

Laboring for Logistics: The Discontents of Dreams of Infrastructure

General, your tank is a powerful vehicle
It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men.
But it has one defect:
It needs a driver.

General, man is very useful.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one defect:
He can think.

---Bertolt Brecht

I want to begin this paper with an anecdote. For a recent visit to the Kolkata port for my fieldwork I wanted to hire an Ola cab. When I opened the app of the taxi aggregator from my smartphone I saw that there was one mini cab which was available at 2 minutes. Before that a short history of the smartphone I have. It is a Sony Experia C 6603 which I used in Australia and whose contract just expired. During the period of contract I could not use an Indian SIM in this fancy phone. A few days back at the expiration of the contract I got a code which I entered on the website of Vodafone Australia and the phone was unlocked and I could use it in India. This model is still not available in India as an admiring shop owner at Fancy Market informed me. The phone had indeed travelled both in terms of software, hardware, codes, protocols and contracts. Now, back to Ola. After 5 minutes when I did not get the call from the driver I called. He informed me that he was at Keshtopur while I was in Salt Lake Tank no. 8. Let me give you a description of the location. My place and Keshtopur is divided by a huge sewage over which a foot bridge is built. If the car could have been driven on that bridge the driver could have surely reached me in two minutes but now it would have taken him twenty. The GPS could not decide between a foot bridge and a bridge for cars. Exasperated I booked another Ola cab. This time the waiting time was one minute. I get a text message with the car number and to my surprise I

found the car parked on the other side of the road. I walked up to it and it was locked with no driver in sight. I called again. The driver picked up and he informed me he was inside the public toilet which was on the side of the road. He came out in a couple of minutes, apologized to me and when I asked why he didn't switch off the duty call he said he couldn't. There it was again no matter how much the GPS wants to track and order it will never be able to stop a man taking a leak.

The point of this rather long piece of anecdote is simple: logistics reveal their properties when they break down. In fact, I would like to go further and claim that logistical arrangements are not simply networks which develop snags once in a while or are obstructed by technical or software failure or even labor 'troubles.' Neither are they nodes that control and arrange the movements of goods and people nor are they rhizomes and such like if you are into that. I will argue in the paper that to visualize and conceptualize logistics it is important to see it as a discontinuous, fractured yet aggregated physical spaces through which goods and people move as a result of intense political struggles. This particular argument is on the basis of the insight provided by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson in their work on borders as topological spaces. I will urge you to have a willing suspension of disbelief and discard, for a while, the held belief that logistics is about connectivity, networks, arrangements, movements etc. and think about it counterintuitively. The proposition that logistics has no pre-decided, management oriented science of movement but a contingent outcome of political struggles between different political subjects: workers and capitalists, peasants and land grabbers, speculators and unions and other myriad subjects who come into collision and alliances which are equally precarious every day. This argument about contingency of logistics is not a novel one. It has been already pointed out on the website of *Logistical Worlds* where it provocatively states that "contingency makes logistics." The only thing that I am attempting here is to investigate the nature of this contingency while giving up the assumption that logistics automatically means or transforms itself into a practice that seeks connectivity forming chains or conveyer belts where goods and people can be moved in a desired pre-planned way despite seen and unseen, known and unknown obstructions. Planners, governments and financial institutions who want a desired connectivity through logistical practices are players in this struggle that produces the contingency too but despite the fact that they are the ones who have more power concentrated with them it does not always mean that they are the deciding factor in the struggle. Thus, where I take a different path

from *Logistical Worlds* is that I put on hold the notion that there is a “normative state” that can be achieved in logistics. In my understanding the ‘normative state’ as underlined is a pause which has been achieved after a struggle and it is possible that another round of struggle occurs after that pause. Instead, I like to view it as a constant tussle which might produce certain outcomes which are regular but that is not to say that there is a pause in struggle. As mentioned above it is the struggles which makes and decides the movement. Let us get to the Kolkata port after this rather lengthy detour.

One of the questions that has cropped up repeatedly during the course of this research is the most fundamental of them all: What is a port? Like all good research projects should achieve there has been no agreement on the subject. I still hold, though, that port should be defined in the way dictionaries do:

- a. A place on a waterway with facilities for loading and unloading ships.
- b. A city or town on a waterway with such facilities.
- c. The waterfront district of a city.

This also has analytical value in a sense that it always points to the uniqueness of the port. A ship is different from a truck which is different from a train and in this lies all the difference. Just a point of entry, all terrestrial, cannot make a port which has a very unique logistical arrangements and labor processes as also the fact that the very location of a port is informed by a series of calculations regarding navigation, geographical features etc. apart from the very obvious fact of being on the side of ‘navigable water.’ It is one of the tasks of the paper to show how a port that which is close to navigable water, is unique as is the airport and so is the terrestrial logistical town and it is the uniqueness which should be emphasized and not the putative similarities.

The first thing to be looked at while studying the port is the physical space itself. The above dictionary definition encompasses the city/town as well as the infrastructural installation itself. This gives us a useful direction to go about the study of physical space of the port. We ask the question about again but in a modified way. Where does the port begin? The answer is it depends on what is our frame of reference. From the waterside the port might begin from the docks. From the landside there are several options. It might begin from the immediate neighborhood or even beyond from the other side of the city where warehouses might be. In the case of Kolkata port

for the sake of convenience as well as ease of analysis we will take that it begins from Fancy Market in Kidderpore on Karl Marx Sarani (as proper a street name as it could have ever been imagined!). There is a reason to start our investigation from here. Fancy Market started in the early 1970s. It was heyday of control and command economy as well as smuggling. But smuggling was not only dangerous it was highly unpredictable too. The goods from the port only came in a trickle that too not regularly. As one of the shopkeepers who has been operational since the start of Fancy Market admitted those were hard times and the market was anything but fancy. Then came containers in the mid-1980s and things took turn for the better. As the liberalization set in so did the profile of providers of the goods. Smugglers were replaced by importers. The same shopkeeper said that these days everyone seems to be an importer. Fancy Market is now really fancy where you can get electronic goods, clothes and as a shopkeeper boasted even a helicopter if you so wished. All thanks to the container inside which you can put anything with minimum of fuss. The market was so glutted with Chinese electronic goods that one Fancy Market was not enough. A New Fancy Market was made and now there are at least 10 such markets every one of them doing brisk business. This area is now rapidly emerging, if it has not already, as the business district of 'grey' market of electronic goods. We will come to the greyness later. This has to do with the change in the technology of moving goods through container. When asked that the same goods could be purchased wholesale from other parts of the town the shopkeepers said that they do buy sometimes from there but their main source remains the importers of Kidderpore. In any case, the goods in other wholesale markets are supplied by the same importers so it really does not make much of a difference. After all, it has to come in the container through the port. The result of this surfeit of commodities and rise of market complexes is that real estate prices have shot up considerably and what was, and still is, a rather 'grey' part of the city is at least as lucrative in terms of speculative practices around real estate as any. We will come to this point later.

One of the peculiar features of Kolkata port is that although there is a rapid emergence of the new the old simply refuses to die. This particular feature of the port area gives the physical space a sense of fragmentation, unevenness and yet they are not necessarily antagonistic to each other politically or morally. Just opposite Fancy Market is a brothel which, from discreet inquiry, was revealed is as old as anything around. This is not only a reminder of the realist novel of the 19th century and the Modernist vision of ports and seafaring of Joseph Conrad but also the many

forms of gendered labor that is possible in the vicinity of the port. Nelly Kambouri in her research of Piraeus port in Greece analyses the distinction between feminized (cleaners and sex workers) and masculinized (dock workers) and how the relationship has been reversed as a result of privatization which has led to massive contractualization of work. The women workers were already doing subsidiary work without the protections, economic and political, enjoyed by the male workers. We will have occasion to analyze this phenomenon in detail even in the case of women dock workers at the Kidderpore docks. However, the boundaries between morality and immorality is very thin in Kidderpore almost non-existent. The brothel is followed, a few meters away, by a run-down drinking joint which is similarly antiquated and behind that is Kidderpore College where I taught English literature for two years. In those two years and during the recent fieldwork it was clear that work, at least on the surface, is not hierarchized in terms of morality or legal and illegal. This is in no way to suggest that sex workers are not exploited. This is just to point out that the establishment is an economic entity no more or less legitimate or illegitimate than anything around. It is also important to know that this establishment is in the middle of 'respectable' neighborhoods and as if to prove the point made above about non-existent lines of respectability and immorality that is the wont of petty-bourgeois propriety all this, Fancy Market, brothel, bar and the college is located only a few hundred meters away from Kabitirtha Sarani, a road which is named after Rongolal Bandhopadhyay, Hemchandra Bandopadhyay and Michael Madhushudan Dutta. Threegreatpoets of Bengal all from this neighborhood. The point I am trying to make here is that the phenomenon that Kambouri analyzed at Piraeus is not the same at Kolkata port. This is not to say that Kolkata port is a paradise of gender equality, far from it. This is just to say that the division of labor between feminized and masculinized work is structured differently. We will come to this later when we analyze the women dock workers but now we have to travel a few meters more to see that relic which was once the crown jewel of permanent workers: the Dock Labor Board.

Dock Labor Board employed workers mainly for loading and unloading cargo on and from the vessels. They were not deployed for shore-related jobs, done by shore workers, covered under the Major Port Trust Act 1963. The Dock Labor Board was merged with the Kolkata Port Trust in 2010. This was after the DLB had exhausted its funds and was finding it difficult to pay the pensioners. At the time of the merger the number of employees was 350 and pensioners were in the vicinity of 7000. To understand what Kolkata port was before liberalization set in and

casualization of work began the office of DLB is the best place to be. It has 36 counters, all closed now, rusting because it has been unused for years now. This is the spot where workers would have lined up in thousands to collect their wages. It is a huge space. The office inside is equally big but now dark and dank. On any day you can find a few people sleeping on the cemented benches to ward off the heat. The officer-in-charge is an amiable man enough and he will lament of what has become of what has become of DLB but all off the record. This office is spread on a big piece of land. A highly prized piece of real estate but it won't vanish not yet at any rate. The 7000 odd pensioners will not give way to land sharks and it ensures that the office is not brought down. It is, as if, the labor-power of the workers stored in the form of pension keeps the structure intact although it is unable to revive it because they can now no longer use their labor-power. This is, of course, a temporary truce, contingent on the existence of the pensioners and it might yet vanish in the near future but as of now the pensioners refuse to go away. If ever the space was contentious because of present and aggressive capital and an absent presence of workers DLB is it. This, to my mind, is also one of the unique features of our contemporary times variously called neoliberalism, globalization etc. in postcolonial condition. For all the vanishing of permanent and secure jobs the same workers have not vanished. In a reduced but significant ways they still shape the port area. There are other ways in which they shape the port but we are not there yet still about a kilometer away.

We now come to the unplugged bridge from where the Kidderpore dock can be seen. Like most things in Kolkata the bridge is named after a poet: Nazrul Setu. But before we cross the bridge we have to wait awhile as *MV Nicobar* has moored and there is a long queue of what looks like workers and their families. They are known to the crew of the ship as Bunk Class passengers. This is so because the ship, originally a Polish ship, is supposed to be a cruise ship from Kolkata to Port Blair. As it turns out it is now used mostly by contractors who ferry the workers and like other commodities it is cheaper to move the goods in bulk. They are highly suspicious when approached by someone who looks remotely like asking questions about them. Only snatches of conversation is possible through which it is known they are headed to Port Blair to work as construction workers. The skills varied from unskilled to that of mason and carpenter. They have an interesting story to tell. The migration from Kolkata to Andamans began in the 1980s (around the same time when port in Kolkata was also changing). The migration to Andamans for construction was dominated by Tamil Nadu. But this was the time of permanent jobs in

Andaman Public Works Department (APWD) and the pace of migration was steady. Things took a turn and the work started to happen through contractors and the Bengali workers, rather the contractors, ensured that they were the ones who took advantage. By this time CPWD, MES and AHW also started to work through contracting system. A long period of competition, sometimes economic at other times extra-economic, ensued between Bengali contractors and the Tamils some of whom transformed themselves into contractors. It was the tsunami of 2004 which decisively shifted the scale in favor of the Bengali contractors as there was a rush for rebuilding infrastructure of the island. The workers claimed that almost 400-600 workers go at a time. When asked where there are from that particular batch of workers said they were from North 24 Parganas. They did not give the name of the village. However, the name of the district struck me. If you remember the study of Rajarhat in the earlier edition of the *Transit Labor* project it is in North 24 Parganas. Was it just possible that some of these workers were the displaced peasants who lost their land for that gaudy monstrosity called the New Town? This would give logistics exactly the property I mentioned above in the introduction i.e. it is the struggle of labor and capital that decides the structure of logistics and which invariably depends on primitive accumulation. This schema is too neat for comfort and in the realm of speculation. However, it was important to mention it as a hypothesis and is an independent line of investigation which I would like to pursue someday. The mere possibility of this though to a large extent supports the argument about logistics if not totally confirms it. However, one thing can be said with certainty. The infrastructure of the port creates a logistical system, at times unintended, whose field extends beyond the binaries of port and hinterland and in the final analysis it is the need for labor-power that decides what shape logistics take with or without a bit of help from natural disaster and a major port will always be in a decisive position to transform smaller ports as in the case of Kolkata and Port Blair.

We can now have a survey of Kidderpore docks from Nazrul Setu. One can feel the strong vibrations of the bridge created by passing trucks. You can see small bulk ships moored on the dock. You can also see the warehouses lined up on the docks, some empty some filled, with gunny sacks while workers load or unload the cargo. Before we proceed one needs to know the structure of the workforce at the Kidderpore docks. On this dock most shops are bulk carriers. A ship carries commodities that an importer has ordered. That importer has an agent who manages the supply of goods. The agent contracts a stevedore company which then contracts a labor

contractor who supplies labor. The workers and contractors that are used for loading and unloading goods are commodity specific. The contractors I spoke to specialized in pulses especially *matar* (peas). The market of contractors is a closely guarded system and functions like a cartel. These contractors have now formed a 'union' of their own and does not allow any new entrant. In the case of contractors who handle peas there are only 4-5 contractors who have monopolized the function at Kidderpore docks.

The workers are hired on *sardari* system. This is a classical jobber system. A person known as the *sardar* (head) recruits around 50 workers under him and put them to work under a contractor. A *sardar* who is also a worker at the docks gets more wages than those who work under him. It is the same system through which seafarers, sailors and lascars were recruited in the 19th century extremely well described by G Balachandran book *Globalizing Labour: Indian Seafarers and World Shipping, c. 1870-1945*. To continue with the workers at Kidderpore docks the wages are decided according to the 'tons' of weight lifted by a particular group under the *sardar*. One has to take into account the size of sacks. Previously each sack could carry 100 kgs of commodities now the sacks are of 50 kgs. As some old workers said it has lightened the burden and the task which had to be performed earlier but it also means that they have to work for longer and quicker to unload a ship. The intensity of work has increased enormously. This was an interesting observation. We have spoken a lot about automation and mechanization at ports be it Kolkata or Piraeus and perhaps also Valpraiso (I was not invited there!!!) and how it has decreased the labor force and increased the intensity of work while massively informalizing it. Here in the case of these workers, that the technologies of intensifying work need not be only through automation and machine-induced. An innocuous and as mundane a tool of work as the sack can do it just the same. Manual labor or 'unskilled' labor are equally controlled by technological innovation. Also, the sacks were earlier made of jute but now are made of plastic threads. This makes quite a lot of difference in the comfort of performing the task as it was easier to grip the jute sack but the workers say that now they have adapted to the technology.

One would intuitively think that carrying of sacks is a manual job and hence 'unskilled'. The statistics of labor will classify them similarly but it is not quite so as it is evident from the composition of the workers. But the nature of migrant workers, and most workers are migrant, tells us a different story. The composition of the migrant workers have changed over the period of

time. In the beginning, which is to say till the 1980s most of the workers (upto 80%) were from Bihar. The regions of Bihar from where the workers came to work on the docks were: Patna, Bakhtiarpur, Nawada, Darbhanga, Begusarai, Barauni, Ara, and Chhapra. Some of them also came from Balia in Uttar Pradesh but it is the extension of Ara and Buxar. Workers from these areas came to develop an expertise on dock work and loading and unloading of cargo. The perception that prevailed among the contractors are that workers from these region of Bihar are sturdy and hardworking. It is also interesting to note that indentured labor to the Caribbean islands in the 19th century were mostly from this region. It is evident from the work of Balakrishnan as well as the massively over-rated *Ibis* trilogy of Amitav Ghosh. Thus, the logistics of labor supply was and has been in place for close to one and a half centuries. The fortunes of Kolkata port and the migrant labor from Bihar have been related. The restructuring has happened simultaneously and one can detect the changes that have been wrought in the relationship between workers from Bihar and Kolkata port. The workforce coming from Bihar has declined steadily and have been replaced by workers from inside West Bengal. Again, the pattern is almost the same in the sense that some regions of West Bengal have gained specialization in dockwork. The areas that have emerged in West Bengal for supplying labor for Kolkata docks are: Murshidabad, Sundarbans and Burdwan. It is interesting to note how migration, logistics and restructuring of capital in the contemporary times known variously as neoliberalism, globalization etc are interlinked and intermeshed. To use an evocative Foucauldian phrase new 'meshes of power' are in place now and are being constantly under innovation. The two cases one of Andamans and another of Bihar and Bengal show clearly that new logistics of labor are being created that uses existing logistical arrangements while simultaneously creating new ones. It is a curious mix of colonial labor recruitment process, new technologies of work and renovation and creation of infrastructural installations and logistical practices. If one studies Bihar, the migration away from the agricultural fields of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan to various industrial towns and port cities could be attributed to these changes in capital, infrastructure, logistical practices and technologies of work. Contrary to a wide held belief, migration of labor from Bihar to Kolkata port is not a result of any 'decline' of the latter it is simply because the logistics of labor in West Bengal is cheaper than those of Bihar. According to the contractors, the labor from West Bengal are paid maximum of around INR 350 per day while those from Bihar had to be paid INR 500 per day. The condition of work is tougher

for them and availability of jobs highly unpredictable and irregular. On the Kidderpore docks where the ships carrying bulk goods moor there is no facility for drinking water or even toilets. Workers, both men and women, have to relieve themselves in open and although drinking water is supplied to the workers by some contractors it is not a common practice. The availability of work is dependent on the number ships that come ashore. The number of ships is then dependent on the larger economic condition. The running joke among the contractors is that if one has to understand the way Indian economy is going one should come at the docks. Since, at the time of fieldwork the prices of pulses were at an all-time high and the frequency of ship carrying pulses was quite high than other times. The ship that was moored at that point of time was carrying pulses from Ukraine. When an importer orders it is then that the whole logistical process of labor is set in motion. Once the order is placed the agent is appointed and it moves downwards in the hierarchy. When the contractor gets the job he calls the *sardar* who then mobilizes the workers under him. A ship that carries 7000 tonnes of goods take seven days to unload and 500 workers are put for the job. After seven days the workers are relieved who then go on in search for other jobs in the city mostly as porters in the wholesale markets doing the same job with the difference that it does not require the same skill. The pulses in the ship come loose. They have to be put in the sack, have to be sewn which is a specialized work which happens in the ship and then has to be carried either to the trucks or the godowns in the dock depending on the importer. Sewing is a task that is done by both men and women same is the case of putting pulses in the bag. It is only carrying of the goods that is exclusively male. The wages of women are lower than that of men and ranges between INR 200-300. The other job that they have to do is to sweep the cargo that has fallen on the ground and pack them and move them to the warehouse. The importers do not want even a grain to go waste. In this whole operation, except perhaps sweeping and certainly in carrying the sacks, the work is not divided along gender lines. Sewing and packing which are seen as relatively easy jobs and also that they are feminine jobs are shared both by men and women. The intensity of work is shared by both men and women as how much they earn depends on how much they can load or unload the goods. This also seems to be a general trend in labor practices in infrastructural installations. The kinds of work which were increasingly looked as feminine are now also done by men. This was evident on my research at Delhi airport as well as Delhi Metro. It will be difficult to infer that the labor in Kolkata port is exclusively masculine

both in term of work and workers. If one takes into count the number of women workers around the port that are directly dependent on the port the women workforce is considerable.

A few words needed to be said on the godowns that are on the docks. They are prized space for importers for it is incredibly cheap to store their goods. The port allows the importers to use the space at a base price for a fixed period after which the importers have to pay a higher rate. Even with the higher rate it is cheaper for the importer to keep the goods on the docks rather than outside. Some importers keep their goods for more than a year. This is not simply for saving on the cost of storage. There is an element of speculation involved too. It is safer to hoard at a securitized government space than to keep it in a godown that could come under the radar of the authorities for hoarding. In the case of pulses this was very apparent. Importers and wholesalers will wait for the prices to change in their favor before they released the goods in their possession in the market. A research is required by specialist academics and practitioners to study and investigate this relationship between the commodity market, spatial arrangement and location of ports and speculative economic practices.

This sets up nicely for our further analysis of the port space and beyond but before that a small Chinese connection which needs to be investigated. Kolkata port has a dedicated railway line that used to service Nepal. Most of the imports to Nepal came to Kolkata port. The railway line is connected to Raxaul which is connected to Birgunj raililway station in Nepal. The connection between Raxaul and Birgunj was done by Nepal Government Railway. A broad gauge became operational in 2005that connected Birgunj Inland Container Depot (ICD). The workers told that the work for Nepal has now almost come to a stop. This is, in all probability, as a result of Chinese infrastructure on the other side of the border which is making Nepal an important destination for infrastructure development. I owe this insight to Dr. Atig Ghosh who explained how a new infrastructure arrangement is in motion that effects North Bengal, North Bihar and Nepal.

There was a controversy recently when a film production house Shree Venkatesh was found illegally occupying a warehouse in Hyde Park of Kolkata port area. The production house was in possession of 69,000 square feet of land and another 18,000 square feet was occupied Magic Moments Motion Pictures Pvt. Limited. Shree Venkatesh Films claimed that the latter was not related to them. It was claimed by SVF that it has had an agreement with LMJ Construction Pvt.

Limited which they also claimed was a fraud when the occupation became news. Police took possession of the warehouse but a day later SVF started shooting. It was alleged that TMC workers helped in the 'recapture' of the warehouse. This story could well serve as a metaphor for how space around Kolkata port is arranged. What appears on the surface, an anarchic space with pavements occupied by eateries, small shops, tyre puncture repair shops, motor mechanics etc. and the unruly movement of all sorts of vehicles from humungous container carriers to auto rickshaws is actually a space that is in a very delicate balance where every inch of land tells story of struggles sometimes violent, sometimes otherwise but always bitterly contentious. If one walks from Hyde Park (where the Shree Venkatesh Films controversy happened) towards the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Dock one sees on the left all manner of vehicles ranging from small three wheeler carriers to lorries are packed in every available space big or small. They are neatly parked in a space that is controlled by local strongmen and for which they charge parking charges from the owners of these vehicles. The competition is fierce between these strongmen to occupy more and more space. This has often led to clashes. There is a scramble for space and the logic of that space decides how a large amount of commodities is moved around the port.

The container yards are also equally dispersed in area as well as type. It ranges from the oldest container yard at Kolkata port, the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) to vast open spaces where containers lie in various degrees of arrangement. Kolkata port also got its first container freight station in 2011. The point is that like all arrangements of logistics around Kolkata port the container yards straddle both the formal and the informal. In fact, one can say that not only the formal and informal are interdependent but that the line between them are sometimes blurred at other times almost non-existent.

We now come to what I found the most interesting commercialization of space at Kolkata port. These are clusters of settlements across the port area. On inquiry, it was found that these houses were owned by workers and as the restructuring began at the port and workers started losing jobs this informal housing began its own process of restructuring and a distinct political economy. Some workers left after selling their homes while some stayed on. Now, these houses have become real estate boom in their own way. Constant change of ownership and sale and purchase has ensured that the prices have gone up steadily. The rents are also quite high when compared to the shanties that have emerged behind this settlement. There are some local political workers

have bought several houses and put them out on rent. One has to take into account that these houses are built on land that belongs to Kolkata Port Trust. The trust has long wanted to evict these people from the place but they have been unable to do so because of political compulsions and in no small matter because now a considerable amount of capital has been invested in this business and most of the capital are of local grassroots political leaders. A respondent said that although there is so much talk about Kolkata Port Trust suffering losses or not making enough profit it can never make loss till it has land in possession and as long as local politicians and speculators are fighting bitterly over it. One must also remember that Kolkata Port Trust is the biggest landowner in Kolkata. He went on to say that the 'real' port activity is no longer the concern of Kolkata Port Trust. While this is obviously hyperbole one has to admit that land and management of land has now become a major economic activity of the port. Again, a specialized research is needed on how these changes in the activity of Kolkata Port Trust has resulted in new systems of accounting and software and how far they reflect this change. This will show the quantum of the change.

Why this study of land is important? I want to give the example of the study of Piraeus and it is something that the research in Valpraiso could look at. When we visited the Ikonion-Thriassion line what was evident was the grand scale of its operations (or potential operations). What was also evident and the study shows is the pauperization of the neighborhood. It was also mentioned in the study that the Roma families help themselves to electric cables to sell the copper in scrap markets. There is an important lesson in study of logistics here. Logistical operations and their constructions and restructuring have two important effects: one, they bring misery for the workers and second a new 'informal' economy of workers comes into being. Actually, they should not be called 'informal' as there is an assumption of a 'formal' which in its perceptible form is already on the way out. These new economies of logistics should be seen as a thoroughly new economic system with a logic and politics of its own. It is an economy no less intense in the struggle between labor and capital. However, there is also another lesson in this new logistics framework that points towards the distinct nature of postcolonial capitalism. The Ikonion-Thriassion railway line has a sense of abandonment and there are or at least were abandoned warehouses as they were abandoned houses on the way to the line. Kolkata port and its restructuring has no doubt brought pauperization and misery but it also has brought new methods of resistance and radical working class response. This is not to say that the Ikonion-Thriassion

line has not produced resistance but their methods both in terms of politics and organization is different. In case of Kolkata, the workers do not brook any abandonment by capital. Instead of the abandonment being a cause of temporary defeat (as in the case of Greece) the workers simply occupy the space abandoned by capital, physically, spatially and economically. The real estate described above is just one example of that. As a result, capital in the postcolonial condition of India cannot abandon its space as was the case in Greece in fear of losing that space to labor. Thus, the struggle continues where labor never abandons its radical politics and organizations. Surely, this new organization and politics is different from the old and is emerging and yet to be articulated in the form of a program or strategy but the tactical struggles are continuous and only adds to the repertoire in the sense which Charles Tilly has used. It is what I think Ranabir Samaddar is indicating when he talks about the postcolonial bind of Greece and his analysis of where working class politics is finding itself short in Greece.

Finally, a point need to be made about the labor around the port. There is a case to be made between logistical labor and labor of logistics or formulated as workers laboring for logistics. Logistical labor is the labor that works directly for logistics: the dock workers, the crane operators, signal men in the case of airport and so on. On the other hand, those laboring for logistics are workers who work for an economy that is directly the product of logistical operations and is subsumed by logistical operations. One of the curious figure of such a worker is the puncture repairer or the motor mechanic at the airport. It is also interesting that the location for such shops are close to the gates of the port. This is not incidental. It is easier for the broken down vehicles which are often considerably big to be moved to the shop. One can see a queue of three to four trucks being repaired at these small shops. Can one imagine the regular movement of the trucks without these workers? It is clearly not possible yet they will not be analytically seen as logistical labor. What analysis of labor around logistics have ignored these workers the port authorities have clearly not. They are seen as undesirable and there are signposts which discourage the use of such workers. They are viewed as unruly and unreliable and who have to be controlled and managed. It is their un-fixable position as worker which is the cause of anxiety. This is a worker, a carrier of the commodity labor power, which creates its own logistical apparatus and map and who is always on the move with no desire to be brought into the fold of governance or capitalist logistics. It will be a mistake, politically and analytically, to leave out this labor that challenges logistics on every step and should be seen as a potential radical subject.

In conclusion I would like to draw attention to the formula for the circuit of money capital in *Capital Volume II*. Marx gives the formula as follows:

$$M-C\dots P\dots C'-M'$$

Production breaks the circuit of money. Later Marx elaborates and gives the formula for the entire circuit:

$$M-C\dots P\dots C'-M'. M-C\dots P\dots C'-M'. M-C\dots P\dots etc.$$

It is evident that the circuits operate simultaneously it also involves break at each point in the circuit. After all what is crisis if not the complete breakdown of this circuit? I think a formula for logistical capital can be formed following the formula as provided by Marx. It will be:

$$M\dots C\dots P\dots M' \dots C'$$

This is how logistics operates. At no point of its operation logistics can act smoothly. It is fractured at each moment due to its own logic that creates economies and labor processes that can never be controlled no matter how smooth the planners want their circuits to operate. In that case any analysis of logistics as connection, network etc. is in some ways inadequate. It is these breaks that makes logistics and its operations possible. The breaks that are result of the original struggle between labor and capital.

