

Researchers' Colloquium

Department of Liberal Arts

IIT Bhilai

Book of Abstracts

Thursday, 20 April 2023

2.30 to 4.30 pm

B 205

Thin Barbed Wire Fences of Religions, Where Football Binds Millions¹: Understanding Fandom and Ultras Phenomenon in Kolkata Maidan

Rhitabrata Das

This paper aims to explore the ultras phenomenon in Kolkata football as a mediatized spectacle in the post-millennial context of sports fandom in India. In contrast to the common portrayal of football ultras as a group of conservatives in the global context, this paper examines the ultras phenomenon in Kolkata football as a distinct identity by specific fan groups of two prominent football clubs—Mohun Bagan and East Bengal. Focusing on the complex understanding of the spectator-fan divide in sporting contexts and the ultras activities, the paper considers the ultras phenomenon in Kolkata football as a form of pastiche, distinguishing it from its European counterparts. The paper expands on the settlers-migrant conflict between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal supporters in post-partition Bengal, which has fuelled an intense rivalry between the two clubs since the late twentieth century. Through its analysis, the paper also examines how this aspect of the rivalry between the two clubs foregrounds a recent transformation in Indian football fandom through the emergence of the football ultras in the 21st century.

Keywords: football; ultras; fandom; rivalry; identity

¹ The title of the paper is inspired by a tifo unfurled by the Blue Pilgrims, a fan club of the Indian national football team, during their Asian Cup qualifying clash against Hong Kong in Kolkata on June 14, 2022. The tifo shows football as a social unifier and as an effective tool to maintain communal harmony.

Topophilia, Ecological Memory and Environmental Engagement in Arif

Anwar's *The Storm*

Barsha Santra

The paper, employing Arif Anwar's *The Storm* (2018) as a case study, will explore how strong empathetic attachment to one's bioregion engenders ecological awareness and gradually leads to environmental activism. It will trace the trajectory of environmental vulnerability of the coastal region of Bay of Bengal through the characters' collective memory of 1970 Bhola

cyclone in which half a million people perished overnight. Shahryar's memory of coastal ocean and the subsequent loss of his parents belonging to the fishing communities in the cataclysmic storm gives rise to strong topophilic connection and transcorporeal entanglement with place. This also leads him to research on the coastal communities of Bangladesh, and later transform into an activist committed towards development of the place in which he feels to be rooted. Drawing on Andrew Hoskin's notion of ecology of memory, Astrid Errl's implicit collective memory, and scholarship on ecocritical place studies, the paper will argue that substantial environmental action is emergent from strong affective ties to one's lived environment and communities, informing one's identities and sense of belonging.

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Impact of government ideology on public finance outcomes in major Indian States, 1991-2021

Vinay Kumar

The literature on the impact of government ideology on public finance outcomes in developing countries needs to be more extensive. We study the question in the Indian context. Analysing a dataset of the political and economic data for the 17 major Indian states for the period 1991-2021 and using a series of panel regressions, we find that as government ideology shifts from left to right there is a significant decrease in the social sector expenditure, capital expenditure, capital outlay, own non-tax revenue, and tax revenue. Right-wing governments spend significantly less than the left-wing governments. We have confirmed the findings using the fixed effects regressions with Driscoll-Kraay standard errors. Among other factors, electoral participation (turnout) also significantly affects public finance outcomes.

Keywords: government ideology; public expenditure; public finance; political economy; India

JEL codes: H72, H11, P35, P41.