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## Zurich Human Geography Colloquium

### Program Fall Semester 2024

**Prof Rachel Rosen**, Professor of Sociology, University College London, UK

**Public lecture: Tue, 8 October, 4-5pm, Room Y25-H-79**

**Methodological reflections on temporal (in)justice and racialised border regimes**

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**Prof R. Ramakumar**, Professor, School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

**Public lecture: Tue, 19 November, 4-5pm, Room Y25-H-79**

**Technology and Labour Use in Agriculture: A Discussion on Emerging Trends in Indian Villages**

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**Prof Dr Nadine Marquardt**, Professor of Social Geography, Universität Bonn

**Public lecture: Tue, 26 November, 4-5pm, Room Y25-H-79**

**At the edge of habitability. Human(itarian) geographies of precarious housing**

**Workshop: Mon, 25 November, 1:30-5pm, Room Y10-G-03/04**

**Infrastructures of Care**

*Please register for the workshop by November 18 via e-mail to [karin.schwiter@geo.uzh.ch](mailto:karin.schwiter@geo.uzh.ch)*



Tue, 8 October 2024 | Prof Rachel Rosen

**Methodological reflections on temporal (in)justice and racialised border regimes**

Research on migration and mobility is experiencing a temporal turn, highlighting the way that time is an often-violent technology of border control and simultaneously a weapon of the weak, marginalised, and precariously positioned. In this talk, I draw on my research with migrant children and young people to extend these insights through attention to the way that age operates as a site of temporal struggle in racialised border regimes (e.g., age contestations, interventions in the name of ‘protecting children’, distribution of futures) and consider the methodological implications. I argue for the importance of working with and against time and developing an ethics of discomfort which takes seriously the labour of our (young) interlocutors and co-researchers involved in negotiating the plural and contradictory rhythms of temporal (in)justice.

**Rachel Rosen** is a Professor of Sociology at the Social Research Institute, University College London. Her publications include *Bordering Social Reproduction: Migrant mothers and children making lives in the shadows* (MUP, forthcoming), *Crisis for Whom? Critical global perspectives on childhood, care, and migration* (UCL Press, 2023), *Reimagining Childhood Studies* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), and *Feminism and the politics of childhood: Friends or foes?* (UCL Press, 2018).



Tue, 19 November 2024 | Prof R. Ramakumar

### Technology and Labour Use in Agriculture: A Discussion on Emerging Trends in Indian Villages

How much of the work force can agriculture accommodate? Conventional development theory suggested that the share of the workforce employed in agriculture would decline with a rise in per capita income. However, faced with the increasing inability of the non-agricultural sectors to adequately absorb the underemployed agricultural workforce in the 1970s and 1980s, scholars of rural India debated if agriculture itself could become more employment intensive. This was in the context of the green revolution, when the assemblage of irrigation and new technologies resulted in a net rise in labour absorption in agriculture in countries like India. Later stages of agricultural growth – marked by increasing levels of mechanisation from the 1980s onwards – were largely labour-saving, though with marked differences across male and female workers. Yet, shifts in the cropping pattern towards more labour-using crops, rising yields and the expansion of groundwater irrigation rendered the aggregate story on net labour absorption more complex -- a fall of labour use in one crop was accompanied by a rise of labour use in another, new crop. But over the past decade of the 2010s, changes in the methods of cultivation have unequivocally turned labour-saving even in crops that previously showed promises of a rise in labour use. In particular, there was a sharp rise in the use of harvesters and weedicides – alongside the continuing rise in the purchase of tractors and tillers – that led to a sharp fall of labour use across crops and regions, and especially for female workers. This paper documents and analyses these shifts using secondary data as well as quantitative and qualitative data from a set of village studies in Maharashtra. In the context of claims from India's policy makers that its agriculture could be a reservoir of new employment opportunities, the conclusions in this paper point to certain disquieting outcomes and prospects in India's rural labour market.

**R. Ramakumar** is an economist by training and is currently Professor at the School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. His areas of interest include agricultural economics, and development economics, with focus on poverty and inequality. He was earlier the Dean of the School of Development Studies as well as NABARD Chair Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. He has earlier held visiting academic positions in the University of Zurich, London School of Economics and Political Science, Queen Mary University of London, Goa University and the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum. From September 2016, he has also been serving as a non-ministerial member with the Kerala State Planning Board. He has written two books -- of which the most recent one "Distress in the Fields" (2022) has been acclaimed by reviews as an authoritative account of agriculture in India over the past three decades. He also writes extensively in newspapers and magazines.



Tue, 26 November 2024 | Prof Dr Nadine Marquardt

**At the edge of habitability. Human(itarian) geographies of precarious housing**

Precarious forms of shelter are a fundamental part of our contemporary condition. We have become accustomed to seeing tents spring up as a sign of emergency and crisis – be it climate change-related disasters, war and political conflict, or the 'slow' crisis of housing markets. As minimal shelter technologies, tents epitomise the precariousness of housing in the present. At first glance, their lightweight structures appear as vulnerable as the lives they shelter. However, behind this immediate visibility of crisis lies a whole network of political rationalities and actors, as well as technical considerations that contribute to the management of emergencies. The talk asks: What does the proliferation of shelter kits tell us about the spatial and material politics of contemporary humanitarianism understood as a core strategy to govern vulnerable lives in the present?

**Nadine Marquardt** is a social and political geographer and Professor of Social Geography at the University of Bonn, working on questions of housing, dwelling and home. She is particularly interested in the techno- and biopolitics that condition the inhabitation of space and shape the experience of dwelling.