# INTERASIAN CONNECTIONS V: SEOUL

CALL FOR WORKSHOP PAPERS

## Logistics of Asia-Led Globalization: Infrastructure, Software, Labor

Workshop Directors:

**Brett Neilson**
Research Director, Institute for Culture and Society,
University of Western Sydney
b.neilson@uws.edu.au

**Ranabir Samaddar**
Director, Calcutta Research Group
ranabir@mcrg.ac.in

Asia's emergence as one of the world's most important trading regions is giving rise to new global connections and spatial economic networks. Recent attention has focused on China's "One Belt, One Road" policy, which seeks to revive historical Silk Road transport routes, but infrastructural and informational installations across the region are fast changing geopolitical visions, renderings of urban space, and understandings of historical transition. From the Asian Highway Network to the Yuxinou freight railway connecting Chongqing to Duisburg in Germany, from the proliferation of discount airline hubs to the tangle of fiber optic cables surrounding data centers in Hong Kong's New Territories or the Jurong district of Singapore, logistical developments are reconfiguring both Asia's relation to the world and its internal logics of transport and communication. Building on critical perspectives that understand logistics as a political technology for producing and organizing space and power, this workshop will enlist a diversity of scholars to discuss how digital technologies and material infrastructure combine to remake urban and regional territories and produce new forms of governance and subjectivity.

Logistics mobilizes infrastructure, labor, data, and software to create a smooth world for the circulation of commodities and capital but, at every juncture, must negotiate social and cultural frictions. This tension lends itself at once to innovation in governmental technologies and to the organization of dissent, resistance, and violence. In urban settings, logistics presents a model of space, time, and economy distinct from the global city of finance capital or the industrial city of factories. The logistical city tends to locate itself on the urban periphery, taking advantage of cheap land, lower labor costs and, ideally, a clean slate for the installation of infrastructure. This clean slate, however, is a planner's unfulfilled dream. Logistical spaces are commonly occupied by workers, peasants, migrants, and other marginal subjects who have their own vision and version of these spaces. There is a tussle between competing visions, which produces a narrative of urban transformation that is uneven, contentious, and overtly political. Understanding the stakes and consequences of this politics means not only examining conflicts on the ground but also studying how logistical technologies marshal populations in ways that parallel, rival, and influence the statecraft of traditional political bodies.

This workshop welcomes papers that explore global extensions of Asian economic power by examining the conflicts and complexities generated when logistical operations hit the ground. We invite interventions that critically investigate resonances and divergences in the making of logistical connections between different sites, sectors, and practices of mobility. Contributions may focus on developments in Asia or examine how infrastructural and informational strategies extend from Asia to other continents in ways that reorganize both Asia's internal regions and the wider spatial patterning of the world. We are particularly interested in papers that utilize data analytics or other digital methods to offer insights into how logistical practices guide current global mobilities. More widely, we seek presentations from a range of disciplinary and conceptual orientations – including feminism, political economy, postcolonial theory, critical geography, and communication/media studies – to explore the power-laden operations of logistics in and beyond Asian urbanities, socialities, and regionalisms.

Submissions are due by **September 8, 2015.** For more information and to submit an application, visit the conference webpage at: http://www.ssrc.org/pages/interasian-connections-v-seoul-2016/

Questions? Please contact the **InterAsia Program** at interasia@ssrc.org