

Prerona Das, National University of Singapore, Geography, 2021

'Track'ing the Border: Micro-geographies of infrastructural borders in Guwahati, India

My research explores the border-making processes in spaces away from borderlands, at a micro-urban scale. Urban spaces contain extremely diverse and layered textures where different processes intersect and various communities come together, and multiple borders overlap. Looking at the infrastructural fragmentation in the locality of Silpukhuri, in the city of Guwahati in Northeast India, this thesis argues that urban micro-geographies within cities are the spaces where the most concentrated experiences of bordering are located. In this research I take the geopolitical event of partition of India as the frame of reference, that is reproduced at different scales including the urban, and how such bordering process interacts with local urban exclusions, especially infrastructural fragmentation in urban spaces. The thesis examines two types of infrastructures- railways that intersect Silpukhuri and divides the communities and spaces, and circulatory water infrastructure that although is fragmented, (re)produces borders that are rather fluid and contextual. The fragmentation of infrastructure in the locality reinforces already existing borders on the basis of religion, ethnicity and class. My thesis investigates a micro-urban space where geopolitical processes at different scales intersect, producing layers of bordering, and where borders are lived by people every day through their interactions with urban infrastructure. By highlighting the need to study contestations over micro-urban spaces within cities, my research speaks back to debates on urban geopolitics and "planetary" urbanism.