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DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
SEMINAR

CO-ORGANISED WITH MSSC IN GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY PROGRAMME



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**Theorizing Nation-Building through
Transport Infrastructure Development:
The Case of a High-Speed Rail Line in Spain**

ABSTRACT

Transport infrastructures have historically been used to advance nation-building projects, yet in the existing literature on the topic what nation-building precisely means and how it relates to transport infrastructures and space has not been sufficiently clarified. Against the backdrop of the resurgence of nationalist ideologies across the world, this talk advances a spatially sensitive conceptualization of the use of transport infrastructures as tools for nation-building in contemporary capitalist economies. Drawing on state and socio-spatial theory, it proposes the synthetic notion of spatial hegemonic vision to explain the legitimacy and substantive coherence of state action with reference to transport infrastructure development and nation-building. It then distinguishes analytically three relevant nation-building dimensions: the territorialization of economic relations, the production of a national landscape, and the consolidation of state power across the national territory. The potential of this conceptualization is illustrated through its application to the case of a high-speed rail line in the contested region of the Basque Country in Spain, Europe. The case shows how a single piece of major transport infrastructure has been mobilized to advance two competing yet partially compatible spatial hegemonic visions, whilst becoming itself a site for their conflict.

LANGUAGE

English

DATE

4 Mar 2021 (Thu)

TIME

4:30 – 6:00 pm (GMT+8)

ZOOM MEETING

ID: 973 6037 5790

<https://cuhk.zoom.us/j/97360375790>

(no password required)

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Diego Garcia-Mejuto is Lecturer in Urban Planning at Newcastle University. With a background in planning and architecture, his research focuses on the politics of extensive urbanization through a qualitative approach informed by political economic and socio-spatial theoretical approaches. His doctoral research examined the multi-scalar politics of trans-European infrastructure development, and his most recent work focuses on understanding the urbanization processes in Spain suspended as a result of the post-2008 economic crisis, with particular attention to the discourses and practices of the local state.

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