2017: a productive year for SASNET

2017 was a very productive and successful year for us at SASNET. Our researchers and staff published books, peer-reviewed articles and made over 40 public appearances. Our many followers on social media were continuously kept updated on research and other activities. During 2018 SASNET will continue to grow as Sweden's leading center for South Asian Studies

During 2017 SASNET had four employees: office director/research coordinator, Andreas Johansson (50%); communication officer, Elina Vidarsson (50%); and two researchers: Maria Tonini (75%) and Admir Skodo (100%).

Throughout 2017 SASNET has successfully started its transformation from being a national network to a research-oriented institute at Lund University. This transformation will continue during 2018.

Research

During 2017 SASNET has been engaged in six research projects.

- 1. Andreas was part of Associate Professor Kristina Myrvold's project on the use of religious miniature scriptures during World War I at Linnaeus University. His part of the projected started in February 2016. The research project investigates the production, distribution, and use of miniature scriptures by Muslim and Sikh soldiers from the province of Punjab in India who fought for the British Army at the Western front during World War I between 1914 and 1918. This project ended in December 2017.
- 2. Admir's research at SASNET uses conceptual history, transnational history, and historical sociology to examine how Afghan refugeehood and asylumhood has been constructed and contested by the state, humanitarian NGOs, international organizations, immigration attorneys, voluntary associations, and refugees themselves during the Cold War and the War on Terror. He focuses on Afghans in the Swedish region Scania, the San Francisco Bay Area, and potentially northwestern Pakistan somewhere down the road. During 2017, Admir has conducted over 60 interviews in Sweden and the United States, and conducted archival research in the archives of the Swedish Migration Agency and the Swedish Afghanistan Committee, among others. This project will continue throughout 2018.
- 3. As a SASNET researcher, Maria Tonini has explored patterns of inclusion and exclusion as they are articulated in digital media in India and Sweden, with special focus on social media platforms and user-generated content. Issues of interest include: online harassment, marginalization, and visibility. She plans to focus specifically on individuals and groups in minoritized positions such as women and queer-identifying people. The objective of this initial study is to gather insights on the ways in which individual and collective identities are shaped, articulated, enabled and disabled through digital media. This project ended in December 2017.
- 4. Another project that SASNET has funded during 2017 is the South Asia Media Project (SAMP), which aims to study and report on the growing digital media landscape in South Asia together with the development of the Swedish media landscape. Moreover, it aims to create a forum for exchange of ideas, perspectives and future outlooks on the South Asian and Swedish media landscape. It also aims to build up a network of South Asian and Swedish

media researchers and journalists to discuss and exchange ideas about work methods, trends within the media industry and business models.

- 5. The project "Comparative Environmental and Economic Analysis of Biomass Waste Utilization Strategies for Biofuel Production in Sweden and India" was conducted by Dr. Shveta Soam and Professor Pål Börjesson at the Department of Environmental and Energy System Studies. The project analyzed the utilization of lignocellulosic waste for biofuels production in India and Sweden. Their research focused on the environmental assessment of biochemical conversion pathways of converting lignocellulose waste into renewable fuels like ethanol and biogas. The aim behind Dr. Shveta Soam and Professor Börjesson's current research project is to analyze the environmental benefits of biofuels and their ability to reduce global warming. This project, which started in 2014 (partly funded by SASNET), has already resulted in two peer reviewed articles: "Global Warming Potential and Energy Analysis of Second Generation Ethanol Production from Rice Straw in India" (2016), and "Life Cycle Assessment of Rice Straw Utilization Practices in India" (2017).
- 6. Since 2010, Professor Helle Rydström and Dr. Anindita Datta have collaborated in both research and teaching. The 2017 SASNET funded project is entitled "Cross-cultural and Cross-disciplinary Collaborations: Gender, Space, and Precariousness in Asia". Underlying their collaboration is the exploration of gender, space, and precariousness in Asia. Their research seeks to redress the paucity of knowledge about ways in which gendered spaces in rural and urban settings in Asia constitute particular arenas which provide the socio-cultural, political, and economic conditions that allow for the abuse of various groups – especially women, girls, and other marginalized and vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. The ways in which gender, space, and precariousness underpins their collaboration is indicated by their jointly authored publications and Linnaeus-Palme program. The Linnaeus-Palme program, with a focus on gender and space, was initiated in 2013 and granted funding for two sequential phases, with the second face closing in the fall of 2016. Their collaboration under the Erasmus Mundus program, granted to Dr. Datta in 2012, was devoted to identifying the scientific and pedagogical synergy effects of integrating gender and space. The Linnaeus-Palme program as well as the Erasmus Mundus program enabled Dr. Datta to spend longer periods as Visiting Fellow at Lund University, allowing her to develop close relationships with the scholarly community at Lund University. The collaboration between the Department of Gender Studies at Lund University and the Department of Geography at the Delhi School of Economics has led to good scholarly and pedagogical results for both departments. In this project, Dr. Datta and Professor Rydström will build on the solid platform which they have developed over the years by infusing a Global South perspective on space and gender in the Lund Gender Studies Department on the one hand, and strengthening the gender component in the Delhi Geography Department on the other.

Research dissemination

In order to disseminate news about research and news on the South Asian region SASNET has begun collaborating with the magazine *Sydasien*. *Sydasien* is an important channel for spreading news and analyses about South Asia in the Swedish language. *Sydasien* was founded in 1977. First appearing in print, *Sydasien* transitioned into an online-only format in 2011 (www.sydasien.se). Through the collaboration between *Sydasien* and SASNET the magazine will once again appear in print biannually. Through SASNET the online version of *Sydasien* will gain more depth as a platform for reports and articles that present new research on South Asia in a clear and accessible manner. Selected articles will appear in the printed

version of *Sydasien*. The printed version will be sent out to researchers, journalists and old subscribers. It will also be handed out at events in the hope of further spreading knowledge of the region to a broader audience.

As a service to researchers and students SASNET is also keeping a library at the Lund University office. The library holds academic South Asia journals and a collection of 200 doctoral dissertations related to South Asia defended at Nordic universities. SASNET has been re-organizing the library collections for some time, but it recently re-opened its doors to visitors. For publications and conferences papers see appendix 1.

Seminars and lectures with external speakers organized by SASNET

During 2017 SASNET hosted 16 public lectures with a wide range of different collaborations with institutions at Lund University and cultural organizations around Lund.

February 2

Maggie Josephine, Assistant Professor at the Department for Communication and Journalism (DCJ) at the University of Kerala, held a lecture organized by SASA. Maggie talked about her study entitled "Environmental News Coverage: A Review of Newspapers in Kerala".

February 10

SASNET together with Media Evolution invited students and researchers to a conversation about how professional roles and workplaces are being reshaped and how we can find ways to work toward a kinder Internet. The question that was discussed was: what can one of the world's most connected countries - Sweden - learn from one of the world's largest countries - India – and vice versa?

Divya Rajagopal, of The Economic Times newspaper in Mumbai, talked about how newspapers in India continue to be sustainable in the digital age as reporters take up the challenge of multi-tasking with both print and digital media. Zeenab Aneez and Japreet Grewal from the Center for Internet and Society talked about how digitization affects people based on human rights, privacy and public education Karen Gabriel from Delhi University talked about online harassment. Vibodh Parthasarathi from Jamia Milia Islamia University talked about how globalization has affected the Indian media landscape.

February 15

Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas held a lecture entitled: "Is 'global' English compatible with local language ecologies and principles of language rights, or a neoimperialist project?" at the Center for Languages and Literature (SOL). The lecture was jointly organized by SOL and SASNET.

March 23

Ida Sofie Matzen held a lecture entitled: "Extremists of Love: Cosmological Activism among Pakistani Sufi Muslims in Lahore, Pakistan" at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES). The lecture was jointly organized by CMES and SASNET.

April 20

Dr. M.S Harikumar held a talk entitled "Mahatma Gandhi As a Communicator" at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES). The talk was organized by SASA.

May 3

Jan-Inge Bengtsson held a talk at Lunds Konsthall about the patterns in Afghan rugs. The lecture was held in collaboration with ABF and Lunds Konsthall.

May 9

Professor Nishi Mitra vom Berg held a lecture entitled: "Child marriages in India: Human Rights Violations that go unchecked" at LUX. The lecture was jointly organized by Human Rights Studies and SASNET.

May 11

Dan V. Hirslund from the University of Copenhagen held a talk entitled: "Urbanizing Maoism: Thoughts on a peasant revolt in the age of neoliberalism" at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

May 30

SASA continued its Fika Without Borders series with a lecture by Prabha Tirmare on "Excluded Children of Migrated communities in India: A challenge for integration and inclusion"

September 14

Film director Sarah Singh came to Skissernas Museum (Museum of Artistic Process and Public Art) in Lund to screen here last movie "A Million Rivers".

October 4

SASNET researcher Maria Tonini held a lecture entitled: More than Male Tears: Men's Rights Activists in India" at the Department of Gender Studies. The lecture was a part of the Global Gender Matters Workshop organized by the Department.

October 4

Dr. Andindita Datta held a lecture entitled: "Misogyny, media and resistances to genderscapes of online hate: Of Bharat Mata and Bharat ki Mata" at the Department of Gender Studies. The lecture was a part of the Global Gender Matters Workshop organized by the Department.

October 30

Professor Heinz Werner Wessler held a lecture entitled: "Jewish identity and literature in contemporary India" at LUX. The lecture was organized by SASNET and the Center for Theology and Religious Studies.

November 8

Amrita Ghosh held a seminar entitled: "Silent Waters: Mapping Silence and Women's Agency in Post-Partition Pakistan" at the Department of Gender Studies. The seminar was organized by the Department of Gender Studies and SASNET.

November 23

Phu Doma Lama, a Ph.D student from the Division of Risk Management and Societal Safety, held a talk entitled: "Exploring the consequences of adaptation to changes: The case of mobility and gender in Maldives" at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

December 9

SASNET screened the movie "Parched" followed by a conversation with Maria Tonini and Sarah Bodelson. The event was organized in collaboration with ABC who served snacks from Nepal and India during the screening. Admission was free.

Newsletter

The number of subscribers on SASNET's mailing list amounts to almost 3,500, worldwide. Published newsletters / news bulletins:

January 2017 February 2017 March 2017 April 2017 May 2017 August 2017 September 2017 October 2017 November 2017

Internationalization

In May the director of SASNET, Andreas Johansson, visited Emory University for discussions on future collaborations between the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies (MESAS) and SASNET/CMES. The reason for visiting MESAS was because of its similar experience in merging South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies into one center. Recently SASNET became a part of Lund University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES). MESAS solution to this challenge is very unique among universities in the United States, and has served as a model for Columbia University for example. Andreas meet with the director of MESAS, Professor Devin Stewart, and discussed prospects and problems with this kind of merger. The discussion was fruitful and the two departments continued talking during the fall.

On September 22-24, SASNET researcher Maria Tonini joined the 2017 EASAS Doctoral Workshop as a senior scholar. The workshop took place on the island of Procida, off the Gulf of Naples, Italy. At the EASAS workshop, 15 doctoral students from EASAS partner universities had the opportunity to present a text from their dissertation and receive in-depth feedback from senior scholars and peers. SASNET also funded the expenses of Phu Doma Lama, one of the doctoral students selected to participate in the workshop. This year's doctoral students were Amogh Dhar Sharma, Phu Doma Lama, Adil Hossain, Daniela Cappello, Kankana Talukda, Aditya Ramesh, Pär Fredborn Larsson, Darshan Karki, Simon Rastén, Anisha Thomas, Radha Kapuria, Ada Dyndo, James Bradbury, Sandhya Fuchs, and Gopika Jadeja. The scholars who acted as discussants were Alessandra Consolaro (University of Turin), Stefania Cavaliere (Universitá Orientale di Napoli), Martin Fuchs (University of Erfurt), Georg Berkemer (Humboldt University Berlin), Ann-Sophie Bentz (University of Paris-Diderot), and Maria Tonini. While the common theme of the EASAS workshop is a focus on South Asia, presenters came from diverse fields such as anthropology, literature, history, and cultural geography. The workshop thus created the possibility for doctoral students to receive constructive comments in an inter-disciplinary atmosphere, exchange perspectives, and build meaningful networks.

In October Andreas together with the Nordic Center of India (NCI) met with professor A.K. Ramakrishnan at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and discussed the possibility of creating a summer course for Nordic students to be hosted at JNU. The course topic that was considered concerned India's foreign policy. Possibilities of exchange programs for students and faculty members between the universities were also discussed. Similar discussions were also held with Dr. Sujata Cheema and Dr. Mujib Alam, at the Jamia Milia Islamia University. Andreas also meet with the director of West Asian studies, Meena Singh Roy, at the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis (IDSA), discussing the possibilities of exchanging researchers between the Center of Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), SASNET and IDSA. Andreas and the acting director of NCI, Christabel Royan, talked about how they will continue cross-institutional collaboration. Among the topics discussed were the possibilities for an annual conference that would be held in Delhi. Besides visiting university and research institutions, Andreas also meet with Sara Larsson at the Swedish Commerce Center, which is located at the Swedish Embassy. They discussed the possibility of a joint project in India.

In the end of November and early December Andreas traveled to Colombo and Malé and discussed, with different research organizations, the possibility of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between SASNET and research institutions in the different countries. A MoU was written with the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies, which will help guide researchers and students from Lund University when they visit Colombo. Similar discussions were held with institutions in Malé, but an agreement has not yet been signed.

Teaching

In March 2017 Lund University was commissioned, following a competitive selection process, by the Swedish Migration Agency to develop an interdisciplinary training program that will help the Migration Agency improve the scientific basis of its asylum investigations, including improving their skills in evaluation and finding country condition information, conducting oral interviews, source criticism, dealing with the effects of trauma and social status on memory, and risk assessment. The training program is a part of the Migration Agency's EU-funded project entitled Understanding Asylum, which involves academia, the UNHCR, Amnesty, the Red Cross, and other organizations. The team from Lund is composed of legal scholars, cognitive scientists, psychologists, and political and social scientists. Admir developed the parts on source criticism and the assessment of country condition information. He was chosen to be co-lead teacher and head of the sub-group responsible for the social and political sciences. Throughout 2018 Admir will deliver this program together with his co-teachers in monthly seminars, each lasting three days.

Admir also developed two modules in the Master course on debates on the Middle East at the Center for Middle Eastern Students. He held two lectures and two seminars.

In an attempt to start delivering courses on South Asia at SASNET, Admir and Andreas developed an introductory online course on the classic religious texts of South Asia and the Middle East and how they have been adopted, used, and interpreted today. A course plan has been drafted and the course literature has been selected.

Student activities

Celia Boltes, journalist student at Lund University, received a SASA travel grant in the spring of 2017. In September 2017 she travelled to Nepal and conducted fieldwork. Celia has now returned to Lund and has written the following report:

During the spring of 2017 I was happy to achieve the South Asian Student Association's travel grant. I had been traveling in Asia many times before, and I was also present during the earthquake that struck the country the 25 of April 2015. Because of this reason I had I great love for the country, but I also knew that Nepal was still struggling from the aftermath of the disaster. As a journalist student I often think about blank spots regarding news coverage, and I definitely think that Nepal is one of those spots. I decided that I wanted to write a long read about post disaster recovery in the country to spread the knowledge and gain a greater understanding about people's life conditions.

I travelled to Nepal in September 2017 and was there for approximately 2,5 weeks. During my time in and around the capital Kathmandu I got to talk to many interesting, inspiring and amazing people. My fieldwork was a great deal of making contact with people that was interesting for my story. I would like to recommend everyone who is travelling to a new place to use Facebook's function "events near me". There you can find a lot of events going on in a city, where the events are taking place, and who else is interested in the event. Also, never underestimate a spontaneous meeting with someone on the street or at a café.

The result of my trip to Nepal was a long read focusing on the fact that the tourist numbers are back to what they were before the disaster, but the people in Nepal are still suffering from trauma. My long read contains three cases: A mother and daughter working as teachers in Bhaktapur (an area that is on UNESCO's world heritage list and was badly damaged during the earthquake), a Nepalese woman working with disaster relief as an agent for the United Nations, and a Nepalese trekking guide who, even though he was badly traumatized, is back working in the mountains to be able to support his family.

Appendix 1. SASNET publications and appearances

Publications

Books

- 1. Yakuza Tattoo, Stockholm: Dokument Press, 2017 Andreas Johansson
- 2. Pragmatic Muslim Politics: The Case of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress Andreas Johansson. Dordrecht: Springer (accepted for publication).

Peer-reviewed articles and book chapters

- 1. "Circumscribed recognition: Creating a Safe Space for Queer Young People In India". In Mason, Corinne (ed.) *Queer Development Studies: A Reader*, London: Routledge (in press) Maria Tonini.
- 2. "Men are Vulnerable Too: Analysing the Narratives of the Indian Men's Rights Activist Network", *Excursions* (under review) Maria Tonini.

- 3. "Migrant Smuggling, Reasons for Fleeing, and Uses of Asylum Capital among Afghan Asylum Seekers in Sweden", *Nidaba: Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle East Studies* (in press) Admir Skodo.
- 4. "'Preventing an Uncontrollable Onslaught': Swedish Asylum Policy Toward Afghans in the 1980s and the 1990s", *Journal of Refugee Studies* (manuscript to be submitted shortly) Admir Skodo.
- 5. "Idealism", Sage Encyclopedia of Research Methods (in press) Admir Skodo.

Newspapers, magazines, public lectures

- 1. "Pragmatic Muslim Politics: The case of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress", review in *STK: Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift*, September, 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 2. Exhibition at Linnéuniversitet, Café Astrakan, Växjö 23 March 29 May, 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 3. Book release and exhibition at Kafé De Luxe, Växjö April 7, 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 4. *Lunds universitets magasin*, *LUM*, "Fotograferade japanska maffiatatueringar" Andreas Johansson.
- 5. www.lnu.se, "Unique glimpse into the culture of the Japanese mafia" (in English) Andreas Johansson.
- 6. *Smålandsposten*, 2 April, 2017" Andreas skildrar japanska maffians tatueringar i ny bok" Andreas Johansson.
- 7. Morgonpasset i P3, Sveriges Radio, 4 April, 2017 "Allt om den japanska maffian" Andreas Johansson.
- 8. P4 Extra, Sveriges Radio, 4 April, 2017 "Andreas har fotat den japanska maffians tatueringar" Andreas Johansson.
- 9. www.myscience.org, 6 April, 2017 "Unique glimpse into world of Japanese mafia tattoos" Andreas Johansson.
- 10. SVT Smålandsnytt, 20 April, 2017 Andreas kom japanska maffian in på bara skinnet Andreas Johansson.
- 11. www.vxonews.se, 20 April, 2017 "Växjöbo släpper bok om maffian" Andreas Johansson.
- 12. Gomorron Sverige, SVT, 21 April, 2017, SVT play Andreas Johansson.
- 13. Book launch at the Center for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, 4 May 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 14. Mariestadstidningen, 11 May, 2017 "Maffian in på bara skinnet" Andreas Johansson.
- 15. Proper Magazin 23, Summer 2017, "Murder Ink" Andreas Johansson.
- 16. Allt om Stockholm, 21 August, 2017, "Ställer ut unika bilder av Yakuza-tatueringar" Andreas Johansson.
- 17. Mitt i, 22 August, 2017, "Ställer ut bilder med Yakuzans tatueringar" Andreas Johansson.
- 18. *Kulturnyheterna*, SR P1, 24 August, 2017, "Fotobok ger inblick i japanska maffians kultur" Andreas Johansson.
- 19. Exhibition at Stockholm Ink Bash Tattoo Convention, 25-27 August, 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 20. Presentation of *Yakuza Tattoo* at Stockholm Ink Bash Tattoo Convention, 25-26 August, 2017 Andreas Johansson.

- 21. Exhibition at Rock the Dot, Växjö, 2 October 11 December 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 22. "Mötet med den Japanska maffian", Bokmässan i Göteborg, 1 October, 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 23. "Gudar, drakar och pistoler", Bokmässan i Göteborg, 1 October, 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 24. Z Tattoo, 39, 2017, "Boknyheter" Yakuza Tattoo Andreas Johansson.
- 25. Media Zink, 8 September, "Yakuza Tattoo; An Insightful Book By Andreas Johansson" Andreas Johansson.
- 26. Fotografen, October 2017, "Intervju med Andreas Johansson" Andreas Johansson.
- 27. "More than Male Tears: Men's Rights Activism in India", 04/10/17, Global Gender Matters Symposium, Dept. of Gender Studies, Lunds Universitet Maria Tonini.
- 28. "Purity and Danger: On Being a Aoman in 21st Century India", 10/10/17 Martedi in Villa, Treviso (Italy) Maria Tonini.
- 29. "Muktiprasang: en dikt av Rajkamal Chaudhri", the Poetry Seminar, 24/11/17, Center for Languages and Literature, Lund University Maria Tonini.
- 30. "Sex, Violence and Women's lives", Screening of the movie "Parched" followed by a discussion, 9/12/17, Kino, Lund Maria Tonini.
- 31. "Queer- livet går vidare med eller utan lagens samtycke", *Sydasien* 23/01/17 Maria Tonini.
- 32. "Afghanistan: Permanent Crisis of Legitimacy", *The Times Literary Supplement*, October 20 2017 Admir Skodo.
- 33. "How Afghans Became Second-class Asylum Seekers",
- The Conversation, February 20 2017. Republished in The Independent, RefWorld and Stockholms Fria Tidning Admir Skodo.
- 34. "Swedish Immigration Is Not Out of Control It's Actually Getting More Restrictive" *The Conversation*, February 28 2017. Republished in *The Independent* and *Metis Europe* Admir Skodo.
- 35. "How Immigration Detention Compares Around the World", *The Conversation*, April 19 2017 Admir Skodo
- 36. Interview on Afghan asylum seekers and refugees by *Ystads Allehanda*, *Sydasien*, *UDN Global Daily Taiwan* Admir Skodo
- 37. "Shades of the Prison-house", *The Times Literary Supplement*, April 26, 2017 Admir Skodo
- 38. "The Afterlife of Idealism The Impact of New Idealism on British Historical and Political Thought, 1945-1980," review in Rethinking History: Journal of Theory and Practice, October, 2017 Admir Skodo.

Conferences/Workshops

- 1. Paper presentation ("Gods, Dragons and Guns: Photographing the Yakuza and Their Tattoos"), the EASR Conference, Leuven, Belgium, 2017 Andreas Johansson.
- 2. Participant in the LMK Styftelsen Idéforum i Björkliden, September 2017 Maria Tonini.
- 3. Participant in the EASAS Doctoral Workshop, Procida (Italy), September 2017 Maria Tonini.

- 4. Paper presentation ("Preventing an Uncontrollable Onslaught': Swedish Asylum Policy Toward Afghans in the 1980s and the 1990s") at Malmö University College, the Migration Seminar, October 2017 Admir Skodo.
- 5. Paper presentation ("The Public Philosophy of the Swedish State in its Response to the 2015 'Refugee Crisis'") at the international workshop Refugees in Northern Europe, Lund, June 2017 Admir Skodo.
- 6. Participant in the conference "Sanctuary in Sweden", Malmö, September 2017, which migration scholars, migration lawyers, and members from humanitarian NGOs such as the Redo Cross to discuss each other's work and potential collaborations Admir Skodo.

Grants

- 1. Helge Ax:son Johnsons Stiftelse (34 000). Admir Skodo
- 2. Knut och Alice Wallenbergs Stiftelse (14 000). Admir Skodo
- 3. Swedish Research Council (VR), 25% three years project. Maria Tonini