

ISAS Public Lecture Series



SATISFIED CALLERS: Police and Corporate Customer Service in India

a talk by

MATTHEW HULL

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ABSTRACT: In 2013 the Indian state of Punjab contracted with a corporation to operate a new police phone helpline. The corporation not only takes complaints but also monitors, directs, and reports police responses to them. This talk explores the tensions and effects of using American techniques of customer service to promote procedural justice within police practices in India. Moving beyond a concern with privatization, it will explore the ideological, procedural, communicational, and technological practices through which police procedure is combined with corporate customer service.

SPEAKER BIO: Matthew Hull is an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. His research focuses on the nexus of representation, technology, and institutions. His book, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan* (University of California Press, May 2012), examines governance as a semiotic and material practice through an account of the role of writing and written artifacts in the operations of city government in Islamabad. He has also worked on the deployment of American technologies of democracy in urban India from the late 1950s and early 1960s. He is currently working on the history and theory of the modern corporation and lotteries in India. In the Department of Anthropology he is associated with both the Social-Cultural and the Linguistic Anthropology subfields. His other affiliations include the Interdisciplinary Program in Anthropology and History, the Program in Science, Technology and Society, and the Center for South Asian Studies. He received his PhD in anthropology from The University of Chicago in 2003. He was a Fellow of the Michigan Society of Fellows from 2003-04 and taught for several years at the University of North Carolina before returning to the University of Michigan. He teaches courses on corporations, technology and materiality, language, South Asia, and social theory.

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2 - 4 pm

221 Kroeber Hall, (Gifford Room)

Event Cosponsors: Department of Anthropology, Townsend Center for the Humanities, Cyborg Linguistics (Townsend Center Working Group), Form and Formalism (Townsend Center Working Group)

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