

Between Indigenous and Immigrant:
 A Workshop on South Asian Migration in Global History
 October 26 – 28, 2017

This workshop probes how indigeneity, immigration, and shifting politics of empire, nation, and citizenship are illuminated through South Asian migration histories in comparative and connected contexts. One session will explore the role of Canadian histories at multiple levels – indid to in aheraln migrad t– as they int panels will explore citizenship, labor dias histories, and radicalism. Furthermore, th to bridge academic research and public e data management and archiving commun will include a “next steps” session, in wh publication as well as future collaboratio

Participants

Gaiutra Bahadur, Independent Scholar/Jo
 Victor V. Ramraj, UVIC
 Sana Aiyar, MIT
 Sara Shneiderman, UBC
 Anneeth Kaur Hundle, UC-Merced
 Seema Sohi, UC-Boulder
 Gajendra Singh, Exeter
 Joanna Ogden, Independent Scholar
 Samip Mallick, SAADA, South Asian A
 Vivek Bald, MIT
 Anne Murphy, UBC
 Nilanjana Bhattacharjya, Arizona State U
 Davina Bhandar, SFU
 Renisa Mawani, UBC
 Marina Martin, Frankfurt

Bikrum Singh Gill, Aberystwyth

Schedule

Thursday, October 26, 2017 – David Strong Building, C126 4:30 p.m.

Opening Words, Dr. Victor V. Ramraj, CAPI
 Welcome, Dr. John Price, UVIC, Asian Canadians on Vancouver Island
 Opening Words, Dr. Davina Bhandar, Simon Fraser University
 Opening Words, Dr. Neilesh Bose, University of Victoria

Gaiutra Bahadur, *Conjure Women and Coolie Women*

Friday, October 27, 2017 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

1) Race, Empire, and Citizenship – Fraser 152. **9 – 10:30 a.m.**
 (Chair, Sikata Banerjee, University of Victoria)

Sana Aiyar, MIT
Anneeth Kaur Hundle, UC-Merced
Sara Shneiderman, UBC

2) Legal Histories – Fraser 152. **10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**
 (Chair, Supriya Routh, University of Victoria)

Renisa Mawani, UBC
Marina Martin, Frankfurt
Victor V. Ramraj, UVIC

Panel 1, Race, Empire, Citizenship

Sana Aiyar
Associate Professor of History,
MIT

“Out of India: East Africa and its South Asian Diasporas”

Where does the Indian diaspora belong? This is a question of historical and historiographical concern. Mapping on to one another, nationalist histories, and the U.S. as a nation (1541-1976). Mapping on to one another, nationalist histories, and the U.S. as a nation (1541-1976). Mapping on to one another, nationalist histories, and the U.S. as a nation (1541-1976).

Anneeth Kaur Hundle
Assistant Professor of Anthropology,
UC Merced

“Unsettling Citizenship: Race, Security and Afro

Sara Shneiderman

**Associate Professor of Anthropology and School of Public Policy and
Global Affairs/Co-Director, Institute of Asian Research,
University of British Columbia**

“The Irony of Open Borders: Mobility, Citizenship and Ethnicity
in Contemporary Himalayan South Asia”

In this era of travel bans and renewed populist nationalism, arguments for open borders and global citizenship appear ever more compelling. Yet the actual effects of open borders on framework for inclusive citizenship and sovereignty from below may not always be as imagined. Drawing upon my ongoing ethnographic research in two different contexts—the movement for an independent state of Gorkhaland in the Darjeeling district of India’s state of West Bengal, and the Madheshi regionalist movement for full citizenship in Nepal—I argue that the political-historical reality of the postcolonial open border between Nepal and India has yielded unexpected results. In both contexts, members of marginalized communities are unable to gain full recognition from the state in which they are born, due to ethno-racialized frameworks for regulating citizenship, which in turn curtail formal political agency. I ask: in such contexts, how do the experiences of both those who negotiate multiple citizenships (simultaneously or sequentially) and those who possess no citizenship (de facto stateless people), complicate state-promoted narratives of singular citizenship and nationalist belonging, yielding their own forms of political action? How have global discourses of indigeneity and marginality worked to counter neocolonial forms of cultural imperialism, challenging nationalist claims to territory through locally-emergent social movements? Finally, I consider what it means to examine these questions within non-diasporic context

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Panel 3, Arts, Literature, and Popular Culture

Anne Murphy
Associate Professor of Asian Studies,
University of British Columbia

“Connected Literatures:
 Local and Transnational Cultural Production in Punjabi”

My presentation seeks to open discussion of the deeply local and simultaneously transnational nature of Punjabi language cultural production, inviting consideration of the ways in which cross-border work functions to destabilize understanding of ideas of "Diaspora," "Homeland" and indeed "Nation" itself, and in so doing to produce an ethics of engagement both within and across national boundaries.

Nilanjana Bhattacharjya
Senior Lecturer in the Honors Program,
Arizona State University

“Tejaswini Niranjana’s *Mobilizing India*: Migration, Popular Music, and the Constitution of Nation, Modernity, Gender, and Sexuality”

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discipline— an issue that she found especially troubling given popular music’s role in West Indian cultural politics. Furthermore, she notes that any attempt to move beyond the “official histories” must consider everyday cultural practices in diasporic communities, which motivates her focus on chutney-soca and calypso.

Notes: (Panel 3)

the missing link between anti-imperial violences in India, Ireland and Egypt and the ideologies of Anarchism, Bolshevism and Pan-Islamism. The dangers Ghadar posed required extraordinary measures. The Lahore trial was the first in a series of ‘Conspiracy Cases’ in British India that suspended ordinary jurisprudence. Guilt was assumed; it was innocence which had to be proven. The near certainty of successful prosecutions made the Lahore trial a process of constructing a narrative of events rather than proving guilt. And, in that narrative of events relatively inconsequential crimes could become treason as long as it was shown that the participants were one step removed from an identifiable Ghadari. This paper will focus on one such event – the Sahnewal dacoity on 23rd January 1915. It involved several men who killed and robbed a village moneylender, assaulted his wife and collectively raped his daughter-in-law. The paper will analyse how this relatively minor event could be used to construct revolutionary criminality and revolutionary consciousness in India during the First World War. It will explore the bodily violences committed at Sahnewal as a way of reading into the alternative consciousnesses of the rebel, and not-so-rebel, Ghadari.

Johanna Ogden
Independent Scholar

“The Radical East Indians of Oregon”

I will explore two inter-related themes that I believe are critical to understanding the rise of the radical nationalist Ghadar Party and its 1913 formation in Oregon. First, East Indians were overwhelming laborers in North America. As such, they were immersed in the working-class politics of the day, whether by choice or as exclusionist targets. Mainstream working class political organizations in the North American West, as part of a global movement, were central to the spread and enforcement of white right. Yet East Indians, overwhelmingly laborers, were propelled into radicalism against their racial targeting and colonized status – in exactly this milieu. I will explore the synergy and unexpected consequences in settler colonies between the time’s endemic racism and the greatest extension of democratic rights to those defined as white. Ghadar was, in a way, East Indians’ claim to the heart of whiteness – the right to self-rule and democratic rights. Secondly, early political leaders in Oregon argued for a specific form of – as DuBois described the times –the white religion. Rooted in western post-Civil War politics, and honed with Chinese migrants, Oregon’s racial policy presented as racial tolerance and opposition to communal ethnic violence. In reality it was a policy of racial supremacy crafted to foster particular business and state interests.

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Panel 5, Archives, Communities, and Histories **between the Local and Global**

Samip Mallick
Executive Director,
South Asian American Digital Archive/SAADA

“Community Archives in the Digital Era: Building the South Asian American Digital Archive”

For the last nine years, SAADA (the South Asian American Digital Archive)

imperative was to remain hidden and unnoticed, who quietly integrated into other U.S. communities of color? This question is at the center of the trans-media Bengali Harlem/Lost Histories project, which consists of a work of written history (*Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America*), a documentary film (*In Search of Bengali Harlem*), and a web-based community archive (“The Lost Histories Project”). This presentation will discuss the ways that different methods and media are being employed to excavate the stories of Bengali Muslim men who

Panel 6, Labor Diasporas Past and Present

anda Wright

**istant Professor, Department of Anthropology,
lege of William and Mary**

ecurity, Rights and the Postcolonial State: Indian Laborers' View from the
Persian Gulf'

is paper, I use archival and ethnographic materials to explore shifting legal
agements with the discourse of consent and how it is mobilized in regards to
treatment of migrant laborers. I look at how consent became instrumental in
ning colonial and contemporary labor mobilities, and I examine how the
ts of individuals were structured as secondary to the security of the nation-
e. Beginning with nineteenth century legal debates in England around the
sent of Indian indentured laborers, I find legal debates concerning workers'
ity to freely consent motivated policies, contracts, and bureaucratic

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Neha Vora
Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology,

Riyad Koya
Ph.D. candidate, Department of History,
University of California Berkeley

“Laboring and Other Diasporas: Defining the Emigrant and Dividing the Diaspora under the Indian Emigration Act of 1922”

The dispersal of Indian indentured laborers to colonies in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean, East and Southern Africa, and the Pacific in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is often treated as a prototypical example of a labor diaspora. The category of a “labor diaspora” itself pluralizes a broader concept of “diaspora,” raising questions about the relationship of labor diasporas to other forms of diaspora. The relative status of this “subaltern” diaspora to “elite” diasporas has been thrown into relief by the differential access to citizenship rights afforded to the descendants of indentured laborers by the postcolonial Indian state. The reluctant embrace of so-called “Persons of Indian Origin” has raised questions as to the genesis of India’s disenchantment with its “older,” laboring diaspora. This paper historicizes the disjunction between labor and “elite” diasporas through an examination of colonial Indian debates concerning the passage of the Indian Emigration Act of 1922. The 1922 Act, I argue, may be properly understood as an extension of a longer debate on the abolition of indentured labor. The Emigration Act introduced a vital distinction between skilled and unskilled labor for purposes of defining emigration. This distinction enabled the restriction of the emigration of unskilled labor to specific destinations while facilitating the continued emigration of skilled labor. In seeking to prohibit of the emigration of unskilled labor, I argue, nationalists sought to promote the international standing of India. In this final repudiation of the system of indentured labor we may locate a pivotal moment in the Indian state’s longer-term disavowal of its laboring diasporas.

Notes: (Panel 6)

Anne Murphy is Associate Professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia and co-Director of the Centre for India and South Asia Research in the Institute of Asian Research. Her monograph, *The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2012), explored the construction of Sikh memory and historical consciousness in textual forms and in relation to material representations and religious sites from the eighteenth century to the present. Dr. Murphy is currently pursuing research on the history of the Punjabi language and the early modern and modern emergence of Punjabi literature.

Nilanjana Bhattacharjya is Honors Faculty Fellow at Arizona State University. As an ethnomusicologist, she works on popular music from South Asia and its diasporic communities. Her articles and essays appear in journals including *Asian Music* and *South Asian History and Culture* as well as in the edited collections *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance* (Minnesota) and *South Asian Transnationalisms: Cultural Exchange in the Twentieth Century* (Routledge).

Davina Bhandar is Co-Director of the Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities and Adjunct Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. She focuses on Canadian Studies, security and border studies, theories of citizenship and multiculturalism, and critical race studies with a specific focus on the South Asian community in North America.

Victor V. Ramraj is the Director of the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives, Professor of Law, and CAPI Chair in Asia-Pacific Legal Relations. Professor Ramraj has edited/co-edited several books published by Cambridge University Press, including *Emergencies and the Limits of Legality* (2009) and *Emergency Powers in Asia: Exploring the Limits of Legality* (2010). His research interests include comparative constitutional and administrative law, transnational regulation, and the history of and regulatory challenges arising from state-company relationships in Asia.

Renisa Mawani is Professor of Sociology at the University of British Columbia. Her interests include colonial legal History, critical theory, race and racism, affect, time and temporality, oceans and maritime worlds, indigeneity, colonial India and the diaspora, and posthumanism. Her book, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871 - 1921* (Duke University Press, 2009) details legal encounters between aboriginal peoples, Chinese migrants, Europeans, and those enumerated as

“mixed race” along Canada’s west coast. Her new book, *Across Oceans of Law*, traces the currents and counter-

Conference Organizers

Neilesh Bose is Canada Research Chair and Assistant Professor of History at the University of Victoria. His research and teaching interests include the history of modern South Asia, the British Empire, decolonization, and the history of diasporas and migrations. Earlier publications include *Recasting the Region: Language, Culture, and Islam in Bengal* (Oxford University Press, 2014) as well as articles in *South Asia Research*, *Modern Asian Studies*, and *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, among others. Current research focuses on religious reform in nineteenth century India and a biography of the itinerant activist Taraknath Das (1884 – 1958).

Renisa Mawani