



## CHAPTER 1

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# Making Logistical Worlds

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Logistics makes worlds. What are the stakes of this claim? First, it indicates that logistics is productive. This may seem a truism for, at least in current dominant understandings, logistics is deeply implicated in capitalist production, where it is defined (in handbooks and management manuals) as the art and science of getting the right thing to the right place at the right time. Undoubtedly, the techniques and technologies that undergird logistics as a system of communication and transport have their productive sides because, in the current wave of globalization, the organization of supply chains and production networks has been a central feature: stretching out production across time and space, facilitating a constant movement of goods, people, and information across sites, trading labour costs against transport costs, and, in doing so, eroding the distinction between production and circulation. But to claim that logistics makes worlds is to say something more than that logistics makes commodities, supply chains, or even globalizing patterns of interconnection. At base it is in an ontological claim, and it is in this sense that we use it to explore the making of a world region.

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© The Author(s) 2018  
B. Neilson et al. (eds.), *Logistical Asia*,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8333-4\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8333-4_1)

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By titling this volume ‘The Labour of Making a World Region,’ we focus our investigation around the Asian region. The chapters that follow evolved within a wider project, ‘Logistical Worlds: Infrastructure, Software, Labour,’ which began in 2011 as an investigation into the global expansion of Chinese interests through logistical and infrastructural installations. The project conducted research in and around three shipping ports in order to deepen our understanding of the processes underlying, and obstacles to, this expansion. The ports were Kolkata—an important and unavoidable choke point in plans to extend Chinese trade routes to the west, Piraeus—where the Chinese state-owned enterprise COSCO now operates the port, and Valparaíso—where plans to expand the port to receive large post-Panamax craft from China have been delayed.

Two of these sites are located beyond the Asian region as it is usually conceived—Piraeus is in Greece, ten kilometres from the city of Athens, and Valparaíso is on the Chilean coast, adjacent to the Santiago metropolitan region—but this was precisely the point. We sought to map how logistics stretches the cultural and geographical region of ‘Asia’ beyond its assumed boundaries and changes the configuration of, and relations between, its conventional subregions. An additional concern was to show that regionalism is partly constructed through global operations of infrastructure, software, and data rather than simply through culture, civilization, and geography. The implications of these operations for labour practices and their attendant modes of subjectivity offer a means of analyzing the relationship of logistical practices to capitalist crisis and transition. The current volume addresses these wider research concerns by focusing on the case of Kolkata port and drawing on a series of contributions that explore the relevance of logistics in China’s rise as regional and global economic power.

China has a significant technical literature on logistics (物流) or *wùliú* in pinyin, meaning ‘material flow’ (Liu et al. 2016). Yet the role of China in the logistics industries has not been seriously examined in recent publications that have interrogated logistical practices, and modes of power, as a means of critically confronting contemporary capitalism (Toscano 2011; Bernes 2013; Cowen 2014). As an example, while Jesse LeCavalier’s (2016) *The Rule of Logistics* is an extensive account of the logistical activities of Walmart in the US, it offers little detail on the company’s operations in China. This is not to underestimate or dismiss recent contributions to the debate on logistics, to which the present authors have also contributed (Neilson and Rossiter 2011; Neilson 2012; Mezzadra and Neilson 2015;

Samaddar 2015; Rossiter 2016). All provide insights into the fluid positioning of states with respect to commercial enterprise, the remaking of urban and wider global spaces in response to the imperatives of growth and productivity, the role of software and data in the control of labour mobility, the interface of capitalist accumulation with processes of militarization and securitization, and the role of infrastructure as a scaffold for the computational, architectural, and technical organization of globalization.

Some contributors to this logistics debate have also occasionally focused their analytical gaze on Asian or Middle Eastern realities. Keller Easterling (2014, 25–69), for example, mentions developments in China’s Shenzhen, Korea’s Songdo City, and Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah Economic City in her exploration of economic zoning practices. Deborah Cowen (2014, 163–195) presents Dubai Logistics City as a primary example in her analysis of the urban forms promoted by logistics enterprises. Benjamin Bratton (2015, 112–15) explores the conflict between China and Google as part of his totalizing geopolitical vision of the new forms of power wielded by what he calls ubiquitous planetary computing. None of these works, however, inquires systemically—which is to say, both historically and in relation to current capitalist formations—into the role of logistics in making world regions. Rather, in these studies, regions either tend to give way to an urban scale focus or appear more broadly as the effects of wider global dynamics.

The ‘Logistical Worlds’ project is not alone in examining how logistics makes regions. Laleh Khalili (2017) has carried out research on the ties between war and trade in the Middle East, based partly on fieldwork conducted on a container ship travelling between Malta and Jabal Ali in the United Arab Emirates. Similarly, Charmaine Chua (2015) has investigated what she calls the ‘Chinese logistical sublime’ by pursuing ethnography on a container vessel travelling from Tacoma in the US state of Washington to Yantian in China, and on to Taiwan. These studies have affinities with the work of this volume, that is, with the tracing of logistical routes, routines, and labour regimes in order to understand the changing internal dynamics and relations between world regions. This is especially important in the case of Asia, since much of the stretching of supply chains across global expanses that occurred with the so-called logistics revolution—which began in the 1970s and was given fillip by the ‘opening’ of China in the 1980s—was accompanied by the emergence of Asia, and particularly East Asia, as a favoured site of industrial production. These changes have implications for patterns of trade and investment, international divisions of labour, and the emergence of what Aihwa Ong (2006)

calls ‘lateral spaces,’ that is, the combining of transcontinental production channels with racialized and gendered forms of labour segregation.

In recent times, the mode of globalization based on the transfer of production to Asia, by predominantly North Atlantic enterprises, has begun to shift. Programmes, such as China’s Belt and Road Initiative, which aim to establish new trade routes from China—through Central and South Asia—to Europe and beyond, presage a new development in Asia-driven globalization that goes against the isolationist and protectionist predilections of the current US presidency. Announced by Xi Jinping in late 2013, and accompanied by the formation of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, this initiative reconfigures China’s geopolitical and geo-economic interests in relation to five major goals: policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds (National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China 2015). Alongside this development is India’s emergence as a global economic power, the longer-standing role of countries such as Japan and South Korea as industrial powerhouses, and the strategic positioning of cities like Singapore and Hong Kong within global circuits of logistics and finance.

While the Belt and Road Initiative represents a major logistical expansion that has the potential to redesign global trade routes and financial strategies, scholarly commentary has for the most part approached this initiative within the classical idioms of international relations and comparative politics (Callaghan 2016; Ferdinand 2016; Yiping 2016), thus foregoing the opportunity to rethink processes of political and economic change through the analytical frame of logistics. Despite some exploration of the programme’s financial implications (Sit et al. 2017) and the relevance of its cultural dimensions (Winter 2016), as well as the framing of its links to the decolonizing spirit of the 1955 Bandung conference (Wondam 2016), the Belt and Road Initiative’s potential to stimulate debate on the intersection of logistics and capitalism has gone unremarked.

In using logistics to provide an epistemic angle for the analysis of contemporary capitalism and Asia-led globalization, however, the present volume does not just restrict its attention to the Belt and Road Initiative. A distinct challenge in broaching Asia, whether as research object or method (Chen 2010), is recognition of its indistinct boundaries and internal heterogeneity. This applies as much to the theoretical approaches that emerge

in the human and social sciences as to questions of political organization, economic practice, social process, or cultural tendencies. Studies of China's rise, for instance, have generally drawn on approaches from world systems theory (see, for instance, Arrighi 2007 or Hamashita 2008) or interrogations of Chinese modernity (Wang 2011). By contrast, debates on India's transition have been informed by the uneasy intersection of Marxism with various paradigms of postcolonial thought. The current emphasis on 'postcolonial capitalism' in Indian discussions of economic and political transformation (see, for instance, Sanyal 2007; Mitra et al. 2016; Sinha 2016; Chatterjee 2017) draws attention to the combination of high financial and primitive accumulation, and the intermeshing of financial and labour mobility, in the rush towards logistical modes of organization that will supposedly generate spectacular growth and wealth. Crucial questions that are emerging in such debates take into account the dynamics of such logistical visions and growth; the fault lines in the accumulation regime—based on finance, extraction, and rent; the dynamics of migrant labour in relation to infrastructural expansion; and, finally, the impact of this logistical expansion on society, politics, and existing frameworks of sovereignty, legality, and gender. Yet the issue of their applicability across other sites in Asia remains open. Any attempt to export them is likely to be met with reminders of the specificity of Japanese debates about modernity (for a summary, see Walker 2016, chapter 2), for instance, or proclamations of how approaches to South-East Asian politics have influenced wider understandings of nationalism (Anderson 1983). Nonetheless, the debates surrounding postcolonial capitalism and the rise of China provide prominent and recognizable approaches to contemporary Asia—perhaps because of the positions of the nations with which they are associated—and the present volume uses the perspective of logistics to negotiate both, moving between China- and India-centred perspectives in ways that seek to relativize these styles of analysis and even interrogate the logistical connections that force us to think them together.

Perhaps it is due to the different histories of colonialism in China and India that analyses of their present roles in making inter-Asian connections draw on different—although related—intellectual strands. India passed in the mid-nineteenth century from a colonialism administered by the 'company state' of the English East India Company (Stern 2011) to direct administration by the British Crown. China, by contrast, was subjected to a form of concession colonialism following the Opium Wars, whereby parts of its territory were ceded to foreign powers through a

series of treaties. A number of commentators (see, for instance, Nyíri 2009) have argued that China's colonial concessions provide a precedent for contemporary logistical territories established by it—both its internal Special Economic Zones and the spaces conceded to Chinese state enterprises in other parts of the world (an example of which is the concession of the port of Piraeus to China COSCO Shipping which is discussed by Nelli Kambouri and Pavlos Hatzopoulos in their contribution to this volume). Although we are wary of understanding current logistical developments as mere reversals of past imperial ventures, there is something to be gained from an analysis that emphasizes how the legal and geographical development of imperialism was shaped by commercial and logistical factors. Lauren Benton's study of the making of legal infrastructures of sovereignty and jurisdiction in early modern imperialism shows how European empires tended to exercise control 'mainly over narrow bands, or corridors, of territory and over enclaves of various sizes and situations' (Benton 2005, 700). The fact that this kind of fragmented territorial control took a different path in India than in China suggests much about the forms of colonialism that emerged in these continental spaces. By the time of the Raj, the British Crown administered a vast territory on the subcontinent and instituted many legal measures that have influenced the forms and practices of capitalism in the postcolonial era: for instance, the Land Acquisition Act of 1894, which continued to apply to practices of governmental land expropriation until 2014, was often used in combination with the Special Economic Zones Act of 2005 to establish new kinds of logistical and industrial spaces. Such land acquisition has been central to the debates about postcolonial capitalism that have animated political and cultural discussion in India in recent years. In considering the differences that invest China- and India-centred perspectives on the changing forms and faces of a region called Asia, it is thus essential to keep the past in view.

The chapters that follow certainly do not shy away from this historical burden. Equally, in putting a logistical gaze upon contemporary capitalist dynamics, they do not adopt an approach that emphasizes local or national specificities to the point that they obscure the commonalities of capitalism across diverse contexts. In this way, the volume seeks to avoid the pitfalls of a perspective that finds global capitalism to structure all differences while also questioning a position that stresses particularity to the point where the unevenness of capitalism overshadows its systemic features (see Murthy and Liu (2017) for a discussion of how this antimony plagues

non-Western trajectories of Marxism). By focusing on how logistical operations play out on the ground, we seek to understand how capital intervenes in specific sites and situations to shift and redesign social relations in its image. At the same time, we are careful not to reduce capitalism to logistics, remaining attentive to how logistical operations concatenate with each other as well as with other operations of capital. In this regard, the relation of logistics to finance is crucial.

If finance provides the abstract point of coordination for contemporary capitalism, logistics provides the material nexus of its coordination. In addition to the mutual implication of logistics and finance, however, there is the role of extraction—both of natural resources and patterns of social cooperation. Together with other operations of capital, finance, logistics, and extraction compose the unstable whole of capitalism (Mezzadra and Neilson 2015). Yet this process of composition, which is also one of concatenation, does not mean that capitalism can be understood as an accomplished totality. By exploring how capital's operations prospect and draw upon its multiple outsides, we observe how it is driven by a logic of accumulation and unlimited expansion while, at the same time, tracking how its operations bring particularity into relationship with universality, and how the complexities of this interrelationship become apparent across diverse Asian contexts. More specifically, in asking how logistical operations of capital create routes, connections, and spaces within, across, and beyond the region, we understand that they not only enact commercial imperatives but also embody novel forms of political power. An important part of the study, therefore, is to understand how these forms of power relate to those that continue to be embodied in and expressed by the state.

### PORT AS INFRASTRUCTURE OF POSTCOLONIAL CAPITALISM

The volume is divided into two parts. The first is titled 'Port as Infrastructure of Postcolonial Capitalism.' Building on the discussions of postcolonial capitalism outlined above, it presents six studies that examine the historical and contemporary logistical complexities surrounding the port of Kolkata. We have chosen this port as a site of in-depth investigation because it has long been an unavoidable choke point in the making of inter-Asian connections as well as Asia's connections with the world at large. In the transitions from the historical triangular trade between China, India, and Britain to the current Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, Kolkata port's fortunes

have fallen repeatedly only to rise again despite the challenges posed by its location as a river port. While our conceptual understanding of logistics extends beyond transport industries, shipping ports remain crucial and iconic facilities in the organization of patterns of production and trade. They are sites of transit and calculation where the intermodal logic of containerized transport meets technologies of digital control and the fractious politics of labour. The investigation of Kolkata port provides an opportunity to track these changes and conflicts from colonial to postcolonial times, and examine how logistics intersects the transformations of capitalism and the making of wider regional connections.

In the background of the geopolitical and economic considerations that facilitate Chinese investment in ports in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, a study of the historical, financial, and spatial transformations surrounding the port of Kolkata offers a means of tracking and analyzing the frictions and tensions that inevitably accompany, and are produced by, logistical efforts to create smooth spaces for the circulation of people, things, and capital. The fact that most Asian ports run terminal operating systems manufactured by the South Korean company, Total Soft Bank, while North American and European ports run software developed by the California-based firm, Navis, raises issues of technical interoperability that parallel but cannot be reduced to questions of cultural translation. This, in turn, has implications for data or process mining techniques deployed in those ports, with knock-on effects for labour regimes, human-machine interactions, and the passage of goods. Practices of transshipment, which involve the transfer of containers from one ship to another without unloading or customs inspections, shift the relations between regions as traditionally defined. For instance, the fact that almost every container that arrives in Kolkata is transshipped through Singapore places those cities in what might be called the same logistical region, tied not only by shipping routes but also by regulatory regimes. Yet, within the received denominations of area studies, the former is in South Asia and the latter in South-East Asia. The study of logistics in this instance allows new analytical questions to be asked about the changing stakes of designating Asia as a region, but such questions are blocked and indeed remain unanswerable within the bounded analytical areas and disciplinary horizons of post-war academic knowledge.

A study of economic relations and material conditions also enables us to investigate what can be called the spectral presence of labour in logistical sites such as ports. In the case of Kolkata, this presence is particularly

marked as much of the labour—for instance, that employed in unloading ships at the Kidderpore docks—is performed by migrant workers from other parts of India who, contrary to the standards of measure introduced by containerization, carry sacks on their backs and are paid according to weight moved rather than volume transported. At the same time, the port supports much labour not directly involved in the movement of freight, including workers in the highly informal economy that surrounds and supports the operations of the port, including those related to corruption and crime. All this—along with questions of gender, unionization, finance, urban planning, and dispossession—is taken up in the in-depth exploration of the logistical operations of Kolkata port undertaken in this part of the book.

The chapter by Kaustabh Mani Sengupta analyzes the development of the port facilities in Kolkata from the third quarter of the nineteenth century. It specifically examines the way goods were brought to the port, stored there, and then shipped or transported to other areas. The modes and mechanism of the port facilities are studied against the general political and economic backdrop of the times. Industrial growth in India and massive increases in import/export trade necessitated rapid development of port infrastructure in Kolkata. The Calcutta Port Trust was officially established in 1870 and made rapid advances in building additional jetties and streamlining dock logistics and cargo handling. Sengupta focuses on two important aspects of this enterprise. Firstly, the role of warehouses in facilitating the trading activities of the port, the negotiations that took place amongst the various actors in constructing these facilities, and the problems faced in maintaining them. And secondly, the crucial part played by the transport system in aiding the movement of goods to and from the port area. Both enterprises reveal how a contestation of territory ensued, the way various interest groups operated, and the effect of political-economic considerations on shaping the city's river-front space. The chapter also notes the contingencies in port planning, the measures adopted for safety and security, and the alterations or deviations in shaping the port infrastructure. Finally, a close reading of the modes and mechanisms of construction of the port over time offers a glimpse into how everyday logistics establishes a complex of men, machine, and things.

Iman Mitra seeks to understand the entangled framework of infrastructure, software, and labour from the specific yet interconnected perspectives of the spatialization of calculability and the financialization of space. He approaches Kolkata port as a site where these two perspectives collide and give rise to a particular form of logistical governance.

This form of governance requires negotiations with, and navigations through, a network of institutional apparatuses which produce the material basis of calculations and speculations that envisage the material connection between infrastructure, software, and labour. Kolkata Port Trust is one such institutional apparatus. Founded in 1870 by the colonial rulers in India, it was bestowed with the responsibility for the expansion and management of the Calcutta Port, which included the carrying out of endless calculations and speculations related to the port's geopolitical exclusivity. Mitra shows how correspondence between navigational calculations and speculations regarding space-making exercises (including rent extraction from the land owned by the Port Trust in the city) gives birth to a vision of logistics that involves various stakeholders in the processes of global capitalist expansion against the backdrop of the growing recognition of the port's locational advantage in schemes such as India's Look East Policy or China's Belt and Road Initiative.

No discourse on logistics is complete without a discussion of crime. The routes through which goods and ideas move are often the same routes used by networks and organized crime groups. Legitimate business hubs often coexist alongside markets for smuggled goods. Sometimes the players are one and the same. In Paula Banerjee's exploration of the nexus of crime and logistics, in and around the Kidderpore docks in Kolkata, she considers the gendered and social dimensions of this situation, both historically and in the present day. Banerjee examines the logistics of port crimes and how they transform the periphery into a central question of enquiry. A port is often at the periphery of an urban logistical system, but sometimes it can transform itself into the main logistical hub for the development of urban space. When that happens, crimes in the port also become central to the security issues of the city, and Kolkata is no exception in this regard. Banerjee thus asks why crimes that happen in the port have much larger ramifications. Even when these crimes may appear random, there is always some logic behind why they happened in a particular logistical space. Anything happening in the port discursively spreads like wildfire. One reason perhaps is that a port cannot be contained as its main function is dispersal. Also its contacts with the outside world make it a problematic space from the perspective of security because, in the administrative imagination, all that is threatening to stability comes from the outside. Studying how the state attempts to tightly control a space that is allocated for all kinds of movement raises the ques-

tion of the relation of logistics to political order, in terms of both how movement is regulated and how logistics generates its own forms of political power.

Samata Biswas' chapter explores the logistical space of Haldia, where the deep-sea dock complex of Kolkata Port Trust is located, to analyze how a port city is created by logistical imperatives and the way it shapes new forms of logistics. Located near the mouth of the river Hooghly, Haldia is a city, a municipality, a riverine port, and an industrial belt. Any attempt to map the logistical networks that cross Haldia—in the form of warehouses, pipelines, roads, trucks, local transport, container traffic, human beings, and cattle—has to pay attention to the interconnections between industry, the dock complex, the geographical area, the human actors, and their nonhuman interests. Based on ten months of ethnographic research, with an emphasis on the collection of visual data, Biswas analyzes five figures that stand in for the logistical transformations underway in Haldia: the illiterate owner of a large logistics firm, the recently closed Renuka Sugar Mill, a local woman who collects coal dust along the road to the port in order to make and sell pellets, the Ural India factory, and the absent figure of public health. Through a close examination, as well as of the subjectivities associated with these figures, Biswas details the existence and flourishing of an 'other' logistics in Haldia, one based in modes of survival and hustling that exist in the shadows of the city's official logistical activities. This approach allows analysis of the changing relations between formal and informal labour, the emergence of new forms of extraction, and the relevance of diverse scales, spaces, and histories in current formations of postcolonial capitalism.

The changing geopolitics of Asia, marked by China's sharp rise and India's emergence, have led to a renewed importance for the Kolkata port system, even as questions have been raised about its future due to poor draught (low water depth), age-old infrastructure, and the high cost of operations. Indian policy makers may worry about a possible Chinese maritime encirclement by a 'string of pearls' (including the China-constructed ports of Gwadar in Pakistan, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, and Kyauk Pyu in Myanmar), but the Kolkata Port Trust regards a China-India road and a reaching out to Tibet as possible options to augment the future business of the port. The Chinese, for their part, have identified the Kunming-Kolkata (K2K) corridor, now known as part of the proposed BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar) corridor, as one of the six economic corridors to be developed under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road

Initiative. Subir Bhaumik's chapter considers five infrastructural projects for the improvement of Kolkata's port system, including the construction of a deep-sea facility at Sagar Island, and relates them to wider logistical and geopolitical initiatives that are reshaping the Asian region. Bhaumik also examines the relevance of the Indian government's identification of Kolkata as the starting point of its 'Act East' thrust. In short, Bhaumik approaches Kolkata port as a vital switch point for contemporary infrastructural projects that seek to remake Asian regionalism by connecting India to its neighbours in the East and eventually to China.

### LOGISTICS OF ASIA-LED GLOBALIZATION

The second part of the book is called 'Logistics of Asia-led Globalization.' Unlike the first part, which focuses on a single logistical facility, the second part's seven chapters investigate how diverse sites and modalities of logistics rearrange relations within and between Asia's subregions and remake Asia's relations with the world. The topics here are diverse: ranging from a gateway in North Bengal in India—where a dusty transit town connects the Indian mainland, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and India's Northeast, and determines the nature of economic corridors in that subregion—to Chinese investment in the Greek port of Piraeus, the politics of e-waste recycling in Hong Kong, the politics of economic corridors, and finally the labour of Internet use in China. All of these interventions show how logistics generates dependencies, conflicts, unwanted circulations, and political orders, and how the latter in turn produces particular forms of circulation. This link between logistical circulation and political orders becomes especially evident in consideration of the new kinds of territory produced by logistical facilities. Understanding the varieties of political order, power, and space that such installations generate means documenting how logistical practices can reconfigure territory in ways that rival and parallel the traditional territoriality of the nation-state.

Atig Ghosh's chapter acts as a bridge between the book's two parts by extending the geographical scope of analysis to examine the logistical transformations surrounding the North Bengal city of Siliguri, a key site of interchange in the hinterlands of Kolkata port. When the partition of India created a geographical barrier in the north-eastern part of the country, the narrow Siliguri Corridor—commonly known as the Chicken's Neck—remained as a national-territorial isthmus between the north-eastern part of India and the rest of the country. Siliguri thus found itself

pitchforked to a position of immense geostrategic importance. Wedged between Bangladesh to the south and west and China to the north, Siliguri has no access to the sea closer than Kolkata, on the other side of the corridor. Ghosh's chapter investigates the importance of logistics to the town's fairy tale growth, emphasizing the role of different actors and infrastructures. A site of military build-up and territorial anxieties, Siliguri has traditionally survived on the basis of four industries: timber, tea, tourism, and transport. To these it is necessary to add a fifth T, that is, the trafficking of humans, principally young women for the sex trade. Ghosh investigates how the logistical convergence of these industries creates a political-economic *mélange* of people in flux—wholesalers, retailers, traders, military and security personnel, tea planters, trafficked bodies and their consumers, gun-runners, political fugitives, asylum-seekers, railway men, construction workers, and stateless groups. Special attention is given to the transitory or 'floating' character of Siliguri's economy—the way it hinges on fluxes of migration and land grabs as well as the transformative construction of the Asian Highway, which promises to open new paths for capital to South-East Asia and China.

In 2009, labour relations in the port of Piraeus were radically transformed as a result of a concession agreement signed between the Greek government and COSCO Pacific Ltd. Studying the transformations of labour and logistics at Piraeus, Nelli Kambouri and Pavlos Hatzopoulos offer insights into changing patterns of human struggle and precarity in the wake of the port's emergence as a key station within China's Belt and Road Initiative. Kambouri and Hatzopoulos draw on research fieldwork begun in 2013 for an analysis of precarious labour in regimes of logistical governance as these were shaped in the port of Piraeus following the COSCO concession. For this analysis, they employ the concept of the machinic assemblage which denotes, in the context of the chapter, entanglements of machines, humans, software, and discourses that produce relations of power exercised through the logic of control. Along these lines, they approach operations in the Piraeus container terminal as a social machine. The container terminal takes human labour in its gears, along with containers and all the machinery required to move them around the terminal: quay cranes, rail-mounted and rubber-tyred gantry cranes, as well as the trucks and software platforms that generate and control their complex movements through algorithmic computations. From this perspective, they argue that labour in the Piraeus container terminal can no longer be represented by the image of workers using their bodies to

perform repetitive tasks in order to operationalize machines. Labour in Piraeus is enabled, instead, through the everyday functioning of cybernetic organisms whose lives are ordered according to the objectives of maximized efficiency and minimalized idleness. Investigation of these transformations allows Kambouri and Hatzopoulos to undertake a critical analysis of the gendered and racialized dimensions of accounts that seek to explain changes to the labour regime in Piraeus, whether seen as a ‘Chinification’ of Greece or the establishment of a Chinese economic zone in the European Union.

Corridors are an emerging catchall in logistical discourses. From trade and investment corridors to freight corridors, from digital corridors to development corridors, from transport corridors to industrial corridors, it is hard to avoid the reference to this concept in discussions of logistics. Giorgio Grappi’s analysis examines how corridors are being used as both an organizational tool and a political concept that marks the language of logistical governance. While the *supply chain* refers to the pervasive economic process that underlies logistics, the language of *corridors* refers to the materiality of infrastructure—that makes possible logistical operations at a larger scale—and, most importantly, to the so-called soft infrastructure of governance. Corridors impose a diverse territoriality and modify the functioning of existing institutions by imposing technical standards, governance tools, and financial flows, as well as producing a variegated geography of logistical power. Introducing the concept of the *politics of corridors*, and addressing examples from China’s Belt and Road Initiative and the European Union’s TEN-T project, Grappi investigates how languages and techniques developed in policy papers, master plans, and international studies are producing a new political discourse and what this suggests and implies in relation to power, the politics of the state, and political theory.

Rolien Hoyng questions the appearance of communication and the knowledge economy in ways that render infrastructure and hardware invisible and make us forget about their material support. Approaching Hong Kong as what she calls a ‘dirty’ smart city, Hoyng focuses on e-waste recycling and the socio-material relations this constitutes. She analyzes the management of the mobility and materiality of e-waste in the formal recycling industry and explores its relation to the informal sector. Hoyng rethinks the binary of order/disorder, which underlies much of the critical literature on waste, by connecting it to questions of power and governance.

Furthermore, she asks to what extent the informal sector of e-waste recycling either undermines or complements operations of the formal knowledge economy. The chapter focuses on the analysis of legal regulations, licences, permits, certificates, and software—as well as waste—as transient matter that manages to generate *and* subvert socio-material relations. Her investigation of the nexus of governance and materiality in e-waste recycling in Hong Kong allows an analysis of logistical practices and relations that actively remake and rechannel regional flows in a key Asian city.

Taking the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as its point of empirical engagement, Majed Akhter's chapter sketches a theoretical orientation to the geopolitical analysis of 'global China' and China-in-Asia. Akhter understands China's Belt and Road Initiative in the context of an economic crisis of over-accumulation and points to a series of 'spatial fixes' that China has undertaken to resolve this situation through the creation of an infrastructurally integrated Asia with China at the centre. In this way, he charts a path beyond state-centred visions of the Belt and Road Initiative while also arguing that large infrastructures are projects not only of accumulation but also of state territorialization. Studying deep-rooted social-historical structures that have led to the militarization of logistical corridors and enclaves in Pakistan, Akhter examines how the state *secures* the infrastructural operations of capital. This analysis leads to a reading of the CPEC that understands it not as a means of creating a smooth space for transnational flows of capital and commodities but as a reassertion of deeply heterogeneous and fragmented social space as produced over generations in Pakistan's peripheries. Akhter thus seeks at once to contextualize the politics of large infrastructural projects within the contradictions of capital accumulation on a world scale and to show how China's Asia-centric vision of globalization runs up against spatial and social realities that it can neither completely homogenize nor control.

Zhongxuan Lin and Shih Ding Liu shift the debate on logistical infrastructure away from ports, corridors, and territoriality by arguing that, under current capitalist conditions, the Internet, media, and software function as vital infrastructures for the production and processing of information. Working from Macau—a historical junction of the coolie trade, the only legal site for gambling in China, and a major importer of labour from the mainland and South-East Asia—they question the tenets of the debate on immaterial labour (or labour that does not produce a material good or product) as conceived by European—especially Italian—thinkers.