

SOAS South Asia Institute Graduate Conference 2017
Interrogating the 'rural' in South Asia: ruptures and continuities
June 12 – 13, 2017

A wealth of literature documents the apparently profound transformations that rural contexts have undergone in the last three decades, suggesting that the validity of 'the rural' as an analytical category has diminished. On the other hand, the distinctive social, economic and political character of rural life has often been understood as backward and/or unchanging and distinctively removed from the constructed urban binary. Such contradictory tendencies have characterized the rural world over different historical periods across South Asia. This workshop explores the varied interpretations of 'the rural' as a simultaneous space of both *rupture and continuity* in terms of its social, political and economic dimensions. Through such discussion, the workshop seeks to question and reimagine the continued relevance of 'the rural'.

Abstracts are invited on, but not limited to, the following themes:

- Rural spaces as agents and recipients of change;
- Social faultlines of caste, class, gender, ethnicity and religion;
- Political change and movements at local, regional, national and transnational levels;
- Cultural representations of ruralities;
- Ecology and environment;
- Historical transformations and production of the contemporary;
- Infrastructure and technology;
- Rural political economies;
- Processes and contradictions across rural and urban binaries.

The conference will also include a special segment on 'The social and ecological worlds of agriculture in South Asia'. Research on agriculture often foregrounds either the social or the ecological. This segment will focus on research that innovatively combines these two aspects in addressing questions of agriculture. If you wish to have your paper included in this segment, please indicate this in your proposal.

We welcome submissions from a wide variety of disciplines including **geography, sociology, anthropology, politics, history, development studies, area studies, and literature**. PhD students working in the humanities and social sciences whose work is at a sufficiently advanced stage for them to share it with their peers, and postdocs /early career researchers who were awarded their doctorate no more than three years before the date of the workshop, are invited to send titles and 300-word abstracts. Contributions may be either a draft thesis chapter or a paper written specially for the workshop. Selected contributors will be invited to come to SOAS to present their work in an engaging and supportive forum.

Abstracts of 300 words should be submitted **by April 15th**. Please indicate your current place of study/work and date of completion of PhD (if applicable) in the abstract. Successful applicants will then be asked to provide **a full paper of 5,000-7,000 words by May 31st**. Proposed abstracts to be submitted to: ruralities2017@gmail.com

Some travel and accommodation bursaries will be awarded, and prospective paper presenters will be notified of this by the organisers on the acceptance of abstracts.