

ABOUT CSH

The Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH, UMIFRE n°20) is part of a network of research units of the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs (MEAE). The CSH is a multidisciplinary research unit that covers all disciplines of the social sciences and humanities.

CSH SEMINAR

The CSH seminar takes place once every month. It offers researchers from different disciplines across social sciences an opportunity to present their upcoming or recently published work. Presentations are followed by a discussion with another scholar and a Q/A session with the audience. The sessions are in hybrid mode. The seminars are coordinated by Corinne Lefèvre (co.lefevre@csh-delhi.com) and Joël Cabalion (joel.cabalion@csh-delhi.com).

SEMINAR CALENDAR

Monday, 8 September 2025

"Caste and Emancipatory Quest: Ethnography of Dalit Lives in an Urban Neighborhood", by **Rama DEVI** (CSH Delhi). Discussant: **Harish S. WANKHEDE** (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Monday, 13 October 2025

"Sheher mein gaon: Telling Urban-Rural Histories through Oral Narratives", by **Ekta CHAUHAN** (O.P. Jindal Global University). Discussant: **Shubham MISHRA** (University of Twente)

Monday, 17 November 2025

"The Middle Class in Neo-Urban India: Space, Class and Distinction", by **Smriti SINGH** (IIT Delhi). Discussant: **Ishita CHATTERJEE** (O.P. Jindal Global University)

Monday, 15 December 2025

"In Tech We Trust: A History of Technophilia in the Climate Mitigation Expertise" by **Jean-Baptiste FRESSOZ** (CNRS-EHESS). Discussant: **Ashwini K SWAIN** (Sustainable Futures Collaborative)

Timings: 17h00 - 18h30 IST

Venue: Centre de Sciences Humaines

IFI-CSH Conference room (ground floor), 2, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Road, New Delhi - 110011

8 September 2025: “Caste and Emancipatory Quest: Ethnography of Dalit Lives in an Urban Neighborhood”, by Rama DEVI

Abstract: Based on a qualitative study of a predominantly Dalit neighbourhood in Delhi, the book examines the emancipatory promise of urban. It offers an ethnographic account of various aspects of Dalit lives, including neighbourhood relations, intergenerational mobility, and politics, to foreground how caste exerts influence on their everyday interactions, experiences, opportunities, and economic mobility in the city. It argues that urban represents a liminal space while offering promising opportunities to aspire and achieve upward mobility; it presents structural constraints frustrating the march of Dalits to claim desired mobility.

Speaker: Rama Devi is a post-doctoral fellow at Centre de Sciences Humaines, New Delhi. Before joining CSH, she was an adjunct faculty member at KREA University. Her research interests broadly lie in the domains of social stratification, discrimination, exclusion, and inequality, and urban sociology.

13 October 2025: “Sheher Mein Gaon: Telling Urban-Rural Histories Through Oral Narratives”, by Ekta CHAUHAN

Abstract: Through everyday stories, personal memories, and community narratives, Ekta traces how agrarian pasts, land transformations, migration, and informal economies shape the urban fabric in ways often overlooked by conventional histories and planning discourses. The talk reflects on how oral histories can illuminate the entangled lives of people and places, offering a more intimate and layered understanding of urbanisation.

Speaker: Ekta Chauhan is a researcher of cities, cultures, and communities. She is an Assistant Professor at O.P. Jindal Global University. Her work—profoundly personal and grounded—explores the intricate rural-urban dynamics of Delhi, a metropolis layered with centuries of history. Through her research and writing, she brings attention to the everyday lives and negotiations of communities that shape and are shaped by the city.

17 November 2025: “The Middle Class in Neo-Urban India: Space, Class and Distinction”, by Smriti SINGH

Abstract: This presentation makes a case for looking at the emerging neourban centres such as Gurugram and the rising section of ‘new’ middle class as not just concurrent but inter-acting phenomena. It makes a case for studying social class as a sociospatial category where class distinction is tied to and manifests itself through the space of the city. It proposes that middle classness is spatially situated, that is, middle class, its dispositions and its consciousness/subjectivity cannot be understood without understanding the fractures of space in which it is formulated and is manifesting.

Speaker: Smriti Singh is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and associated with The Urban Research Lab at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology-Delhi (IIITD), India. Her monograph, *The Middle Class in Neo-Urban India Space, Class and Distinction*, was published by Routledge in 2023. She has earned her doctorate from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi and was a Fulbright-Nehru scholar (2015–2016). Her research focuses on questions of urban space, community, and identity.

18 December 2025: “In Tech we Trust: A History of Technophilia in the Climate Mitigation Expertise”, by Jean-Baptiste FRESSOZ

Abstract: This presentation examines the technocentric bias in climate mitigation literature, particularly in IPCC Working Group III reports. Rooted in the scientific field’s prioritization of innovation and reinforced by industry-linked funding, this bias overrepresents technological solutions. Tracing its origins to the 1970s—when nuclear energy was framed as a dual solution to energy scarcity and climate change—the presentation shows how U.S. diplomacy and the sustainable development agenda enabled fossil fuel interests to take foot in mitigation science. This trajectory culminated in the central role of CCS and BECCS in net-zero scenarios.

Speaker: Jean-Baptiste Fressoz is a historian of science, technology, and the environment, and a research fellow at the CNRS, affiliated with the Centre de Recherches Historiques (EHESS, Paris). His work critically interrogates the relationship between industrial modernity, ecological transformations, and state rationalities.