Abstracts

The Concept of Peace in Pashtunwali: A Pashtun Code of Life

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Pashtuns of Pakistan and Afghanistan are living in a tribal society. They have their own code of conduct and rules and regulations. This code of conduct is called Pashtunwali. It is an unwritten constitution of Pashtuns. Since time immemorial, Pashtuns follow their customs and traditions in their social life. Since a few decades, the Pashtun belt of Afghanistan and Pakistan are facing terrorism and militancy which have destroyed the lives of many people. In this presentation the concept of peace in Pashtun culture will be addressed.

The Production of Desire: Urbanity, Youth and Employment Training in Kolkata

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My paper ethnographically explores how Employee Training Programs (ETPs) are deployed by organized retail and service industries in Kolkata, India as pedagogical sites for fashioning an emergent urban worker-subjectivity amongst underclass urban youth employees. What ETPs strive for is a complete re-making of the worker-subjectivity by inculcating the ideals and practices of global consumerism that the workers are then expected to convey to customers in service spaces.

Drawing on ethnographic research in three organized retail institutions in Kolkata, I suggest that the consumer citizenship norms emphasized by ETPs generate unanticipated frictions between the social realities of urban youth labour and aspirations for consumerism. For workers, low wages, diminishing employment securities or exhausting working conditions rub uneasily against the 'dream-world' of commodities and images of the capitalist good-life that ETPs teach them to aspire for.

My research investigates how corporate institutions like ETPs mobilize a disciplined post-industrial labour by modulating subjective desires and fantasies for consumerist life-styles amongst India's urban poor youth populations. Moreover, I ask what kinds of urban subjectivities are being produced at the fault-lines between pervasive global consumerist cultures and persistent post-colonial conditions of social inequalities in contemporary Indian cities.

Transformations of Intercultural Diplomacy at the Court of the Nizam of Hyderabad, c. 1770-1815

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With the East India Company's (EIC) territorial expansion since the 1760s diplomatic interaction also grew considerably by dispatching envoys to courts all over India. In diplomatic practice we basically find pragmatic approaches and commensurable rules of engagement. In the mid-eighteenth century the EIC only had a rough bureaucracy and actually built up its structures of diplomacy and governance in the very process of intensified interaction and negotiation with Indian Rulers – thus becoming a composite political corporation legitimated in a complex amalgam of European and Asian charters. However, increasing limitations of Hyderabad's externals sovereignty around 1800 transformed these entangled pre-moderns political systems to a rather unilateral British Empire by treaty.

Labour Processes, Caste identity and Urban Spaces in India

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Caste and labour processes are closely linked in Indian society. It is argued that caste identity gets blurred in urban spaces and dalits[1] have better opportunities in labour market and move into alternative profession that are not caste based. But some profession viz. cleaning remains outside of this labour process and caste relations are reinforced in different forms.

This paper highlights the dominant role of caste in low skilled professions (cleaning work) and labour processes with particular emphasize on life of women workers in this profession from the city of Mumbai.

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[1] Dalits are low caste group in India who were historically known as untouchables and engaged into menial professions such cleaning, burying dead animals etc.