



LUND
UNIVERSITY

SASNET Activity Report 2021

SWEDISH SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES NETWORK

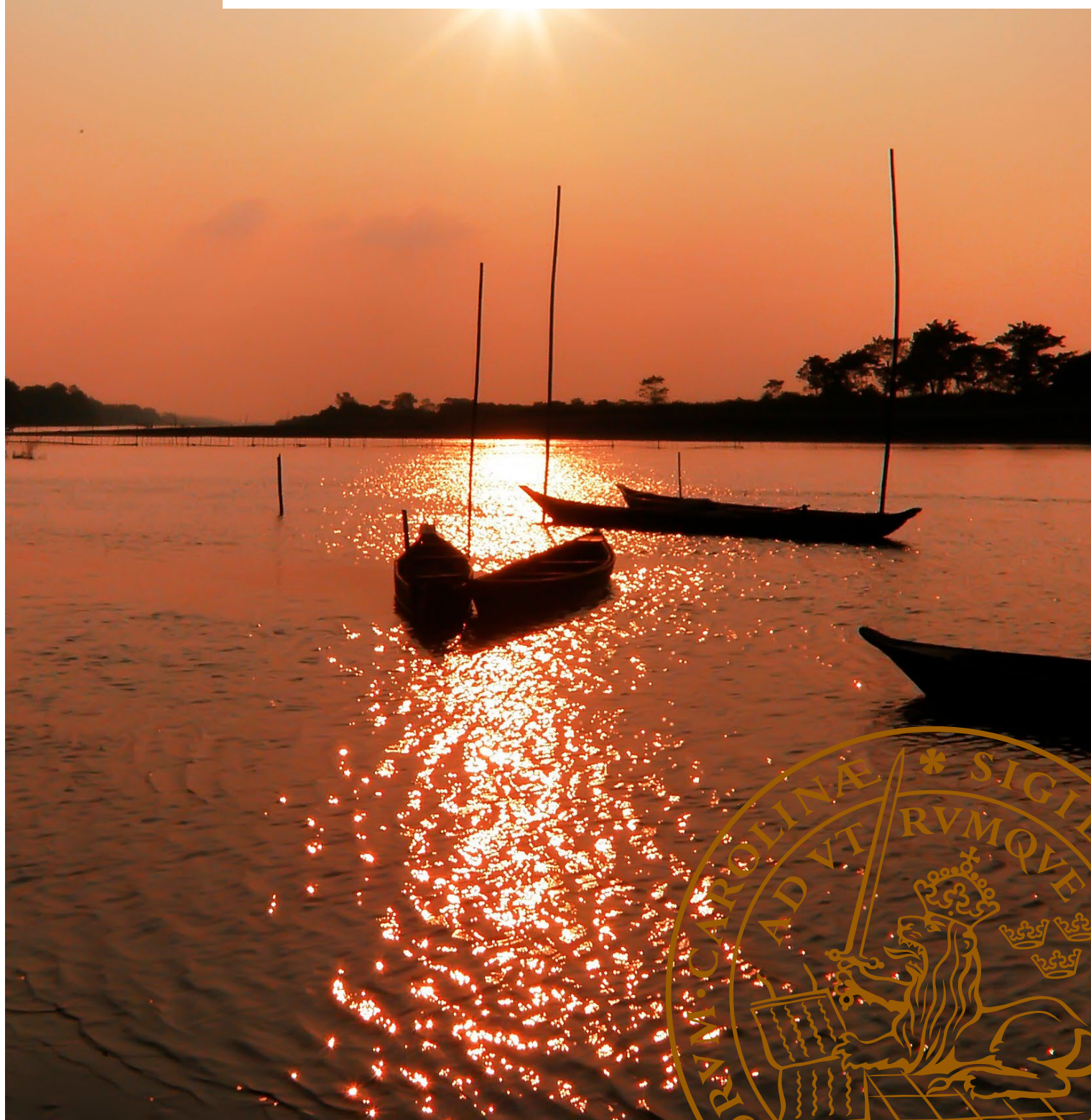


Table of Contents

SASNET ACTIVITY REPORT 2021	5
WEBINARS AND PODCASTS	6
Webinars and exhibition	6
Podcast	7
WORKSHOPS	8
RESEARCH	9
Isha Dubey's postdoctoral research project in summary	9
JOURNAL ARTICLES	10
WORKS IN PROGRESS	11
Amrita Ghosh	12
Isha Dubey	13
SASNET PUBLICATIONS	13
New SASNET-CMES report on jihadi-Salafism	13
RE-ORGANIZATION OF SASNET	15
ABOUT SASNET	16



SASNET Activity Report 2021

During 2021 SASNET has conducted a wide range of activities to bolster South Asia research and research related accomplishments at Lund University. SASNET has collaborated with several organizations within Lund University but also with organizations from all over the country through webinars, publications, podcasts, networking, and workshops. During 2021 SASNET had two employees: office director/research coordinator Andreas Johansson (100% until 1 August, then 50%); postdoc, Isha Dubey (100% until 31 May then 50% until 31 December). SASNET also hired researcher Amrita Gosh (1 June -31 December, 50%) and associate professor Ted Svensson (1 October-31 December, 20%).



Fig 1. LUX, Lund University's new building for humanities and theological subjects, inaugurated in autumn 2014. Photo: Johan Persson.

Webinars and podcasts

During the year SASNET hosted several online events, most of which were open lectures, but many were also connected to ongoing courses at Lund University. SASNET covered a wide array of topics and invited some of the most prominent South Asia scholars around the world.

WEBINARS AND EXHIBITION

Inaugural lecture with Sujata Patel at Umeå University

Patel is currently in Sweden as a Kerstin Hesselgren visiting professor, co-hosted by SASNET. On Wednesday, 7 April 2021, Prof. Sujata Patel held a virtual inaugural lecture, marking the start of her 2021 Kerstin Hesselgren visiting professorship.

The inaugural lecture, entitled 'Colonialism and Its Knowledges', addressed the ways in which the post-colonial, the decolonial and indigenous theories have contributed to the current sociological imagination. These differing conceptual frameworks have not only decentered contemporary western perspectives on modernity and social theory but reframed many of its key concepts such as class, race, caste, gender and nation; politics and identity; religiosities and ethnicities; culture(s) and languages. As a consequence, these viewpoints have also promoted the need for diverse approaches to the study of global modernities and affirmed the necessity of comprehending these in distinct scales and varied geographies.

Sujata Patel is Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Savitribai Phule Pune University, India, former Vice-President of the International Sociological Association (ISA), and author or editor of a dozen of books in the areas of social theory, urban studies, sociology of power and authority, and the sociology of social movements.

As Kerstin Hesselgren visiting professor, Sujata Patel will be hosted by the Department of Sociology, Umeå University, and co-hosted by SASNET as well as the Division of Migration, Ethnicity and Society (REMESO), Linköping University, Umeå Centre for Gender Studies (UCGS), Umeå University, and the Department of Sociology, Uppsala University.



Fig 2: Picture of Sujata Patel. Private photo.

Book launch "Ameen's resa" with Anna Lindberg

On 17 May, SASNET hosted a virtual book launch of Anna Lindberg's first novel, *Ameen's Journey* (or the book that wrote itself).

In her book, Lindberg tells the story of Ameen, a young girl from eastern Afghanistan who is forced to flee with her family from the Taliban and embarks on a tumultuous journey that eventually leads her to Sweden.

For the book launch, Anna Lindberg, interdisciplinary historian and previous SASNET Director, was joined by Anna Lundberg, professor of welfare law at the Department of Culture and Society and the Department of Social Work at Linköping University. The two discussed themes and passages from the book, followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience.



Fig 3: Poster of the book launch, with pictures of Anna Lindberg and Anna Lundberg.

Sasnet researcher Amrita Ghosh was invited to give a talk at the Global Salon Speaker Series

The USI Global Studies Program and the Department of World Languages and Cultures at the University of Southern Indiana invited SASNET researcher Amrita Ghosh to give a talk on the specter of colonial violence.

Abstract of the lecture: The Specter of Colonial Violence: The Strangler Vine and 'Thugs' in America

Taking a look at Miranda Carter's novel *The Strangler Vine* (2015) set in 19C India as a colonial adventure narrative. In the first part, it focuses on the novel's critique and rethinking of colonial violence using the metaphor of the 'strangler vines.' Carter revises the idea of violence and criminality of the thugs in 19th C India, but interestingly her novel also intersects with contemporary American political discourse. The novel was published in the year 2015, when the term 'thug' emerged in then President Obama's speech on the Baltimore riots (April 2015) and then eventually in President Donald Trump's speech in 2020 to represent race riots in America. In the second part of the paper, I trace the etymology of the "thug" in American lingo and its shifting narrative. This section intersects with Carter's novel to show the limitations and 'problematic' the text poses, and to show how power and discourse are updated in asymmetrical planetary intersections and contexts that have dangerous reverberations in the American political imaginary in our present time. The intersection of these two seemingly unrelated historicity is important to reveal the structures of embedded (neo)colonial violence that turns "thugs" in a larger continuum, symbolizing Black men and ultimately emerging a fear of black bodies.



Dr. Amrita Ghosh, Research Fellow at SASNET, South Asia Research Center, Lund University, Sweden presents:
"The Specter of Colonial Violence: *The Strangler Vine* and 'Thugs' in America"
 Thursday, December 2 • 2:00 - 2:50 p.m. CST
 • Zoom ID

Fig 4: Poster of the event with Amrita Gosh.

Photo exhibition with Rishi Jah

Photo exhibition of lives and living in Mumbai's resettlement colonies. The idea is to capture a visual course of advance urban marginalities in the city. Rishi Jah have been working on this as a part of his PhD project as well and can share more details.

Due to the pandemic this exhibition will be held during the spring 2022 at Lund University.

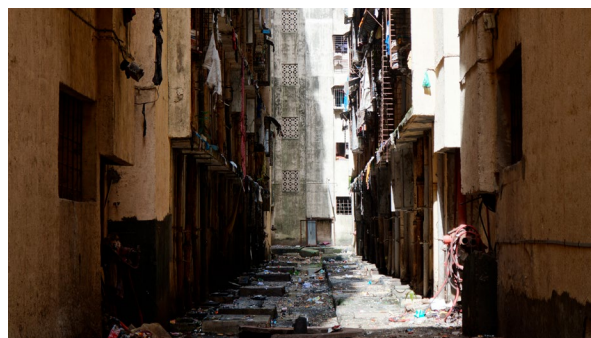


Fig 5: Mumbai's resettlement colonies, Photo: Rishi Jah.

PODCAST

During 2021 The Swedish Institute of International Affairs' (UI) South Asia Initiative and SASNET at Lund University released *Indienpodden* (the India Podcast) which brings experts from South Asia and Sweden together to discuss different aspects of democracy in India and the South Asian region. The podcast is targeted to a Swedish audience and mainly produced in Swedish.

India is the world's second most populous country and is commonly referred to as its largest democracy. Still, general knowledge about developments in the country remains low. *Indienpodden* is an initiative that aims at raising awareness on issues related to India and the South Asian region, by circling in on the state of democracy in India.

Deepened ties between India, Sweden, and the EU, mean that political developments in the region reach far beyond Indian borders and bring consequences to our side of the globe. Not least as Swedish companies are increasingly dependent on the skills and competences from Indian IT-workers, as well as the global reliance on India for vaccine production as the world is getting vaccinated against Covid-19. Thus, there's an immediate need to deepen the understanding of India in Sweden.

“Indo-Swedish cooperation is becoming increasingly important for Sweden and Swedish businesses. Meanwhile, the knowledge on political developments and structures in India remains low in our country. Also, reporting on India in Swedish media tend to display a very one-sided portrait of the country. We hope to change this narrative, and begin by shining light on a crucial question: the state of democracy in India and its conditions.”

According to some, democracy in India is facing its greatest crisis since independence. In 2021, both Freedom House and Sweden-based V-Dem Institute released reports stating that democracy in India is in decline, degrading India to a “partly free” democracy and an “electoral autocracy” respectively. The question of the state of democracy in India has divided the country: while some hold that human rights are under severe threat, others believe that democracy is flourishing, as old power structures are being tested and remodeled.

In Indienpodden, recent developments are being discussed and debated with South Asian journalists,

researchers, and activists, with opinions reflecting a wide spectrum of political thought in the region. The podcast has covered themes such as academic freedom, fake news, social media as a political driver, and provide an outlook on India post Covid-19. Swedish experts are invited to put South Asian developments in European and Swedish perspectives.

During 2021 six episodes were produced and released. The podcast is available at Podcaster, Spotify, Soundcloud, Acast, and Google Podcasts.



Fig 6: Logo of Indienpodden

Workshops

SASNET and CTR organized Nordic workshop on Indian Religions

On 10 February 2021, SASNET together with the Lund University Center for Theology and Religious Studies (CTR) hosted a virtual workshop on “Nordic Collaboration in Research and Education on Indian Religions”.

After a welcome by the organisers Dr. Kristina Myrvold, Visiting Professor at CTR, and Dr. Andreas Johansson, SASNET Director, scholars from institutions in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden presented their research and education activities on Indian religions in four separate sessions. In the afternoon, participants met in smaller break out rooms to discuss selected themes and exchange ideas.

With this workshop, SASNET and CTR hope to lay the foundation for future collaboration between Nordic institutions to promote knowledge production on Indian religions.



Fig.7: Poster of the workshop “Education in Indian religion in the Nordic context.”

Workshop on A Nation and its Fault Lines

In February 2022, we have planned a workshop with the above name, with eminent keynote speaker Professor Ananya Jahanara Kabir from Kings College London. Kabir will be focusing on the nation state’s extensions towards the island formations and creolizations of culture, identities and rethinking the nation-

state in her talk. The other participants are Humera Iqbal from University College London, Asiya Zahoor from Cornell University, Anushay Malik from Simon Fraser University, Canada along with Isha Dubey and Amrita Ghosh. The talks will span from Kashmir as a conflict zone, partitions of memory, fractured identities and belongings in fault-lines that reconfigure the present. This workshop would be a one-day event.

Due to the pandemic this workshop will be held during the spring 2022.



Fig 8: Pictures of the workshop organizers, Amrita Gosh and Isha Dubey. Private photo.

Research

ISHA DUBEY'S POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT IN SUMMARY

Publications

Dr. Dubey's research output from the postdoctoral position is a combination of publications that have emerged from her post-doctoral project Memory, Memorialisation, and the Politics of Forgetting: 'Difficult Heritage' and the construction and contestation of 'national memory' in India and Bangladesh, as well as from her doctoral dissertation. Over the course of the fellowship, Dr. Dubey has written and submitted three articles from the project. Two of these will be published in the forthcoming issues of *India Review* and the *Journal of Migration Affairs*. The third article is currently under review. Dr. Dubey has also published another article from my doctoral dissertation in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in March 2020. Apart from this Dr. Dubey has also edited a special issue of *Chakra: A Journal of South Asian Studies* with the title "Articulations of Pandemic: Researching and Navigating South Asian in the Times of Covid-19". The issue, with an introductory essay by Dr. Dubey is a collection of fourteen articles exploring the implication of the pandemic for both the everyday lived reality in the region as well as for those researching them across disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences. It was published in December 2020. As part of the public-facing aspect of her research, Dr. Dubey have also published two opinion pieces in *The Conversation* on the Kashmir conflict and the 2019 Supreme Court verdict on the Babari Mosque demolition. Finally, Dr. Dubey have two book manuscripts under preparation

at different stages of the review process. The first is a monograph based on her PhD dissertation. It is under advance contract with Orient BlackSwan for its new perspectives on South Asian History series. The completed manuscript is expected to be published by late 2022. Secondly, Dr. Dubey have also initiated the process of publishing a collection of articles presented at the SASNET Rethinking the Politics of Memory Conference that she organised in 2020 as an edited volume. Dr. Anindya Raychoudhuri (University of St. Andrews), a prominent scholar of South Asian Memory Studies has agreed to write a foreword for the volume.

Conference activity

During the course of the fellowship, Dr. Dubey participated in two international conferences. The first one was organised by Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore (January 2021) and the second one by Princeton University (April 2021). Both the conferences were originally scheduled to be held in person but were later conducted virtually on account of the pandemic. Apart from this, Dr. Dubey delivered the valedictory address as an invited speaker at the International Conference on the life and times of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman jointly organised by the International Institute of People's History Dhaka, and Barisal University (February 2020).

Events organised

The fellowship has given Dr. Dubey the opportunity to organise South-Asia centric events catering to both an academic audience as well as for a larger one of

students and people with an interest in the region and its cultural and socio-political landscape. This has taken the form of two panel discussions and one international conference. The first panel discussion, held in September 2019, was on the revocation of Article 371 which accorded a special status to Kashmir in August 2019. The discussion, while structured around the implications of the historic revocation also covered a range of related themes such as meanings attached to Kashmiriyat over the years and representations of Kashmir in cultural production through a series of talks by invited speakers and the in-plenum closing session. The second panel discussion took place in October 2020, was co-organised with Dr. Amrita Ghosh. It focused on the 'presence' of caste in India from a contemporary and historical perspective. Finally, the third event organised by Dr. Dubey as a postdoctoral researcher was the SASNET international conference on Rethinking the Politics of Memory in South Asia (virtually on account of the pandemic) on December 9-10, 2020. The conference, which was part of her postdoctoral project and emerged from the themes Dr. Dubey engaged with through it was generated widespread interest and participation from all over the world and with about 60 papers presented across 12 thematic panels.

Teaching

The postdoctoral fellowship at SASNET was primarily research focused. However, through it, Dr. Dubey was also engaged with teaching. The teaching aspect of the postdoc was carried out primarily in association with the Center for Theology and Religion. Spread over the autumn semester of 2019 and the spring semester of 2020 She served as an instructor for two online courses. The first course was Classics of Middle Eastern and South Asian Religious Literature in which Dr. Dubey taught modules on the Bhagwat Gita and its relevance/interpretation as a historical, political and transnational text. In the second course, Brahmins, Imams and Holy Mothers: Religious Diversity in Contemporary India, Dr. Dubey taught modules on religion, society, and politics in India from a historical perspective.

Work done as an affiliate of SAI-UI

During Dr. Dubey postdoctoral fellowship at SASNET, Dr. Dubey was also affiliated to the Swedish Institute of International Affairs as an affiliated researcher under its South Asia Initiative. As part of this association, Dr. Dubey was involved with some of the activities and research at the Institute concerning South Asian politics. Dr. Dubey participated as an invited panelist and speaker for an UI and Lund University organised

panel discussion on the then recently concluded Indian general elections of 2019 at that year's Almedalen event in Visby, Gotland. At the panel discussion, which is available as a podcast at the UI website, Dr. Dubey spoke of the implications of the 2019 elections on India's foreign policy. In October 2019, Dr. Dubey participated in another UI/SAI organised seminar on India's Domestic Economy and World Trade in which Dr. Dubey spoke on the 'neighborhood first' thrust in India's foreign policy and the continuities and ruptures therein. As part of Dr. Dubey postdoctoral fellowship mandated commitments towards SAI at UI, Dr. Dubey also worked on and submitted a research grant project proposal - "Remembering and Rethinking Historical Injustice in South Asia: Justice in Transition and the Role of Civil Society in Bangladesh, Nepal and India" – to the Swedish Research Council under its Development Research call. Finally, Dr. Dubey's association with SAI, as part of her postdoctoral fellowship has also entailed her participation in a pilot project on the 'politics of othering' in India which was a collaborative venture among the UI, SASNET and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Her role in the project was that of research assistance on one particular aspect of it which focused on analysing the nature and implications of the rhetoric of exclusion and profiling surrounding the annual congregation of the Tablighi Jamaat that took place in New Delhi in March 2020 as the world was waking up to the seriousness of what would go on to become the Covid-19 pandemic.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION DETAILS

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Dubey, Isha. "Remembering, Forgetting and Memorialising: 1947, 1971 and the state of memory studies in South Asia." *India Review*. (forthcoming)

Dubey, Isha. "Muhajir Narratives of Homes Lost and Found: Nostalgia and belonging in the novels of Intizar Husain and the columns of The Daily Pasban." *Journal of Migration Affairs* (forthcoming)

Dubey, Isha. "Introduction." *Articulations of a Pandemic: Researching and navigating South Asia in the times of Covid-19*, special issue of *Chakra: A Nordic Journal of South Asian Studies* (Special Issue), edited by Isha Dubey, no. 1 (2020): 13-22.

Dubey, Isha. "Between 'Everyday' and 'Extraordinary': Partition, violence and the communal riots of 1946 in Bihar." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30, no. 2(2020): 283-312.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Dubey, Isha. "The Making of an Indian Company Town: Rethinking cosmopolitanism, industrial heritage and communal violence in Jamshedpur."

Dubey, Isha. "The Urdu-speakers of Bangladesh and the Idea of 'Home': Migration, Displacement and Shifting Narratives of Belonging." (New Perspectives in South Asian History Series, Orient Blackswan)

Dubey, Isha. ed. Remembrance, Forgetting and Utterance: Rethinking the Politics of Memory in South Asia.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Dubey, Isha. "Ayodhya Land Ruling has thrust history into the center of Indian politics – what this means for the future." The Conversation December 11, 2019. <https://theconversation.com/ayodhya-land-ruling-has-thrust-history-into-the-centre-of-indian-politics-what-this-means-for-the-future-127970>

Dubey, Isha. "Where Kashmir fits within India's national memory – and what impact removing its special status could have." The Conversation October 7, 2019. <http://theconversation.com/where-kashmir-fits-within-indias-national-memory-and-what-impact-removing-its-special-status-could-have-122889>

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

2021

Writing the Region: Writing, Practice and Power in South Asia (Princeton South Asia Conference), April 15-17. Princeton University, New Jersey. "Muhajir Narratives of Homes Lost and Found: Nostalgia and belonging in the novels of Intizar Hussain and the columns of The Daily Pasban."

Managing the Cosmopolitan City: Inter-Asian Strategies of Ethnic Administration, Past and Present, January 14-15.

The Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore "The Making of an Indian Company Town: Rethinking cosmopolitanism, industrial heritage and communal violence in Jamshedpur."

2020

Valedictory speaker at the international conference on the occasion of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary, February 27-28 Barisal University and Jana Itihas Charcha Kendra, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

'Bangabandhu', his times and legacy: Society, Eco-

nomy and state formation in retrospect (1920-2020) "Constructing and contesting the 'national memory' of 1947 and 1971 in India and Bangladesh"



Bild 9: Isha Dubey giving a talk in a conference in Bangladesh. Photo: Private.

Participants: Dr. Amrita Ghosh and Dr. Isha Dubey. June 1, 2021- December 31, 2021, SASNET, Lund University

From June 2021, Dr. Amrita Ghosh and Dr. Isha Dubey have embarked on working on this project A Nation and its Faultlines - both Dr. Amrita Ghosh and Dr. Isha Dubey worked on our specific angles intersecting on the theme of the "long Partition" and its legacies in the faultiness that emerged within the Indian subcontinent.

Part 1

Kashmir has been such a "fault line" of the Indian and Pakistani nation-states? In this section, Dr. Amrita Ghosh read cultural productions like Madhuri Vijay's award winning recent novel *The Far Field* (2019), and she looked at notions of postcolonial hospitality within the nation-state and what the concept means for carving out newer definitions of belonging. *The Far Field* (2019) couches Theodore Roethke's titular poem, in a journey spanning from South India to Kashmir. In a quasi-autobiographical, testimonial story merged with a travelogue narrative, the protagonist Shalini leaves the privileged spaces of upper-class bourgeoisie Bangalore in search of a childhood memory that connects her recently dead mother's past to a Kashmiri salesman of carpets. A familiar 'Indian' narrative of Kashmiri carpet sellers within mainland India is, thus, flipped to give a glimpse of the 'other' side — one in which Shalini searches for her mother's Kashmiri friend Bashir Ahmed into the rural mountainous spaces of Kishtwar, Kashmir. This is not the typical Kashmir of sparkling Dal lake and shikara boats; rather through Vijay's story key questions emerge of Kashmir's space within the Indian national imaginary and Kashmiri subjects' relationship with the India, framed within the

politics of hospitality. The novel reverses the gaze from the usual suspect foreigner figure of Bashir Ahmed within the unfamiliar terrain and hosts in Bangalore, to Shalini, a South Indian woman, a foreigner in the mountains of Kashmir, a guest to Kashmiri hosts. Framing the paper within Derrida's notion of "unconditional hospitality" Dr. Amrita Ghosh argues that the text creates a radical space in which the guest and the host enable a poetics of hospitality, that in one way is a reminder of the classic concept of "kashmiriyat," but on the other, the politics of this hospitality deconstructs the ideas of national sovereignty and creates newer possibilities of "hospitality from below" (Spivak) in which the colonized Kashmiri subject (the host) presents alternative modalities of being, ontologically and politically, to the "guest" in the larger paradigm of the sovereign imagination.

Part II

This part of the project traces the shifting concept of home from 1947 to 1971, (the second Partition) and situates it along the historical archives of newspaper to locate the affects of nostalgia, disappointment and how to rethink one's rightful place in the nation. Secondly, a sub-theme within this part focuses attention on contemporary Bangladesh as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. The idea is to understand how it constructs and curates a cultural memory of the nation structured around the Liberation War of 1971 and how those included and excluded from it engage with this public history. Together, the two sub-themes within this part of the project aim to understand the nature enduring fault lines etched on to the fabric of the Subcontinent through the events of 1947 through the experiences of the Muhajirs or Indian Muslims who migrated to Pakistan but retained a sense of never-ending dislocation and exile and then to examine the fissures and tensions that exist within present-day Bangladesh united by the memory of 1971.

AMRITA GHOSH

Conferences and Invited Talks

Nov 17th. Invited Talk. "Are we Post-Race Yet?" Race Studies and the "Other". Uppsala University. Department of Nuclear Physics.

Nov 20th. "Decolonial Art: Kashmir, Resistance and Gender". Malmö Feminist Festival.

Nov 20th. In conversation with Nitasha Kaul, "Literature, Conflict Zone and Art".

Dec 20th. Invited Talk. "Specter of Colonial Violence:

Strangler Vine and 'Thugs' in America" University of Southern Indiana, Global Salon Speaker Series 2021.

MLA International Panel accepted for Glasgow Summer 2022. "A Nation and its Fault lines" (with Isha Dubey).

Forthcoming upcoming Publications worked on during this project

The Far Field: Kashmir and Politics and Poetics of Hospitality." Kashmir's Necropolis. Monograph contracted with Lexington Books, USA, forthcoming 2022.

Decolonial Art: Kashmir, Resistance and Gender"-- Literature and Social Justice. Edited by Masood Raja and Nick Tsung Che-Lu. Contracted with Routledge. 2022.

"Specter of Colonial Violence: Strangler Vine and 'Thugs' in America." Interpreting Violence: Narrative, Ethics, Hermeneutics. Edited by Cassandra Falke. Victoria Fareld, Hanna Meretoja. Contracted with Routledge. 2022.

"Representations of Kashmir in Shadow from Ladakh by Bhabani Bhattacharya". Encyclopedia of Indian Writing in English, Edited by Manju Jaidka. Contracted with Routledge, 2022.

ISHA DUBEY

Publication from the project

Dubey, Isha. "Muhajirs and their 'homes': Conceptions of Nostalgia and Belonging literature and Press." Migrations in South Asia Series (Contracted with Routledge) (forthcoming 2022)

Conference activity as part of the project

June 2022: Being Hospitable: Languages and Cultures Across Borders, MLA International Symposium, (final dates to be announced) Modern Language Association and University of Glasgow

"In Exile at Home: Deconstructing Muhajir Narratives in the novels of Intizar Hussain and the columns of The Daily Pasban As part of an accepted panel: The Nation and its Other: Fault Lines of 'Hospitality' along with Amrita Ghosh.

Invited talks

2021

Keynote speaker, Annual International Conference of the International Institute of People's History (IIPH),

Bangladesh, December 12-13. Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and his Legacy Spoken Heritage: Revisiting Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7 Speech and its Legacy in Contemporary South Asia.

Work in progress

Dubey, Isha. "Curating National Pasts and National Traumas: Mourning and Loss in the Cultural Memory of Bangladesh." (As part of the planned edited volume with Routledge and based on the SASNET 2020 Rethinking the Politics of Memory Conference).

SASNET Publications

NEW SASNET-CMES REPORT ON JIHADI-SALAFISM

Researcher Orwa Ajjoub explores the historical development of the theological concepts of jihadi Salafism and their implications on the ground.

In his newly published report "From Afghanistan to Syria: The Development of the Theological and Political Aspects of Jihadi-Salafism", funded by SASNET and the Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University, researcher Orwa Ajjoub interrogates the complicated relationship between the theological concepts of jihadi-Salafism and the ever-changing socio-political context in which they have developed.

Ajjoub's work fills significant gaps in the under-researched topic of jihadi-Salafism within the wider field of jihadism. While scholars have increasingly started to focus on jihadi-Salafism since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, much of the research has been centred around organisations such as al-Qa'eda (AQ) or the Islamic State (IS), with less attention paid to the details of the movements' ideologies.

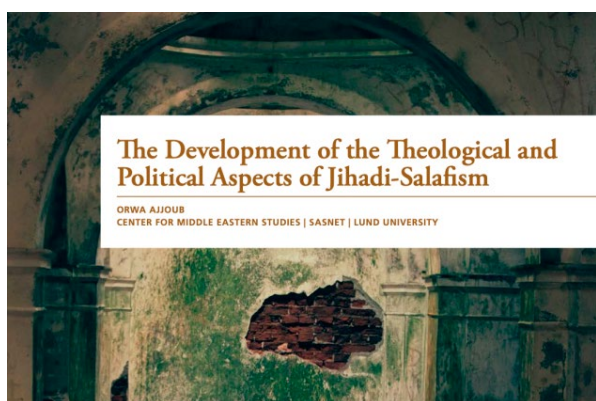


Fig 10: Cover of the report on jihadi.salafism

Report on education of women in Afghanistan

The report was written by former SASNET intern Maliha Shir Mohammad and is a summary of her MA thesis.

In her report "Education as an empowerment tool for women in Afghanistan: the insider perspectives of educated Afghan women", Maliha Shir Mohammad explores the understudied topic of the lived experiences of educated Afghan women and investigates their perspectives on education as an empowerment tool, in addition to their challenges and motivations for contributing to the promotion of women's education in Afghanistan.

Globally, Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy rates. This is due to barriers to women's education, such as girls' limited mobility and early marriage. The general war-torn context further strains social order and the pursuit of social justice in ways that particularly affect women. It makes it difficult to promote gender equality because, in addition to security challenges, Afghan culture continues to hold a very pessimistic view toward women's progress and social status.

In her study, Maliha argues that efforts to promote girls' right to education in Afghanistan continue to be undermined by sociocultural norms, while the complex security situation in Afghanistan further explains why so many girls remain without education. Her findings, among others, highlighted the need for governments and nongovernmental organisations to promote women's education in Afghanistan.

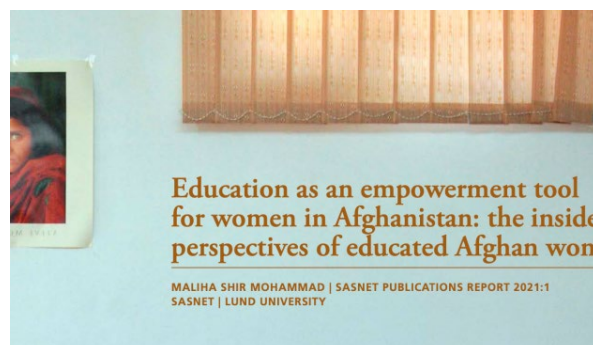


Fig 11: Cover of the report on education of women in Afghanistan

Report on Indo-Bangladeshi borderlands

Dr. Amrita Ghosh, in 2021 visiting researcher at SASNET, released her report “Fuzzy Borders and Postcolonial Forgotten Zones: The Case of Indo-Bangladeshi Enclaves” as part of a preliminary pilot project focusing on questions of identity and space across the complex Bengal borderlands.

This is a preliminary pilot project that encompasses an overview on the Indo-Bangladeshi complex borderlands, focusing on the enclaves or ‘chitmahals’ that became unique stateless conflict zones between India and Bangladesh. A historic Land Boundary Agreement was signed in 1955, that officially exchanged all chitmahals of both Indian and Bangladeshi side towards incorporation and inclusion within national sovereignty, after almost seventy years since the Partition of the Indian subcontinent.

Yet, in 2021, the question about identity and space still remains that pose a challenge to easy resolutions within these complex borderlands. This study is divided into sub-sections that delve into a history and scholarship on the complex Bengal borderlands; thereafter, I focus on the former enclaves as zones of state abandonment, different from other conflict zones. In light of new scholarship on the once stateless people and former enclaves, I read the enclaves as still hovering in a space of ‘abjectness’ between inclusion within national sovereignty and not yet fully there.

Thus, this project asks a larger question, whether a “third identity” is possible for the people of the enclaves, and does their former statelessness itself become a unifying resistant force? The section on gender, and the focus art and cultural productions from the chitmahals all point to the instability of the borderlands, that are sometimes still narrating an alternate modality of being in these spaces

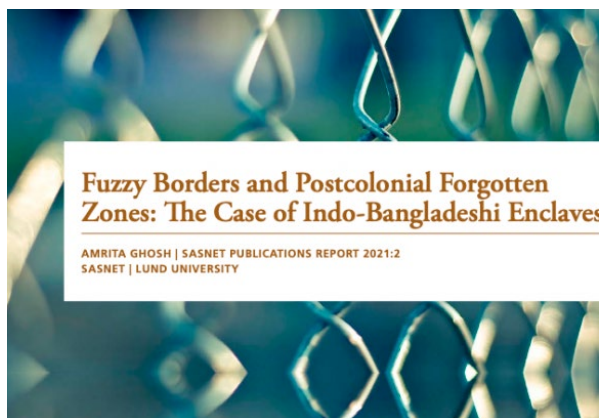


Fig 12: Cover on the report on Indo-Bangladeshi borderlands

Special issue of Asian Ethnology on “South Asian Nationalisms”

The issue, which is the result of a SASNET workshop at Lund University in 2018, is now available online. The latest issue of the Asian Ethnology journal, published in July 2021, features essays and reviews exploring various aspects of nationalism in the South Asian region.

The articles are the joint outcome of a two-day workshop at Lund University hosted by SASNET and funded by the Crafoord Foundation. In several sessions, workshop participants presented their work and discussed what similarities and differences would emerge when looking at nationalism, which was long viewed as a strictly Western affair, from different geographical and ethnic perspectives on the subcontinent. Professor Frank Korom, Boston University and editor of Asian Ethnology, Associate Professor Jan Magnusson, Lund University, and SASNET Director Andreas Johansson were the lead organisers.



Fig 13: Logo of Asian Ethnology.

Islam in South Asia

The SASNET director, Andreas Johansson, published a chapter on Islam in South Asia in the book Islam - En religionsvetenskaplig introduktion, edited by Susanne Olsson and Simon Sorgenfrei.



Fig 14: Cover of the book, Islam - En religionsvetenskaplig introduktion.

Re-organization of SASNET

In 2000, the Swedish development agency (SIDA) selected Lund University to host a new network that was focused on South Asia. The Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) has – largely thanks to the ambitious work carried out by the former directors Staffan Lindberg and Anna Lindberg as well as the former deputy director Lars Eklund – established itself as an important and well-known node for research on South Asia, in Sweden as well as globally.

Since 2015, SASNET has increasingly centred its activities on research that is carried out at Lund University. Andreas Johansson, an historian of religion, was recruited to oversee this process and in 2016, when Anna Lindberg and Lars Eklund left SASNET, Johansson assumed the position as the new director. One of his main goals, which was achieved in January 2018, was to secure permanent funding for SASNET from Lund University.

During his time as director, Johansson has sought to enable and promote high-quality research about South Asia at Lund University. As part of this objective, several research projects attending to the region have been associated with and supported by SASNET. Reflecting on his time as SASNET director, Johansson says that ‘I am extremely proud of the work of that has been done over the last couple of years. I want to thank my co-workers and the former directors Staffan Lindberg and Anna Lindberg for their support. With the new management SASNET will have a bright future’.

During the autumn 2021, Johansson accepted a tenured position at Karlstad University. He will, however, continue to be affiliated with SASNET, mainly through a four-year research project on the theme religion and politics in Sri Lanka.

Ted Svensson is, since January 2022, the new director of SASNET. Svensson is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science at Lund University and he has published extensively on state making and nation building in South Asia. In his role as a researcher, he is presently foremost committed to finalizing a book about British indirect rule of South Asia’s princely states and to a research project addressing the environmental degradation of the Ganges.

Svensson is excited about having taken up the position as SASNET director and he is looking forward to, during the coming years, build on and add to the important work done by his predecessors.



Fig 15: Picture of Ted Svensson new director of SASNET from 2022 and Andreas Johansson director of SASNET 2016-2021.

About SASNET

SASNET is an interdisciplinary network for the production and dissemination of research, education, and information about South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka).

SASNET produces and disseminates knowledge and research about South Asia in three principal ways. First, SASNET produces knowledge about South Asia through research, seminars, workshops, and conferences. Second, SASNET supports research, seminars, and international collaborations at Lund University. Third, SASNET collaborates with Swedish and Nordic universities that have a strong focus on South Asia.

Follow SASNET

- www.sasnet.lu.se
- sasnet@sasnet.lu.se
- <https://www.facebook.com/sasnetpage>
- <https://twitter.com/sasnetlund>
- <https://www.instagram.com/sasnetlund/>

Visit SASNET's office

Allhelgona kyrkogata 14 (Eden), Lund, room 325