



CENTRE FOR ASIAN AND
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SOUTH ASIA
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Lecture Series on Governance and Politics in South Asia
Department of Political Science

Belt and Road Blocks: Exploring Potential Ruptures within China's Belt and Road Initiative - The Case of Sri Lanka

by

Kanchana Ruwanpura

University of Edinburgh

Recently, much scholarship has been dedicated to exploring China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The vast majority of this work has focused on global dimensions of the BRI, typically considering notions of a changing geopolitical landscape or South-South cooperation. However, these grand narratives often displace local realities, especially in the oft-overlooked and concomitant arenas of environmental degradation and local political volatility. Using post-war Sri Lanka's nation building via infrastructure as a point of departure, we explore these two potential ruptures, questioning whether existing BRI narratives critically consider local politics of place and burgeoning environmental degradation in a time of global climate change, two unstable fault lines which could hinder and disrupt China's implementation of the BRI. In what is necessarily a thought piece, we find that most narratives fail to adequately consider these potential ruptures, neglecting both the existing post-conflict political volatility in Sri Lanka, as well as the compounding effects of mega-infrastructure and associated environment.

Kanchana N. Ruwanpura is a Reader in Development Geography at the Institute of Geography, University of Edinburgh. During 2019-20, she holds fellowships awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and Max Weber Stiftung; and is currently spending time as a Humboldt Fellow at the University of Gottingen, Germany. At the University of Edinburgh, she was the Programme Director of the MSc in Environment and Development and a Director for Centre of South Asian Studies for a four-year period. Her research explores the intersection between feminism, ethnicity, labour and post-war development; on which she has published extensively including a research monograph and several edited volumes. She also serves as an editor of *Geoforum* and *Gender, Place and Culture*.



Date: Monday, November 25, 2019

Time: 14:00 - 16:00

Venue: CATS, EG SR 01 (010.00.21)

All are cordially invited!