

Lisa Björkman

Assistant Professor
Department of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville

research and teaching interests

Indian politics and society; networked infrastructures and urbanism; material and infrastructural politics; political ethnography; political representation and state-society relations; water and environmental politics; political economy of urban redevelopment.

education

Ph.D. 2012, Politics

New School for Social Research, New York

Dissertation: "Getting Water: the Politics and Performance of Access in Mumbai"

B.A. 2000, History

Reed College, Portland Oregon

Thesis: "'At the Point of a Gun and Threat of the Lash': Convict Labor in North Carolina, 1867-1933"

publications

book

Pipe Politics, Contested Waters: Embedded Infrastructures of Millennial Mumbai
Duke University Press (2015); Orient BlackSwan (2015)

Pipe Politics is a political ethnography about the encounter in Mumbai between liberalizing market reforms and the materially-dense politics of urban infrastructure. Mumbai's increasingly-illegible and volatile hydrologies, the book argues, are lending infrastructures increasing political salience just as actual control over pipes and flows becomes contingent upon dispersed and intimate configurations of knowledge, power, and material authority. 'Pipe politics' refers to the new arenas of contestation that Mumbai's water infrastructures animate – contestations that reveal the illusory and precarious nature of an elite-driven project to remake Mumbai in the image Shanghai or Singapore, and gesture instead towards the highly-contested futures of the actually-existing city. *Pipe Politics* is the recipient of the American Institute of Indian Studies Joseph W. Elder Prize in the Indian Social Sciences, 2014

peer-reviewed articles

Björkman, Lisa and Andrew Harris (forthcoming 2017). "Engineering cities: mediating materialities, infrastructural imaginaries and shifting regimes of urban expertise," Introduction to special issue of *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Special Issue co-edited with Dr. Andrew Harris, University College of London.

Björkman, Lisa (forthcoming 2017) "The Engineer and the Plumber: mediating Mumbai's conflicting infrastructural imaginaries" (forthcoming 2017), in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.

Björkman, Lisa and Jeffrey Witsoe (forthcoming 2017) "Money and Votes: following flows through Mumbai and Bihar." *Politics and Society*, special issue on "Money Politics in India," edited by Milan Vaishnav and Devesh Kapur.

"Eight Methods of Access: supplementary methods chapter" (2016) supplementary materials for *Pipe Politics, Contested Waters: Embedded Infrastructures of Millennial Mumbai* (Duke University Press).

"Beyond 'Informality'" (forthcoming March 2017) in "Dialogues in Human Geography book review forum" Björkman (2015) *Pipe Politics, Contested Waters: Embedded Infrastructures of Millennial Mumbai* (five reviews and an author response)

"The Ostentatious Crowd: public protest as mass-political street theater in Mumbai" *Critique of Anthropology* 35.2 [June 2015]

"'You Can't Buy a Vote': meanings of money in a Mumbai election" *American Ethnologist* 41:4 [forthcoming, November 2014]

"Un/known waters: hedging everyday risks of infrastructural breakdown in Mumbai" [December 2014] *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34:3]

"Becoming a Slum: from Municipal Colony to Illegal Settlement in Liberalization-Era Mumbai" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38.1 [January 2014]

"Godot in Mumbai: a Tragicomedy in Two Decades." *Nakhara Journal of Environmental Design and Planning*, Vol. 7: History in Design: Writing Asian Modernities [2011]

book chapters

“Becoming a Slum: from Municipal Colony to Illegal Settlement in Liberalization Era Mumbai” in *Contesting the Indian City: Global Visions and the Politics of the Local*. Gavin Shatkin, ed. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell [2013]

“vote banking as politics in Mumbai” in *Patronage in South Asia*. Anastasia Piliavsky, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [2014].

book reviews

[2013] Marie Huchzermeyer, *Cities With ‘Slums’: From Informal Settlement Eradication to a Right to the City in Africa*. In *Journal of Urban Affairs*

[2016] Sanjay Srivastva, *Entangled Urbanism: Slum, Gated Community and Shopping Mall in Delhi and Gurgaon*. In *Pacific Affairs*, [forthcoming 2016]

workshops organized

“Mediating Transregional Flow, Scale and Belonging: rethinking brokerage.” workshop organized at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, December 24-25, 2016.

2015 Indian Urban Studies Workshop: Building Indian Cities. at University of Pennsylvania’s Center for the Advanced Study of India (CASI), November 19, 2015

recent invited talks, presentations, workshops

“Pipe Politics, Contested Waters” Harvard Graduate School of Design, Harvard University (November 14, 2016).

“pipe politics, contested waters.” New Books in Network (podcast). New Books in South Asian Studies; New Books in Anthropology (August 2, 2016).

“Urban Super-organism in Asia.” (September 30 – October 2, 2016)
Workshop organized by John Friedman and André Sorenson
University of Toronto, Munk School

45th Annual Conference on South Asia (October 19-23, 2016)
University of Wisconsin, Madison
double panel organized: Friday, October 21, 2016 1:45 PM – 5:00 PM.
“Revisiting dis/possession politics: minerals, land, and ‘the urban’
panel 1: a macro-view of India
panel 2: a view from Mumbai

“India’s political lexicon in the vernaculars”

Workshop organized by Anastasia Piliavsky and Lisa Mitchell
University of Pennsylvania (11-12 November 2016)

“Pathways to Water Justice” presentation at workshop on “Critical Perspectives in Urban Infrastructure Institute of Advanced Studies and Development Planning Unit, an ESRC-funded workshop at University College London, (June 13-17 2016)

“Studying Indian Politics: Methodological challenges and ethnographic innovations” at workshop on “Identity to Interests? Quantitative and Qualitative explanations of electoral change in rural and urban India” (EECURI), London School of Economics and Political Science (June 7-8, 2016)

“Money and Votes: following flows through Mumbai and Bihar,” at Workshop on Political Finance in India, Centre for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania (June 2-3, 2016)

“Pipe Politics: Mumbai’s Contested Waters,” at London School of Economics and Political Science (January 21, 2016).

“Engineering Cities: plumbers, brokers and Mumbai’s contested infrastructural imaginaries” at University College, London (January 20, 2016).

“Pipe Politics: Mumbai’s Contested Waters” Columbia University’s Studio-X Mumbai (January 8, 2016)

“Pipe Politics: Mumbai’s Contested Waters” at University of Stockholm, Department of Anthropology (December 15-16, 2015).

“Pipe Politics, Contested Waters” at Brown University (November 20, 2015)

“Notes on Infrastructure” presented at pre-conference roundtable at 44th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Madison (October 2015)

“Pipe Politics, Contested Waters” at Bowdoin College (October 5, 2015)

research and professional posts

Assistant Professor of Urban and Public Affairs

University of Louisville: 2015-present

Research Scholar, Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania (March-April 2015)

Postdoctoral Research Fellow: 2014-2015

Center for Modern Indian Studies, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Postdoctoral Research Fellow: 2011-2013

Max Planck Institute, Germany

Visiting Researcher: Spring 2010

IMT Lucca, Institute for Advanced Studies, Italy

Research Assistant: 2005-2007

New School for Social Research, Department of Politics, Sanjay Ruparelia

Research Assistant: Fall 2006

Graduate Program of International Affairs, Michael Cohen

Research Assistant: 2003-2005

New School South Asia Forum, Carol Breckenridge

teaching

University of Louisville, Urban and Public Affairs

(Fall 2016) UPA 623: Comparative Urban Development

(Fall 2016) UPA 610: The Urban Political

(Spring 2016) UPA 608: Urban development and infrastructure in the post-neoliberal city: Naples (fieldtrip for graduate students)

(Fall 2015) UPA 610: The Urban Political

Center for Modern Indian Studies, Göttingen Germany

2012: Introduction to Themes in the Study of Modern India II

New School Graduate Program in International Affairs

2011: Comparative Development

Graduate Academic Writing Center, New School for Social Research

2005-2007: tutored graduate students in academic writing

2006: workshops on dissertation proposal writing

fellowships, grants and awards

2014: Recipient of the American Institute of Indian Studies' Joseph W. Elder Prize in the Indian Social Sciences, 2014 for book manuscript, *Pipe*

Politics, Contested Waters: Embedded Infrastructures of Millennial Mumbai

2014-present: CeMIS-CeMEAS Transregional Research Network (CETREN),
Göttingen (Germany), postdoctoral research fellowship,
2011-2014: Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
Göttingen (Germany) postdoctoral research fellowship
2008-2010: American Institute of Indian Studies, Junior Research Fellowship
2007-2008: New School for Social Research, Dissertation Fellowship
2007-2008: American Institute of Indian Studies, Language Fellowship
2005-2008: New School for Social Research, Dean's Fellowship
Summer 2006: New School India China Institute, Summer Research Fellowship
2004-2005: New School University, University Fellowship, 2004-2005
1999-2000: Reed College, Commendation for Academic Excellence
1999-2000: Reed College, E.B. and Cheryl Scholtz MacNaughton Memorial
Scholarship
1998-1999: Reed College, Commendation for Academic Excellence

fieldwork

India

2015-2016 (December-February) Mumbai, India
2015 (February-March) Mumbai, India
2014 (April-October) Mumbai, India
2012-2013 (December – February) Mumbai, India
2011-2012 (October – April) Mumbai, India
2008-2010: Mumbai, India
2007-2008: Jaipur, India
2006: (summer): Mumbai, India
2002 (fall): Varanasi, India

Italy

February-April 2016 (Naples, Italy)

languages

English (native fluency)
Hindi (proficient)
Urdu (proficient spoken)
Italian (proficient)
German (intermediate)
French (intermediate)
Marathi (basic)
Spanish (basic)
Arabic (beginning)