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Understanding “State” in the Margins: Life in Peace and Conflict in Southeastern Bangladesh

The research concerns dialectical relations between the “state” and the “margins”, where the former itself (re)produces the latter. While dominant historical works tend to depict the state as a centralised political institution, the research attempts to grasp the state in its local societal dynamics beneath the institutional framework as anthropology has recently been critically engaged in studying the state from the margin. The research considers the state not as a single-governing entity from top but as a multi-layered configuration in the margins along at least four dimensions; (a) zones of limited statehood depicted as “peripheries”, (b) “local state” by which center governs locales, (c) “public discourse” that represents dominant notions of “stateness”, and (4) ambivalent position of political elites who represent the state in the margins. The research contextualises its arguments through the discourse of peace and conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT); a southeastern part of Bangladesh.

Date: Thursday, 14.11. 2013

Venue: South Asia Institute, Room Z10

Time: 6 p.m. / 18 Uhr s.t.