



Azim Premji University Colloquium Series

presents a lecture

"Islands of Excellence: The Corporatization of Urban Space in Bangalore"

Speaker

Nicole Rigillo

PhD Visiting Scholar, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore

Date: October 28, 2016 (Friday)

Time: 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm

Venue: Seminar Hall, 10th Floor, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

Watch the live broadcast of the talk by clicking <http://lectures.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/>. It can be accessed from Android and iOS devices too.

About the Lecture

In India, as elsewhere, states have adopted neoliberal policies devolving responsibility for public goods such as education, health care, and infrastructure to non-state actors – NGOs, humanitarian agencies, and corporations, for example. But what are the implications of the increasing involvement of non-state actors in activities that are often seen as the responsibility of the nation-state? How might these developments be changing the meaning and practice of governance and citizenship today? Drawing on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork, this paper examines how corporations in Bangalore are fashioning new spatial, social, and political configurations through their involvement in corporate social responsibility, a practice made mandatory by the Government of India in 2014. Here I focus on the spatially-delimited forms of responsibility assumed by Indian watch manufacturer Titan, a member of the Tata Group, India's most well-known philanthropic conglomerate company. Between 1991 and 1999, Titan constructed a company township outside of Bangalore to house its factory workers. The township, designed by renowned architect and urban planner Charles Correa, is an entirely corporate-managed residential community that effectively obviates the need for government involvement of any kind. While it might be easy to discount Titan's Township as just another privatized enclave – an "island of excellence in a sea of deprivation" – the company's approach to CSR suggests that corporate modes of intervention can also be expansive, albeit in ways that raise questions concerning the kind of society that may be brought into being when a variety of disparate actors assume responsibility for the social.

About the Speaker

Nicole Rigillo is a socio-cultural anthropologist who has worked at the intersections of the anthropology of humanitarianism, the anthropology of space, and the history and contemporary practice of business philanthropy in India. She received her PhD from McGill University's Department of Anthropology in 2015, and her dissertation focused on logics and practices of CSR in Bangalore. She has also conducted research at the intersection on health and development, such as analyses of HIV/AIDS prevention programs for Namibian youth, and research used to improve TB control and palliative care for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. She is currently a Visiting Scholar at IIMB, adapting her dissertation into a book entitled: *The Corporate Social: Welfare and Neoliberalism in Contemporary India*. Her next project will examine the use of online platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook, and Twitter by citizens and government representatives in Bangalore as a means of collaborating to address municipal-level problems, such as waste management and crime.