of sovereignty. Roads are

sites of governance. They are known or infamous for ‘opening up’ hinterlands for exploitation and settlement (technologies of destruction) but do also hold together the imaginative and the concrete in quite explicit ways.

Ruinous Natures: Climate, Development, and Infrastructure in the India-Bangladesh Borderlands

Jason Cons, University of Texas, Austin, United States

Over the past decade, there has been a vast transformation in the character of development and conservation in the India-Bangladesh borderlands. New waves of development initiatives, many of them indexed to global fears about climate change, have swept into the southwestern delta region. While these projects profess a common goal—climate preparedness—they are anything but mutually coherent or coordinated. Some offer experimental interventions on climate resilience. Others seek to stem massive and imminent displacement across the border. Still yet others focus on securing and conserving the Sundarbans—the world’s largest mangrove forest—protecting it from ruinous anthropogenic change. Of particular note amongst these projects is their ephemerality and rapidly changing nature. Old projects are rapidly displaced by new ones. One funding cycle’s operative logics give way to new priorities and strategies. This paper explores both the fragmentary remains and ruinous logics of this new emerging climate borderland. As the India-Bangladesh border is increasingly imagined as a frontline of global climate change, it asks: what kind of future do these ruins portend and what other kind of imaginaries—of space, of agrarian life, of security—emerge in their midst.

Regimes of unaccountability: hydro-power development and infrastructural ruins in the eastern Himalaya

Mona Chettri, Aarhus University, Denmark

Infrastructural development is one of the key factors that contributes to Sikkim’s reputation as the model development state in north-eastern India. Roads, green buildings, religious-themed parks, airport, hydro-power projects and pharmaceutical factories all come together to produce and reinforce the relationship between infrastructure and development in the public sphere. Within this gamut of infrastructural interventions, hydro-power projects have been most significant in altering the physical and social landscape of Sikkim. There are more than nineteen power projects that have either been already commissioned or are in various stages of construction in the Sikkim Himalaya. According to official statements hydro-power projects are expected to convert the state from being ‘consumers’ to ‘producers’ and become ‘self-reliant’.

The realization of these aspirations has led to different forms of ruptures in the physical, social and political landscape of Sikkim. Infrastructural ruptures and ruins have galvanised different forms of solidarities and contestations, especially in north Sikkim where anti-hydro movement has been spearheaded by an ethnic group. In other parts of the state, construction and abandonment of HEP projects continues with very limited accountability on the part of the state as well as the project developers. The paper will focus on the socio-economic and environmental decay caused by the now-abandoned Rangit IV HEP in south Sikkim to discuss, firstly, how desires for development materialise in infrastructure; secondly, what are the factors that enable and perpetuate a regime of unaccountability that leads to decay and ruins and finally what does the absence of political discussion around infrastructural ruins tell us about economic liberalisation in the eastern Himalayan borderland.

An anxious Border: Material Embodiment, Diffusion and Social Abandonment in the Abkhazian Borderlands

Mikel J.H. Venhovens, Aarhus University, Denmark

The borderlands of the de-facto/semi-recognized state of Abkhazia take a unique position in the debate on borders due its insecure, anxious and contested nature. Especially as Abkhazian Statehood has been established in the ruins of a violent conflict and afterwards has been left with the scars of non-recognition, contested statehood and unresolved conflict.

It can be argued that the borderlands of de-facto states are explicitly meant to be additionally ‘hard’ and immovable, as the ‘insecure, unrecognized state of being’ makes it more important to stress the existence, firmness and cohesiveness of the state. For these entities, there is an existential need to express where one space begins and where another ends, often done by barbed wire, border control, patrols and other forms of tangible representations that carry on the narrative of the state. Negotiating these spaces seems to be impossible as the diffusion of where one nation state begins and ends, is regarded as a threat directly pertained to their collective identity and existence.

While the borderization process ‘hardens’ the border, the ethnic Georgian population living in the borderlands are deemed by the Abkhazian Government to be diffusing this process. They negotiate their way across the de-

facto border amidst the newly installed border regime with its accompanying (spatial) bordering devices. Once just an administrative borderline on a map, nowadays the border significantly limits their ability to participate in Georgian society, friends, family and Georgian bureaucratic processes. Not able to participate freely in Georgian Society and treated as outcasts by Abkhazian society, they find themselves in an anxious limbo amid the ruins of a 24 year old conflict.

This paper therefore explores the question of how de-facto authorities legitimize their authority through spatial strategies, and how populations living in the borderlands contest this –deliberately or unintentionally- by crossing this border.

Language Revitalization in the Tibetospheric Borderlands

Convenor and Chair: **Gerald Roche**, University of Melbourne, Australia

The Tibetosphere is a transnational linguistic and cultural region in the heart of Asia, stretching across six countries: China, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar. This region is defined by the central role played by the written Tibetan language, as a script that is not only a sacred medium within Tibetan Buddhism, but also, increasingly, the basis of a ‘holy vernacular’ associated with a pan-Tibetan identity. Beyond Tibetan and its unifying roles in the region however, the Tibetosphere is also a linguistically diverse region; in all countries of the Tibetosphere, Tibetan interacts with dominant state languages, as well as numerous localized vernaculars. The Tibetosphere is therefore simultaneously a powerful cultural and linguistic centre, and also a marginalized borderland at the intersection of several states. The emerging dynamics of this borderland language ecology are highly complex. On the one hand, Tibetan is minoritized in all countries of the Tibetosphere, in that it plays only a limited role within major social institutions and is dominated by national languages. In this sense, Tibetan - its written and spoken forms - can be considered endangered. On the other hand, however, Tibetan increasingly plays a central role throughout the Tibetosphere, with its prestige as a sacred language bolstering its role as an emerging ethnonational vernacular. Thus, whilst also being endangered, Tibetan is now placing pressure on, and even replacing, less prestigious spoken vernaculars throughout the region. Language revitalization in the borderlands of the Tibetosphere therefore refers to two related and seemingly opposed processes. First of all, it refers to the revitalization of Tibetan as a minoritized language: the struggle to maintain and develop the written language while expanding it into new domains. Secondly, it refers to the revitalization of other languages in the region, which is often suppressed by struggles between Tibetan and dominant state languages. In this context, this panel seeks to investigate the following questions. What discourses of identity and belonging underlie the revitalization of Tibetan in this transnational region? What international discourses and institutions promote and empower the revitalization of Tibetan? To what extent do these discourses promote the maintenance of the region’s linguistic diversity through plurilingual identities and the fostering of multilingual practices? What counter-discourses to pan-Tibetan monoglot identity exist, if any? What parallels exist elsewhere within other Asian borderlands, with Tibetan as both a minoritized and dominant language?

The role of Chöke (Classical Tibetan) on the development of the Kurtöp Language in Bhutan

Gwendolyn Hyslop, The University of Sydney, Australia

Kurtöp is an East Bodish language of Northeastern Bhutan, spoken by approximately 15,000 people. Like the other East Bodish languages, Kurtöp is not a direct descendant of Old Tibetan and thus belongs to a different linguistic group than the Tibetic languages (Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994; Hyslop 2013, 2014). However, Classical Tibetan (referred to as Chöke in Bhutan) has had a large influence on the development of Kurtöp over the centuries. In this talk I present some of the features of Kurtöp which can be attributed to influence from Chöke.

We can identify Chöke influence in the domain of phonology, the lexicon, and grammar. In terms of phonology, we see that Kurtöp has recently innovated a series of retroflex stops, developed palatal stops, and is developing tone, all in the same phonological contexts as Chöke. While standard Kurtöp only has five vowels, we see that for speakers educated in Bhutan’s national language Dzongkha, and spoken Tibetan, two front rounded vowels are also found in the same contexts they are found in spoken Tibetan. In terms of lexicon, we see a near complete overlap in religious vocabulary as Chöke words were borrowed directly into Kurtöp, presumably under the influence of Buddhism. In addition to the religious domain, we also see Chöke words in nearly every other lexical domain of Kurtöp, including basic verbs and body parts. Finally, we see Chöke influence on the grammar, with the nominalizers -khan and -pa, being borrowed from spoken Tibetan, for example. Even the egophoric perfective marker -shang can be shown to be a borrowing from a Tibetan dialect (Hyslop under review).

The Paradox of a Global Tibetan: Ruination & Revival in Standard Tibetan Language Forms

Dirk Schmidt, Esukhia, United States

The literary standard for Tibetan was, according to tradition, codified by Tönmi Sambota in the grammar treatises of the ‘Thirty Verses’, among others, in the 7th century CE. Though the 8th through 10th centuries saw three language reforms—mostly related to spelling—no modern change to the acceptable literary norms have been made since the fall of the Tibetan empire. For all intents and purposes, the literary standard has been frozen in a state of stasis for the past 1,000 years.

In contradistinction, the emerging standard for an inter-dialectal Tibetan vernacular has been an organic process marked by fluidity and change—as speakers of various dialects and regions communicate, natural strategies for understanding and being understood cross-dialectally manifest as divergent language change. That is, rather than moving the standard vernacular dialect back towards already-accepted literary norms, spoken language change tends away from these norms, by introducing and exacerbating differences between the informal and the formal.

This phenomenon is especially pronounced in the standard Tibetan vernacular of the Himalayan diaspora, ‘Settlement Tibetan’. Settlement Tibetan provides a window into how changes to environment, family structure, and inter-dialectal speech communities drive changes in language and, as a result, the behavior and relationships of native Tibetan speakers with a highly conservative (and unchanged) literary language. Indeed, a closer look at the data and trends found in Settlement Tibetan suggest that the developing global Tibetan vernacular widens the diglossic gap between spoken and literary standards, leading to reduced Tibetan language literacy, despite a concerted effort to impose top-down language education. The paradox this presentation explores, then, is this: How does a potential global Tibetan vernacular actually create obstacles to—or ruin the opportunity for—literacy in global literary Tibetan? What revival strategies are possible? And what resources would such a revival require?

Khams Tibetan as a linguistic minority in Myanmar: A sociolinguistic description

Hiroyuki Suzuki, University of Oslo, Norway

This paper presents a sociolinguistic description of Khams Tibetan spoken by ethnic Tibetans who reside in the northern tip of Myanmar. The approximate number of Khams Tibetan speakers is 300, and they live mainly in four hamlets in Dazundam Village Tract, Putao Region, Kachin State, Myanmar. Their ancestors came from the adjacent area to its north, within the present Chayu (Dzayul) County of Tibetan Autonomous Region, China, around 200 years ago. At present, Khams Tibetan in Myanmar faces two major languages: Rawang as the regional lingua franca and Burmese as the national education language. Tibetans receive compulsory education in Myanmar only in Burmese. For everyday life, they communicate in Rawang with neighbours such as Rawang and Lisu. Under these circumstances, Tibetans are generally trilingual. Remarkably, they still maintain high competence in Khams Tibetan as well. It seems likely that their maintenance of Khams Tibetan is due to the fact that their language is used not only in their hamlets and their households but also in communicating with Tibetans in China since several families still maintain relations with Tibetans in Chayu (Dzayul).

Tibetan as a Dominant Language in China

Gerald Roche, University of Melbourne, Australia

The Tibetan language in China demonstrates two seemingly contradictory trends. On the one hand, it is a dominated language, which is socially marginalized and excluded from significant social and political institutions—one which its speakers are right to feel is threatened. At the same time, Tibetan is also an expanding language that is gradually replacing some of the small, oral vernaculars of the Tibetan Plateau—the minority languages of Tibet. This presentation will focus on this second aspect of the fate of the Tibetan language in China, and thus contribute new knowledge to our understanding of the complex language policies to which China’s linguistic diversity are subject. Due to the difficulty of collecting systematic, large-scale data amongst all of Tibet’s minority language speakers, this research is based on a survey of linguists who work on these languages. Drawing on these linguists’ expert testimony, this survey demonstrates that Tibetan is acting as a dominant language for some of the minority languages of Tibet, but not for others. In addition to mapping out the landscape of language shift in the region, I also attempt to offer an explanation as to why some of Tibet’s minority languages are shifting to Tibetan, others are shifting to Chinese, but none of them are being sustainably maintained. My analysis also endeavors to put this national situation within the transnational pattern of the Tibetan language’s expansion.

Life on the Border: New Forms of Life Blooming in the Borderlands

Convenor and Chair: **Karolina Koziol**, Princeton University, United States

Apart from being demarcation lines drawn on the maps and corresponding legal institutions, borders are material structures: walls, fences, gates, “no man” zones, security cameras and even non-human agents (De Leon 2015). As an instrument in the process of securitization adopted by the state, whether by physical structures or bordering policies, they partition the local population and may restrict flows of people, goods and ideas. Designed to divide and connect at the same time, they are supposed to be an inhabitable space of transit, non-places (Auge 1995).

But what happens once the stability of the demarcation line is challenged, this is, once the border is suddenly closed or opened, becomes defunct, is transformed or moved away? In this panel we look at the new forms of life blooming in the borderlands that erupt into and interrupt existing forms of life: how borders infrastructure and/or their ruins are being appropriated and transformed by various actors.

However, being zones of cross-border movements, borderlands are subjects of multiple, at times conflicting, imaginaries produced by diverse groups. How do these imaginaries impact place-making of borderlands throughout Asia? Why are certain new forms of life and afterlife prevailing over others? What conflicts arise because of new forms? Inspired by investigations of materiality and infrastructure, we ask not what borders and borderplaces themselves do but what they enable or allow by viewing infrastructure as “built networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people, or ideas and allow for their exchange over space [; they are physical forms that] shape the nature of a network, the speed and direction of its movement, its temporalities, and its vulnerability to breakdown” (Larkin 2013). At stake are the past, present, future, as well as the unfulfilled past and present potentials of the borders that this panel interrogates.

Competing Tourism(s): Local and Governmental Aspiration in Vladivostok, Russia in the Tourism Industry

Kamal Kariem, Princeton University, United States

During the Soviet Union, Vladivostok was a closed city. Around the city, on nearby islands, and throughout the region as a whole, there are remnants of this reality. Crumbling forts, old barracks, tunnel systems in disrepair, and abandon lookout posts exist alongside the city, the administrative center of Primorsky Krai, and with active naval and military bases. Within this context, the government of the Russian Federation is developing the regional tourism industry, mainly targeted at attracting foreigners to the region. Here, two trends of tourism arise. First, tourists dominantly from China, Japan, and South Korea come to the city to shop and partake in a close by European city by shopping and taking part in the number of rising tourist attractions being formed by government-private partnerships. Second, tourists from the region and other parts of Russia come to enjoy nature. In between these two trends, this paper interrogates the discourses around tourism that arise when government-private partnerships create tourist attractions that largely attract foreigners and foreign capital from China, Japan, and South Korea and when ecological tourism mobilizes the region’s former closed status to attract tourists from Russia to pristine nature. This paper illuminates the divergences between two conceptions of and motivations for development in the region and in the tourism industry and how infrastructure or lack thereof enables local and governmental actors to forward their aspirational vision of the region in this borderland.

Border as a Theme Park: Tourist Imaginaries along the Sino-Russian Border

Karolina Koziol, Princeton University, United States

The border between China and Russia had been closed for years. In the last years, Manzhouli, a city in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and the last Chinese train station before the border crossing with Russia, became a tourist attraction for domestic and international visitors, proving that tourism industry does not depend on “intrinsic” attractions, but rather on hyperreal constructed spaces. Since Manzhouli did not offer any major preexisting historical landmarks, but merely a train station and marketplaces, the tourist attractions had to be invented. While Russian-themed tourist attractions can be found throughout Northern China, Manzhouli claims to be a site of the “fusion of three cultures.” Conveniently located on the border, the city serves as a “Chinese” destination for visitors from Russia and simultaneously offers “Russian” tourist experiences for domestic guests, a highlight of which is a Matryoshka-themed entertainment park, featuring a museum of Russia and a hotel in a shape of a Russian nestling doll, also offering “Russian and Mongolian” art shows. An additional attraction, however only accessible for holders of PRC passports, is a border theme park, featuring different forms of border gates. The urbanscape of Manzhouli provides a great insight into the construction of mutual imaginaries along

the Russian-Chinese border. Tourism imaginaries are based on difference projection and reproduction within local, national, regional and global contexts. However, in this case a city in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, bordering with the Siberian province Zabaikalsky Krai, is designed as a liminal space of encountering the “Chinese” and the “Russian.” Using the concept of socio-semiotics, this paper explores how two different national traits are developed and represented in an urban space of a bordertown which theoretically belongs to another ethnic group’s territory.

Changing identity and boundaries at the India-Bangladesh borderland: The implications of Border formation and Border fence

Abhimanyu Datta, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

Looking at the increased cross border illegal activities, the construction of the International Barbed wire Border fence was initiated by the Government of India at the entire Indo-Bangladesh borderland. But the construction of the border fence following the Land Border Agreement of leaving 150yards from the actual line of partition has directly affected approximately 90,000 populations who were living at the extreme territorial edge of India. Historically people are living in this geographical location since before the partition of India. The partition has formed two nations but still there are many locations on this borderland where two different nationals are living just like neighbours near the actual line of partition. The Indian families, who are now trapped between the actual line of partition and the border fence, are now in receipt of a new social identity. They are living at the extreme edge of Indian Territory but the creation of the border fence has emerged as a new challenge for their life. The creation of the border fence not only restricts the easy movements of the people into their own country but with the passage of time they have been identified in different ways and which is resulting in exclusion and deterioration in their socio-economic condition.

The paper is an attempt to describe how the creation of the border fence is resulting in identity confusion of the place and of the people living over there. It will also describe how the border is getting categorized and imagined in a new way based on the creation of the border fence and border rules of the State.

Liquid Undercurrents: Infrastructure and the border lives of fuel, water, and cash

Convenor and chair: **Galen Murton**, James Madison University, United States

Infrastructure has emerged as a major theme in borderland studies. The current frenzy of road and hydropower construction, often in relation to China's Belt and Road initiative (BRI/OBOR), is rapidly reshaping Asian borderlands. While a main focus of analysis often examines how anticipation, planning and building of infrastructures affects lives and relations in the borderlands (Sidaway and Woon 2017), the liquid undercurrents that drive these processes – such as gaz, diesel, water, and cash – remain hidden and less understood. While these fuels and their circulations are widely discussed in more geopolitical and policy-oriented conversations, more grounded analyses reveal the everyday ways in which infrastructures require and control particular flows of fuels and how these material movements navigate, accumulate at, and pass through borders. Damming water on one side of a border raises red flags in neighbouring countries downstream, as India's concern for China's hydropower projects exemplifies; hydrocarbons are also strategic resource that doesn't cross borders easily, as the recent blockade of fuel at the Nepal-India border shows (Rinck and Adhikari 2016). Water and petroleum as well as capital financing are also necessary for the construction and operation of infrastructures, and thus a closer look at the flows of these liquid undercurrents reveals the often hidden and overlooked - or infra - components of infrastructural assemblages themselves.

This panel suggests that the material presence and practical relevance of these liquid undercurrents have curiously remained under-examined in wider debates on the entanglements of borderland lives and infrastructural interventions. This is especially true with respect to the large scale and discursively powerful new development projects expanding across the Asian borderlands under new BRI/OBOR initiatives. In an effort to illuminate new understandings of the liquid undercurrents of infrastructure in politically sensitive spaces, this panel examines the practicalities of channeling and controlling fuel, water, and money across Asia's borderlands. Papers will analyze the provisioning and smuggling of gaz and diesel in border areas, the local and national contestations over international flows and 'ownership' or water and the electricities produced by particular hydro-actions, and the reconfiguration and volatility of upstream-downstream dynamics with respect to accumulation, possession, and corruption on a more 'localized geopolitical' scale (O'Tuathail 2010). Together, contributors will put place-based and materially-rich analysis into conversation with wider debates on infrastructure development across Asian borderlands in order to illuminate liquid resources as the undercurrents that both drive revivals and create ruins once they run dry.

The Turbulent Interface: Borderland Flows and the Politics of Energy Security in Nepal

Austin Lord, Cornell University, United States

In 2015, Nepal experienced two significant crises with infrastructural effects: a 7.8m earthquake and an 'unofficial blockade' along the Nepal-India border that precipitated a four-month long fuel crisis. This paper investigates the ways these events have shaped the political economy of energy security in Nepal, by generating new patterns of openness, closure, and turbulence along Nepal's borders with India and China. Drawing on Massumi's (2010) work on the "political ontology of the threat" and Anderson (2010) work on geographies of pre-emption, precaution, and preparedness, I consider the ways that imagined threats to 'energy sovereignty' and immanent conditions of energy scarcity are mobilized to legitimate new political initiatives and infrastructural projects in borderland regions of Nepal. In early 2016, the Government of Nepal declared an 'energy emergency' and passed a series of reforms focused on alleviating conditions of energy scarcity. As Nepal renews its rhetoric of energy independence from India in the wake of the blockade, it also seeks increased Chinese investment in borderland infrastructures and hydropower development (Murton et al 2016). Currently, China is directly involved in creating several 'power corridors' in northern Nepal, an intimate mix of trans-boundary roads and hydropower projects, some incorporated into China's Belt & Road Initiative. For Nepal, the possibility that flows along the southern border might again be obstructed helps to create "scenarios that render the future geographies of infrastructure actionable" (Anderson 2010: 785) in its northern borderlands. A focus on these politically actionable threats also helps maintain patterns of "strategic ignorance" (McGoey 2012) concerning other possible threats to infrastructure and security, like the next earthquake (Rest et al 2015). In this way, I show how 'liquid undercurrents' flowing (or not flowing) through Nepal's borderlands are materially and affectively mobilized to underwrite imagined energy futures.

Money, illegal banks, and authorities: The exchange and flow of money in Tachilek at the Myanmar-Thailand border

Yi Yang, East China Normal University, China

Tachilek, in Myanmar's Shan State, brands itself as "the city of the golden triangle". With the advantage of its location, a stone's throw away from Thailand's Mae Sai, over the past decades Tachilek has prospered as an important trade market and transport corridor for former Guomindang (KMT) troops, the Communist Party of Burma, various ethnic armed groups, and common people. After the Second World War, there have been two abrupt monetary policies in Myanmar – in 1966, when large-denomination bills were abolished; and in 1987, when Ne Win replaced the currency with denominations such as 45 and 90, all divisible by nine, his lucky number. Both moves had dramatic effects on the formal and informal financial system in Myanmar. Access to money was further complicated after the United States imposed economic sanctions on Burma following the Burmese military coup in 1988. As a result, many Tachilek residents often exchange money and inward remittance through illegal banks – informal institutions privately run that can be found across the country. This paper describes the cooperation between illegal bank businessmen and their customers in Tachilek. People who rely on illegal banks for exchanging and remitting money maintain close relationship with businessmen running illegal banks. In this context I will describe what groups of people control the circulation of money, how they make money across borders, how they handle different countries' bank cards for their customers, and how they build non-legal but moral credibility mechanism with their clients. Building on ethnographic research in Tachilek, this paper thus analyses the persistence of informal economic networks in a weak state, as well as their broad connections to multiple actors and authorities across the region.

Petty Petrol Politics: Geopolitics, Reconstruction, and the Everyday Struggle for Fuel in Post-earthquake Nepal

Galen Murton, James Madison University, United States

The Himalayan earthquakes of Spring 2015 significantly transformed flows of petroleum and politics across Nepal's borders with both India and China. In addition to causing nearly 9000 deaths and incalculable losses across public and private spheres, the earthquakes shattered infrastructures, generated massive new humanitarian cash flows, and reconfigured Kathmandu's relations with Delhi and Beijing. In the post-earthquake period of October 2015, anti-constitution protests in southern Nepal turned violent and soon resulted in blockades and trade embargoes at Nepal's border crossings with India. Nepal historically imports 100% of its petroleum products from India, and with the borders all but closed to fuel transfers, domestic demands for petroleum products soon escalated into an acute fuel crisis. While the Government of Nepal quickly blamed this crisis on Indian leadership in Delhi, Chinese interventions soon made a highly symbolic but largely nominal act of fuel relief with the delivery of 12 petrol tankers from Tibet in November 2015. During this period, a robust and highly lucrative black market also developed, sustained through collusion between Madhesi activists, the Nepali Police, and unscrupulous members of the Kathmandu establishment. The day to day experience of this fuel crises amounted to a 300-500% inflation in gasoline and diesel prices, a severe limitation of propane and kerosene cooking gas, and the virtual shut-down of all construction industry. As a result of these constraints, much of Nepal was left paralyzed and earthquake reconstruction, road repairs, hydropower development, and other infrastructure programs widely articulated as bikas abruptly came to a stand still. A material example of regional geopolitics grounded into everyday experience, access to fossil fuels – and the contested prices at which they were bought, burned, traded, and hoarded – reflects a key way in which borders can be reconsidered through analysis of the stuff that flows across them.

A 'Green' Belt and Road? Small Hydropower and Large Dams on China's Southwestern Borderlands

Tyler Harlan, Cornell University, United States

In May 2017, at the official launch of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Beijing, President Xi Jinping called for boosting new energy technologies and global energy interconnections to achieve "green, low-carbon development." The same month, the State Council released "Guidance to Promote the Construction of a Green Belt and Road," which prioritized Chinese investment in green infrastructure across Asia. Yet this "green" discourse conflicts with China's own domestic environmental crises, and Chinese companies continue to build ecologically destructive infrastructure projects in other countries, raising questions about the kind of "green development" that the BRI is supposed to deliver, and the types of projects that are built.

In this paper, I investigate how the discourse of the "green" BRI is translated into hydropower investments in the countries along China's southwestern border. I focus on the small hydropower (SHP) industry, because SHP is

China's most widespread renewable energy and is promoted internationally as a model of green development. Drawing on participant observation in SHP training programs for Southeast Asian countries, I show how Chinese officials and investors emphasize the role of SHP in off-grid rural electrification and local environmental protection in China. I then contrast this discourse with the larger, grid-connected hydropower plants that Chinese investors are actually building in Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. These findings reveal how China's hydropower industry co-opts the green development narrative of SHP to facilitate large dam construction, suggesting the need to further interrogate the "green" infrastructure delivered through the BRI.

Ocean grabbing and ocean re-claiming in Asian maritime borderlands: Shifting interests, actors and agendas

Convenor and Chair: **Henryk Alff**, Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT), Germany

Co-convenor: **Edyta Roszko**, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Since the global food crisis of 2007/08, considerable attention in academia was drawn towards land grabbing processes around the world. Despite being no less critical in terms of food security and livelihood resilience of populations, practices by private or state institutions of forcefully restricting access towards and re-allocating marine spaces and resources from prior resource users, right holders or inhabitants, put under the notion of 'ocean grabbing' (Bennett et al. 2015) or 'blue grabbing' (Hill 2017), have only recently entered the scholarly debate. While the concept of ocean grabbing denotes processes in which coastal communities are deprived of the right of and agency in using, controlling and accessing resources, it obscures the bottom-up approaches people undertake to secure their coastal livelihoods.

The proposed panel suggests dealing empirically and conceptually with the above issues. On the one hand, based on case studies it seeks to explore the everyday consequences of grabbing of coastal/marine spaces and associated resources on the shore, in the water column and on/below the seabed like fish, seafood or mangroves, but also hydrocarbons and minerals, by means of marine conservation, statist reterritorialization/border (re-) drawing and private commodification. On the other hand, this panel seeks to scrutinize how various actors actively engage into the process through both legal (-ized) and illegal (ized) activities, rather than simply framing multiple dispossessions and appropriations of the marine spaces into the narrative of dominant and external "powerful forces" applied on communities. We thus seek to unpack and problematize the concept of "ocean grabbing" beyond the binaries between state and non-state, local-global, and private and public, thereby recognizing that the very same process might be experienced by others as "ocean re-claiming."

Taking a closer look at the maritime regions of South, East and Southeast Asia, this panel delineates how the physically unsettled nature of maritime borders, migratory fish stock, seabed and submarine resources provides various actors with an array of opportunities to claim or re-claim sea spaces. Thus we ask for the socio-ecological peculiarity of maritime borderland spaces as often politically, legally and socially disputed, three-dimensional, fluid, 'wet' and constantly changing (Steinberg 1999) in both processes of ocean grabbing and re-claiming. Given the growing overexploitation of marine resources and environmental degradation in the South China Sea, Bay of Bengal, Gulf of Thailand and elsewhere we seek to also address what local effects and responses these processes produce in and across coastal communities.

Localized Effects of Globalizing fisheries beyond the South China Sea

Edyta Roszko, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

China's expansion of its exclusive economic zone to include most of the South China Sea (SCS) went hand in hand with a massive exploitation of marine resources with the effect that other claimant states could not access them. This modern territorial claim through novel technologies used by the heavily subsidized and militarized Chinese fishing fleet and the technologically much less developed Vietnamese fleet alarmed marine ecologists around the world over the exploitation of oceans, as the depletion of marine resources in the SCS induces fishers to use their harvesting technologies in other oceans, producing knock-on effects as far away as Oceania and Africa. Whereas these activities are considered in the context of territorial claims, this paper hypothesizes that they should also be seen in their historical continuity, as fishers recreate centuries-old patterns of mobility and interconnection that do not recognize political borders. Tracing these historical patterns in past and present, this paper seeks to explore the interconnections between modern, state-supported and technology-driven fisheries with older patterns of mobility, producing new forms of mobility under the states' radars.

Fishing in the shadows of conflict in the South China Sea

Michael Fabinyi, University of Technology Sydney, Australia

In the South China Sea where multiple countries hold contested territorial claims, the fisheries and fishers have been central to the dispute. However, the role of fishing extends well beyond conventional perspectives of fish as a valuable economic resource. Instead, fishers are increasingly being implicated and actively involved in the broader conflict, and the role that fishers play depends very much on broader state strategies and power levels. Drawing on research in both China and the Philippines, this presentation will show how in the Scarborough Shoal, contested strongly since 2012 by China and the Philippines, fishers exemplify different state strategies to establish de facto sovereignty and negotiated access respectively. With the strong support of the Chinese Coast

Guard, Chinese fishers have actively worked to produce state authority and de facto sovereignty in the Scarborough Shoal through asserting control of the fishery resources. In contrast, under President Duterte, and recognising the strong imbalance of power between the two sides, the Philippine state has negotiated access to fishery resources through a social appeal to the legitimacy of Philippine fishing rights. In such circumstances the dispute has significantly cooled, yet the long-term environmental and territorial consequences of such strategies may yet be profound.

North Korean Watery Matters and their Dispossession: Grabbing the ‘Great Fish Hauls.’

Robert Winstanley-Chesters, University of Leeds, United Kingdom

The waters of the Korean Peninsula and North East Asia have long been sites of exploration, appropriation and extraction. Initial cartographic assessment and review was followed by the infrastructures and energies of Japanese colonialism; Korean and Chinese coastal communities finding themselves technologically displaced by new developmental realities. No longer would the foreshore and shallows be the site of amateur subsistence; boats from Chosen (Korea) would seek their quarry in the deep oceans far beyond national boundaries, utilising extractive techniques acquired in the territories of Japan’s South Pacific Mandate. Following liberation from Japan in 1945 and the Korean War in 1953, North Korea would apply new politics and ideology to similar developmental imperatives. Seeking to extract as much productive capacity from the waters under its control as from its territory on land, Pyongyang would theorise a locally ‘Socialist’ frame through which fish and maritime resource could be grabbed in much the same manner as under past Capitalist logics. Considering fish, crustaceans, seaweed and other matters of the sea and the coast as vibrant and lively (following Jane Bennett, 2010), in their absence as much as their presence; important in the context of North Korea, this paper tracks the appropriations and dispossessions at sea of that nation. The paper follows present North Korean institutional efforts to grab ‘great fish hauls,’ away from fishing communities and cooperatives at national and maritime borders. Pyongyang instead has sought to place infrastructure and maritime and aquacultural rights in the possession of the Korean People’s Army. The paper reviews the impact of these unexpected dispossession on these communities and the re-bordering of national maritime enterprise as a result. Finally in light of UNSC2371 and the sanctioning of North Korea’s entire maritime resource the paper considers this rare and comprehensive watery dispossession at the hands of geopolitics.

Claiming the sea and its resources? The expansion of China’s fisheries in the Indian Ocean through a Maritime Silk Road lens

Henryk Alff, Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT), Germany

Given that the seas of East and Southeast Asia have faced a depletion of biological resources as a result of decades-long over-exploitation by growing fishing fleets from the adjacent states, the Chinese government since the late 1990s has set the goal to develop a distant water fishing (DWF) fleet. Operating far beyond China’s territorial claims in the South China Sea in international waters, but also in exclusive economic zones of particular states, from the Arctic to the tropical Atlantic, China’s heavily subsidized DWF fleet has become the largest worldwide (Pauly et al. 2013). In the Indian Ocean, where regional fishing bodies have only recommendation functions, making it difficult to implement effective tools for fisheries management, Chinese trawlers are responsible for largely unbound and -regulated catch of fish and seafood. In the face of China’s ambitions to prepare for the ‘Ocean Century’ (Mallory 2015), this paper seeks to connect local materialisations and negotiations of Chinese fisheries in the Indian Ocean with the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) initiative, announced by China’s president Xi Jinping in 2013. Based on empirical examples the contribution explores, if ‘grabbing’ and competition are the only angles through which to look at Chinese fisheries in the Indian Ocean and asks under which circumstances the MSR could become a vehicle to improve the management of marine biological resource use in the Indian Ocean.

On the Politics of Loss: Making Geographies of History and Memory in India and China

Convenor: **Vazira Zamindar**, Brown University, United States

Chair: **Rebecca Nedostup**, Brown University, United States

This panel brings together scholars and students of India and China to engage with questions of how conditions of war, insurgency and loss have shaped the making of political geographies and their conception of borderlands. Moving away from the substantial and important understanding of borderlands as limin, the focus here is instead on displacement and geography, a sense of loss and its territorial manifestations. Here “loss” operates on several registers – as defeat, inferiority, destruction, disappearance or death - but it is through the recognition and marking of loss that its politics unfolds.

The papers here consider how displacements produced by wars – of both the living and the dead, the material and the sacred - have been historically produced and contested through practices of mapping, memorialization and memory. From colonial photographs of war on the Indo-Afghan borderlands that erase the violence of war by transforming loss into an aesthetic, the active production of a Chinese geographic nationalism in the aftermath and as a counterpoint to loss, inferiority and inadequacy, to the extraordinary displacements and emplacements of the dead and living in postwar China and divided Kashmir – these papers take on the militarization of borderlands, the making of geographies of defeat and resistance, and the territoriality of the practices of history and memory in the struggles for sovereignty and justice.

As an occasion to bring together scholarship on India and China, the panel hopes to open to a broader conversation on Asian borderlands, the cleavages of nationally formed historiographies and some ways to think “asia as method” as once proposed by Kuan-Hsing Chen. Thus larger questions of geographical imagination and historical method also animate our panel, as we think “asia” as an invitation to forging different kinds of intellectual solidarities and conversations.

Ruins of War: Photography and Antiquity on an Insurgent Frontier

Vazira Zamindar, Brown University, United States

At least since the Crimean War photography has been important to not just reporting on the war, but on shaping official and public interventions in the practices of war. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the British government commissioned photographers to accompany military expeditions on the Indo-Afghan borderlands, in part to garner public support for some of the largest military mobilizations and expenditures in the empire. This paper looks at these commissioned photographs from the Second Afghan War (1878-1880) and the later Tirah Expedition (1897-98) as they accompanied official reports and media coverage of these expeditions. The use of archaeological sites and objects in these photographs, the staging of the tribes in the landscape, and the absence of the dead, produced an aesthetic of ruins and ruination that became integral to the geographical imagination of this insurgent borderland. This paper investigates the photographer’s archive, the literary and historical sources that framed the antiquity of these images of war, as well as the ordinary practices of archaeology itself in erasing signs of the living, staging destruction as timeless, and disinterring objects that could be continuously displaced as the succor of war. The displacements in these photographs not only concealed the brutal costs of war; they have provided a sustained repertoire of representational forms that persist in images of insurgency on the northwest frontier to this day.

Imagining the Loss: Map-Making, Geographic Knowledge, and the Formation of Modern Chinese Nation-State, 1912-1950

Yu-Chi Chang, Brown University, United States

The imagination of a geographically unified state is a haunting ghost in the political ideology of modern Chinese regimes throughout the twentieth and the twentieth-first centuries. For late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chinese political elites and intellectuals, one of the urgent missions was to build a nation-state that could be recognized by “international society.” However, the problem, in part, was that China did not see itself as an equal; rather, it had a national identity of inferiority inherited from the Qing dynasty. That regime had left China with “unequal treaties” and territorial loss due to imperialist influence since the early nineteenth century. A Chinese expression, “national humiliation” (guochi 國恥), emerged to describe this sense of inferiority. Although the territorial issue has been one of the keynotes of early-twentieth-century and contemporary Chinese political discourses, how and why geographic knowledge shaped concepts of the nation-state has not

been fully elaborated. This paper addresses the role of what I call “geographic nationalism” in the making of modern China. I argue that maps and geographic knowledge have long articulated the historical memory of Chinese people in the early twentieth century and keep playing an important role in contemporary political and cultural discourses in China. Specifically, this research highlights one key characteristic carrying crucial messages but often taken for granted in early-twentieth-century Chinese maps and geographic publications— national humiliation—to explore the ways in which negative emotions became essential in nation-building discourses. When, why, and how did the terms *guochi* and *guonan* (國難) emerge and become popular themes in the production of geographic knowledge? How did maps that visualized the abstract idea of national humiliation and national crisis become attractive to map-makers? How widely were national humiliation and national crisis maps disseminated, and what effect did they have?

Body Identification: The Material, Moral, and Sovereign Claims of the Dead in China’s “Postwar”, 1945-1949
Rebecca Nedostup, Brown University, United States

As displaced communities began to recollect and reconstruct in various parts of China at the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the dead played important roles alongside the living. The need not only to account for their names and deeds, but to physically return them to a home place formed a critical moral narrative alongside that of mobilization for nation and revolution. When postwar quickly turned to civil war, bringing new displacements and an increasingly intense politicization of ordinary life, corpses continued to be made to speak for virtue, justice, and mutual obligation. They were also made to cement material claims amid uncertainty, want, and political division.

This paper explores three intertwined stories in the local history of the aborted “postwar” of Jiangsu province in eastern China. First, the natives of Wuxi, Jiangsu residing in the Nationalist wartime capital of Chongqing played a critical role in transporting civilian war dead back home at the first opportunity – even before most of the living displaced were able to return. Second, Wuxi was at the epicenter of a massive wave of postwar genealogy editing, lineage hall refurbishment, and religious reconfiguration – arguably the largest such collective effort in the region since the Taiping aftermath. Such activities contained overt and implied arguments refuting the chaos and drifting of the wartime experience, as well as both support of and counter-narratives to the sovereign claims of political parties. These phenomena emerged against a backdrop of continued social disruption and violence, which produced the third story: the struggle of the refugees of civil unrest in Jiangsu to protect their own bodies, and to stake on them their own claims to morality and virtue.

Graveyards at the Border: History and Memory in Contemporary Kashmir
Suvaid Yaseen, Brown University, United States

My paper looks at contemporary memorialization practices in Indian administered Kashmir in order to displace a colonial and postcolonial geographical imagination of a postcard mountain “paradise” emptied of its people. By placing a “people’s archive” at the center of this project, I make people - the living, disappeared and dead - as integral to an alternative geographical and historical imagination of Kashmir. I analyze the significance of public funerals, protest mobilizations, poetry, slogans, and care for martyrs’ graveyards in Kashmir as not only ways in which people contest the official narratives disseminated by the militarized State. Beyond the immediate practical and political purpose of funerals and protests, these practices of mourning and care become the emotive enactments that inscribe new moorings and attachments to the landscape, and sustain a living memory as an ethical responsibility vis-à-vis the killed and disappeared victims of a long drawn war. Moreover, the transformation of historical graveyards is important as they draw together what has been below the ground and above it in a historical geography that recognizes a map of peoples’ sense of belonging, their vulnerabilities, as well as the longing for justice, which in turn repudiates the justifications of militarization and the limitations of official borders.

Remaking the Resource Frontier in Myanmar's Borderlands I

Convenor: **Hilary Faxon**, Cornell University, United States

Chair: **Kimberly Roberts**, York University, Canada

For centuries, international capital, colonial and Burmese governments, and the global media have fashioned Myanmar's borderlands as a 'frontier.' Since the country's economic opening in 2012, speculation of and on Asia's so-called last frontier has quickened, creating new avenues for accumulation and development, political alliances, environmental and social assemblages. While these processes echo transformations across Asia's borderlands, the pace, scale, and complexity of change in Myanmar presents a startling case for scholars of state formation, globalization, and territorialization (Peluso & Lund 2011; Vangdergeest & Peluso 1995; Das & Poole 2004; Su 2013; Jones 2012).

Scholarship and public discourse has traditionally associated areas such as the Chin, Kachin and Shan Hills, the Karen-Thai border, and the Tanintharyi and Rakhine coasts with unrest, illicitness, and fragmented political authority (Scott 2009; Callahan 2007; Leach 1945; Walker 1999). Meanwhile, militaries, militias and residents in these borders have long relied on the strategic production and exploitation of resources such as gems, forest products, minerals, drugs, wastelands, wildlife, and other commodities for both territorial control and income generation (Bryant, 1994; Chang, 2004; Jelsma et al., 2005; Ma, 2014; Ferguson 2014; Fiskesjö, 2010; Woods 2011).

Today, market and digital integration, ceasefire politics, international investment and aid, and a heightened atmosphere of opportunity and brutality are transforming Myanmar's old border spaces into strategic, profitable resource frontiers. With it, large-scale agribusiness, hydropower, pipeline and SEZ projects, refugee camps and border trading zones are reworking and displacing old border relations to create new environments, economies, mobilities and sites of speculation and surveillance. (Than 2016; Suhardiman et al. 2017; Sturgeon 2004). These remade resource frontiers present new antinomies: they simultaneously draw and displace; enrich and exploit; create space for dialogue and provoke violent rebellion; invite and expel.

This double panel explores Myanmar's resource frontiers both empirically and conceptually, highlighting ways in which the making and mobilizing of resources re-order human and ecological relations at the borderlands. Through the lenses of history, space, actors, and imaginaries, these papers investigate how resource frontiers in Myanmar have been and are being transformed. Papers in the first panel are loosely grouped around historical and ethnographic analyses of commodity trades and border-making; papers in the second consider contemporary themes of sovereignty, land, and place-making from below.

Resource Access and Local Political Authority: Opium in Burma

John Buchanan, Yale University, United States

Since World War II, opium has provided revenue for armed actors in Mainland Southeast Asia. Strongmen, state officials, non-stated armed groups and government-allied militias tapped into a transnational opium supply chain. The mechanisms through which these actors access opium are not well understood. This paper draws on a unique collection of archival data to address the following questions: What role(s) do markets and states play in structuring local access to resources? What are the implications of resource access for the forms of local authority in areas where actors engage in militarized violence?

This paper examines the impacts of access to (il)licit commodity rents on local political structures in Mainland Southeast Asia's "opium belt" in the post-World War II period. With important exceptions (e.g., McCoy, 1972), academic studies have largely ignored the transformative impacts of opium capital accumulation in eastern Burma, northern Thailand, and northern Laos and the question of access. With a focus on eastern Burma, this paper shows that a boom in opium production did not mean that armed actors accrued opium "rents." Instead, market forces, institutions, and armed actors mediated access. This paper also considers the strategies pursued by armed actors to secure access to opium revenues and the implications of their strategies for their relations with society.

The paper demonstrates the need for a more careful examination of the institutions and dynamics that structure access to revenue from commodity supply chains in assessing their impacts on society. Its assessment of the roles played by markets, state actors along with non-state actors provides insights useful for conceptualizing the linkages between other valuable resources and violence.

Lootable resources in Shan borderlands: The politics of extraction in 'non-state' spaces, c.1880-1900

Frances O'Morchoe, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

This paper explores how relationships between borderland populations and central states are shaped by the type of resource endowments in borderland localities. The paper argues that in Wa and Lahu areas of the Qing-Burmese borderland the main resources that states were interested in (primarily the Qing Dynasty and the British colonial state) were mines, primarily silver, gold, tin and lead. The fact that these mines were more easily worked by indigenous people gave local leaders greater scope to broker with state actors in ways that enabled them to retain a greater degree of autonomy. In contrast, further south, Lahu populations in southern Shan State were not able to negotiate state encroachment in the same way because the main resource sought by Siam and the British was teak. This required a relatively capital-intensive process of resource extraction, especially hiring elephants to transport the teak. The Lahu were unable to extract value from these resources in the same way that Lahu and Wa counterparts further north were able to. These dynamics have had a lasting legacy on the varying degrees of agency and autonomy of borderland populations.

These dynamics provide an important critique to the 'anti-state' narrative of Scott's work on Zomia. Groups which were incorporated into the state (e.g. Lahu regions in southern Shan State) may have been anti-state but had little power to check processes of state consolidation, whereas the Wa communities further north – so often depicted as anti-state, highly autonomous zones – were actually empowered not through state evasion but through engagement with the state. This provides a way of challenging the problematic binaries constructed between state/non (or anti-)state spaces. This is a historical case study that speaks to a body of social science literature around 'institutions of extraction', offering an important bridge between political science and the humanities.

"Banana Border": Changing Landscapes of Refugee Mobility, Resource Accumulation and Governance at the China-Myanmar border

Jasnea Sarma, National University of Singapore, Singapore

In Myanmar, most recently in the Rakhine border in the West, an emergent debate about the impact of the displacement and distractions caused by political economy of the "Resource Frontier" – largely the extractive resource foreign investments and SEZs, land grabs (Sassen 2016) and 'ceasefire capitalism' (Woods, 2012) has attempted to explain the 'root cause' and sustenance of communal, ethnic and identity war/violence at the borders. This paper turns to Myanmar's North-East border with China - a landscape which has also been transformed into a similarly complicated "Resource Frontier" – whereby new forms of resources, particularly hydropower, pipeline projects, and agribusiness mono-cultures, Bananas, among others being the most prominent - have entwined with existing (jade, chemical drugs); or even partially substitutes old illicit resource frontiers (opium, timber, etc).

Using GIS mapping, ethnographies and personal narratives from border dwellers and crossers in two locations - the government /military controlled Northern Shan border crossing and the KIA (Kachin Independence Army) controlled border, this paper shows how these processes come to fruition on the ground through local everyday practices, and explains how these structures above then determine contemporary conflict alliances, labour and refugee/humanitarian motilities. Through these narratives, the paper also demonstrates dynamics from the China side – of how Chinese companies and local ethnic communities deal with cronies, militias, EAOs (ethnic armed groups), the army, NGOs and government in Myanmar.

Keywords: China-Myanmar Border, Resource Frontiers, Refugees, GIS mapping, Border Ethnographies

Remaking the Resource Frontier in Myanmar's Borderlands II

Convenor and Chair: **Jasnea Sarma**, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Discussant: **Jason Cons**, University of Texas at Austin, United States

For centuries, international capital, colonial and Burmese governments, and the global media have fashioned Myanmar's borderlands as a 'frontier.' Since the country's economic opening in 2012, speculation of and on Asia's so-called last frontier has quickened, creating new avenues for accumulation and development, political alliances, environmental and social assemblages. While these processes echo transformations across Asia's borderlands, the pace, scale, and complexity of change in Myanmar presents a startling case for scholars of state formation, globalization, and territorialization (Peluso & Lund 2011; Vangdergeest & Peluso 1995; Das & Poole 2004; Su 2013; Jones 2012).

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Co-producing Resource Frontiers along the Salween River

Kimberly Roberts, York University, Canada

The 'resource frontier' along the Salween River in Shan and Kayah states becomes a mixing pot of fragmented state and non-state sovereigns. Local wisdom talks about the three governments: The central Burmese government, the Burmese military, and the local ethnic armed organizations (EAOs). These fragmented sovereignties directly impact not only local communities access to natural resources, but also the 'legal' and 'illegal' commercial extraction of resources. Agreements over large-scale hydro-power, logging, and gold mining are made through crony networks and remade as ceasefire agreements alter the landscape of hegemonic actors. The same ceasefire agreements and demilitarization of Myanmar Government that have encouraged economic investment from foreign companies has also reshaped economic opportunities available to local farmers and villagers. Literature on resource frontiers focuses on macro and mezzo geopolitical shifts and the large-scale commercial extraction of resources (Tsing, 2005; Jones 2012; Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995). This, however, minimizes the agency and role of local actors in influencing the networks and territory of these resource frontiers. Building on three years of research from four different communities along Salween River in Shan and Kayah States of Myanmar, as well as informal interviews and document review with civil society organizations, Burmese academics, business investors, and government, this research finds that resource frontiers are co-produced. The resource frontier is a place where old crony systems and new large-scale resource extraction efforts mix with new grass-roots activist efforts and small-scale, locally produced entrepreneurial activities. Displaced migrants return with knowledge and expertise to market the use of pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture. Day laborers find work in timber extraction and local civil society organizations raise up "no dam" movements while organizations scramble to get ahead of land-titling opportunities. These activities contribute to the shape, networks, and extent of resource extraction along the Salween River.

Navigating Land Access at Myanmar's Borders: The Case of Karen State/Kawthoolei

SiuSue Mark, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University, the Netherlands

After the partial national ceasefire agreement (NCA) signed between the Government of Myanmar (GOM) and eight ethnic armed groups (EAGs) in October 2015, the GOM embarked in a new phase of heightened state-building. With this, the border became “a transformative and creative instrument... mark[ing] the transition from a state of anarchy to one of order...,” based on the ontology of the state as the guarantor of order and justice (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007: xii)

The extension of Myanmar's legal and bureaucratic architecture onto the border creates friction as it comes up against a host of armed groups characterized by varied ethnic identities, fighting strength, “revolutionary” principles, and engagement with the GOM. While some of the larger EAGs established parallel structures of governmentality, others have instead exploited the situation by partaking in “ceasefire capitalism” (Woods 2011). Thus, even while the state imagines order, in reality, the scenarios on the ground have arguably become more varied and complex. At the same time, these new realities are not only acting on local communities, they are also challenged by creative agency. Thus, “the border is...a paradoxical zone of resistance, agency and rogue embodiment” (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007: ix).

Within this context unfolds the state project of integrating the resource-rich borderlands into a system of private property, initiated with the passage of the 2012 Farmland Law. This is met by varied responses on the part of the communities: compliance with state law, rejection of it and opting for alternative authority, or minimization of risks through appeals to both. In areas where governmentality is low, communities face high levels of extortion by rogue armed groups, adding additional complications. Focusing on Karen State/Kawthoolei, this paper analyses community responses with respect to securing land titling, arbitrating land conflicts, and handling taxation on land and crops.

Intimate Frontiers: Settlement and Eviction in Bualpi Village

Hilary Faxon, Cornell University, United States

On August 30, 2016 the Chin State Government bulldozed hundreds of houses in the new settlement of Bualpi, claiming the farmers were squatting illegally on reserve forest land. Both the rapid population of the area, which had swollen to over 1,000 households in nine months, and the eviction and arrest of farmer leaders, were dramatic events. But while their scale and pace are linked to contemporary political and economic changes that are accelerating speculation and reconfiguring authority in the region, the seam of land at the foot of the Chin Hills has a long and contentious history as an internal frontier attracting both lowlanders and hill people seeking a more prosperous and comfortable life, and sparking conflicts over property, territory, and belonging.

In this paper, I explore the diverse groups of people now self-identifying as Bualpi Villagers, their motivations for coming and arguments for claiming land, and Bualpi's place in the regional history of settlements at the foot of the Chin Hills near the Indian border. With fertile land, emphasis on ethnic identity, unstable relationship to the Burman State, and links to international labor and refugee circulation as well as legal and illicit cross-border trade, I argue that these villages should be understood as internal or intimate frontiers, reconfiguring regional authority and resource flows and creating new claims to property and identity. By exploring the ways that commodity crops, political and social belonging, and international circulations are constructed and challenged in these villages, I contribute to an understanding of how frontiers function in the eyes of the resident population and to shore up or fragment state power, as well as the empirics of rural change in contemporary Myanmar.

Resurgent Frontiers: Mobility, regulation and infrastructure in South Asian borderlands

Convenor: **Aditi Saraf**, Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich, Germany

Chair: **Sahana Ghosh**, Harvard University, United States

Discussant: **Radhika Gupta**, Leiden University, the Netherlands

The term frontier has been historically construed as timeless, spatially indeterminate and conceptually elastic. By contrast, the scholarly discussion around borders and boundaries has considered them as specific sites of regulation and violence. As has been well documented, the advent of modern nation-states meant that historic frontier spaces often became collapsed into the logic of national borders. This panel considers the multiple temporalities and socio-spatial lives of the frontier in South Asia to examine how such spaces are defined in relation to ideas of law, regulation and infrastructure in the effort to pacify and integrate them into the national body politic. How are historical political contestations and socio-spatial relations of power translated into

present struggles and claims for justice? What are alternative forms of landscape and community that are reflected in struggles over access, wellbeing, and citizenship? Further, are we witnessing a re-frontierization of borderlands in context of new forms of capital and commodity flows? To address these questions, this panel showcases four papers set in the interstices of imperial and national geographies, from the historical frontier between British India and Afghanistan in the west to the upland region straddling northeast India and Southeast Asia in the east. Aditi Saraf examines the recurrent confrontations around the control and management of transregional trade networks in Kashmir. Abhilash Medhi investigates how actions of the British colonial government and local Pashtun communities articulated and undermined the spatial referents of the Indo-Afghan frontier in the first half of the twentieth century. Sahana Ghosh explores how the promises of infrastructure are perceived in the context of transforming capital and commodity flows in the India-Bangladesh borderlands. Swargajyoti Gohain attends to the emergent discourses of development and nationhood around road-building projects in North East India. Together these papers are interested in processes of scaling in relation to mobility, capital, and sociality. They raise questions about the layers of regulatory histories and materialities through which ‘frontiers’ and ‘borderlands’ have been constituted to consider how objects, biographies, infrastructures, and imaginaries integral to such histories reappear at different temporal junctures.

Trade Artefacts: Customs, boundaries and mobility in Kashmir

Aditi Saraf, Ludmig-Maximilians University München, Germany

This paper examines the revival of what I call “trade artefacts” in Kashmir to reflect on the intersections between political contestation and commercial regulation. In doing so I juxtapose snapshots of two forms of trade, one contemporary and one devised under colonial and princely rule. Against the current impasses of the “cross-LOC trade” at the Line of Control between the Indian and Pakistan held parts of Kashmir, I revisit colonial disputes around the Central Asian Trade Corridor that was carved through the erstwhile princely state. While both artifacts attempt to cast sovereign authority as the control of flows of people, commodities and ideas, they also reveal the intense resistance that such projects face in the attempt to subsume frontier spatialities into tight jurisdictional regimes. Particularly, both artefacts try to efface past connectivities and communities in order to establish new ones harnessed to imperial and national boundary-making. Drawing on Reinhart Koselleck’s notion of “iterability” as a heuristic device that allows comparisons across temporal structures, I show how such recursive artefacts, their failures and unintended consequences, point towards distinct forms of mobility and exchange at the Himalayan frontier whose traces persist in everyday life and political imagination despite state efforts to obliterate them.

Reading Braudel along the Indo-Afghan frontier: Narratives of an uprising, a railway, and a family

Abhilash Medhi, Brown University, United States

This paper examines circulation and social access on the Indo-Afghan frontier under late-colonialism. Drawing on Fernand Braudel’s idea of hierarchical temporal rhythms, I juxtapose three histories of varying temporal and spatial scopes. I begin with the history of an event, the Shinwari uprising of 1928-29. The uprising lasted a few weeks and saw Shinwari tribesmen from the Khyber storm into eastern Afghanistan to join their counterparts from that side of the border in a revolt against the incumbent Afghan Amir. The civil war ended with the accession of Habibullah Kalakani, a water-carrier’s son, to the throne of Kabul. I then turn to the story of the Khyber Pass Railway. Built to facilitate the speedy movement of troops and goods, the railway opened for traffic in 1925 and was part suspended in 1932. Finally, I reconstruct a spatial biography of two generations of the family of eminent Pashto poet Amir Hamza Shinwari. The three histories intersected during the digging of a tunnel for the Khyber Pass Railway, when Amir Hamza assisted his contractor father and Habibullah supplied water. Irrespective of whether or not the itineraries they encompassed complied with standards of mobility mandated by colonial infrastructure projects, Anglo-Afghan trade agreements, and prevalent property and policing regimes, they represent a palimpsest rich with political and social meaning. I attempt to peel back these accretions to understand how diplomacy, colonial statecraft, and social status regulated circulation and social access along the Indo-Afghan frontier even as cross-border insurgencies and mobile people reconstituted them themselves.

Tobacco, ganja, and the ‘return’ of the road: Refrontierization of the India-Bangladesh borderlands?

Sahana Ghosh, Harvard University, United States

What do infrastructural projects and the regulation of commodities across national borders tell us about the nature of capital flows, resource extraction, and mobility in regional-historical terms? This paper proposes to

think through this question through two ethnographic case studies in the rapidly transforming and vast agrarian borderlands between India and Bangladesh. It will examine the rumoured return of the road, in the form of a part of the transregional Asian Highways project, to northern Bengal which is today a 'remote' and 'underdeveloped' borderland region in both India and Bangladesh but used to be a major colonial hub in jute and tobacco commerce. Today while tobacco trails continue across the border in both directions, new agrarian commodity flows have emerged because of the border, profitable currency differences, and devalued land. In particular, marijuana is grown on the Indian side exclusively for Bangladesh, and contractual tobacco cultivation for foreign tobacco companies has overtaken the cultivation of other varieties of tobacco that go into products locally consumed and food crops in the Bangladeshi borderlands of north Bengal. Taking these two threads together, the paper will trace the changing relations between borders, commodity flows, and capital accumulation in the north Bengal region. It explores the multi-scalar border materialization projects, suggesting that perhaps these rely on a refrontierization of borderlands in South Asia today.

Roads and Frontiers

Swargajyoti Gohain, Ashoka University, India

In this paper, I would like to examine how roads, frontiers and borders are linked together in the development discourse in North East India. Previously, roads were intended to integrate the centre and the Northeast region of India, often described as a "resource frontier" (Kar 2016) – as new resources were discovered, the frontiers of administration kept expanding. During the colonial period, the north east frontier areas of India were excluded from proper administrative circuits. Development schemes in the late colonial and immediate decolonization period attempted to expand tenuous state control to hitherto un-administered territory. In this respect, road construction was seen as the priority area.

In the last decade, roads have figured in the new discourse of development propagated by various cross-border policy initiatives. The Look East (renamed Act East) policy, most notably, envisions greater regional cooperation and integration (RCI) between India and the ASEAN nations by developing North East India as transport corridor and into Border Development Special zones. In terms of trade liberalization, the relation between borders and roads is outlined as a facilitative one; that is, roads, along with railways, and seaports are the conduits for intra-regional and cross-border trade.

Despite this shift, I argue, the discourse of cross border connectivity is the new development regime to control and manage border populations. From roads being the medium of state-building to facilitating cross-border trade and economic globalization, both strategies reinvigorate the notion of nation-ness.

Reviving Memories of World War II in Manipur and the Naga Hills: The Use of War as a Tourism Resource in Northeast India

Convenor: **Makiko Kimura**, Tsuda University, Japan

Chair: **Masao Imamura**, Yamagata University, Japan

In 1944, during the Burma Campaign of the Second World War, fierce battles took place in the princely state of Manipur and what was then the Naga Hills of Assam. They were remembered as one of the fiercest battles during the War, and both soldiers of the Allied Forces and Japanese Army have remembered and written about them in numerous memoirs and books. However, little is known about their impact on the local people, being mainly Nagas, Kukis and Meiteis, and how they feel about the war.

Recently, some local people as well as researchers have made efforts to record the battles, collect the remnants (ruins) of the war such as unexploded bombs, bullets, swords and garments, and construct a museum to remember it. These efforts are partly connected to the promotion of tourism in the states of Manipur and Nagaland. Furthermore, such activities have triggered discussions among the local people regarding how to reinterpret and remember the past.

In this panel, based on presentations on Manipur and Nagaland in Northeast India, we will attempt to analyze how World War II is being used as a resource for tourism, what kind of local experiences are being forgotten during the process, and how the local people are reacting to it. In doing so, contemporary changes and the transformation of narratives and memories of the war will be examined.

The Battlefields of the Burma Campaign: Making a Second World War experience and heritage relevant to the present day

Hemant Singh Katoch, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, India

Burma/Myanmar was a major theatre of the Second World War. From 1942 to 1945, the Allies and the Japanese fought across the country: from south to north as the Japanese took over in 1942, and from north to south as the Allies recaptured Burma/Myanmar in 1944-45. This period is known as the 'Burma Campaign' of the Second World War. It saw fighting of the fiercest kind in numerous battles large and small both in Burma/Myanmar and in North East India, along the India/Burma border. In fact, the twin battles of Kohima and Imphal of 1944 in the then-Naga Hills of Assam and the princely state of Manipur respectively are together considered the main turning point of the Burma Campaign.

While military and historical accounts of the battles have proliferated over the years, hardly any systematic research has been done on the sites where the fighting actually took place – the battlefields of the Burma Campaign. Perhaps this is understandable because Burma/Myanmar was largely cut off from the world for long periods since independence. Rebellions in North East India have also limited access to parts of present-day Manipur and Nagaland that were affected by the war. Moreover, little attention has been paid to the question of how to make this fascinating, international chapter of history and the related heritage more relevant to the present day.

These are the two issues that this paper will address, with a focus on Manipur and Nagaland on the India/Burma border. It will look at the main WWII battlefields and sites in these two frontier states and examine what has been done recently to draw on this war experience and heritage in furtherance of current economic and diplomatic goals. Finally, the paper will seek to identify what more can be done in this regard in future.

Memories From the Present : The Second World War and The Tourism Industry in Nagaland

Haruna Watabe, University of Delhi, India

The aim of this paper is to examine how Nagas narrate their own war experience, and the process of how war tourism is emerging in the area. Among the major tribes which experienced the war are mostly Angami Nagas, some from Chakesang Nagas and some from Lotha Nagas. I would like to consider what are the local's attitude towards the past, and how the past experiences are introduced into the tourism industry. The growing touristic interest for the region has led some villagers to not only speak, but present in the media about the Second World War. As many historians have pointed out, histories inescapably speak to and of the present. Several factors shape the patterns of storytelling, such as the interviewer themselves (gender, age and nationality) and the type of listeners, and the political situation of the region on particular historical period. As such, I will focus

on how the Second World War experiences are narrated and being modified in the present, and how this process creates the present tourism industry.

Contesting 'Memories of Empires': Allied Occupation of Manipur and Naga Hills, and the local experience of Second World War

Deepak Naorem, University of Delhi, India

Northeast British India, otherwise a peripheral region in the larger politics of the British Empire, was suddenly pushed into the center of a major global war when the Imperial Japanese army invaded the region between 1939 and 1945. In 1942, Christopher Gimson, the Political Agent of Manipur and Maharaja Bodhchandra declared Manipur an 'Operational Area', handed over the administration to the commander of the Allied forces, and war preparations began on a large scale. It subsequently led to the occupation of the princely kingdom and the neighboring regions by the Allied forces to begin the 'reconquest' of Asia for British Empire.

The paper looks at the afterlife of the war in the form of various commemorations of 'Japan Laan/Gal', war heroes and martyrs, building of monuments and museums, and recently emergence of a flourishing 'war/vet tourism' industry. Memories of war played a significant role in the process of nation building after the region was incorporated within the political boundaries of Indian state post WW2, and recently as a catalyst for economic restructuring through tourism. The paper argues that memories of Empires were always privileged over local memories of war and occupation. War brought destructions, deaths, diseases and losses/damages to public and private properties. While such memories rarely find audiences today, the paper looks at the archival evidences which reveal diverse narratives of how the war was experienced by the locals. Thousands of people wrote 'petitions' seeking compensations for damages and losses incurred during the war. Contrary to the 'memories of empires', the paper looks at these petitions which narrate the marginalized local experiences of military occupation, forced evictions, confiscation of properties, forced labor, scarcity of essential commodities, destruction of movable and immovable properties, returning to ruins after the war and the endless legal battles with empires for war compensations.

War, Love and Chastity: Conflicting Narratives about a Local Female Interpreter in the Tangkhul Naga area of Manipur, India

Makiko Kimura, Tsuda University, Japan

During the Second World War, a young woman named Sarengla from the Tangkhul Naga community was asked to serve as an interpreter for a Japanese army officer. She spent several months with him and helped him communicate with the local people. The officer was later killed on his way back to Burma. This story became well-known among the people of the Tangkhul Naga community, who came to understand the woman as the officer's wife or mistress. There are still folk songs in the area about the love and relationship they had during the war.

Sarengla got married after the war and lived until the 1990s. Her family and relatives believe that she did not have a relationship with the officer, and have expressed discontent about their love story. Recently, a plan arose to shoot a film based partly on the story, but Sarengla's family did not allow the director to use her name, stating that some of the scenarios were not based on fact.

Based on interviews with Sarengla's family, the people of the Tangkhul community, and the film director, this paper seeks to explore why it was important to the community to know whether or not Sarengla had had a relationship with the officer, or become pregnant by him. In doing so, I will examine why and how women's chastity became an important issue to them, especially at a time of war.

Sartorial heritage and the past as resources for securing a community's future in the Asian borderlands

Convenor and Chair: **Vibha Joshi**, University of Tübingen, Germany/University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Borderlands created by political demarcation have divided similar communities as well as thrown together dissimilar ones. The pulls and push a community undergoes when new boundaries are established or old ones dissolved, impact and affect different areas of everyday living. Communities in Asian borderlands have experienced changes in political ideology, political governance and religious practice. In such a scenario how do communities (and individual members) communicate through dress their ideas of who they are and their sense of belonging; and for that matter, how do newly found nations or federal states within a nation, communicate a sense of self in material terms, especially in both everyday and formal /ceremonial clothing. This panel will explore the ways in which communities in the Asian borderlands relate to their sartorial heritage and use the past as a resource for securing a community's future. The papers cover the geographical area from Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan), north eastern India (Nagaland), South East Asia (especially Vietnam, Indonesia, South Korea), and address sartorial expressions of tension or harmony as communities forge regional, national, communal and individual identities.

Keeping with the guidelines in the CFP, this interdisciplinary panel brings together dress historian, textile researcher, political scientist and anthropologist.

Cultural Continuity and Social Structure through the Lens of Ethnic Dress and Textiles: Case Studies in Northern Vietnam, Southwest China, Myanmar (Shan State) and Indonesia (Timor Barat and Flores)

Serena Lee, Textile Odyssey, United States

Unknown to most of the world, countless ethnic minorities in the Asian borderlands maintain distinctive group dress that express their pride as members of specific clans. Based on multiple field studies conducted from 1999-2017 in the remote areas of northern Vietnam, southwest China, Myanmar, and Indonesia, this paper discusses the role of dress and textiles in perpetuating cultural continuity among these remarkable clans.

On the Vietnam/China border, changes in clan names, as in the case of the Lolo in Vietnam/ Yi in China, create confusion and threaten eventual dilution of group identity. However, similar ethnic dress across political borders is strikingly clear visual evidence of familial connections. In remote islands of Indonesia (Timor Barat and Flores) and the highlands of Myanmar, motifs in textiles and dress traditions recount ancestral beliefs and convey unique worldviews. Many ethnic minorities in northern Vietnam continue to wear their group garments daily. With the influx of inexpensive, mass-produced clothing into rural markets, communities develop creative ways to continue to express their group identity through their dress. Cultural pride of the Hmong/Miao, Hani, Dai, Zhuang and Yi women in Vietnam and China continue to inspire industries of mass-produced ethnic outfits, fabrics, trims, etc. and a popular culture of dress made specifically for particular subgroups. Despite 200 years of separation, the oral history of ancestral connections between the Buyi in Vietnam and Bouyei in China is remembered in dress details. These surprising twists in clothing trends/evolution refute the idea that there is a fixed universal continuum leading from ethnic to cosmopolitan dress and inevitable assimilation into the majority. As these cultures evolve, ethnic dress nurtures a sense of self and place, bonds communities through generations and across national boundaries, and speaks of the amazing versatility and resilience of kinship and the human spirit.

Material Cultural Heritage of a 'heathen past': colonial Ethnographic collections and the Naga of North East India

Vibha Joshi, University of Tübingen, Germany/University of Oxford, United Kingdom

The paper is based on ongoing research on the material cultural heritage of the indigenous Naga people of northeast India. Artefacts were collected in colonial times (1850-1947) and immediately thereafter and are now located in several European ethnographic museums. During the past 4-5 generations most Naga have converted to Christianity, alongside a protracted nationalist movement for sovereignty. During Christian revivals, cultural accessories, especially cloth and jewelry associated with the ancestral animistic religion, were either destroyed or discarded. However, a large number of surviving items from the so called 'Heathen past' have now become part of a treasured cultural history of the Naga. There is currently a trend to project Naga sartorial heritage in grand celebrations of indigenous annual festivals, and in the Nagaland state's flagship Hornbill Festival aimed at promoting tourism. In the light of this trend, the paper explores how Naga communities engage with their

material cultural heritage, especially cloths from the collections. Giving an example of the impact on local Naga of research photographs of older textiles/cloths which were taken to the field, the paper discusses the views of modern members of the community as to the relevance of their sartorial heritage for present day definitions and interpretations of themselves as an internationally involved people. The paper asks to what extent the community's material cultural heritage is the foundation on which it is building its future.

Gender and politics of dress in contemporary Kyrgyzstan

Mohira Suyarkulova, American University Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

This paper explores gendered nationalist ideologies and their attendant myths and narratives in present-day Kyrgyzstan through an investigation of clothing items and practices. Clothes speak volumes, revealing tensions between gendered narratives of nationhood and various interpretations of what proper Kyrgyz femininities and masculinities should be. Clothing thus becomes both a sign and a site of the politics of identity, inscribing power relations and individual strategies of Kyrgyz men and women onto their bodies. Individual clothing choices and strategies take place within the general context of discursive struggles over what authentic and appropriate representations of Kyrgyzness should be. Thus, such clothing items as ak kalpak (conical felt hats) and the practice of Muslim women covering their head (hijab) acquire social and political meanings that stand for wider processes of identity contestation in the country

Sartorial Borderland of East and West: Assimilation of Western Clothing Construction into Traditional Korean Dress, Hanbok

Minjee Kim, Independent Scholar, United States

Since Western clothes replaced traditional wardrobes in the Asian countries, many of national, ethnic, and tribal dresses were gradually relegated to ceremonial occasions, and have been regarded stagnant, out of cycles of fashion, being labeled as cases of 'anti-fashion' or 'non-fashion.' However, the traditional Korean dress, hanbok has lively responded to the external forces that impacted the environment of manufacturing its counterpart, westernized daily wear as well as to the innate desire of people to dress a la mode. Drawn to the turn of the twenty-first century, the structural transformation of hanbok has been accelerated along with continuous hanbok reform movement to replace it as daily wear, which in result, questioned its authenticity.

This study probes into the Western clothing construction techniques assimilated into hanbok since the late 19th century onward, through the examination of surviving hanbok from the museum and private collections, the surveys of fashion magazines, and the interviews with designers. The results reveal: (1) the elements taken from functionality, attaching shoulder straps on skirt bindings, snap buttons to close jeogori, pants hook and bar to fasten the waist, has long been remained as the functions were effective, but otherwise became obsolete (2) more aggressive adoptions to create a desired silhouette of form-fitting top and A-line skirt with tapering bodice panels, slanted shoulder line, set-in sleeve and curved armhole line unwittingly emerged at the end of 20th century and became more prevalent and unrestrainable in the 21st century.

This groundwork of understanding the status quo suggests to foresee the tenor of future hanbok, re-systemize the conventional way of hanbok construction, redesign government's policy to maintain the tradition of national dress and to reconsider the conventional demarcation of Eastern clothing characterized by unstructured, two-dimensional construction and three-dimensional, form-fitting Western clothing.

Snapshots from the Naryn-Syr Darya river basin: local responses to infrastructure degradation

Convenor and chair: **Flora Roberts**, University of Leiden / University of Tübingen, the Netherlands

Together these papers seek to take the pulse of the Naryn - Syr Darya waterway a quarter century after the fall of the USSR, focusing on interactions between human communities and water resources mediated by decaying or obsolete infrastructure.

Informed by recent fieldwork by two anthropologists and a historian at three sites between southern Kyrgyzstan and northern Tajikistan, the panel sheds light on a range of adaptation strategies – ranging from out migration to local governance initiatives and new visions of rural development – to cope with the effects of sharply reduced state funding and the predictable instabilities of anthropogenic landscape transformations.

Tajik Sea or Soviet dam? living with a body of water in flux

Flora Roberts, University of Leiden, the Netherlands / University of Tübingen, Germany

One of the first large dam projects on the Syr Darya river, at Kairakkum, created a large reservoir used for irrigation, power generation, and – most importantly – to regulate the flow of water to the Farhad power station downstream in Uzbekistan. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the breakdown in relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the dam lost its primary function. The model Soviet towns built on the shores of the reservoir have undergone a significant demographic shift, with ethnic Tajiks replacing a multi-lingual population drawn from across the USSR. Today, with the fisheries closed and hydropower production in sharp decline due to silting, the Kairakkum reservoir's most visible identity is as a place of rest and relaxation for holiday makers.

On the basis of interviews with long term residents of Kairakkum town, this paper charts continuities and disjunctures in the relationship between area residents and the body of water that has significant role in their lives, but whose significance has changed over time. To what extent is the Kairakkum reservoir, or “Tajik Sea”, as it is officially known, experienced as a “natural” phenomenon, and to what extent are local perceptions coloured by the breakdown of the infrastructure built to exploit the river's resources?

Changing ecological sensitivities and the after-life of a deindustrialized boom town

Gulzat Baialieva, University of Tübingen, Germany

Presenting ethnographic research on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek transboundary riverine life, this paper examines breakdown of local industries, outdated infrastructure, perceptions of (post)industrial life, changing environmental sensitivities. The Naryn river is glacially fed largest river in Kyrgyzstan which flows to the Syr Darya to form the Aral Sea. The case presented is located on the lower gorge of the Naryn rivers, which accommodates 97% of country's hydropower plants.

This paper studies how harnessing the river as an energy-producer and site of industry changed human-environment interactions, how the bordered riverine life is being appropriated to socioeconomic, political and ecological challenges. The leading research questions are how anthropogenic change has affected the natural environment, and to what extent the river is locally perceived as a technical energy-producing resource as opposed to a natural water resource. Situated on the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border, which hardened after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the local communities face issues of transboundary everyday lives. Therefore, a follow-up question concerns the appropriation of bordered life in different regimes, exploring the mechanisms used locally to adapt to the militarization of borders.

On the basis of in-depth interviews, archival research and participant observation over the course of ten months of fieldwork explore local perceptions, strategies of post-industrial life, bordered life and relations to the natural environment. Preliminary findings indicate that resources, technology and involution mechanisms are dependent on the river, its channels, interregional communication. The Naryn river, the dam and bridge retain strong power in fertilizing the riverine social lives. Like Pritchard's (2011) conceptualization of the Rhone as envirotechnical system, the lower Naryn has a long-time perspective of envirotechnical landscape. Therefore, industry, dam and hydropower-harnessed Naryn represents a specific configuration of “intertwined ‘ecological’ and ‘technological’ systems, which may be composed of artifacts, practices, people, institutions, and ecologies” (19:2011).

Spiritual revival and hybridity: Islam and Tengriism in Kyrgyzstan and beyond

Convenor and Chair: **Rene Provis**, University of New South Wales, Australia

Addressing the “Revivals” theme of the conference, this panel explores dimensions of the post-Soviet spiritual revival in Central Asia with a particular focus on hybrid spiritualities in Kyrgyzstan. Following the relaxation of religious proscriptions in 1991, Kyrgyzstan was unique among Central Asian states for the degree of religious freedoms afforded to local and foreign religious organisations. The re-establishment of religious practices and profusion of religious institutions in the wake of official atheism across the former Soviet Union has received considerable scholarly and popular attention. However, in Central Asia, and Kyrgyzstan in particular, much of this attention has been focussed either on potential for incipient militant Islam in the post-9/11 environment, or on the activities of missionaries, mostly western protestant and foreign Islamic organizations. Yet while the dominance of these themes has tended to obfuscate understanding everyday ritual beliefs and practices, it has also generated significant conflict such that notions of what it means to be a proper “Kyrgyz”, “Muslim”, etc., remain contested. This panel brings together three scholars with individual research projects investigating different aspects of the contemporary Kyrgyz spiritual revival and the significance of Tengriism, both temporally and spatially, across the shifting borders of the post-Soviet periphery.

Nurlan Choibekov presents ethnographic research conducted across the complex borders of Batken Oblast. His comparative fieldwork explores the nature of spiritual beliefs in two separate villages, one Tajik and one Kyrgyz. While spiritual hybridity is widespread among the Kyrgyzstani, Choibekov’s study reveals both the strength of hybrid practices in the ostensibly more “purely” Islamic south, and, compellingly, a similar hybridity of Islam and Tengriism among the Tajik communities of southern Kyrgyzstan. Adding an important historical dimension, Jennifer Webster’s paper draws on archival and ethnographic research to investigate the centrality of Osh’s sacred Sulaiman Too as a mazar and pilgrimage site. The sacral topography of the mountain, she argues, greatly facilitated the integration of Islam among the local Central Asian population through providing a local site of spiritual significance and connection to the wider Muslim world. Finally, Rene Provis’ paper broadens the panel’s geographical scope to the north of Kyrgyzstan and beyond by considering the ways in which hybrid religiosity informs grass-roots indigenous environmentalism. This, he argues, is a hitherto neglected dimension of studies of spirituality, but one which nevertheless has important consequences for economic development, natural resource management (intersecting with the “Resources” theme of the conference), and perceptions of health and well-being among the Kyrgyz populace.

Pre-Islamic practices and Islam in Batken Oblast, southern Kyrgyzstan

Nurlan Choibekov, International University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

The South of Kyrgyzstan has been a zone of frequent ethnic conflict between citizens of Kyrgyzstan, as well as between citizens of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The similar religious background of these ethnic groups does not seem to have had a significant impact on restoring peaceful post-conflict relations. Comparative ethnographic research conducted in Batken during 2015, in the villages of Andarak that is Tajik populated and Iskra village that is Kyrgyz populated, showed that similar pre-Islamic Tengriism practices are present in both ethnic groups. There thus exists a long standing syncretism of Islamic rituals with pre-Islamic practices that is not specific to particular ethnic groups.

The popular contemporary notion of an intensifying Islamic religiosity in Kyrgyzstan, especially in the south, does not cohere with the everyday lived reality of the ethnic Kyrgyz population. Our fieldwork showed that southern Kyrgyz combine pre-Islamic rituals with Islamic practices without distinguishing between them, and without questioning whether the resulting practices conform to a “correct” interpretation of Islam. This is evident, for instance, during important life-cycle practices such when pilgrims arrive home from the Haj, during funeral ceremonies, or when visiting traditional healers. In the North of Kyrgyzstan, Muslim clerics are making efforts to “purify” Islam of pre-Islamic rituals by categorising them as “shirk” (Arabic: the sin of idolatry or polytheism). However, similar efforts in the south would likely prove difficult at best. Southern Kyrgyz and Tajik alike consider such “shirk” practices as an important part of their tradition, and attempts by clerics to purify Islam would likely only result in loss of authority and support from of local populations. However, the Kyrgyz State’s political focus and identity discourses create a divisive “otherness” between the population of the southern oblasts. In this paper I explore whether the commonalities in spiritual hybridity could be used as a basis for peace-building efforts among ethnic minorities rather than the ostensibly more “pure” Islamic religious identity, which I argue is misplaced.

The Persian Mecca: Islam at the Sacred Mountain of Osh

Jennifer Webster, University of Washington, United States

This paper explores the integration of Islam into the sacral topography of Takht-I Sulaiman (Sulaiman Too), the sacred mountain in the heart of Osh, Kyrgyzstan. Two nineteenth century Chaghatay manuscripts refer to the mountain as the "Persian Mecca" as well as draw connections between the mountain and the prophets of Islam through the telling of a series of legends. Today the mountain rests within the borders of the Kyrgyz Republic and, as recently as 2010, became the backdrop of interethnic violence between two Turkic ethnic groups, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz.

Did people adapt Islam to the local context in the Ferghana Valley to legitimize preexisting practices? Or did the infusion of Islam into the local context imbue Islam with meaning necessary to appeal to non-Arab peoples. Furthermore, how have Osh's residents intertwined their ethno-linguistic identities with their Muslimness? Through an analysis of the trajectory of how people have viewed the mountain as a sacred space, this paper argues that the advent of Islam in Osh allowed people to both strengthen local practices and offer a compelling link to Islam.

The pervasiveness of regional shrines within the Islamic world has deep roots. The practice of visiting regional shrines, especially in the non-Arab world, is important within both the local context and as a widespread phenomenon that allowed Muslim travelers to find the familiar within distant lands. In many cases these pilgrimage practices gave Muslims the opportunity to perform key rituals without having to journey long distances through hostile territories. This paper intersects with the scholarship on pilgrimage both within Central Asia and within other regions of the Islamic world while also being grounded in its analysis of historical sources, ethnographic research, and the manmade and natural topography of the mountain. Takht-i Sulaiman is one of many local shrines throughout the Ferghana Valley. It is perhaps, the most well known shrine in the Ferghana Valley, especially with its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Tengirchylyk, spiritual revival, and grass-roots environmentalism in postsocialist Kyrgyzstan

Rene Provis, University of New South Wales, Australia

This paper investigates the revival of traditional spirituality and its relationship with grass-roots environmentalism in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. Drawing on ethnographic materials collected during 2011, 2012, and 2014, I first document the everyday spiritualities that are evident in diverse practices such as feasting celebrations held to mark important life-cycle events, and practices of mazar (shrine) pilgrimage. While seemingly unrelated, both are motivated by a desire for spiritual and material well-being which draws on and re-creates spiritual imaginaries from a distant, pre-Soviet past. Linking these seemingly disparate practices is an underlying, quasi-magic belief in bata (blessings), and widespread perception of the necessity of acquiring ak bata (white or good blessings) while avoiding ters bata (curses) in order to lead a healthy and prosperous life. Reflecting hybrid elements of Hanifi and Sufi Islam, and pre-Islamic shamanic or Tengrianic spiritual beliefs, recognition and greater exploration of the latter has been hampered by the relative dominance of security centred analyses of political and militant Islam. However, with the relaxation of religious proscriptions since 1991, Tengrianic spiritual practices and organised religious bodies have experienced a significant revival, and it is through this that a deeper connection between everyday spiritual beliefs and "enculturated landscapes" becomes apparent. In the second part of this paper I thus investigate how this unique spiritual hybridity informs grass-roots environmentalism in Kyrgyzstan, which has been particularly apparent in mobilised opposition to the extractives sector. I also locate indigenous environmentalism regionally and comparatively with similar indigenous environmental movements throughout the world today.

State, Commodities and Politics of Mobility

Chair: **Anwasha Sengupta**, Institute of Development Studies Kolkata, India

This panel explores the connectivity between borders, nation-states, and resources in shaping the environment, local politics, and borderland communities. Within each of these studies, the state and communities residing in borderland spaces adopt different strategies with regards to border-formation and commodification of resources. The domination of the state ultimately redefines interpersonal relationships on an individual and collective scale. Bittner's paper addresses oil and gas resources in Azerbaijan and how the approach to their extraction has changed following the country's independence. She explores how peripheral places where resources are extracted are becoming increasingly important actors, but questions to what degree resources and their extraction actually strengthen the state and the independence of political elites.

Lin examines the contemporary participation of lapis lazuli merchants across Afghan-Pakistani borders through their trading practices under changing regimes. She demonstrates ethnographically the significance of the lapis traders, their ethnic backgrounds, and historical transregional regulatory systems in mobilising the flow of goods and people across borders.

Yadav looks at the domination of resources in Kazakhstan by Russia. He argues that Russian migration towards Central Asia and Kazakhstan was a developmental process sponsored by the state during the Czarist and Soviet regime. He deals with the positive and negative aspects of old borders (made by Soviet) with the new realities and the supremacy of Russian population in Kazakhstan both socially and economically.

Sengupta studies the impact of the former-East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) on the jute trading networks of Bengal. As India and Pakistan competed for control over jute production and its circulation within and outside their national territories, demarcating and policing the borders between eastern India and East Pakistan became important. Despite governmental initiatives to control the movement of jute across borders, she demonstrates that borderlanders continued their "illicit" trade networks, thus shaping the economy and politics of the Bengal borderland.

Old borders with new realities: Impact of ethnic Russians to the Social-Economic Sector of Kazakhstan

Ankur Yadav, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Several historical developments like colonization, Russification and Sovietization contributed to the socio-economic development of Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan was once referred to as a backward region, a perception which changed with its assimilation and fusion with ethnic Russians, over the course of time leading to institutional development in Soviet Kazakhstan. Russian migrants, in collaboration with the ruling regime, changed not only the economic profile, but also transformed the socio-cultural fabric of Kazakh society by developing urban centres. At the time of Soviet disintegration, Kazakhstan was figured among the highly developed republics. Kazakhstan, as the biggest state in Central Asia and having the longest borders with Russia, holds special significance with the second largest Russian population. Hence this paper deals with the positive and negative aspects of old borders with the new reality and the supremacy of Russians on infrastructure and resources.

This paper deals with the pattern of migration of Russians to Kazakhstan, from its conquest by Russia till the end of Czarist period. It argues that Russian migration towards CA & Kazakhstan was a developmental process sponsored by the state. It concludes that the migration process of ethnic Russians into Kazakhstan was primarily a state sponsored initiative under the auspices of the Czarist regime and reached the climax during the Soviet era. This changed the demographic structure of Kazakhstan, bearing far reaching consequences on the socio-economic and cultural history of the region.

This ethnically diverse composition of the social and economic sectors had both positive as well as negative implications. The contribution of ethnic Russians to the socio-economic sectors of Kazakhstan is explained from the components of agriculture, industrial sector and natural resources, education, family and marriage institutions.

Border Making and the Politics of Jute Sharing between Two Bengals in 1950s

Anwasha Sengupta, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, India

This paper studies the impact of British India's partition (1947) on the trade networks of Bengal. The particular focus of this paper is on the circulation of jute and how the new border separating eastern India and East Pakistan disrupted this circulation.

Bengal had been the most important jute-producing area of the world since the late 19th century. With an easy access to raw jute, jute mills mushroomed in Calcutta and its surroundings around the same time. But the new international border separating India and the former East Pakistan put the jute-producing areas (now in Bangladesh) and the jute mills (West Bengal) on either side in two separate countries. Moreover, the new border separated the Calcutta port, from where jute bales were shipped and sent to the rest of the world, from the jute producing areas. Partition and the creation of India and Pakistan was thus a major blow to this lucrative trade. Though both the governments, eager to earn hard currencies from jute, agreed to cooperate with each other in jute cultivation, baling, manufacturing jute products and exporting raw jute, in reality jute diplomacy was complex and conflict-ridden. To become self-sufficient in jute economy, Pakistan invested heavily in jute mills and began to develop Chittagong Port to export raw jute. India, on the other hand, encouraged jute cultivation and recruited the Bengali Hindu refugees for jute cultivation. Both countries set up customs and check posts in the border to curb jute-smuggling. The paper argues that the untangling of Bengal's jute economy in 1950s was integrally linked with nation-building and border making initiatives. Moreover, the paper also shows how the people in the Bengal borderland participated as well as subverted these border making initiatives.

Borderlands taking control: Do resources contribute to Azerbaijan's independence

Victoria Ariel Bittner, Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD), Azerbaijan

This paper will examine the shift in the perception of Azerbaijan by its political elites, from an oil-supplying outpost of the Soviet Union to a prestigious, regional power center of the South Caucasus.

In 1940, Azerbaijan produced roughly a million barrels of oil a day, before its slow, steady decline as the powerhouse of the Soviet Union. Azerbaijan, as a Union Republic, was never properly compensated for the exhaustion of its natural resources. In fact, Azerbaijan was paid less for a barrel of oil than its extraction cost; this economic reality led to a serious decline in its standard of living and necessitated complete dependence on the center.

The Absheron peninsula is abundant with visual memories of its early exploitation, with fields of oil pumps littering its landscape; however, its fortunes changed, when, in 1994, it signed what was termed the 'contract of the century' with a consortium of foreign oil companies to develop its Caspian oil reserves.

Once a Moscow backwater, with all power and resources shifted to the political center in the Kremlin, Baku is now a major international player in its own right, acting as an important component connecting the South Caucasus to Central Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Russia. Furthermore, this paper will explore to what degree resource extraction of Azerbaijan's Caspian reserves allows for greater degrees of autonomy, from both Euro-Atlantic and Russian-centered institutions. Based on the assumption that a state's goals, first and foremost, include the ability to exercise sole control over the entirety of its recognized borders, it will be suggested that Azerbaijan's oil and gas reserves have provided for a situation of state capture, whereby the goals of the state have been distorted, and Azerbaijan, in fact, continues to be severely dependent on exogenous factors in the determination of its policies.

The becoming of resources: temporal and moral valuations of resource making in marginal lands

Convenor and Chair: **Jeanine Dayyeli**, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Germany

Resource use, (re-)valuation and extraction do not only entail material and economic dimensions; they include temporal and moral assumptions as well. Only by considering these immaterial we may understand shifting patterns of resource (re-)valuation or devaluation as well as ethical, normative, social or other registers shaping their use. Starting from the famous dictum of Erich Zimmermann (1933) that “resources are not: they become”, we want to focus on the often neglected processes – negotiated or violent – by which substances, landscapes, plants or animals become resources. This becoming is mostly linked to larger, often global developments like the opening of trade routes, technical advancement increasing the need for certain substances and energy, ecological awareness, new production and consumption patterns, and new forms of leisure. Moral economy considerations and temporal aspects of (re-)valuating certain matters as resources do not only refer to recent kinds of resources like »pristine« landscapes or rare earth elements but also to classical resources like land and water, especially once they undergo commodification and speculation. Valuations are based on assumptions about the past, present and future while the different temporal scales inherent in resource use often engender moral judgements about the money thus generated. Temporal (like progressive, future-oriented, backward, ancestral etc.) and moral valuations (like clean vs. polluted wealth, honest labour etc.) are linked in manifold ways and employed by different social actors to frame the valuation of a given resource according to their respective agenda. The valuation of borderland or marginal resources is additionally often framed in terms of development and national progress whereas the disenfranchisement of local populations is presented as unavoidable for future progress. Borderlands are thus sites which lend themselves in specifically fruitful ways to resource-related discussions of moral economies/the common good (for whom?), aspirations and anxieties, aspects of marginalities, and asynchronous temporalities of becoming. This panel will address the intersections between economic and moral valuations in the making of natural resources (Lange et al. 2016: 2) by discussing case studies from different borderland sites in Central Asia, Pakistan, Iraqi Kurdistan, and southwestern China.

Disappearing Dams and Emerging Glaciers: temporality, affect and planning on the Naryn River

Jeanne Féaux de la Croix, University of Tübingen, Germany

This paper charts the biography and temporal intertwining of two central resources in the borderlands of Kyrgyzstan and China, namely hydropower plants and the glaciers that feed them. Medium-sized dams have been in the making in Naryn province since the post-war Soviet period. The Kyrgyzstani government had allied with the Russian company RusHydro in 2013 to finally build these dams, but financial difficulties aborted the project early on. Hydropower continues to be vaunted as the ‘future of the country’ and export resource though. The promise of these projects has significantly shaped the economic life also in this remote area, and the cognitive landscape of Naryn residents. Such perpetual expectation of resource-creation has more recently been linked to observations of significant glacier melt. While these facts were paid little attention until the early 2000s, glaciers have recently experienced a significant shift from ‘invisibility’ to surging into view as a crucial resource and concern for residents and policy-makers. Their condition is now connected to anxiety about a reduction in available water for hydropower and agriculture, and broadcasting of the climate change idea and associated policies.

This paper traces the paradoxical effect of a hydropower resource that never materializes, alongside the trajectory of a natural resource that is newly valued because of its shrinking. The analysis highlights how developments in the material environment and infrastructure (Harvey, Morita and Jensen 2017) of borderlands intersect with human emotions such as hope and fear. I relate these material conditions and emotions to planning as a particular kind of future-oriented action (Abram and Weszkalnys 2013), and to its grass-roots reception. Through examining the impact of ‘resources that never were’, I discuss the wider implications for understanding horizons of expectation, temporality and emotion in resource-making.

Evaluations of Land and Politics in a Contested Border Region: The Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Katharina Lange, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Germany

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is, until this day, one of the most contested border regions in the Middle East. As such, it has seen enormous violence over the past half century. This paper reflects on long-term consequences of this violence by taking an ethnographic perspective on shifting valuations of agrarian land and rural life in the Province of Duhok, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Once the bread basket of Iraq, agricultural production in the region has declined significantly over the last four decades due to the region’s violent recent history. While the region’s urban conglomerations are rapidly expanding, driven by a rentier-type economic model based on the export of

oil and gas, the rural and agrarian sector has remained marginal for decades. Under these circumstances, appreciation of land in rural areas is frequently articulated in terms of aesthetics and leisure, rather than economic exploitation. These shifts are associated with intergenerational changes in symbolic valuations and lifestyle aspirations, lack of agricultural knowledge, but also structural political decisions which still pursue an urban development model. Based on interviews and observations made between 2012 and 2017, the paper explores contradictions and tensions in local interpretations of these shifts, suggesting that their discussion offers local interlocutors a way of (self) critiquing the trajectory of Iraq's Kurdistan Region after 2003.

Working at the fringes: the moral economy of land and water in Bukhara's natural border zones

Jeanine Dayyeli, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Germany

In Central Asia's arid regions water was (and continues to be) the prime resource without which even other potential resources like land are almost worthless. Pre-Soviet allocation of water consisted less in a fixed set of regulations than in a complex process of negotiations, power plays and religious-moral considerations of how these issues should be properly dealt with. Taking the southern and westernmost steppe and desert peripheries of the Bukharan Emirate (which are today divided between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) during the 19th and early 20th centuries as a vantage point, this presentation will examine how water regimes, land reclamation and a specific, peripheral natural environment played a part in negotiating and practising resource making. In spite of their geographical and climate conditions, these Bukharan regions were predominantly agricultural; peasants had, however, often to cope with lands buried under sand, water shortage and salinization which led to frequent abandonment of fields and made recurrent land reclamation necessary. Turning unproductive, "dead" land into a resource was an enterprise pursued by many actors, often with contradicting aspirations. With increasing cotton demand and incorporation into a large if not global trade network, this became even more pressing in the course of the late 19th century. Consulting documentary and narrative archival sources, it will be asked who was able to turn which water course or piece of land into a resource and how, which notions of moral economy were entailed, and how conflict-prone interests were balanced in a social environment characterised by demands on an idealised paternalistic state on the one hand and frequent on-the-ground bypassing of agreements on the other.

The Grant Entrepreneur: Promissory Development and the Local Business of Doing Good

Convenor and Chair: **Carolin Maertens**, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

Edwin Arderner once famously noted that remote areas are full of rubble and ruins of the past (2012). Indeed, looking at the remoter regions along Asia's borders, we find plenty of ruins – material and other – of grand state schemes that came to an end or pilot projects in development that ran out of funding. Some of these ruins are remnants of the past while others are still in the making, such as the scars left behind by extractive resource capitalism or the frustration caused by myriads of "trainings" that more often than not fail to lead to the promised income or employment opportunities. Thus, ruins tend to be entangled with visions of the frontier as realm of precious resources – timber, minerals, untouched wilderness, cultural diversity, crossborder differentials – that prompt efforts at extracting or protecting in the name of development, conservation, or heritage, respectively. Moreover, remoteness itself is turned into a resource – in a paradoxical way: While being the very problem (1)NGO interventions seek to address, remoteness also needs to be maintained, at least rhetorically, as a feature of a "target area" in order to lend justification to further interventions.

In this panel, we are looking at a group of people that is instrumental in this dynamic, yet has largely remained out of sight: those who make use of grand development schemes by establishing local NGOs as implementation partners; those who possess the language and skills necessary to navigate the world of development work and obtain funding; those who use grants and connections both as entrepreneurial opportunities and as means to do good for their communities; those who use "funding" as resource to establish themselves locally in wider networks of money and influence. We call them – appreciatively rather than disapprovingly – NGO entrepreneurs (Maertens 2017). Their work and ambitions are typically enmeshed in notions of revival – revived culture, revived wilderness, a revived economy – but they are also the ones staying on after the end of a project or scheme. Their lives and ambitions, thus, are entangled with layers of ruins of former attempts to shape remote borderlands in particular ways. Caught in between global rhetorics of conservation, heritage, and economic development, and the intricate moral and socio-political fabric of communities at the edge of nation-states, their engagement and reasonings are crucial for a deeper understanding of the entanglements between revivals, resources and ruins.

Doing Business, Doing Good: Entrepreneurial Spirit of Development Work in Eastern Tajikistan

Carolin Maertens, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

While research on development in the borderlands of Eastern Tajikistan primarily focuses on international development institutions, this paper brings to attention development work carried out in Gorno-Badakhshan province by "NGO entrepreneurs": local people who set up their own NGO and either secure grants from international donors for their own project ideas or become local "implementation partners". Their biographies, ambitions and approaches, I argue, reflect the persistent dependencies of the region on outside support – dependencies that are reinforced, not least, by those who work to diminish them. Thus, NGO entrepreneurs are often those who benefitted from an education abroad and work experience with international development actors, equipping them with the language and performative skills as well as networks to run their own NGO. Facing the same fundamental challenge as most people living in the region – how to make a living in a dire economic situation – the motivation for establishing an NGO is rooted in both the need to generate income and the desire to improve living conditions for the wider community.

I argue that NGO entrepreneurship is a form of privatization of development work, a "business model", that emerged as an effect of and a response to the discontinuation of state provisioning and the lack of income sources and economic opportunities since the collapse of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the influx of international funding and the requirement of donor policies to engage in cooperation with local partners, on the other. In search for concrete problems to address, 'target communities' are identified rather in remote villages outside Khorog, the provincial capital and NGO hub, where in turn international funding is concentrated. Here, remoteness, as a sign of underdevelopment, becomes a resource employed to secure funding, which further underpins existing socio-economic and political asymmetries between Khorog and its 'hinterlands'.

Shifting concepts: human rights NGOs in Nepal's Terai borderlands

Kristin Cain, Independent scholar, the Netherlands

In Nepal's southern Terai borderland, human rights NGOs multiplied during and directly after the Maoist insurgency. With initial humanitarian aims or as community-based peace movements, these NGOs later received international funding to monitor violations, collect victims' testimonies, and hold

training programs on human rights. More than a decade after the end of the armed conflict, many of these NGOs have faded into insignificance and are only hollow offices with a signboard and few staff. Others continue to function under the heading of “human rights NGOs” though the human rights content, in terms of placing the state’s actions under scrutiny or fulfilling a role of bridging between conflict parties, is no longer part of their work. Instead they run projects ranging from open-defecation free campaigns to youth entrepreneurship and interreligious dialogue. Many of these NGO entrepreneurs are part of a politically powerful network through their involvement as “district representatives” of a leading Kathmandu-based human rights NGO. Building on this affiliation, they obtain membership in a number of local committees and political bodies. Consisting of individuals with largely coinciding interests, this network has shifted the concept of “human rights” to focus not on violations by the state, but by non-state actors. Focusing on violence found in the borderland, they report on cross-border criminal activities, “backward” cultural practices involving borderlands minorities such as caste-based discrimination, oppression of women and bonded labour, and political agitation by these same minorities. This portrayal ties into the global rhetoric of borderlands as a security threat. Data collected on violent incidents is used by INGOs to demonstrate the conflict-prone nature of the Terai and the risks of the open border. At the same time, contestation around concepts of “human rights” on the ground has had real consequences for some of these NGO entrepreneurs.

The Politics of Gateway: Human Flow at the Borderlands

Convenor and Chair: **Eva Hung**, Hang Seng Management College, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Borders are both rigid and fluid, constraining and facilitating. Borders exist to create political and economic divisions; ironically however it is also the erection of political borders that facilitates the flow of not only people but also of goods across the border. State policies on one side of the border may create relative scarcity of goods and services. The politically contrived scarcity generates demand, where the supply channels can be easily established by mobilizing preexisting cross-border networks. Hence, borders separate as well as connect people.

Borderlands are also productive spaces. By crossing border, people generate resources which otherwise not available in their own native land. This panel brings together four different types of people on the move in the borderlands and note how manipulation of border spaces generate productive resources. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Central Asia transformed from a formerly unified socio-economic system to five independent states. Sub-borders in the past became national borders guarding the sovereign power of each independent state vis-a-vis the others. Adams sets out to examine the changing discourse on cross-border migration in Kazakhstan and in particular the resettlement policy so as to ease economic disparities between regions. Nikolotov, on the other hand, explores how disabled Lyuli alm seekers circumvent and navigate the border to Russia and in the process turn their ruined bodies into something resourceful.

Both Adams and Nikolotov look at Central Asia where border changed from a sub-border one to a national one. By contrast, the return of Hong Kong and Macao to China in 1997 and 1999 respectively turned the national borders into sub-borders, as the two territories are now Special Administrative Regions under the one country of China. Ngo and Hung discusses how a group of “procurement agents” turn the sub-border region into resourceful spaces, as they exploit the border to engage in shadow trade. Meanwhile, Chan and Pun explore how cross-border school children navigate two social spaces, Hong Kong and mainland China, and in so doing negotiate belongingness. Taken together these four papers contribute to a new understanding of the borderlands as sites producing and generating resources, which add complexity to the borders as mere gateway of resource flow.

Virtual Connectivity and its Challenge to Border Checkpoints: The Rise of Shadow Procurement Services in Hong Kong and Macao

Tak-Wing Ngo, University of Macau, Macao S.A.R., China

Eva Hung, Hang Seng Management College, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Hong Kong and Macao have been servicing as hubs of trans-border commodity, capital, and human resources flow for centuries. The two borderlands in Greater China are also the nodal centres in regional shadow trade. This paper looks at the emergence of a specific “service industry” – the shadow procurement service – linking mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao.

The procurement service is shadowy because the whole rationale is to purchase specific foreign products (such as cosmetics, infant formula, pharmaceutical products) without paying import tax. Instead of buying these items in shops or ordering them through official e-commerce outlets, customers entrust an individual or a procurement network to buy for them in Hong Kong or Macao. An order is placed usually through social media, chat groups, or internet platforms. The tens of millions of people visiting Hong Kong and Macao every year in their capacities as tourists, students, contract labours, professionals, businessmen, and so on provide the human resources needed for this connectivity. A good proportion of them serve as the regular, albeit freelance, procurement agents. Upon receiving the orders, they purchase the items during their visit/work in Hong Kong and Macao, bring them across border checkpoints, and send them to their customers through domestic courier or post service. It is in essence a combination of suitcase trade and e-commerce.

This type of shadow exchanges has expanded exponentially in recent years, thanks to the advancement of the internet, courier logistics, and social media, as well as the availability of vast human resources arriving and departing the borderlands. The traditional mode of border control has become increasingly ineffective as trans-border exchanges have gone “virtual”. This paper explores its historical meanings in terms of state control, resources, and the global value chain.

Inhabiting the Extraction: Moral Economies of Ruined Bodies

Anton Nikolotov, Berlin Graduate School of Muslim Cultures and Societies, Frei University and Humboldt University, Germany

This paper explores how work-caused disability of certain Lyuli alms seekers—their ruined bodies—are inserted into moral economies of charity and become resourceful, or rather, receptive to Allah’s resourcefulness in the understandings of my interlocutors. This means analyzing several interrelated issues: first, the extractive operations of the current migration regime and urban development in Moscow—the way the city space is segmented into turfs and zones of rent extraction. Second, the capacities of bodily ruins of Central Asian migrant workers to inhabit this extractive regime of marginalization and produce alternative temporalities. The paper contributes both to the understanding of Luylis’ vulnerable life-worlds as well as the logic of capitalist dispossession in contemporary Russia.

Border Crossing and Belongingness of Chinese Cross-Border Students

Anita K. W. Chan, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Ngai Pun, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Although globalization has facilitated massive transnational movement of goods and information, human cross-border flow remains heavily regulated and controlled. However, Chinese cross-border students is an anomaly. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, substantial numbers of young children – who are Hong Kong residents but live in the mainland, have been traveling across the border to school. Being the physical embodiment of transnationalism, these children have to navigate constantly two social spaces – Hong Kong and mainland China – that have different social, political, economic and jurisdiction systems. Based on in-depth interviews with 16 cross-border students aged 10 to 12, this paper explores how young children negotiate belongingness – preferred place of residence and identification – amidst their mobility experience. Our findings reveal that child migrants are active agents who displayed subtle considerations when negotiating complex physical and emotional needs. Their narratives also illuminate a transnational space which is characterized by closer socio-economic ties, the rising prominence of China, and not least the social and spatial hierarchy between Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Moreover, their identification, dis-identification and ambivalence with ‘Hong Kong identity’ clearly shows that parents’ (illegitimate) migration and marital status have impacts on child migrants who have to actively grapple with stigmas and discrimination.

Traversing Borderlands Through Time: Remains of the Past in Imagined Futures

Convenor: **Jan Karlach**, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Chair: **James Meador**, University of Michigan, United States

Borders are typically imagined as boundaries in space, but part of their magic lies in concealing how they appear and vanish in time. Making and unmaking borders involve fundamental transformations of lived temporality, not just rewriting histories but also projecting new opportunities on top of previous articulations of mobility and constraint. Combining visual ethnography, oral history, and textual analysis, this panel explores how people creatively perform and navigate the ongoing redrawing of ethnic and political borders. Collectively, these papers seek to draw attention to the role of embodied and emplaced imagination as the front line of border-work. Even if borders are planned or decreed schematically from the metropole, the work of border-making rests heaviest on the periphery. Imagining borders requires the collaboration of multiple kinds, and aspects of this labor are inevitably delegated or relegated to ethnic groups and institutions inhabiting the peripheries with complex relationships to the regimes that come and go in the capital. If sometimes drowned out by more monolithic projections of state power, these voices nevertheless remain irreplaceable guides to ruins and other traces of previous eras of borders, even as they serve to turn these traces into something more durable - an imagined future.

Pronounced Dead, but Still Breathing: Imagining the Native Chieftaincy through Buildings and Ruins in Southwest China

Jan Karlach, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

The Native Chieftain System (*tusi zhidu*) was a loose arrangement of local rulers (*tusi*) empowered by the Chinese imperial court to manage the indigenous population inhabiting the peripheries, which differed from the Empire's majority in language and practices. Fragments of this system prevailed until the establishment of the PRC, after which it was officially promulgated a history. The often sumptuous chieftains' offices (*tusi yamen*) faced decades of abandonment and subsequent decay. Since the 80's, some of these buildings were revitalized, inscribed on the list of the material heritage and turned into a tourist attraction. Such spaces, thoroughly re-interpreted and demystified, were converted into museums representing the largely imagined official narrative fitting into the mainstream paradigm of Chinese history. However, most of the thousands of bigger or smaller offices lie fallow. Although most of the actual native headmen disappeared from their lands during turbulent 50's and 60's, their subjects and the following generations stayed behind with their individual and collective memories and imaginations of the native chieftaincy as well as with practices of worshipping the former rulers' lineages. The buildings, ruins or empty spaces serve as a gateway to the alternate dimension of polyphonic narratives concerning identity, power, land boundaries, and ancestors, all veiled in a thick layer of mysticism. This contribution aims to provide a platform for these voices, broaden and extend the space for the native chieftaincy discourse beyond the ossified history, and describe the legacy and heritage of Native Chieftain System as still symbolically alive and in various forms embedded into the everyday lives of contemporary dwellers.

The Bridge of Orthodoxy: Imagining the Albazians in Sino-Russian Relations

James Meador, University of Michigan, United States

The "Russian Company" in the Manchu army was formed in late 17th century Beijing out of a motley group of Russian soldiers: Cossack turncoats, mercenaries, and prisoners-of-war from the Russian defeat at Albazino. Given wives and salaries by the Qing Emperor, within a generation the Albazians were indistinguishable from the Manchu bannermen they served alongside. The only persistent reminder of their origin was nominal adherence to Russian Orthodox Christianity. This faith often wavered, but they were never allowed to forget it due to their symbolic value as living bridges - for better or worse. From early days of relative neglect through to the opening of an Orthodox Mission for converting them to a religion already theirs by heritage, from violent persecution to junkets as good-will emissaries, the Albazians have served as prefigurative sites for projecting imagined concordance between the diverging cultural worlds of imperialist, socialist, and post-socialist Russia and China. This paper accordingly seeks to sketch the changing roles the Albazians played under changing political circumstance, and thereby show how religion became the basis for an ethnic identity perpetually caught in the middle of two powerful and mistrustful states.

Purple Ruins: Tsering Woesser's (Re)construction of the "Old Tibet"

Kamila Hladikova, Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic

Symbolic reconstruction of the “purple ruins” - the abandoned ruins of traditional Tibetan buildings, monasteries, temples and old mansions of aristocracy – has become one of the main topics of Tibetan Sinophone dissident writer Tsering Woeser. Her effort to preserve them not only as witnesses of Tibetan glorious past, but also of the dark chapters of modern Tibetan history and indictment of the Chinese rule in Tibet, has intensified when the Chinese authorities’ decided to tear down the silent mementos of the “peaceful liberation of Tibet” and “democratic reforms” of the 1950s and the “Cultural Revolution” of the 1960s. Last year Woeser’s new book in Chinese Purple Ruins (Jianghong se de feixu) was published in Taiwan as a result of her long-term research on the topic, including photographic documentation, description, and historical context. As in her book Notes on Tibet (Xizang biji, 2003), she has combined subjective perspective (poems, personal memories, interviews etc.) with objective facts. While reconstructing the image of the “old Tibet” that is contesting the official Chinese representations of Tibet, Tibetan history and Tibetan culture, she is supporting her arguments with Western philosophical and scholarly sources, referring to works of colonial and postcolonial studies and namely Said’s Orientalism. Borrowing her husband Wang Lixiong’s term “cultural imperialism” (wenhua diguozhuyi), she is appropriating those Western theories to interpret Chinese imperial/colonial endeavors in Tibet from past to present. The aim of this paper is to look into the way Woeser is engaging with the complexities of Chinese representations of Tibet in an attempt to (re)construct the missing parts of modern Tibetan history that were concealed and even intentionally erased by the Chinese official narrative and to (re)construct modern Tibetan identity against the background of the dominant Chinese culture and ideology.

Vulnerable borders

Convenor: **Paul Fryer**, Department of Geography, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Chair: **Jeremy Smith**, Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Discussant: **Ivan Zuenko**, Russian Academy of Sciences, Far Eastern Branch, Russia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there was much hope that global geopolitical tensions would decrease, ushering in a new period of co-operation and calm. Indeed, by the end of the 1990s and into the 2000s, this did seem the case as discussions moved to a 'post-modern' world order and the developing 'borderless world' that institutions, such as the strengthening European Union, suggested. However, recently the world has moved into a new period in which conflicts and global tensions are on the rise again. From the developing standoff between Russia and the West over spheres of influence, to the increasing unpredictability of North Korea or the growing political assertiveness of China, the world now seems to be more vulnerable to instability and conflict than it has for some time. State borders are portrayed as being vulnerable to a variety of threats, increasingly leading to domestic securitisation debates and reviving tensions between neighbours. In this panel we aim to examine this perception of increased vulnerability as it relates to Asian borders. In this age of increasing global conflict, are borders really more vulnerable? How does this perception of vulnerability affect citizens, especially those in border regions? What can be done to redress this perception of vulnerability? The multi-disciplinary panel presents cases from Central and South Asia, the Korean Peninsula and the Russian-Chinese borderland.

New border, new uncertainty: the emerging cross-border relations of communities in Badakhshan, Tajikistan

Paul Fryer, Department of Geography, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

The north-eastern Pamir Mountains, comprising the ethnic Kyrgyz-inhabited area of Murghab district in the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan, has long been associated with the Pamir Highway, an ancient Silk Road trade route that was popularised in the nineteenth century at a time of the 'Great Game' and the British and Russian Empires scramble for influence in the region. Though administratively attached to the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) as part of Soviet border defences against China and Afghanistan, Badakhshan and the Highway were linked functionally to the southern Kyrgyz city of Osh and the Pamir Road Administration. As such, all provisioning of Badakhshan was conducted from Osh, while ordinary citizens were connected to the outside state through the southern Kyrgyz SSR. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, when a 'hard' border was erected between the newly-independent republics of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, uncertainty developed over the future of the region and the transport corridor. Established economic links along the Highway to Osh began to weaken as the condition of the Highway deteriorated and were re-orientated towards distant Dushanbe, causing great hardship in the region and initiating a steady out-migration of young people. In this paper, I examine the cross-border relations between Murghab and Kyrgyzstan that have emerged since 1991 and ask how has the local community adapted to the past 25 years of uncertainty? What changes in the border regime have most affected local lives, whether providing new opportunities or leaving people more vulnerable? Research for this paper was conducted in Murghab in the summers of 2017 and 2018.

"The Invisible Exodus": Undocumented Migrants and Defectors from North Korea in East Asia

Naomi Chi, Hokkaido University, Japan

Since the end of the 2nd World War, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (hereinafter DPRK) has experienced the devastating Korean War (1950-1953) and the division of the two Koreas. The country historically relied on the Soviet Union and China for trade and subsidies, however, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the decline of trade with China since the early 1990s as well as the chronic food crisis that faced DPRK have had detrimental effects on the country. Together with the economic instability and the political instability (the nepotistic/hereditary succession of the Kim family) triggered the influx and flow of undocumented migrants from North Koreans to China as well as defectors to South Korea. Consequently, the increase of undocumented migration in this region brought about a new avenue for human trafficking and exploitation. The objective of this paper is to explore the gender dimension of the North Korean migrants and defectors to China and South Korea, as women in any form of migration are more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and discrimination. To be more specific, the paper will examine the sexual exploitation, forced marriage and illicit trafficking of North Korean women in the two respective countries. In terms of methodology, the author relies on primary and secondary sources such as government documents, reports by human rights organizations, interviews and memoirs as well as personal encounters with women who have been victims to human rights violation, exploitation and trafficking.

ROUNDTABLES

Influence, Investment, and Infrastructure: China's Presence in Central, South, and Southeast Asian Borderlands

Convenor and chair: **Srdjan Uljevic**, American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

China has in recent years taken the mantle of Asia's major investor. Whether it is roads, railways, mines or deep sea ports, Beijing has embarked on a building spree across Asia. China's economic presence has been felt in many Asian countries, especially in those that are in acute need of infrastructure or whose economies depend on resource extraction. This panel will explore legal aspects as well as environmental, socio-economic, and political impact of China's massive investment drive in the countries of Central, South, and Southeast Asia. More specifically, the panel will explore how China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative can compete with the Eurasian Economic Union for economic dominance and power in the Central Asian region. The panel will also focus on the role of the Asian Development Bank's safeguard policies in relation to Chinese investments in Asia. In particular, the panel will discuss their effectiveness in helping investment recipient countries ensure that Chinese investments contribute to ecological sustainability, enhancement of social cohesiveness of communities, and promotion of inclusive growth, rather than the achievement of fast-paced economic growth at the expense of important ecosystems and well-being of local communities. In addition, the panel will discuss the legal framework of Chinese investments in the Kyrgyz Republic's mining sector and explore whether it allows advancing sustainable development outcomes for Kyrgyzstan as the host state. The panel will specifically look into the international investment agreement between Kyrgyzstan and China and other sources of investment law. With respect to South Asia, the roundtable will explore political and strategic consequences of China's One Belt One Road Initiative on relations with India. Although a fellow BRICS member, India is not part of OBOR, which it perceives with suspicion. As far as the Southeast Asia is concerned, the panel will concentrate on Special Economic Zones which have become prominent technical solutions to a broad range of economic, social, and political issues. In this regard, the panel will consider the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Program, a regional initiative between Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, and China's Yunnan and Guangxi provinces. Through so-called "economic corridors" these countries imagine a connected region with increased flows of people, goods, and capital. However, large-scale infrastructure and investment projects, most recently accelerated by Chinese capital, often have unintended consequences for the people that they are intended to help. Based on three ethnographic case studies the panel will draw attention to the idiosyncratic business practices of both Chinese and Thai entrepreneurs as they navigate and subvert the GMS development discourse for their own benefit. Deliberately moving away from the paradigm of graduated sovereignty and arguments of extraterritoriality, the border is viewed as frontier space, where banditry and business have historically coexisted, and the tension between licit and illicit remains a persistent social reality.

Participants

Srdjan Uljevic, American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

Sunsanee McDonnell, University of Melbourne, Australia

Akylai Muktarbek kzy, American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

The spatial dynamics of infrastructure investments in urban centers of Central Asia: Revival, decline, centers and peripheries

Convenors: **Willem Vogelsang**, International Institute for Asian Studies, the Netherlands

Juan Du, Faculty of Architecture, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Chair: **Paul Rabé**, International Institute for Asian Studies, the Netherlands

The proposed roundtable will focus on urban centers in the borderlands of Central Asia, including larger agglomerations as well as smaller towns. The focus will be on alternative readings of the themes of resources and revival in the region's cities.

The panel is organized by the Urban Knowledge Network Asia—a large network of urban Asia scholars, bringing together over 20 partners—and two of its institutional partners: the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, and the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Hong Kong (UHK).

As Central Asia becomes a staging ground for large infrastructure projects and investment programs linking the region to other parts of Asia and Eurasia, some urban centers in the borderlands of the region are attracting new resources (human, financial and physical) and displaying the spatial dynamics of revival, while others are declining and remaining on the periphery. This panel will investigate the many implications of large-scale investments in Central Asia for the region's urban centers. It will explore the incidences and multiple meanings of center versus periphery, revival versus stasis, neglect and loss, and the encounters of "slow versus fast, old versus new, and flexibility versus rigidity" that are associated with these changes .

Participants will analyze Central Asian cities and towns in comparative (Asian) perspective, but may also focus on Central Asian urban centers in their own right. Contributions will represent multiple disciplines in the humanities, arts and the social sciences.

Papers will cover the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project of the Chinese government as well as other large infrastructure projects in the region and their manifestations and impacts on towns and cities of Central Asia in one or more of the following areas identified below:

- The rapidly changing political, economic and social environment in urban centers of Central Asia;
- The appreciation (or not) of urban heritage;
- The migration from countryside to towns and cities; and
- Urban planning projects and systems.

Participants

Irina Morozova, University of Regensburg, Germany

Siddharth Saxena, Cambridge Central Asia Forum, Jesus College, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Juan Du, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Xiaoxuan Lu, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Elena Paskaleva, Leiden University Institute for Area Studies, the Netherlands

INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS

Dialogue of the Border: Rethinking Attari-Wagah Performance

Anna Bochkovskaya, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Russia

A colorful ceremony of lowering the flags (Beating Retreat) at the border between India and Pakistan at the Attari-Wagah checkpoint has been held almost every evening since 1959. Carried out jointly by the Indian Border Security Force and Pakistan Rangers, the emotional ritual is generally perceived as a mutual demonstration of aggressive intentions and/or as a symbol of goodwill and cooperation between the two countries.

The visual component of this show is crucial for performing the border (Sheren 2015; Jeychandran 2016) and building up national identity and patriotism (Menon 2013; Schendel 2007). The verbal component, i.e. slogans chanted from both sides (Hindustan zindabad; Vande mataram; Bharat Mata ki jai etc. in India; Pakistan zindabad; Nara-e takbir; Pakistan ka matlab kya etc. in Pakistan), is no less important for boosting and maintaining the spectators' patriotic mood. They take up the slogans and thus become active participants of everyday performance: through the emotional chants that praise respective countries all visitors join explicit and implicit dialogues with fellow countrymen as well as with the "other" across the border.

Such communication is stipulated by the internal dialogism of the word as "any understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive <...>; any understanding is imbued with response and necessarily elicits it in one form or the other: the listener becomes the speaker" (Bakhtin 1986). Drawing on Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, this paper focuses on the historical semantics of the verbal dialogue at the India-Pakistan border in Wagah and the dialogue's role in border-making.

There is Definitely Something to See Here: Independence Day Ceremony at the Indonesian Margin

Sindhunata Hargyono, Northwestern University, United States

This paper studies the Independence Day ceremony at an Indonesian border village (Long Nawang) on Borneo Island. The ceremony is accompanied with militarized hostage rescue simulation. This study looks at this sequence of events as state apparatuses' attempt of producing territory (and authority) through aesthetical means: graphic image/representations, sound, and bureaucratized as well as militarized performance. Far from providing spatial closure, however, the sensibility of the state's territoriality distributed through the Independence Day ceremony is ephemeral, as the border political economy requires continuous transgression of the state's space proper. By taking temporality into consideration, this study reflects on the utility of studies conducted on the borderland to rethink urban-based spatial theory, such as Michel de Certeau's work on spatial strategy and tactic.

"Kyrgyz-Kazak are Siblings": Analysis of Media Framing of Kyrgyz-Kazak Border Blockade"

Elira Turdubaeva, American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

The aim of this research is to analyze the framing of Kyrgyz-Kazak border blockade in the mainstream online news media in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyz-Kazak border blockade started on October 10, 2017 when Kazakhstan began tightening its customs checks.

This study uses Entman's framing theory to analyze online news coverage of Kyrgyz-Kazak border blockade. According to Entman, framing is "selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (1993, p. 52). Frames are constructed through the strategic use or omission of certain words and phrases (ibid.). Certain frames are pertinent only to specific topics or events. Such frames may be labeled issue-specific frames. An issue-specific approach to the study of news frames allows for a profound level of specificity and details relevant to the event or issue under investigation.

Entman (ibid. p. 52) suggested that frames in news can be examined and identified by 'the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments.' In this case, "Kyrgyz-Kazak border blockade" and related contextual synonyms were used as the words around which the frame is constructed.

This study analyses the framing of Kyrgyz-Kazak border blockade by mainstream online news media such as azattyk.kg, kloop.kg, kaktus.kg, Knews.kg, 24.kg, Kabar.kg and Sputnik.kg in Kyrgyzstan for the period October

10, 2017 to March 10, 2018. The news articles about Kyrgyz-Kazak border blockade, in terms of thematic thrust, sources cited, authorship and Kyrgyz-Kazak border blockade being at the heart of the story will be selected for analysis.

Social Mobility between Tajik and Kyrgyz Borders

Gulrano Ataeva, M&E research assistant, Kyrgyzstan

High scholarly interest in borderland studies rose as a result of the migration studies boom over the last years. The paper discusses the formation of new spaces in the border areas of Central Asia which is the result of major geopolitical processes such as the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the rise of China as an economic giant and their effects on the peripheries of bordering states. It focuses on the interplay between rather marginalised areas from the point of view of their respective political and economic centres - being regional centres at the same time.

In this regard, the paper focused on how local communities in borderland areas are seeking to turn scenarios of insecurity into emerging opportunities. These dynamics are exemplified here by studies of trade opportunities in the marginalised areas like Isfana. Findings show that local groups rely on their networks, or divided relatives across the borders to follow the process of local and regional transformation. It also shows the changing nature of state, authority and society.

After independence with the Prikaz of the first president Akaev seventh province was formed in the south of the country regions of which used to belong to Osh Province. This way Isfana, a town close to the Tajik border of Southern Kyrgyzstan, lost connections to the second biggest city in the country and became dependent to Batken city which in fact was far behind Isfana in terms of infrastructure. Today Isfana is disconnected to Bishkek or Osh and this way it stays far behind the social and political changes occurring in central cities. Due to the close location Tajik second largest city Khujand Isfanians tend to interact often with neighbours.

In addition to specified boundaries, I discuss other forms of borders in societies such as religious, socio-cultural, linguistic and inclusion or exclusion of ethnic groups.

Despite the territorial belongings people in Isfana prefer to travel to Tajik Khujand for daily purchases even though they do not speak Tajik language.

In addition Isfana is a multiethnic town where cultural and linguistic boundary-making between Uzbeks, country's biggest minority group and the Kyrgyz exist. Trade interrelations of Uzbeks of Isfana with their Tajik neighbour over time led to a rethinking of identity and their sense of social belonging. For that reason, objective was to look into the factors leading to the transformation of and construction of social belonging across and over borders in matter of spatial mobility.

Findings state that interactions are primarily promoted by the similarity of Uzbek and Tajik cultures and joint history firstly as a part of Persian civilization, joint history during Kokand Khanate and later as a part of Leninabad region of Tajik USSR.

Contextual factors of conflict in border communities in Batken Province, Kyrgyzstan

Asel Murzakulova, University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

The research for this paper was based on the premise that conflicts between border communities along Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border can be attributed to contextual factors such as agricultural crisis, restricted movement of goods across borders, the militarization of the border, migration, and problems surrounding natural resources management. These factors create certain vulnerabilities that lead to the emergence of tensions and conflict at the level of local communities.

In public discourse, such conflicts are often viewed through the lens of nationalism and oversimplified as a competition between different ethnic groups for the possession of natural resources. However, the reality of conflict dynamics in border communities is much more diverse and goes beyond issues of land ownership, even though they are often articulated as such.

The analysis presented in this report shows that there are different types of conflict in border communities. In communities located in close proximity to enclaves, the conflict potential is higher than in communities located far from enclaves. The communities close to enclaves are extremely sensitive to border tensions, and this sensitivity can quickly turn into vulnerability in times of escalating conflict. Furthermore, the security regime in areas close to enclaves differs due to a greater concentration of military and border guards. Though conflict modes are often articulated in interethnic terms, they are usually related to a wider range of problems on managerial, institutional, and infrastructural levels.

This paper is based on data collected through a desk and field study, interviews with experts, and data from the MSRI UCA study "Dynamics in Natural Resource Management in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan" implemented in 2016 with the support of DFID. As part of the desk study, the fundamentals of the relationship between conflict and natural resources were analysed, and data were collected on projects and programs implemented in the border areas of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with a focus on conflict resolution. The field-based component of the study was carried out in November-December 2016 and April-July 2017 in the 13 border villages along Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border.

Ruins and Resources – Why Layers of the Past Still Matter in the Amu Darya Borderland

Manu Sobti, School of Architecture, University of Queensland-Brisbane, Australia

The cultural biographies of borderlands—the conditions created by borders, boundaries and abandoned terrains—are evocative biographies of ‘no places’ and the people who no longer live there. Yet, these ‘thick’ biographies are seldom recorded in scholarly writings. Set within this purview, this paper explores the borderland condition created by Eurasia’s legendary Oxus River (the Amu Darya) as a provocative, mnemonic repository of interconnected places. While currently connecting, yet inimically separating the transforming nations of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the river’s role as a cultural liminality allows for the re-construction of a holistic, socio-historic narrative. In its medieval past, the Amu Darya served as the selectively permeable, border/boundary condition for the medieval Arab armies moving across Khorasan, their trans-river migrations effectively connecting inhospitable desert to salubrious steppe. While these riverine ‘crossings’ continued over the next millennia, the historical terrain of the river lay largely neglected well into the Soviet times. It is only in the last few decades that archaeology and urban studies have started to reconstruct the spatial choreographies and seemingly ‘inconsequential’ cultural landscapes along these forgotten riverine banks, re-formulating the Amu Darya’s engaging role as the only geographic truism in Eurasia. In uniquely elaborating on the role of this riverine borderland as a muse and imparting it with historical agency, this paper formulates the master narratives and identity re-constructions that accompany the descriptions of this contested ecology. It also suggests how new interpretations of passage, journey, crossing and arrival could serve as new border interpretations within the transforming state and region.

Deterritorializing Asian Borderlands: Exploring the Idea of “River” as a Civilizational Resource in Tagore and Hazarika

Rafiul Ahmed, Sikkim University, India

This paper seeks to explore the significance of waterscapes and its symbolic characteristics “flow”, “movement” and “confluence” that can unsettle the territorialized political imaginations of borderlands which gets often narrowly confined with notions of “citizenship” and “migration” in the context of discourses of borderlands in South Asia. It focuses on “river narratives” looking at how these have figured as an important site in different cultural and geographical contexts from the perspective of civilization. In so doing it takes two creative engagements: the poetics of Assamese cultural icon Bhupen Hazarika and the much-acclaimed poet and polymath Rabindranath Tagore. Through a closer reading of these two legacies of creating engagement, the paper examines how these poetics have chronicled a “referential registers” of relationality that have inspired people of the contagious borderlands of India and Bangladesh to rise above the narrow confines of individualized selves to a higher pedestal of humanity. Can these poetics become the bedrock of a dialogue between India and Bangladesh? Against this question, the paper critically explores the possibilities of finding an alternative to the conventional cartographic anxiety laden Indo-Bangladesh relations based on notions of sealed borders, countable population and sanctified citizenship. The significance of the paper lies in the fact that Westphalian notions of nation-state continue to overdetermine articulations of Asian borderlands with varied emphasis on territorial imaginations. On the contrary, waterscapes that are inalienable part of the borderlands leaving a unique stamp on the civilizational templates are yet to attain much significance. More importantly, rather than looking at rivers as a shared “civilizational resource” with deeper histories of transnational flows and connections, much of the cross-border dialogues around it have reduced it to the instrumental logic of being a mere physical resource.

UNIFIL’s “Blue Line,” Sovereignty, and Spatial Contestation in Southern Lebanon

Susann Kasseem, The Graduate Institute, Geneva, Switzerland

This paper analyzes three major sites of contestation and local resistance to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon's (UNIFIL) "Blue Line" in southern Lebanon, the unofficial borderline separating Lebanon and Israel. It marks the Israeli military's line of withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. Its coordinates are based on slightly adapted versions of the 1920 French and English boundary descriptions of modern Lebanon that were never fully enforced—until now. This article will explore UNIFIL's ongoing process of the gradual normalization of the line as the de facto border between the two warring states. This presentation will problematize the instances where once productive contested areas are transformed into abandoned, highly militarized zones in the absence of a political solution to the Arab-Israeli war. At the same time my research underlines the fragility of the Blue Line, while exploring its contradictions with the actual human geography of the land. Considering land use before and after the Blue Line demarcations, it will demonstrate the implications of enforcing this often involuntary border for the populations who are directly affected by it. By looking at the different narrations and claims to power, this paper interrogates the notion of sovereignty in a region that has undergone major political change, moving from foreign occupation to liberation, while hosting a long-term UN presence. This paper is based on ethnographic research and interviews conducted over several years with southern Lebanese citizens and officials, former officials from the Lebanese Armed Forces, and UNIFIL officials, as well as historical accounts of the borderline in question.

The Sino-Kachin Border through Assemblage Gaze

Karin Dean, Tallinn University, Estonia

There are two persisting challenges to writing Asia's borderlands. The first is to downgrade the state as just another form of modern political authority and thus avoid the state's own dominant categories in scrutiny (van Schendel and Abraham 2005). The other is capturing in one analysis the messiness and complexity of borderlands that emerged through rupture and thus constituting an amalgam of disparate and autonomous participants, contingent actors, material artefacts, fluid interrelations and tangled relationships between all, at different scales and hierarchies. The paper demonstrates through scrutinizing the Sino-Kachin border that assemblage thinking makes a significant difference owing to its faculty to see the social-spatial-material as a dynamic topological whole continuously in the making. Applying assemblage as a methodology and a mode of thinking elucidates the internally tense and "often uneven and uncomfortable practices of composition" (Anderson et al 2012: 173), which is the main feature of the empirical context at the Sino-Myanmar border more widely.

Anderson B., Kearnes M., McFarlane C. & Swanton D. (2012). On assemblages and geography. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 2(2), pp. 171—189.

van Schendel and Abraham, Itty (2005). Introduction: The Making of Illicitness. In: Itty Abraham and Willem van Schendel (eds) *Illicit flows and criminal things: States, Borders, and the Other Side of Globalization*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Construction of Ethnic identity and boundaries in the Sindh-Rajasthan Borderland Space

Neha Meena, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

This paper tries to make a linkage between the post-Barthian analysis of ethnic boundaries and the national border by analysing the construction of the ethnic nomadic or pastoralist groups in the borderland space of the nation-state. The specific focus of the study is on the Rajasthan border areas of Sindh-Rajasthan lying under the territorial jurisdiction of Indian nation-state. Being historically part of the Thar Desert which is partitioned between the two South Asian nation-states India and Pakistan, the Rajasthan border area is apt for the aim of this research based on its environmental and demographic conditions. The decades-old Fredrik Barth's analysis of ethnic boundaries gave a new turn to the study of ethnicity in the academic discourse as it brought the concept of 'boundaries' and with time the concept of 'border' into the varied social science disciplines. However, later the border studies which linked the concepts of ethnicity, nationalism, and borders together largely remained confined to the idea of national borders by ignoring the aspect of boundaries. As an analytical departure to this approach of border studies discipline, I intend to study the concepts of ethnic boundaries and national borders separately and together in the borderland space and understand how they interplay with each other.

In this paper, I wish to examine the impact of classificatory practices of the nation-state on the boundary of the nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoral groups. The endeavor is to observe how the law in the border areas

takes the 'form of boundary' and in what ways it further creates situations of transformations to the pastoralist identity in the border spaces. The claim here is that this change in the livelihood strategies and nomadic way of life of the pastoral groups leads to the circumstances of identity or existential crisis for the pastoral people. Based on the archival study of the pastoral groups in the Thar frontier and ethnographic work of the border areas of Rajasthan, this paper tries to study the relationship between the national border and the ethnic boundaries. In addition, in the context of the frontier turned international borderline the paper interrogates the affective nature of the border in the instances of identity change of the pastoral groups and the legal steps taken by the state to govern the nomadic way of life in the border areas of Rajasthan.

The Making of Identities and the Silver Mine Industry on the Yunnan-Burma Borderland in the 19th Century

Jianxiong Ma, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

This research reviews the history of the exploitation of silver mines on the borderland between the Yunnan and Burma. After a century of exploitation, resulting in the silver mines becoming exhausted from the 1800s to 1840s, a large number of unemployed miners had to search for outlets other than mining deep in the mountains. Their mobility created two different styles of social mobilization against the Qing governments, due to the two different social political environments in the official county areas and the frontier chieftain areas. Some miners found political interests with the mountain communities through their participation in the rebellions in the mountains, through which a new Lahu identity was created. Other idle miners mobilized and became involved in the competition and violent conflicts in other mines. Along with more and more serious conflicts among miners, an ethnic mobilization line between the Hui miners and the Han miners was gradually established. The decline of the silver mine industry on the borderland brought about the local governments' failure to manage social mobility when miners shifted into agriculture or business. The two styles of identity construction or re-construction against were all based on the invalidation of social mobility management, and the different judicial systems empowered by state authority on frontier societies. Thus, different local rebellious polities against the Qing state were created by local agency.

Limbu through the Nepal-Sikkim border: displacing the boundaries to make the community

Melanie Vandenhelsken, University of Vienna, Austria

Limbu main area of settlement – in today north-east Nepal and western Sikkim – have been divided in two parts, included into two separated political entities, by the Gorkha conquests (end of 18th century) and the establishment of the border between Nepal and Sikkim from the early 19th century. Today, building a federal system in Nepal confers strong political efficacy to the history of the north-eastern part of the country as a quasi-autonomous region; unravelling this past is central to endeavors to produce a Limbu community in its own right. In Sikkim, where indigeneity is a central stake of the competition for gaining political representation, 'foreign' and 'indigenous' Limbu are differentiated. Here the border is a political resource, whereas Sikkim and Nepal intellectuals closely collaborate to construct an academic knowledge of Limbu literature, history and cultural practices.

This paper will explore the various forms and roles given to the border by Limbu people in Sikkim and Nepal today. Reinforcing the border, ignoring it, and crossing it are simultaneously used by Limbu in both countries in their endeavor to give social and political strength to their community, but in different ways. I will present a history of the section of the border dividing east Nepal and West Sikkim before discussing the various usages of the border Limbu make today in both countries. The paper will focus on three main activities: literary production, rituals and their dynamics, and trans-border mobility within the Limbu community.

<http://www.univie.ac.at/cirdis/research/trans-border-religion>

Swedes in the borderlands of Dzungaria: eighteenth-century mapping and twentieth-century minority politics

Lisa Hellman, Free University Berlin, Germany

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the borderlands between China, Russia and Dzungaria were mapped. This paper explores the multiple European and Asian groups involved in that mapping, as well as how these geographic and ethnographic sources were rediscovered and used in twentieth-century minority politics.

At the same time as the Russian empire expanded eastwards, the Qing Empire expanded westwards, and the Dzungar Empire was caught in between. However, as an effect of the Great Northern War between Russia and

Sweden, over 20,000 Swedish prisoners ended up in these borderlands. Many of them were trained translators and mapmakers. Eventually, there were Swedish prisoners of war working in China, Russia as well as Dzungaria.

The contemporaneity between the Asian expansion and the Northern war provide unique sources for this clash of non-European empires, as the Swedes detail cooperation not only with official Russian, Chinese and Manchu mapmakers, including Jesuits at the Beijing court, but also connections to Tibet, Turkish, Kazak, Mongol and Torghut networks of guides and caravan traders. They illuminate the diversity behind the circulation of knowledge.

These sources were picked up simultaneously in different parts of the world in the twentieth century. Now, however, they were used to contain and restrict ethnic minorities. In Sweden, the descriptions of these nomad people were reshaped as an understanding of the country's own Roma minority, and as a legitimization to deny them civil rights. In Russia, the same process became a battering ram in the conceptualisation of both Siberian and Volga minorities. In China, finally, the parallel process of mapping and conquering the Dzungar lands is part of the deeply politicised history of the settlement of Inner Mongolia.

Thus, the mapping of these Central Asian borderlands ties together eighteenth-century circulation of knowledge and twentieth-century minority politics in Sweden, Russia and China.

The Postcolonial Displacements of Border-crossing Communities, Cultural Heritages and Vernacular Histories in Hong Kong

Chiu Yin Leung, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong S.A.R., China

When state or imperial boundaries have shifted but their institutions, heritages, and landscapes inherently survive reminiscent of the past, border cities are perpetuated with remarkable internal boundaries of socio-cultural differentiation within the new political authorities. With a restrictive and conflictive Sino-British border regime and recurrent wars and refugee crises throughout its colonial history in the 20th century, the internal borderland of Hong Kong has been loaded with military facilities, rural and indigenous heritage, and closed gates and fences after its sovereignty return into China. As driven by local pressure for capitalistic urbanization and also the state-led initiatives of regional integration across Hong Kong and other mainland cities at broader scales, the border spaces have been harnessed as new sites of economic production and social reproduction.

Using ethnographic fieldwork and archival data, this paper navigates the transformation of borderlands in Hong Kong from a self-enclosed and decaying rural landscape to a potential hub of conurbation between the border cities. The author discusses the fragmented experiences and uneven representation in the politics of land and resource management, planning processes, and its aftermath treatment of the colonial facilities and indigenous heritages. Special attention is also paid on the dynamics of bureaucratic discretion and community resistance in everyday lives as array of practices forging the border landscapes. It is argued that the recent cross-border mega-infrastructure planning and development initiatives have apparently modernized the internal borderland in conjunction with the displacement of cross-border farming and petty-trading communities, the whitewashing of colonial/military ruins and cultural/religious heritages, and the contestation of vernacular histories and borderland identities. Finally, the paper offers a critique in mobilizing the borderland transformation as important discourses for the socio-spatial reconfiguration and imaginations in postcolonial Hong Kong.

The Bermuda Triangle of Cross-Border Cooperation: Development of the Russo-Chinese-Korean Borderland

Ivan Zuenko, Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography, Far Eastern Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia

Russia, China, and Korea's shared borderland formed in 1860 following the border delimitation between the Russian and Qing empires. Russia's colonial intentions towards Korea, and Beijing's inability to withstand Russian diplomatic pressure, resulted in a long "cat-walk" bridging Russian and Korean territory, blocking Manchuria's access to the sea. For 130 years this area was a periphery and military buffer zone within the framework of three state groupings—Russia/USSR, China/PRC, and Korea/DPRK. In the 1990s, Russia and China began to consider this borderland as a potential hub for cross-border cooperation. For nearly 30 years, local officials have promoted this area's development potential in efforts to attract foreign and domestic investment in local infrastructure.

Such rhetoric promises high-growth outcomes for all sides based on the multiplier effect of integrating the three states' economies. Yet compromise over institutional and infrastructural cross-border projects has proved difficult. Access to the Sea of Japan for China's North-East provides a case in point. Plans for cooperation have existed on paper since the 1980s, but the reality is that China's Tumen River Area Development program, plans

for the North-Korean port of Rajin, Russia's international transport corridor Primorye-2, and now China's One Belt, One Road initiative have failed to materialize.

This paper asks why cross-border cooperation in this borderland has failed. It draws on the author's field research on local bureaucracies, as well as relevant secondary scholarship, to explore a case that invites comparison with China's other supposed "hubs" of cross-border development with its neighbors, such as China-Russia-Mongolia, China-Russia-Kazakhstan, China-India-Bangladesh-Myanmar, China-Myanmar-Laos-Thailand, and China-Vietnam-Laos. Such projects have lacked the success of China's coastal economic zones. Comparative analysis of different borderland cases promises to reveal general trends in these "cross-border cooperation triangles," which I suggest have been triangles of lost development opportunities.

Built to Ruin

Rune Steenberg, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

— Achilmay turup tozughan güldek (Like a bud that withers before it ever blossomed); Uyghur folk song

The above quote is about a young man's life in prison. It could have been about modernisation efforts in Xinjiang. The recent massive building of infrastructure and formalisation of the trade between southern Xinjiang and Kyrgyzstan lead to the creation of vast spaces of modern wasteland. Temporary centres are abandoned after short term administrative changes and empty infrastructure decays before it is ever put to use. This paper argues that these ruins are by the authorities seen as collaterals to the process of modernisation and formalisation, but for local inhabitants destroy livelihoods, dreams, investments and trust. Construction in itself boosts business and the official economic growth statistics. It symbolise modernisation for all to see. It also, arguably, serves the purpose of destroying existing social structures that are deemed backward and not modern. This is effected whether these new structures that are put to use or not. Their abandonment and decay does not summon back the former destroyed structures.

This paper shows the growth of two types of ruins near Xianjiang's border with Kyrgyzstan: The unutilised ghost cities and commercial centres of Kashgar, and the abandoned border village of Irkeshtam; both results of large scale Chinese development schemes and both ruinous in more than a physical sense. It draws a picture of infrastructural modernisation as local fragmentation and often precarisation. The massive construction and the severe volatility threaten local communities across Xinjiang and Central Asia in ways unseen by statistics. The currently widely discussed Chinese Belt and Road Initiative may exacerbate this trend.

Borderland Encounters and World-Making: Nationalism and Nature Conservation Meet amid Myanmar's Kachin War

Laur Kiik, Oxford University, United Kingdom

How do the ruins, revivals, and resources of Asian borderlands inspire 'cosmopolitical' encounters? And when do these borderland encounters – between disparate world-making projects – result in conflict, cooperation, or awkward being-nearby? Based on altogether twenty months of ethnographic fieldwork between 2010 and 2018, my paper explores the encounters between an ethnic nationalism and global biodiversity conservation – in northern Burma's war-torn Kachin region. The Kachin borderland bursts with ruins – destroyed landscapes, lives, and relations – from decades of military oppression, the destructive grabbing of natural resources, and the current war and people's displacement. Relatedly, this landscape inspires revivals – various Christian and civic makings of modernity, the ethnic Kachin nationalism and homeland-building, and the competing movements of other ethnic peoples. Finally, these ruins and revivals involve contested resources – local jade's mining and trade makes tens of billions of dollars every year; unique old-growth rainforests and life-forms have attracted Western-based conservation organizations. My paper looks at conservation's arrival to this land. Indeed, our planet's so-called borderlands, far from big cities, are where biodiversity conservation concentrates and tries to govern – looking for valuable ecosystems and least people. Yet, state-allied and landscape-oriented conservation actors – both expats and local-country citizens – often encounter ethnic patriots, for whom here is no borderland, but the central homeland of our separate nation. My paper thus asks: What kinds of worlds are the Kachin nationalists and the transnational conservationists trying to create here, as they both target native people, landscapes, and animals with a sense of emergency and morality? Amid other projects still – several ethnic groups' revivals, village people's individual life-projects, Myanmar Army's military-state-creating, and the wild animals' own makings of homes-and-borders –, how may such a land's disparate actors negotiate over reality and value?

Illegal and/or Legal? Yarshagumba Trade in the Borderlands of the Kailash Landscape – an Area of Opportunities and Constraints

Corinna Wallrapp, University of Goettingen, Institute of Geography, Germany

Borderlands are constructed places of contacts and separation. Contacts and separations between states defined on sovereignty and power and between local and regional actors who interact across borders.

The Kailash Landscape is a remote and geopolitically sensitive area from the perspective of the governments of Nepal, India and China, which leads to restrictions and limitations for the local people. At the same time, people in this area are socially and economically connected across the three countries since centuries. This study looks at the yarshagumba trade (a high value medicinal product) in this area. Based on recent empirical fieldwork, the analysis focuses on the aspects of legality and illegality of yarshagumba, as well on relational dynamics between state and non-state actors at a local and regional level.

Preliminary results show that yarshagumba is collected illegally in the remote mountain areas of India, crosses through informal networks to Nepal, gets legalised in Nepal and is traded further to China as legal or illegal product. Local actors are knowledgeable in navigating the opportunities of different national policies, regulations and market demands. They are skilful in using different networks, languages and currencies to establish a trading route that forms the easiest and most profitable way to trade yarshagumba. Cultures, traditions, and personal relationships, but also the porousness of the borders (Nepal – India, India – China, Nepal – China) determine the informal cross-border networks along the trading route established by the traders. Due to lack of formalisation the trade of yarshagumba depends highly on trust between the actors involved. State and non-state actors influence and depend on each other and need to adjust to any changes in the established system. Following the findings the illegal or legal status of yarshagumba is not a fixed condition, neither over time nor along the supply chain.

Tigers, Tibetans and Idu Mishmis: Wildlife conservation, development and nation-building in India's northeastern borderlands.

Sahil Nijhawan, University College London (UCL), United Kingdom

The Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh is located at the contentious modern border between India, China (Tibet) and Burma. This peripheral mountainous region, composed of several ethnic homelands, has long been administered through a policy of minimal state intervention with a mandate on governance through local customs. My previous research on the Idu Mishmi people of Arunachal showed that when their local practices - underpinned by a cosmology that binds human, natural and spirit worlds into a singular commune with intertwined destinies - were given state protection, high-value natural resources including the heavily endangered tiger were remarkably conserved. However, posturing from an increasingly aggressive China, that claims territorial rights over Arunachal, has led to swift expansion of the Indian administrative state into local lives. Currently, Idu homeland is witnessing large-scale military deployment coupled with neo-liberal development and conservation policies of mega-dams and creation of state-owned protected reserves. This paper is based on twenty-two months of fieldwork conducted in 2013-15 using interdisciplinary approaches from natural and social sciences. I explore how the process of state-making impacts human-nature and human-human relations. In particular, I discuss how the ever-expanding state bureaucracy mired in corruption has created a new class of political and economic elite. These elites are driving the process of cultural change with ramifications for the conservation of globally threatened and high-valued wildlife, notably the tiger. I also highlight that while the Indian government's nation-building activities seek to fortify the border; the 'cosmo-political worlds' of the people on different sides of it intersect, interlink and collide constantly. On the one hand, Tibetan hunters regularly cross over into Idu areas in search of the lucrative musk deer and tiger. On the other, the Idu death ritual sends the souls of the departed on a journey through 143 named locations, many of which are currently in Tibet.

(Re)discovering Alai: heritage tourism in southern Kyrgyzstan

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This paper focuses on heritage tourism in the Alai District in southern Kyrgyzstan. Situated in the southern part of Osh Oblast, the Alai District shares borders, and border crossings, with Tajikistan in the south and China in the east. Despite its tourism potential, proximity to these international border crossings, and the fact that it is only a

few hours' drive away from Osh – Kyrgyzstan's second largest city – Alai District only plays a marginal role as a tourist destination.

In recent years, however, various actors have initiated projects to increase tourism in the region, thereby utilizing both cultural heritage and the natural environment. In this process, and in the interaction between tourists and local people, aspects of Kyrgyz culture and cultural heritage – such as performances of music and dance, horse and other games, food, handicrafts, and nomadic life in general – are reinterpreted and rediscovered, thereby acquiring new, or additional, meanings and values. Also, in becoming part of international, cross-cultural contexts, the local, insider understanding of these cultural aspects gets interwoven with outsider perspectives, which are oftentimes shaped by a "globalised heritage jargon".

Beside the use of notions of a shared, national or ethnic Kyrgyz nomadic identity, and the wish to be a part of "Kyrgyzstan as a tourist destination", notions of region specific traits also play a role in these tourism projects. Tourism projects in Alai thus work to (re)interpret, (re)discover and (re)define both notions of a (universal) cultural Kyrgyz identity and the uniqueness of Alai. Moreover, in addition to popularising the region, these tourism projects serve to develop tourism and other types of infrastructure. They thereby aim to increase (self-) employment and as such generate income for the inhabitants of Alai District.

Economic Growth and Moral Ruins: The revival of monasticism on the Sino-Tibetan border

Hannah Klepeis, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany

This paper will focus upon the economic and political significance of a Tibetan Buddhist monastic institution on the Sino-Tibetan borderland in the Chinese province of Yunnan. Laid in ruins at the end of the Cultural Revolution, Ganden Sumtsenling monastery was soon recognised as a valuable cultural resource for the economic development of the region. Even prior to the area's renaming into Shangri-La in 2001, the monastery had already become one of the main attractions and revenue sources for mass tourism in the region.

At the same time, Ganden Sumtsenling has played an important role in the regional and national government's agenda of (re)inventing this multi-ethnic border region as a quintessentially 'Tibetan' place – a role it has played throughout its history. Founded on a direct order from the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1678, it was part of an attempt to expand the Gelug order's influence and to bring these borderlands into the realm of Lhasa polity. The Chinese government's active engagement in monastic affairs through tourism today can be seen in a similar light. As Buddhism and anti-materialism play a key role in the construction and negotiation of local Tibetan identity, the monastery's transformation into a commercial space is met with much criticism locally and often encourages debates about the "Tibetan-ness" of the region. Large-scale economic growth is not only seen as a threat to the moral integrity of monks – of whom some have visibly engaged in the accumulation of individual wealth – but for the local community as whole. By looking at the dynamics monastic tourism has created, and how this has been contested by different groups, this paper will show how Ganden Sumtsenling monastery has simultaneously come to represent a physical resource for a prosperous future as well as the metaphorical ruins of a moral past.

The True Shangrila: Buddhist Faith, Tibetan Authenticity and the Chinese-Tibetan Frontier

Gideon Elazar, Bar Ilan University, Israel

In 2002, the Yunnanese Tibetan city of Zhogdian was renamed Shangrila, alluding to the long lost Tibetan paradise described in James Hilton's novel "Lost Horizon". With considerable investment on the side of provincial authorities, the city became a magnet for both Chinese and foreign tourist and a source of important income for local Tibetans. Shangrila is unique in that it may be conceptualized as a double periphery. From a Chinese perspective, the city is situated in the remote northwestern corner of Yunnan, making it a distant yet convenient location for the experiencing of Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism, outside of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. At the same time, Shangrila is also situated on the periphery of the Tibetan world. Thus, the dialect spoken in the city and the region surrounding it differs considerably from that of the Tibetan heartland and the levels of cultural assimilation are significantly high. This confluence between the Chinese and Tibetan cultural spheres, as well as several other ethnic groups residing in this corner of Yunnan has created a space of alternating and overlapping narratives of faith, culture and authenticity. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in The Shangrila Thangka Academy, this lecture is an attempt to portray the divergent agendas surrounding the city's contemporary development; While local Tibetan activists in the Thangka center are attempting to revive and preserve knowledge of Tibetan culture and language through the instruction of traditional Thangka painting. At the same time, the city has become an easy access point for Han Chinese tourists interested in experiencing Tibetan culture as well as devout Buddhist, seeking acquaintance with Tibetan

Buddhism. Finally, the presence of local tourists and foreign backpackers, as well as the rapid development of the region is continuously changing the city's cultural character.

Partition in the Neoliberal City: Heritage Branding in Pakistan

Ariel Sophia Bardi, Journalist, United States

"Bricks pulsate like beating hearts. Boards beam under the sunlight," writes Robert Ginsberg. "Reclaiming space for itself, the ruin captivates us." In Pakistan, a cultural landscape of pre-partition ruins--mostly from the country's Hindu and Sikh heritage, which shrunk dramatically after statehood in 1947--has fueled gentrification processes, and decaying infrastructure from departed minority groups now heralds a complex commemoration.

Drawing on field investigations from Saidpur Village, outside Islamabad, and Lahore's Food Street, this paper will discuss ruination as ornament in the development of neoliberal city spaces. Empty signifiers, Pakistan's pre-partition ruins are presented as curated, gentrified backdrops for middle-class sites of leisure and consumption, leading to new considerations of identity and heritage. Ruins lend a veneer of authenticity to branded development projects: in Saidpur Village, re-painted Hindu and Sikh temples help to curate the village's salable wares, adding a splash of antiquated whimsy. The dilapidated buildings are imbued with a rugged purity, thrown into relief by the planned city of Islamabad, with its sprawling government complexes and commercial centers. In Lahore, formerly Hindu neighborhoods in Old Anarkali and Gwalmandi have been designated culinary tourist zones, replete with colorful renovations and festive decorations.

Renovated structures serve as proxies for pastness, lending tourist sites an old-world charm and billable appeal. This paper argues that these spaces represent a process of neoliberal preservation that acts as elision, ostensibly re-staging minority histories while effectively further erasing them.

Reconstituting Borders in Property Ownership: Land, State and Tibetan Refugees and in India

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Madhura Balasubramaniam, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras

This paper explores the relationship between land, property rights and citizenship in the context of the Tibetan exile community in India. For all refugees the experience of being at the 'borders' is relived and reconstituted through legal and bureaucratic interactions with the state. This study looks at the reproduction of borders for the Tibetan refugee community in India as related to property rights. The study places land at the heart of the enquiry of political identity and liminal citizenship of the Tibetan exile community in India. It views land as a key resource that is employed by the Tibetan refugee community to stake claims or challenge ideas of identity and belongingness.

The Tibetan community in India is hosted in geographically demarcated as well as scattered settlements. These settlements function within normative structures of political identity and legal frameworks that govern Tibetans as 'long-term' residents in India. This study, drawing on field work in Tibetan settlements in New Delhi, Himachal and Karnataka, examines the manner in which concerns of property rights are addressed and negotiated at the level of framing of policies and in the lived experiences of the Tibetan exile community. It examines the underlying articulations of citizenship and refugee identity as "long term residents" in the policies of the Indian government and the CTA. It analyses the implications of property ownership and use by members of Tibetan cluster settlements and agricultural settlements on conceptualizations of political citizenship and refugee identity.

The paper focusses specifically on the 2014 Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy that seeks to centralise all land holding patterns in Tibetan settlements in India.

Revivals and Remembrances Among Ruins: Tohoku Responses to the Earthquake, Tsunami & Nuclear Disasters as a Japanese Borderland

Millie Creighton, University of British Columbia, Canada

On March 11, 2011 the Tohoku area of Japan was rocked by an immense earthquake, subsequent tsunami, and meltdown of nearby nuclear plants. Based on fieldwork shortly after the disasters and subsequently, this presentation explores the needs of affected communities (Sendai, Fukushima, Ishinomaki, Kesenuma, Yoriage and Kamaishi) to commemorate the events and their dead, create archives, and enact revivals of local traditions while redirecting efforts to the future. These activities continue to be on-going as people are still living among the ruins and rubble which will take years to remove, or in some cases still dealing with being unable to return to

their former communities because of the destruction or nuclear poisoning. It compares area narratives among affected communities with national narratives of what happened as 'Japan's disasters'. Nationally, re-building infrastructure was emphasized, while local responses emphasized creating commemorations among the ruins, establishing ways to remember those who died and the experiences of those who survived through recording and archiving, revivals of festivals and other local traditions. The paper also deals with how the affected, Tohoku area, comprising the northern border area of Japan's main island, is and has been treated as a borderland for Japan. It is an area with less power than dominant national cores such as the Tokyo area, historically (as other such areas) used as a region of resource extraction and as a 'hinterland' to benefit those in central cores. This includes discussion of the placement of the nuclear plants in the area and how this is consistent with other nuclear plants, along with other constructions involving environmental concerns such as dams, where border areas are used to benefit central areas, with the benefits going to those in core areas while the risks are heaped on those living in the remote or border areas.

Songy Kosh' (Last Migration) – Mass Sino-Soviet Migration of Kazakhs from 1955 to 1962

Alima Bissenova, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan

This paper relates the story of several members of one extended Kazakh family, who like thousands of other Kazakh families, as a consequence of the policies of collectivization, fled to China, where they lived for over twenty years, subsequently, returning through the period between 1955-1962. Based on shared memories circulated within the family, testimonials of actual eyewitness accounts of the border-crossing in 1962, official documents and other written sources (e.g. autobiographical poems) kept within the family, we reconstruct the family's movement across the border, their settlement in China and resettlement in the Soviet Union, and then weave their family story into a "proper" history based upon archival sources.

Eating Borders Up: Central Asians at Home and Abroad

Sebile Yapici, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany

Borders between the Central Asian states are imagined in terms of ways they separate contiguous neighbors but they are also powerfully real in the way border agents can exclude people from communities and political rights. While narratives highlight the differences between the countries, looking at the material culture, such as food, can lead us to a better appreciation of the degrees of difference, along with similarities, determined by geography and history. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as the new independent nation states had to find their identity, the Soviet-made ethnicity-focused idea of a state remained and may have even grown stronger.

Nevertheless there is a lot of interaction between people of different ethnicity, especially in border areas such as the Ferghana Valley or Samarkand, Tashkent or Nukus, but narratives about the 'other' dominate the minds of citizens. While a Karakalpak man confirmed that Uzbeks use spices in their osh palov, a rice meat dish, whereas the Karakalpaks don't, a Uzbek woman reacted indignantly to my proposal to use cumin in declaring that only the Tajiks use it.

Those real and imagined borders become porous with migration. This can especially be seen in neighborhoods in New York. I interrogate the networks between the people from different countries of Central Asia and the impact of the shifting image of borders on the homeland. This work will help specify the contingent and contextual nature of identity-making that is linked both to a past, real and imagined, and a present that is embedded in different degrees of selfsameness and otherness.

Locating Aizawl: A borderland city at the centre of news production

Lallianpuii, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati, India

Since the creation of Mizoram state in India's borderland in 1987, Aizawl the capital has become the seat of government and has gradually assumed the 'centre' for Mizos living in the state and for related communities across internal and international borders. The city, once colonized and militarized, is reclaimed as a focal point for the exploration and expression of urban modernity, of which local media that informs and connects people are a part. Today, Aizawl is a major production hub of modern Mizo culture; a culture that is circulated within and beyond the city – and even beyond Mizoram to other Northeast Indian states as well as crossing the international boundary into Myanmar – through media. As such, news from Aizawl is sought after, challenging

the dichotomous – and often contradictory stereotypes of the remote and obscure border city on one hand and the savvy consumerist northeast tribal on the other. This aligns with Duncan McDuaie-Ra's (2016) argument that borderland cities challenge the notion of urbanisation and modernity, bypassing the remote frontier.

In this paper based on my ethnographic fieldwork in Aizawl I look at the existing infrastructure that supports the proliferation of Aizawl-based newspapers in contemporary Mizoram and argue that government institutional structures, once intended to suppress and censor the print media, have become an integral part of the creation of content for the pan-Mizo newspapers, while a diffuse network of private transporters, agents and subscribers bring news from the capital to the far reaches of the state and beyond. Here, I make an attempt, to examine the complex links between the state and newspapers, thereby highlighting the significant role of the state in the making of Aizawl-centred newspapers, which serve to produce an image of Aizawl as the centre of the transnational Mizo world.

Human Security issues in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore Borders

Sukawarsini Djelantik, Parahyangan Catholic University, Indonesia

Indonesia is the biggest sender of migrant worker to Singapore and Malaysia. The phenomena supported by push and pull factors that contributive to the increase number of Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMW). The IMWs number significantly increased after the economic downturn in 1998, followed by the global economic crisis in 2000. The increased number of unemployment rate and people living below poverty line had forced IMWs, that dominated by women, to migrate. Lack of law enforcement to illegal agents, combined with corrupted bureaucrats, and the absence of proper training, often led to IMWs illegal and undocumented status in receiving countries. The IMWs mostly working at domestic and informal sectors that with 3D's (dirty, dangerous, demeaning) category, are most vulnerable to violation of human and workers rihghts, that often turned as the victim of human trafficking. Despite considered as serious criminal offence, human trafficking remain exist as "shadow economy", which provide significant profit in black market. Those are strong reasons for government's intervention to stop the modern day slavery. The paper would answer the question on what are Indonesian challenges to prevent human trafficking and sending of illegal/undocumented migrant workers in Malaysia and Singaporean borders? The analysis would include discussion on security issues in the border regions.

The Militia Fix: Ordering space at the margins of the Myanmar state

Patrick Meehan, SOAS University of London, United Kingdom

This paper analyses the role that state-sanctioned militias have played in embedding state authority and market forces in Myanmar's conflict-affected borderlands since 1988, and in shaping the violence and patterns of accumulation surrounding these processes. Focusing on Shan State – a large region of eastern Myanmar that borders with China, Thailand and Laos – it argues that the army's militia strategy has become an integral part of the Myanmar army's its attempts to establish a more comprehensive architecture of surveillance and control across the country's contested borderlands. However, this article alsopaper argues shows that militias have not simply become cogs in the expanding machinery of state power, but have created new tensions and ambiguities surrounding processes of state consolidation. The militia strategy has been viewed by borderland elites as a way of responding to the challenges they have faced in managing encroaching military-state power and an opportunity to re-work the political and economic shifts unfolding across the region to their own advantage. Analysing the impact of militias across Shan State thus demands analysis to focus less upon the stated intentions of the militia strategy, and more on the forms of brokerage and the shifting constellations of power that have underpinned these informal arrangements. This reveals how the purposeful attempts by the army to extend state authority by governing through militias have been 'bent' by the multiple interests and forms of agency that have coalesced around this strategy, fixing in place diverse and enduring informal institutional arrangements that have reinvigorated, rather than overcome, the centrifugal forces that have defined the Shan region for so long.

Films

Border Stories (2018, 15 min)

Elena Barabantseva

The official version of the Sino-Vietnamese border stresses 1) the memory and legacy of the violent 1979 border war, and 2) the warm relations between national leaders. This dominant narrative of the border glosses over long-existing human connections and lifestyles characteristic of the area, which escape the binary analytics of national borders. Using visual anthropology techniques, the film explores the intimate geopolitics of the Sino-Vietnamese border through following the journey of a local Yao man, Fucai. It juxtaposes a personal family story of Fucai, a Chinese national, and his Vietnamese Yao wife Meihua, with the stories and Yao ritual practices that the elders pass on to the young generation, on the one hand, and the local state's efforts to revive the Yao as an official ethnic minority in the Chinese multinational nation, on the other. The film ponders questions of how the border enters and shapes family relations and what it means for the Yao to, quite literally, inhabit the border in their daily lives. The film seeks to enable the Yao express their versions of their own past and present, and searches for the role that the state imagines for the Yao in its ambitious border development plans and ethnic revival strategies.

Ruin-scapes: Great Walls (2018, 20 min)

William A. Callahan

The Great Wall of China is a strange sort of border architecture: since the 17th century, it hasn't marked an international boundary and was left to become ruin. But this ruin-scape was revived in the 20th century, first as an idea to support the new nation, and then as a patriotic tourist destination. The Great Wall, which draws a boundary between China proper and the barbaric outside and between the Han majority and national minorities, thus is a site of the messy politics of identity construction. Strangely, since Nehru visited the Great Wall in 1954, it has become a pilgrimage site for foreigners as well. This short film will explore the many meanings of the Great Wall by juxtaposing interviews I conducted with Chinese and non-Chinese about their experiences at the wall with 1) stock footage of visits by foreign elites (Nehru, Nixon, Gorbachev, etc.), and 2) film I have shot at other walls: the Berlin Wall and the US-Mexico border wall. The goal of the film is to 1) provide a nuanced analysis of the Great Wall's many contradictory meanings, and 2) offer a sense of border walls as an affective experience. The film employs strategies of visual anthropology to explore how this ruin-revival performs the territorial/social borders of identity, alterity and community.