



Centre for International Development Seminar Series

Demonetisation to digital financial inclusion: Transforming a nation's relationship with cash

In November 2016 the Indian government made 85% of its cash illegal overnight through its policy of demonetisation. This seminar is based on a paper (co-authored with Kavita Datta) that examines the Indian government's drive to make India a 'cashless' or 'less-cash' economy, with the aim to reduce corruption and accelerate digital financial inclusion to India's poorest populations. Situated in this moment of apparent acceleration, we propose that demonetisation and digital financial inclusion are political projects which are intimately tied up with the project of nation building raising significant questions concerning the imaginary of the Indian nation and Modi's personal politics and ambitions. Functioning as a tool of statecraft we argue that these financial-economic policies evidence a financialising state which has a shifting relationship with both corporate India and the 'aam admi' (ordinary Indian/citizen) who feature significantly in these policies. Our research aims to make visible the constellation of actors, events and processes that are shaping digital financial inclusion in India in a shift from 'poverty capital' to 'poverty payment' and to evaluate its potential implications for a technocratic (mis) management of poverty.



Biography:

Dr. Philippa Williams is Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography at Queen Mary University of London. Philippa's qualitative research has been based in India since 2005 and is animated by questions concerning citizenship, marginality, violence/non-violence and the everyday politics of the state. Her book *Everyday Peace? Politics, citizenship and Muslim lives in India*, published by RGS-IBG Book Series, was awarded the Julian Minghi Distinguished Book Award by the American Association of Geographers' Political Geography specialty group. Her current projects focus on the material politics of the immigration/emigration state and the politics of digital development in India.

Venue: Room 204, Lipman Building Time: 13th June 2018, 3—5pm

Please contact Aisling O'Loughlen with any queries (aisling.ologhlen@northumbria.ac.uk)