

2021
Research Student Seminar Series

Date : 18 January 2021 (Monday)

Time : 3:30 to 5:00 pm

Venue : Register in advance for this zoom meeting:

<https://cityu.zoom.us/j/78114829999>*After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.*

Language : English

**Cooperation in Asia: Can Transboundary Rivers Ease the Flow?***by Mr Sandeep Kamal CHULANI (Presenter 1, 3:30 - 4:15 pm)**PhD Candidate, Department of Asian International Studies*

ABSTRACT: How and why do states cooperate on emergent issues of security concern? What are the domestic alignments of power that push a state towards cooperation instead of competition with its neighbours? How are these domestic coalitions reflected in foreign policy outcomes? Water is a critical area of both China's and India's non-traditional security matrix. No other great powers are as water insecure as these two states. This insecurity generates significant demands on the states to meet the needs of their people and industries but to do so requires them to engage with each other and other powers beyond its borders; in regions entangled by other geo-strategic and geo-economic considerations.

This research looks at the development of cooperation among riparian states in South and Southeast Asia. China and India serve as upper riparian states to major rivers such as the Mekong (China-Mainland Southeast Asia), the Indus (India-Pakistan) and the Brahmaputra (China-India-Bangladesh). The conduct of China and India in the coming decades will determine the future of water security in large parts of South and Southeast Asia. Both regions are energy-poor, water-stressed, and food-deficient, with increasing populations and development expected to exacerbate existing problems.

Water serves as a critical issue to both China and India. Historically, flood control, and control over water resources, is an indicator of political control and social stability in both countries. It also continues to serve as an ongoing metric of the ruling parties' ability to govern. Continued access to water is economically critical for the two countries, as it is for many of the surrounding countries. The location of China and India within the water basins has a direct impact on the wellbeing of downstream peoples. Negotiating ongoing access to water supplies in the face of external challenges (such as climate change) and internal demands (such as hydropower and irrigation) is a key diplomatic challenge for the region, now and in the future.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: Sandeep Chulani is a PhD candidate at AIS. His interests are international security, specifically water security and the role of institutions. He has previously presented papers at Kyushu University as well as being invited to deliver talks in Mainland China, South Korea, Bangladesh and Thailand.

**What are the political effects of the new Chinese mobility in the 21st century? Evidence from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.***by Mr DU Yufei (Presenter 2, 4:15 - 5:00 pm)**PhD Candidate, Department of Asian International Studies*

ABSTRACT: Since the turn of the century, hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens have freely and legally migrated, traveled, worked, and studied outside the mainland Chinese border. It is unprecedented even by Chinese standard – a country with one of the world's largest ethnic diaspora populations. Forced migration – driven by wars, famine, and political persecution – used to be the norm, not to mention the government's myriads of citizen mobility restrictions since imperial times. By and large, the new Chinese mobility is a natural phenomenon thanks to China's economic development and liberalization (or normalization) of mobility, with Chinese citizens exercising their newfound freedom of mobility in pursuit of better livelihood. But for many migrants-receiving societies – especially smaller countries in the global South – the presence of a large number of Chinese nationals can be political as it is overwhelming. I use the word "nationals" because never had the Chinese migrants been more "nationalized" than they are in the 21st century as they tend to share the same national identity and use the same Mandarin Chinese language (historically, Chinese migrants mostly identify with their hometowns and use their hometown dialects). The geopolitical backdrop of "the rise of China" further complicates the world's perception of the new Chinese mobility. So, what are the political effects of the new Chinese mobility? The question is an empirical one and should not be overgeneralized. In Hong Kong SAR, for example, new Chinese mobility triggers previously (almost) nonexistent "localist" reactions. Communal conflicts between "pro-Hong Kong" and "pro-China" begin to overshadow old ideological divisions between "pro-democracy" and "pro-establishment." I argue that Hong Kong people's experience with new Chinese mobility is a micro-foundations of this narrative change, which bears important implications for Hong Kong's path to democratization. In upper Myanmar, the new Chinese mobility has either entrenched many subnational "rentier states" of ethnic minorities rebels by giving them new sources of revenues or has assisted the so-called "Burmanization" led by Myanmar's central government through funding large state projects that are located in or pass through ethnically contentious areas. In Indonesia, where the so-called "Chinese problem" used to carry a different meaning, scholars are concerned about a new wave of anti-Chinese sentiment against mainland Chinese workers. As Hong Kong's case demonstrates, the relationship between the "old" Chinese and the "new" Chinese is anything but automatic due to the constructive nature of ethnic boundaries. This insight beckons careful investigations of the local's attitudes toward the new Chinese mobility in such countries as Malaysia and Singapore where large numbers of ethnic Chinese reside. It is fair to say the political effects of the new Chinese mobility are multifaceted and contingent.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: Du Yufei is a second-year PhD candidate at the Department of Asian and International Studies. He receives his B.A. Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa in International relations, Economics and Political Science from Tufts University, USA, in 2015. He was a Princeton in Asia fellow from 2015 to 2017 and spent a year studying in Indonesia.