Navigating 'New' Delhi: New Spaces of Mobility and Intercultural Engagement in a 'Globalising' City

Melissa Butcher

As part of Delhi's massive redevelopment, aimed at creating a 'global city' and to prepare for the 2010 Commonwealth Games, new public transport infrastructure such as Metro rail and rapid bus corridors are being built. This introduction of 'modern' transport systems has changed the city's flow of passengers who are traversing new spaces, re-appropriating space in new ways and engaging in new interactions. Authorities have also attempted to change commuting practices embedded in the culture of Delhi, a crowded, economically and culturally diverse city, in line with desired new behaviours including an emphasis on cleanliness, order and quiet. To explore these developments this paper presents findings from a qualitative study (2009) analysing the movement across Delhi of a diverse group of young people. Participants documented their experiences as passengers on new and older transport systems such as auto-rickshaws and 'Blueline' buses, using reflective journals, street maps and photography. Their mobility revealed interacting fields of power in the city, between passengers and between passengers and those in control of the mode of transport, situated within wider urban redevelopment processes that intersect with transnational flows of capital, people and ideologies of development and modernity. The findings also highlighted everyday, often unconscious, adaptive competencies of negotiation and flexibility deployed to manage change, unfamiliarity and inequality.

Decolonizing diaspora: the reconstruction of Indian modernities in East Africa

Jen Dickinson

In light of the 'discovery' of migrant and diaspora networks by international organizations as an alternative form of economic exchange outside of the dependency of foreign aid and debt, emerging critiques of both theoretical and policy analyses of the migration-development networks identify the normative temporal and spatial frameworks that continue to reproduce contrapuntal readings of development. My aim in this paper is to utilize a historically informed view of citizenship and migration to render a more spatially nuanced analysis of the ways in which diasporic populations become tethered to nations as deeply ideological, rather than developmental, projects. In particular, this paper interrogates the agency and agenda of Indian ways of rethinking the relationship between migration and progress, where 'modernity' is recast as a particular way of 'staging' history. Through published government documents and research papers, this research analyzes the ways in which the Indian state reconstructs the East African historical trajectory of diasporic settlement, decolonization and present day relations. I demonstrate that the Indian state constitution of the history of the diaspora in East Africa uses neo-colonial language of hierarchy, heroism, conquest and modernization as a political tool for the positioning of India as a natural leader and model of development for nations in East Africa.

Global peddlers and local networks: migrant cosmopolitanisms

Uma Kothari

This paper is based on the experiences of migrant street traders from South Asia and West Africa who currently live and work in Barcelona. It argues that in the 'informal' and marginal spaces inhabited, utilized and created by these traders they produce forms of non-elite cosmopolitanism through which livelihoods are sustained, social bonds strengthened and fluid, diasporic identities produced. These are enabled by the development and maintenance of globalised networks and allegiances that are negotiated in highly localised ways. Thus, mobile and abiding cultural characteristics co-exist as peddlers' experiences of travelling and their encounters in place challenge conventional notions of cosmopolitanism producing instead everyday forms of grounded cosmopolitanisms and convivial cultures. The paper also introduces the notion of a strategic cosmopolitanism that emerges out of the need for vulnerable individuals and groups to make a living in an environment characterised by insecurity, and concludes by enquiring whether there are temporal dimensions to their cosmopolitanism.

Braving the Dragon's Den: African traders in Guangzhou 2005-2008

Michal Lyons, Alison Brown and Li Zhigang

A growing literature analyses the strategies of Chinese diasporas in Africa, many of which are involved in the import and distribution of manufactured goods in for example Namibia and Angola (Dobler 2005), Cape Verde (Haugen and Carling 2005), and Senegal (Scheld 2007), identifying the value and limitations of their social capital strategies and their interactions with African urban and political life. In contrast, the counter-flow of African private traders to China has been relatively little studied, yet is part of significant changes in African economies and societies (Lyons and Brown 2009), and creates new interactions in Chinese cities. The trade in which they have engaged over the few years since the introduction of the 'Open Door' policy and the subsequent rapid rise in bilateral trade has been undertaken through a period of booming international trade; a fuel crisis in 2008; and a world financial crisis in late 2008 and early 2009. This article explores the African diaspora in Guangzhou, SE China - one of the major centres in the export of manufactured goods from China to Africa. Drawing on ongoing work by the authors started in 2005, the article asks: How has the Guangzhou-Africa trade changed over the period; What livelihood strategies have been adopted by the Africans engaged in the Guangzhou end of the value chain; and how have their perceptions of this host city - and its perceptions of them - changed over time.

Mobility as development: migration and tourism as 'civilizing tools' in China

Pál Nyiri

State socialism has been associated with strict controls on people's movement. But since 1978, China has witnessed a rise in various forms of population mobility, in part encouraged by the state. This paper considers how these forms -- domestic and international migration as well as tourism -- fit into the state logic of turning Chinese into desirable citizens.

Transnational Methods: Critical Global Ethnographies of Asian Migration

Rachel Silvey

In recent decades, as scholars of migration have become increasingly focused on the growth of transnational and women's migration, our methodological toolkits have expanded. Specifically, in this paper I will focus on three methodological transitions that I view as providing new windows onto continuing work in migration studies in Asia: i) multi-sited global studies that span the work and home lives of migrants in host and home countries as well as the spaces in-between (e.g., airports, immigration counters/offices, embassies, labor training centers and agencies, transport vehicles and bus stations in transit to and from airports, crisis centers, government and NGO support and training centers at home and abroad); ii) critical ethnographic methods that include multi-scale analytical attention to the political-economic and geo-historical contexts of particular "cultures" of migration; iii) approaches to migrant subjectivities that refuse simple binaries of exploitation vs. empowerment, and instead examine the trade-offs, negotiations, and normativities around gendered power that are struggled over in relation to women's increasing transnational mobility. I locate the discussion of these methodological approaches and their associated topical emphases in the context of broader debates in critical development studies about the role of the state in shaping migration processes and meanings.