

ANTHROPOLOGY COLLOQUIA

Decolonizing Climate Knowledge: Expertise, Citizenship, and Technocratic Imagination in the Indian Himalayas

THURSDAY | October 22, 2020 | 12:30 – 2:00 pm

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What does living with climate change mean for indigenous populations of the Indian Himalayas? How does local knowledge about the cryosphere (water in its solid form, including the snow cover and glaciers) gained through agropastoral activities contrast with knowledge produced by climate science and how does it contend with state rationality? In Zanskar, addressing climate change cannot be disentangled from how farmers are experiencing citizenship. To coherently do so, farmers' attempts to appeal to the state to address water stress in agrarian production, whether by accessing drought relief measures or securing resources for the building of canals, entails the mobilization of local expertise about the climate and the environment. But how does this knowledge meet state policies? This presentation examines how Zanskar's experience is woven into geographical and political marginalization and how ultimately, their efforts are thwarted by a limited technocratic understanding of the climate and related processes, like climate change.



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