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ABSTRACT
Drawing partly from an ongoing project on normalization and professionalization of water engineering in India, and a socio-historical understanding of the Andhra region, this paper raises questions about and hypothesizes the global techno-politics of regional formations in the longue durée. Eschewing the extremes of a hydraulic society approach and the state-centredness of high modernity perspectives (James Scott), the paper will highlight the important role of caste and religion in the evolution, development and deployment of an engineering imagination across the colonial and post-colonial periods in the Andhra region from the time it was part of the Madras Presidency to its current avatar as Andhra Pradesh. Arguing with Peter Molinga and others about engineering education and practice (especially irrigation) as a complex mix of regional social structure and ‘global’ technocratic practices, it will be argued that the evolution of a dominant caste mix, the co-constitution of religious practice and technology led development matrices, and the professionalization and normalization of engineering in the Andhra region both shaped and consolidated regional identities and structures of domination. A larger objective of our ongoing project is to trace the continuities and disjunctures across the colonial and post-colonial period as a contribution to the socio-historical analysis of the evolution of engineering institutions and bureaucracies, and how these mutually interface with professional growth, and the changing social structure of India. A particular argument made in this presentation is to highlight and speculate on the pasts and futures of Brahmanism and neo-Brahmanism in association and competition with other dominant castes in the context of colonial and post-colonial technological imaginations and interventions that shape regions and regional identities.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER
D.Parthasarathy is India Value Fund Chair Professor at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. He has earlier worked or held visiting positions at the Australian National University, National University of Singapore, and Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin. He is the author of Collective Violence in a Provincial City (1997), and has co-edited “Women’s Self Help Groups: Restructuring Socio-Economic Development,” (2011), and “Cleavage, Connection and Conflict in Rural, Urban and Contemporary Asia” (2013). He has carried out research projects and published in the areas of urban studies, law and governance, climate studies, and disaster risk and vulnerability. His current research interests include urban informality with a focus on urban religion and politics, urban commons, transnational urbanism, legal pluralism and resource governance, and vulnerability to climate / disaster risks.

DATE
Wednesday, 16 November 2016

TIME
3.00pm to 4.30pm

VENUE
AS8 Conference Room, #06-46, Singapore 119260

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