

Participants' Profile



Akash Jash is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru, specializing in the intersection of Urban and Environmental Sociology. His research examines the socio-spatial transformations of Bengaluru's lakes, focusing on the interaction between water governance, urban planning, and contemporary contestations over ecological commons. By integrating archival research, oral histories, and spatial mapping, he aims to explore how state-corporate alliances and community struggles shape urban environmental justice in the Global South. His academic interests align closely with the course's focus on the "making and unmaking of cities", particularly its emphasis on urban justice, ecological commons, and the socio-political dimensions of urban transformation.



Amrita Gurung is a PhD student from Nepal in Social and Cultural Analysis Program in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University in Montreal. Her study is about Nepali student migrants in Canada for which understanding 'place' from the perspective of migrants is central. Hence, by taking part in the course, she hopes to map Nepali student geographies as sites of 'embodied transnationalism' in the city of Montreal. Prior to joining PhD, she worked in the issues of labour, youth and migration as a researcher with Governance Lab, Social Science Baha and Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility in Kathmandu.



Anamitra Ghosh is a PhD research scholar in the department of Sociology, Presidency University. He has completed graduation in Sociology Honors from Maulana Azad College, Kolkata and thereafter did my Masters and MPhil on the same subject from Jadavpur University. His areas of research interest include Migration, Urban Sociology, Gender Studies, Sociology of Food and Nutrition and Sociology of Marginalized Communities. He has taught Post Graduate Courses in Sociology at Rabindra Bharati University, and Undergraduate Courses in Jadavpur University and APJ Abdul Kalam College from 2015-2020. He has also taught WBCS optional courses in Sociology at Adamas University and Roy's Institute of Competitive Examinations (RICE).



Anuska Paul is currently enrolled as a Doctoral candidate in English in Jadavpur University, Kolkata, in India. She completed her post-graduation in 2022 from the same institute. Her doctoral research attempts to interrogate non-consumptive leisure practises in the public as it emerges as an alternate marker in assessing the anatomy of a city insofar it challenges capitalist preoccupations with incessant motion and neoliberal privatisation of space, particularly vis-a-vis marginalised women's presence in the city. Her other research interests include Marxist studies, spatiality studies, public history, political and subversive life writings, and histories of women's movements and alliances in the global South. This course would be extremely valuable in sharpening her critical engagement skills to survey the intersections of (urban) space and gender.



Aparna Eswaran is currently an Assistant Professor in the School of International Relations and Politics, at MG University, Kottayam. She is also the Joint Director at the newly formed Graduate School at MGU and the chairperson of the Centre for Cross-national Communication in South Asia. She holds a PhD in Women's Studies, from the Centre for Women's Studies, JNU where she combined her research interests in Literature, Gender and International Politics in her PhD thesis on "Women and Witnessing War: Poetry of Tamil Women in Sri Lanka."



Arooshi Bagri Maheshwari is an artist & researcher. She is a doctoral candidate in Art History & Visual Studies at the Department of Fine Arts, University of Hyderabad. Researching on exhibition histories, her study specifically focuses on the making of exhibitions as a cultural turn at the beginning of the millennium in the context of 'city'. Her work traces the representation of the 'city' as an intersection of post-colonial ideas of globalization and contemporary curatorial choices. To look at the interwoven histories defining the complex position of South Asia cities, this course shall enrich her understanding deeply.



Ashin Chakraborty is a Master's student in Economics with a strong passion for leveraging data-driven insights to drive real-world change. His interests lie at the intersection of analytics and public policy, where he seeks to create impactful, evidence-based solutions to today's most pressing challenges and has published articles in newspapers The Indian Express and The Wire. Ashin is currently working as a research associate at Sabar Institute.



Ayushi Roy completed her Bachelor's in History from Ambedkar University, Delhi and previously worked with the Partition Museum, creating an archive on Bengali migrants in Delhi. Her research focuses on urban governance, necro politics, carcerality and migration, emphasising urban justice, human rights and advocacy. She is currently a Research Assistant for a PhD scholar at UC Berkeley, assisting with thesis research on urban private security companies in Delhi and their impact on urban governance, the securitisation of space, and spatial transformation. She is also pursuing a diploma in Human Rights and International Refugee Law from the Indian Society of International Law.



Beatriz is a student from Central European University's Sociology and Social Anthropology Master Program. Currently, her research interests lie at the juncture of migration studies, labour and political mobilisation in the urban context, with a passion for visual research methods. Her fieldwork discussed the politics of migrant solidarity-building in the contexts of urban commons in Naples, Southern Italy. This project highlighted the multiscalar dynamics of labour and marginalization, particularly as they pertain to semi-peripheral economies like that of the “Mezzogiorno”, connecting Naples to other souths of the world. She plans to use the urban scale as a privileged site for migrant emplacement, delving into the variegated “livelihood practices” that strive to improve migrants’ living and working conditions.



Bodhisattwa Sarkar is currently pursuing PhD at the Department of Economics, University of Kalyani, West Bengal. He has also received his MPhil degree from here as well. His present research is primarily motivated by the rapid scaling up of digital platforms with the pace of urbanization in India over the past decade promising flexible nature of jobs to a rising aspirational class of workers – popularly known as gig workers. Flexibility of such independent contract model has placed economic rationality on their free time, forcing them into unsocial working hours (evenings, nights and weekends) that serve as a source of exhaustion. The design and objective(s) of the course would definitely help me to grasp the transition process of such informal workforce in Urban areas more intensely and eventually shape my research aspect.



Charunila Malatpure has worked on diverse roles from a Community Design Fellow for an organisation operating at the intersection of human rights, urban design and social sciences, a Project Consultant with a gender-led governance program with a grassroots feminist organisation, to a creative/brand strategist. These two projects have shaped her, what John Berger puts as, ‘ways of seeing’ – from the lens of gender and the public & private spheres that is constructed around it; on spaces, on architecture, and how all of these intersect with one-another to create inclusion, exclusion and alienation. Her intent lays in exploring further and deeper the above-mentioned intersections to build a complex, contradictory and human understanding of ‘urban’ from the perspective of Everydayness and from a Rights lens (in place of an often-adopted Safety and/or Risk lens).



Chinmayee Kalita’s area of interest is mainly focused on place/space, border, identity conflict, informality, infrastructure and urbanisation. In the past, she has worked on migration and identity conflicts related to it in the state of Assam. She has done research on geographical imagination and postcolonial anxiety, specifically in the context of the state of Assam. For her doctoral research, she focused on urbanism in the borderlands of Agartala and Chittagong. With this research, she is trying to understand how urbanism becomes the site to understand the relationship between the population and their interactions with the infrastructures, especially informal transport in these two cities taking a comparative approach.



John Shorter is an MA candidate in Public History & Caribbean Heritage from the University of the West Indies, Mona. Writing a thesis in the Department of History & Archaeology titled *Remembering Waterhouse: The (Un)Making of a 21st-Century Jamaican Garrison*, John combines oral history, urban anthropology, and radical geography with community-based participatory research and a postmodern deconstructionist approach to *unmake* the colonial topographies of suburban Kingston, Jamaica, through the cognitive archaeological exploration of the collective memory of the often neglected inhabitants of its garrison communities. A former executive board member of the Archaeological Society of Jamaica (ASJ) and part of the Coalition for Caribbean Archaeological Heritage (CoCAH), John is presently an editor for the Coalition of Master’s Scholars on Material Culture (CMSMC) and a research assistant at the University of Hull’s Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery & Emancipation.



Ioana Simina Popescu is a PhD candidate in the Anthropology Department at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on the recent labor migration from South Asia to Romania, examining both the precarious conditions faced by migrants and the strategies they develop to sustain their livelihoods in Romania and beyond.



Juri Baruah is from Upper Assam. She pursued MPhil and PhD from TISS Guwahati campus. Her research interests are political ecology, eviction, land rights and gender. She is also a short story writer. She published two of her collections in Assamese language. Currently she is working as an Assistant Professor, DCB Girls' College, Jorhat.



Krishna Priya is a PhD scholar in the Department of Mass Communication at Mizoram University, with an M.A. and M.Phil. in Mass Communication from the University of Madras, Chennai. Her PhD research focuses on the communication and spatial practices in the everyday lives of women in Chennai's resettlement areas through photovoice. She has been engaged in research on resettlement areas since 2018, beginning with an internship as an assistant director with independent documentary filmmaker R.P. Amudhan on *The Caste*. This experience provided valuable insights into the lived realities of Dalit-Bahujan communities in these areas. Her MPhil dissertation further explored how media coverage portrayed resettlement areas in Chennai during the COVID-19 pandemic. For PhD, she delved deeper into the spatial and material practices of daily life in these areas through participatory methods like photovoice.



Monish Upadhyay is a video journalist based out of Delhi. He completed masters in Convergent Journalism from Jamia Millia Islamia and ever since have been drawn to the power of visuals and research. The course will help him understand the philosophy of urban spaces, making it easier to convey hard-hitting stories.



Nikhil Malik is a PhD researcher in contemporary History at the Department of Conservation, Archaeology and History (IAKH), University of Oslo. His PhD project titled *Manufacturing Faridabad: History of Work in a Post-Partition New Industrial Township*, studies the building of New Industrial Township (NIT) – Faridabad on greenfield lands in the aftermath of partition of India. The research involves the study of factors, motives and driving forces that led to the conception of such a ‘utopian’ planned industrial township, as well those that led to its alleged ‘failure’. In MPhil dissertation (Ambedkar University, Delhi), he studied how events such as the national Emergency (1975-77) shaped the political, economic, and social fabric of the young state of Haryana (formed in 1966). His broader research interests are located within various fields such as labour history, urban history/studies, social history, global history, etc.



Palanivelrajan is a research scholar in the Film Studies and Visual Culture department at the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. His research interests converge around the intersections of space, class, and caste. His work seeks to understand the complex power structures that shape our lived environments by exploring the dynamics of urbanization, spatial injustice, and cityscapes.



Pritha Chatterjee is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, Kolkata. She is a doctoral fellow at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, pursuing PhD under the guidance of Prof. Rosinka Chaudhuri. Her area of research is the mixed-race community of colonial Calcutta in the early nineteenth century. Chatterjee is also, a performing musician and a mental health enthusiast with a formal training in psychological counselling and wellbeing.



Priya Singh is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre for Gender and Forced Displacement, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok. Her research bridges nationalism, state formation, migration, and gender, focusing on the lived experiences of marginalized communities across the Global South. With a background in extensive fieldwork across West Asia, she now examines Bangkok’s socio-spatial dynamics as a ‘city in waiting,’ analyzing how urban transformations reflect and reinforce structural inequalities. Situating her work within critical theoretical frameworks, she explores intersections of migration, marginalization, and urban justice, with an emphasis on forced displacement and resilience. Holding a PhD from the University of Calcutta, her interdisciplinary approach

integrates regional and global perspectives to offer comparative analyses of evolving urban landscapes in the Global South.



Priyanka Mokale PhD Student at the University of Birmingham Geography Department. Her PhD research focuses on the Slum Rehabilitation Policy of Mumbai City with a key focus on marginalized communities. This study will focus on the rehabilitation housing settlers' issues of Mumbai's M-ward through an environmental justice perspective. Furthermore, she is interested in researching urban policy and governance, urban slum sanitation, waste management issues, and urban health from a public health perspective.



Priyanka Nupur is a PhD scholar at Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Her work engages with the question of social justice in cities through the framework of participatory parity. With an interdisciplinary academic background of Sociology and Social Work, her research bridges urban sociology, environmental governance, gender and different dimensions of social justice. Her field experience includes projects on slum resettlement, sustainable transportation, industrial relocation and community-based disaster preparedness in hilly regions.



Ratnadeep Maitra is presently a doctoral candidate at the Department of International Relations and Governance Studies at Shiv Nadar University, Delhi-NCR and an Adjunct Researcher at Asia in Global Affairs, Kolkata. Having received a disciplinary training in Political Science from Presidency College, and subsequently from the University of Hyderabad, his research interests lie at the intersections of spatiality, visual politics and memory in contemporary South Asia. His doctoral dissertation investigates how multiple forms of spaces get (mis)appropriated by ethnonationalist projects, how cityscapes get embroiled in them and the broader public reception to such interventions.



Rupsa Nag is a recent graduate in MA Gender Studies from Utrecht University and the University of York. She is interested in exploring questions of spatiality, surveillance, memory, body and belonging through cultural analysis, literary studies as well as creatively through artistic experimentations with visual arts and poetry.



Saloni Verma is a PhD candidate at the Department of History and Archaeology, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, India. She received the Commonwealth Split-site scholarship 2024-2025 and is currently based at the University of Exeter. She completed her Master's in 2019, specialising in Modern Indian History from Jawaharlal Nehru University, and her Bachelor's in 2017 from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi.

Her PhD project is titled: *The Promise of a Resilient Future: Cement, Concrete and the Infrastructural Transformations in Modern South Asia (1850s to 1950s)*. Her research interests include histories of the built environment, infrastructure, science and technology, labour, materiality and historical geographies. She also takes a keen interest in themes of political economy, ecology, and geopolitics. She is a recipient of the INLAKS Shivdasani Research and Travel Grant 2023.



Sheetal Bhopal is an Assistant Professor in Political Science, currently working at Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Government Degree College, Dharampur, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at Centre for Political Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Her doctoral thesis is on the subject of political economy of sex work. The course, 'Making and Unmaking of Cities' shall help her deepen her understanding about spatiality, marginal populations.



Shobha Elizabeth John is a doctoral researcher in Literature at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IISER Bhopal. Her work explores the intersections of isolation, exclusion, and various spaces in metropolitan centres in India, analysed through literary and cultural texts from the 1990s-2020s. She is currently working on exclusion and public spaces in the city, concentrating on how marginalized communities – the urban poor, migrant workers, and deprived sections of society – interact with urban publics.



Shreya Das has completed her graduation from Calcutta University (2016–2019) and postgraduation from Delhi University (2019–2021) in English literature. She is a PhD research scholar at the English Department of The Sanskrit College and University, where she also works as a guest lecturer. Her area of research is to examine the gendered nature of colonial criminality specifically in the nineteenth century Calcutta that was rapidly urbanizing.



Shriya Malhotra is an artist and a researcher whose work considers alternative forms of experience, perception and city-making. She is a graduate of the New School GPIA, and is currently working on making visible the intersections of art and policy.



Simran Luthra has recently submitted her doctoral thesis titled 'Global Education and Local Context: A Study of International Schools in Pune.' This study is a Cultural Political Economy (CPE) analysis of international schools in Pune, integrating various data sources and analytical frameworks that are cognisant of the phenomenon's complexity. One of my key research questions revolves around spatiality and the urban context of Pune. I attempted to analyse the significance of the locations of international schools from the perspective of urban sociology and critical urban theory. I also tried understanding the nexus between class, housing societies, and international schools. Thus, one of the aims was to link social class and schooling to the socio-economic structure of the urban area of Pune.



Sindu Deivanayagam is a research scholar in the Department of Sociology and Social work in Christ University, Bangalore. Her area of interests are Urban Ecology, Environmental Sociology and Urban Divide. Her research is focused on development and its impacts on urban ecology and livelihood of fishing communities in Chennai.



Somrita Banerjee is a Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Kharagpur, and an alumna of Jadavpur University, Department of English. Her research focuses on the relationship of embodied capital and social mobility in transnational labor circuits, within the broader context of multilingualism and language-in-education policy. Affiliated with the Just Transition Research Centre at IIT Kanpur, she engages with broader questions of sustainability and equity, her area of study being an industrial zone with a peripheral resource enclave. This learning opportunity provided by the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, aids and aligns with her research on language and labour, offering critical perspectives on cities as sites of dispossession, labor mobilization, and reclamation.



Sucharita Sengupta is a Postdoctoral Fellow for Volkswagen Foundation funded collaborative project, “Smartness as Wealth,” and is an affiliated scholar with the Jindal School of Art and Architecture, Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana. She worked as a researcher at the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (CRG) in 2024 working on a Research Programme on “Justice, Security and Vulnerable Populations of South Asia”. She did her PhD in 2023 from the department of Anthropology and Sociology of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva, Switzerland under the supervision of Prof. Alessandro Monsutti. She was also a Teaching Assistant at the institute between 2019-2021. Her thesis explored, the Statelessness, agentive discourse and conditions of life of Rohingya Refugees in camps of Bangladesh, which was based on months of ethnographic field work in Bangladesh in 2019.



Sudeshna Dutta is pursuing PhD at the Women’s Studies Centre, Vidyasagar University. I have completed B. A. from Presidency College (Calcutta University) and M. A. from Jadavpur University. In the past, I worked as a Research Assistant on a major project funded by UGC. My main area of research interest encompasses female reproductive health care in urban slums, the experiences of women following their migration from rural areas, and the ways in which women in slums conceptualize and prioritize their health.



Tahmin Fatma Barkati is pursuing PhD at the School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Her research reflects interest in city building and the narratives of urban protest. Her primary focus is understanding the spatiality of protest, and how the restructuring of the city space hinders and reflexively modifies the medium and characteristics of protest. The "Making and Unmaking of Cities: An Online Course on the City of Our Time" is an excellent opportunity to enhance my understanding of urban issues and methodologies.



Zehra Khan is a Bachelor of Fine Art from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi, Pakistan. Since the past three years, her research has centered around the politics of conflict, the phenomenon of mass refugee and forced migration, keeping the partitions of South Asia at the heart of her work. Zehra largely considers herself a creative historian, and has been utilising a multidisciplinary approach- between a strong visual art practice, fiction and non-fiction writing, and more than fifty hours of oral history and associated sensorial and material memory she has collected from the migrants of the 1971 Partition of Pakistan residing in Karachi - to understanding refugee and migrant lives.