WWW.OEAW.AC.AT

ÖAW AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

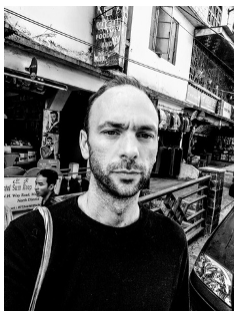
OCTOBER 28, 2021
START: 10 AM
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

ISA ONLINE GUEST LECTURE

BUILDING MODERNITY IN SIKKIM, INDIA

DUNCAN MCDUIE-RA & MONA CHETTRI

Sikkim is a geopolitically sensitive frontier state in India sharing borders with Bhutan, China and Nepal. As distinctions between urban and rural dissolve across the Himalaya, concrete characterises the transformation of these landscapes and the assemblages that hold them together. Using the notion of 'dwelling' we explore Sikkim's concrete manifested in tourism, hydropower and housing to make four arguments. First, concrete is central to the way development is conceived and enacted in Sikkim and offers a critical reading of the ways landscape is imagined, reproduced and politicised. Second, concrete foregrounds the ways peoples' aspirations are materialised in the built environment of a 'remote', yet geopolitically significant territory. Third, concrete is an integral component of Sikkim's political culture, part of the assemblage of incongruent elements that undergird the state's dependency. Finally, concrete has further entangled Sikkim within India, producing a loyal border state out of a recently independent polity.



Duncan McDuie-Ra is professor of urban sociology at the University of Newcastle with an interest in urban culture, urban technology and urban media. McDuie-Ra's monographs include: Skateboarding and Urban Landscapes in Asia (Amsterdam Univ Press, 2021); Skateboard Video: Archiving the City from Below (Springer, 2021); Ceasefire City: Militarism, Capitalism and Urbanism in Dimapur (co-authored with Dolly Kikon, Oxford Univ Press, 2020), Borderland City in New India: frontier to gateway (Amsterdam Univ Press, 2016), and Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, refuge and retail (Amsterdam Univ Press, 2012). Recent work has appeared in the journals: Modern Asian Studies, Political Geography, Memory Studies, Area, and Development & Change.

Mona Chettri is an Australia-India Institute Next Generation Network Scholar. She has worked extensively on urbanisation, ethnicity, environmental politics and development in the eastern Himalayan borderlands of Sikkim, Darjeeling and east Nepal. She is the author of Constructing Democracy: Ethnicity and Democracy in the eastern Himalaya (Amsterdam University Press, 2017) and co-editor of Development Zones in Asian Borderlands (Amsterdam University Press, 2021). Her current research focuses on the intersections between gender, labour, urbanisation and infrastructure in the Sikkim-Darjeeling Himalaya, India and Himalayan immigrant labour in Australia.

Please login with a web browser:

https://oeaw-ac-at.zoom.us/j/98727672015?pwd=VmhNVkh4TWNjckpNN01lNERJaU1pdz09

Meeting-ID: 987 2767 2015
Kenncode: Uy2GHS

ISA – INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY