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CHARTING THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ETHNIC UNREST IN NEPAL: SHIFTING CLASS RELATIONS AND AGRARIAN CRISIS

Speaker: Fraser Sugden, Researcher, IWMI Nepal

Seminar / Wednesday 6 January 2016
4-6pm in Room 116, SOAS, University of London
All are welcome, no need to book

In late 2015, a political crisis unfolded in Nepal, with intense protests by the ethnic groups of the lowland Tarai-Madhesh region, over a new constitution that is widely believed to be discriminatory. This culminated in a border blockade and crippling nationwide shortages of essential supplies. This paper takes a new approach to the crisis, analysing the shift towards ethnic politics in the plains through the lens of political economy. It situates the unrest amid changing rural class relations associated with neoliberal globalisation, an agrarian 'crisis' since the 1990s, and increasingly complex articulations between semi-feudal and capitalist economic formations.

Dr Fraser Sugden is a Kathmandu-based social scientist at the International Water Management Institute. He has been conducting in-depth rural research on agrarian issues in the Eastern Gangetic Plains of the Nepal Tarai, Bihar and West Bengal for the last ten years. He has an interest in agrarian class relations, particularly under 'pre-capitalist' economic formations, and the intersection between ecological, political and material transformation.

Organised by SOAS Department of Development Studies



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