

Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)

Ambedkar University Delhi

Geographies of Waste: Surplus Value, Surplus Matter, Surplus Humanity

Professor Vinay Gidwani, University of Minnesota, USA

18-23 December, 2017



Overview

We are used to supposing that most people make their living by means of work: work in a family enterprise on or off farm, or wage work for someone else. In the narratives of agrarian transition, modernization and development, the pattern of work is expected to change as people move from farm to factory, and from country to town, where their labor will be absorbed into manufacturing and service sectors. However, recent trends suggest that economic growth is often jobless: technological and organizational efficiencies in production, transportation, communication, and supply chains have allowed formal and informal sector employers to capture additional surplus value without proportionate job creation. Secondly, manufacturing is spatially concentrated in a few, national and global production regions; while new service industries are unable to absorb the "surplus" of leftover labor, especially low-skilled, manual labor. Thirdly, growth in consumption among rising middle classes, combined with the use of new packaging materials aimed at making commodities more attractive to consumers, has exacerbated the production of waste materials, particularly in cities. Against this backdrop, many among the urban poor – particularly from historically subordinated groups – have confronted the daily challenge of survival by finding livelihoods based around retrieving waste matter, including municipal solid waste, electronic waste, and other waste streams.

Experimental and post-disciplinary in its thrust, the seminar will range across these geographies of waste: straddling the abstract and the concrete, the theoretical and the empirical, the philosophical and the prosaic, the structural and the ethnographic.

You should attend if you are...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Graduate and advanced undergraduate students with an interest in urban political economy and urban environmental issues ▪ Faculty with interest in urban studies, human geography, political theory, and urban infrastructure ▪ Practitioners in the fields of waste management, urban planning, and poverty remediation
Fees	There is no participation fee. However, note that AUD does not have facilities to accommodate outstation participants.

About Vinay Gidwani

Vinay Gidwani is Professor of Geography and Global Studies at University of Minnesota. He has multi-disciplinary training in geography, economics, and environmental science and combines these in the study of capitalist development, poverty, as well as urban and rural environments in various regions of the world, especially South Asia. His current projects include an ongoing study of informal waste economies in Indian cities; a collaborative project on the life-worlds of rural-to-urban migrants in India; and an NSF-funded collaboration with colleagues in Bangalore, Jakarta, LA and Minnesota, which traces the socio-economic impacts of large land development projects in Bangalore and Jakarta. He is the author of *Capital, Interrupted: Agrarian Development and the Politics of Work in India* (Minnesota, 2008). Recent publications have appeared in *Antipode*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, and *Economic and Political Weekly* (India).

Course Co-ordinator

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