**Prashant Kidambi, School of History, Politics and International Relations (17.06.22)**

I’m Prashant Kidmabi, I’m a historian of modern South Asia, specifically modern India, which means I work on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I’ve been largely working on the history of Indian cities, and I’ve also got an interest in the history of sport within the British empire. I’m currently the director of the Centre for Urban History; now I’m based in the Attenborough Tower.

I’ve not been part of many collective projects as such - a lot of my research has been individual researched, although I’ve been part of research networks, within Urban History, for example, talking to people outside one’s discipline is very, very central to broadening one’s perspectives, deepening one’s analytical insights; to bring a certain kind of richness to the analysis one carries out with the primary sources one works on.

I think we have to be careful about this term ‘interdisciplinary’, and what it means, and what its requirements are, and what its challenges and pitfalls are. So essentially I’m a historian; I don’t pretend to be a sociologist, or an economist, or a political theorist, or a geographer, my interests are historical. What I do think, though, is that in understanding a historical context, so knowing what sociologists and political theorists and geographers and anthropologists  have written about a city, and urbanism etc., is very, very useful for me to think conceptually about the empirical materials I encounter, because historians themselves tend to be hesitant about being very conceptual, and for me, one way in which I try to counter that is by drawing on concepts from these different disciplines, and seeing if it works for what I am looking at at, or what I am researching. Sometimes it does and sometimes it’s not very helpful. In my understanding, a genuine interdisciplinarity means you take one problem, and then you come at it using the protocols of different disciplines - now one of the challenges of doing that is often these protocols can be in tension with each other, and I think that then we have to be very careful about the sorts of methodologies we construct, how do we reconcile these, and is it at all possible to produce something that is really coherent and analytically robust, just bringing together disciplines without reconciling these methodological problems?

My favourite place to walk on campus? I actually tend to do a lot of my walks around the campus itself, in the sense that I often go for evening walks around Victoria Park. I love the park itself - even though it’s not formally part of the campus, it’s still, for me it’s very much an integral element of the university campus, and of course when it’s very, very cloudy and dull I think the library itself is a nice place to escape into.