



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative of a previously funded grant application, which conforms to a past set of grant guidelines. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the application guidelines for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Research Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Unfinished Partitions in South Asia and the Making of Miyahs, Biharis, and Christians into Noncitizens (1947 - the Present)

Institution: Arizona State University

Project Director: Yasmin Saikia

Grant Program: Collaborative Research

**Unfinished Partitions in South Asia and the Making of
Miyahs, Biharis, and Christians into Noncitizens (1947 - the Present)**

Project Directors: Yasmin Saikia and Chad Haines

Statement of Significance and Impact

There are over 65 million people today displaced from their homes due to violence and natural disasters. But what of those who are “displaced” without having ever moved? With the rise of populist ethnic and religious nationalisms, millions of people are finding themselves no longer welcome in their own home. This project explores the experiences of displacement of people “left behind” due to shifting international borders and new expressions of nationalism mapping them outside the national community across the three countries of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Our research focuses on three communities who, already leading precarious lives, are victims of new forms of exclusion, making them noncitizens and, as a consequence, nonhuman. Our key questions include what is it like to live as precarious noncitizens in one’s own country, and how do these communities create and maintain a sense of belonging? Our aim is to tell the stories of these particular communities in South Asia to highlight their enduring humanity and engage the larger academic discussions about vulnerable communities, citizenship, and belonging in the postcolonial context of partitioned lives. A manuscript preparation grant from the NEH’s Collaborative Research Program would support the completion of field and archival research already started in the three countries as well as the writing of a co-authored book.

Today, in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, there are millions who are not recognized as citizens or who are degraded into second-class status. Among these many vulnerable people are: the Miyahs in Assam, India; the Biharis in Dhaka, Bangladesh; and the Dalit Christians in Punjab, Pakistan. These communities live in precarious economic and environmental conditions and socially and culturally they are not allowed to integrate into the national community. Though numerically small communities, in the last few decades, political discourses brought them to the center stage of national discussions. In India, the Miyahs are framed as “illegal”, “termites”, and/or “Muslim noncitizens” in contrast to a national Hindu identity; in Pakistan, violence against the Dalit Christians for blasphemy becomes a site for reaffirming the nation’s Islamic identity; and in Bangladesh, the Biharis are reduced to “camp dwelling” as “stranded Pakistanis” as a means to mark Bengali liberation from Pakistan.

This project builds upon years of scholarly activity by both collaborators in South Asia and it interweaves humanistic research methods, including: archival research, oral histories, field observations, and ethnographic research to gather first-hand accounts of precarious communities in South Asia. This project is also designed to continue the project directors’ ongoing joint scholarship on the concept of “people’s peace” for developing a humanities perspective on peace as a lived value and everyday ethic. The project directors published two edited volumes in which they co-authored four conceptual chapters that focus on the formal and informal arrangements people devise to live in peace with others, as well as the challenges they face in sustaining people’s peace.

The project’s final product will be a co-authored book from an academic press. The book is conceived with an eye for attracting a larger audience of human rights and refugee advocates as well as public readers, particularly in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. One of the goals for the lasting impact of the book is to construct and disseminate it in a way that allows for it to be read by people in these three countries and thus hopefully create more appreciation of the lives of noncitizens and support for better policies that include rather than exclude people. Keeping the different levels of audiences in mind, the book will be in an accessible narrative style not to exceed 210 pages in length. Previously, the project team published with Cambridge University Press, Duke University Press, Routledge, and Syracuse University Press, and all expressed interest in this current project as well. Zed Books is also interested to publish this book with them. Given our successful track record of co-authorship, collaborative research, and depth of knowledge of South Asia, we are confident that we can complete the research, analyze the findings, write an engaging and important book, and secure a publisher by the end of the three-year project.

Unfinished Partitions in South Asia and the Making of Miyahs, Biharis, and Christians into Noncitizens (1947 - the Present)

Project Directors: Yasmin Saikia and Chad Haines

Section 1: Substance and Context

In 1947, British India was partitioned into two new nation-states, India and Pakistan, the latter divided between two discrete entities, East and West. In 1971, Pakistan experienced another territorial division when East Pakistan seceded, creating Bangladesh. The events of these multiple partitions are scars on the landscape of the subcontinent; the traumas of the displaced millions fester even today. As new borders were mapped and the territories of the nation-states were delineated, several communities were “left behind”, becoming outsiders, not because they migrated, but because of shifting borders. The communities left behind are reminders of the unfinished partitions of postcolonial South Asia. Like enemies across the national borders they, too, are represented as “security threats” and “infiltrators” in national political discourses that transform them into objects for exclusion and expulsion. Today, in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh there are millions who are not recognized as citizens or who are degraded into second-class status. What is it like to live as precarious noncitizens in one’s own country? How do these communities create belonging and a sense of home? How do they experience and express their humanity as they are being cast as subhuman noncitizens? To highlight the enduring humanity of the dehumanized, this project explores and answers these and other related questions through research on three noncitizen communities: the Miyahs in Assam, India; the Biharis in Dhaka, Bangladesh; and the Dalit Christians in Punjab, Pakistan. Funding from the NEH Collaborative Research Program will enable us to complete the research and write a co-authored book, illuminating the values and practices of precarious lives at the margins of national belonging, providing a history of the making of noncitizens, and delineate the ongoing politics of South Asia’s partitions as continuous disruptions and disjunctions of everyday lives.

In postcolonial India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh there are many vulnerable and dispossessed communities. The three communities we are examining depict some of the most extreme cases of marginality as the rhetoric of their outsidership is not simply an imagination but it is substantiated with the drastic punishment of noncitizenship. These communities are cast aside to live in precarious economic and environmental conditions; socially and culturally they are deemed pariah communities and are not allowed to integrate; and, being mapped as hostile foreigners, they are differentiated from other citizens and denied basic rights. While the conditions of their lives have worsened as they keep getting pushed to the extreme margins, in the last few decades political discourses have brought them to the center stage of national discussions. Although they are demographically insignificant, it is from their location as “outcast” and “intruders” that new narratives of enclosed populist national identities are being constructed for public consumption. In India, framing the Miyahs as “illegal”, “immigrant”, “Bangladeshi”, “termites”, and or “Muslim noncitizens” allows for cementing a national Hindu identity. In Pakistan, violence against the Dalit Christians for blasphemy becomes a site for reaffirming the nation’s Islamic identity. While in Bangladesh, the Biharis being the reminders of the (west) Pakistanis are punished to prove Bangladesh’s liberation from Pakistan. What is truly remarkable, viewed against this background, is how these communities continue to maintain the notion of humanity. People who are denied humanity become its signifiers in our reading, offering an opening for a different way of seeing them and offering an alternative, humanistic, vision of the future.

In order to better appreciate the shared realities of the vulnerable and marginal in postcolonial South Asia our project shifts the focus away from national state-centric rhetoric to develop a combined story of precarious lives and common sufferings. Recognizing the lived realities of these communities across the wider canvas of South Asia allows us to overcome national divisions and make the noncitizens the “connecting bridge” between the divided, but interrelated, people. As well, by zooming into the micro level of the villages and camps where these noncitizens live, we can see the complexity and richness of their everyday lives as humans. Drawing from Siep Stuurman, we approach the common humanity of the otherized noncitizens as a “culturally significant similarity” (Stuurman 2017, 7) with citizens, which gives

us the advantage to approach the people of the subcontinent as similar, even in their national differences, and accept those who are discounted from national citizenship for what they have—their humanity.

To make the concept of the humanity of noncitizens accessible and thinkable, we move beyond the study of discourses to pay attention to: (1) the practices of religious traditions, particularly evident in important life events—such as birth, marriage, death, and religious festivals; (2) the values and ethics that guide them in their personal lives and facilitate community in acts of neighborliness, hospitality, care, and concern; (3) their expressed desires and hopes for their children; (4) their struggles for education, employment, and health; and, (5) the variety of everyday adjustments and negotiations they make to claim and live like other ordinary people. This provides us with the vocabulary to describe their human communities. It also allows us to situate them culturally to distinguish what is specific in each context of the three communities yet place them within the continuum of the variety in South Asia.

Our research follows the pathways of previous scholarship from a variety of fields and disciplines, namely Partition studies, South Asian history, Holocaust studies, and religious studies. Partition history and literature focus primarily on the event of Partition in 1947 (e.g. Pandey 2001, Chatterjee 1994, Manto 1991, Dhulipala 2014) with little or no discussion on the break-up of Pakistan in 1971. Partition is thus studied as a closed event, ending with refugee resettlement in India and Pakistan. Feminist scholars, such as Urvashi Butalia (2000) and Ritu Menon (1998), provide a corrective to the ‘closed’ Partition narrative showing the ongoing trauma of horrific memories in women’s lives. Vazira Zamindar’s (2010) research on the protracted Partition shows how the project of territorial mapping and the issue of belonging continued much longer, particularly for Muslims who were displaced from India and migrated to Pakistan. But we do not hear the voices of people who were left behind in all three countries, particularly after Pakistan was partitioned (Saikia 2011). The Biharis, also known as “stranded Pakistanis”, appear in Bangladesh’s national narrative as enemy “collaborators” (Siddiqui 2013).

The Miyahs, Biharis, and Dalit Christians did not move, but the borders around them moved and shifted. They were transformed into precarious noncitizens in their own home countries. We critique the idea of enclosed society espoused by John Rawls (1971) as an inherently violent idea prevalent in modern conceptions of nation-states and popularized by scholars such as Samuel Huntington (1996, 2004). Nation-states today not only use vocabulary to exclude the noncitizens but dehumanize them through policies and actions. Following Hannah Arendt, we explore how noncitizen communities live without rights because, as she argues, they are denied the right to enjoy rights (1976) and exist in a state of exception as Giorgio Agamben (2005) illustrates in the case of the Jews in Holocaust Germany.

Prevailing studies on citizenship in South Asian studies document how the concept of birth right citizenship was compromised by religion, caste, ethnicity, language, gender, and class hierarchies (Jayal 2013, Sadiq 2009, Kabeer 2005, Roy 2000). Taking it a step further, we are exploring how some communities are made into noncitizens by banishing them from the national psyche as argued by Matthew Gibney (2017). Thus, although rooted in the place of their birth, the Miyah’s, Bihari’s and Dalit Christian’s legal and social status is precarious. We borrow the term precarious citizen from Noora Lori (2017) to refer to people who are the internal “other”, and the term noncitizens from Linda Bosnaik (2006) to refer to the communities that are unable to secure citizenship in the place of their birth. In our research, by bringing together the social and political experiences of three precarious noncitizen communities, we engage James Scott’s (1999) argument of how states make people legible, but we also show the inverse of how states make communities illegible as humans.

In our research we document how in living through a variety of experiences the noncitizens cope and create meaning of their humanity. We approach the meaning making process of their humanity not as fixed, normative regimes of acceptable social behavior and practices, but of informal practices drawing people together around causes and issues that radiate their humanity. For the Miyahs and Biharis, their reliance on Islamic values of community, hospitality, and responsibilities toward the guests can serve to foster thinking and to act in ways that occlude the state’s dehumanization. The normative idea that there is no stranger in Islam (Rosenthal 1997) is a powerful motif for these precarious communities to reaffirm the common connection between themselves and others. For the Dalit Christians in Pakistan, whose origins are in the Hindu outcaste *Chuhra*s and Sikh *mahzabi* communities, the church is a powerful place

of community organizing, connecting them globally to the Christian world for their rights (Amjad-Ali 2015). Though the church is a formal space, it is the informal gatherings that happen outside worship where they express reciprocity and solidarity and disrupt their fragmentation from human communities.

Through values, lived ethics, assembly, and informal practices the Miyahs, Biharis, and Dalit Christians assert their humanness, even as others map them out as nonhuman. Their experiences are an outcome of the “war on interdependence” and we discover in their daily lives small acts of disruption, a reclaiming of their own humanity, of their “demand that lives should be treated equally and that they should be equally livable” (Butler 2015, 67). In the noncitizen communities we discover an “ethics of cohabitation” through informal practices and fluid assemblages, or “coming together” (Haines 2019), or what Richard Sennett advances as a basic, innate human trait – cooperation (2012). The ethics of cohabitation in South Asia is deeply embedded in popular notions of hospitality, neighborliness, and community. Our work documents how such ethical ideas are utilized for reclaiming humanity. Numerous scholars engage these values, but as normative ethics, as philosophical ideas, and as religious morality, but rarely as lived practices (e.g. Gabbay 2010; Siddiqui 2015; Agarwal 2011; Heim 2004). When studied, they are situated as acts of piety (Ernst 1992; Jurgensmeyer & McMahan 1998), as individuated acts of humanitarianism (Bornstein 2012), or as informed by western and global humanitarianism in diasporic communities (Geithner et al 2004; Dusenbery & Tatla 2009). Our concern is to provide an ethnography of ethics as lived by precarious noncitizens. This does not mean they are a pure community of people who are good all the time. Rather, their lived ethics as we approach it, is expressive of a politics of belonging and being human in the modern world (Sennett 2012), which is effectively disrupted by states and the institutionalization of belonging through the legal status of citizenship (Nussbaum 2013).

In our final analysis, following Partha Chatterjee’s critique (2004), we argue that the postcolonial citizenship regimes in South Asia offer only a partial account of the lived realities of the marginalized. Thus, in our research we will “bring back” into the center of our narrative the experiences of those left behind, the precarious lives whose everyday existence enable an imagination of individual and collective agency, of creating community and belonging that is a bottom-up struggle to sustain human relations and produce vibrant and visible human communities.

Section 2: History of the Project and its Productivity

This project is comprised of multiple components that merge our combined scholarship on South Asia. Most immediately, the project is part of our ongoing joint scholarship on the concept of “people’s peace” for developing a humanities perspective on peace as a lived value and everyday ethic. We published two co-edited volumes in which we have co-authored four conceptual chapters that focus on the formal and informal arrangements people devise to live in peace with others, as well as the challenges they face in sustaining people’s peace.

In advancing those ideas and furthering our interest in precarious noncitizens we organized a conference on “Peace with the Other” in November 2019, bringing together scholars studying a diversity of issues including race, migration and displacement, gender and sexuality, and the nonhuman other. In the conference Saikia presented her research on the Miyahs. Haines presented a paper reflecting on Islamophobia and practices of hate, providing conceptual frames for advancing the work in South Asia.

We commenced this new research project a year ago, focusing on the Miyahs of Assam. There are 2,000 Miyah villages in Assam along the Brahmaputra River. Originally from East-Bengal, the British colonial government bribed and encouraged them to migrate to Assam for increasing food crop production in the early 1900s. Nearly a hundred years later, the new politics of *Hindutva* identity have transformed them into “Bangladeshi” *ghuspaithiye* (intruder) and *kire* (termite) to legitimize their ferocious dehumanization.

We have collected secondary materials regarding these discourses, including Miyah poetry, novels, books, pamphlets, and ephemeral materials that produce a counter human narrative. In fall 2019, we conducted ethnographic research in two Miyah villages, Sontoli and Lakhipur in Assam. The on-the-ground work and the material collection provide us a window for understanding the precarious condition

of the Miyahs. It is important to note here that the term Miyah, until recently, was used pejoratively, but since Miyah public intellectuals have claimed it, it has gained currency for exposing the violence against them. During our visit to Sontoli village we had several discussions on this issue. Our visit to Lakhipur village enabled us to develop local contacts there and in the adjoining village of Morisakundi for undertaking future research. In spring 2020 we will spend one month in Assam to identify additional villages and establish local contact for future field research.

Saikia first undertook research on the Bihari communities in Bangladesh in the early 2000s, writing a book on women's experiences in the war of 1971 (2011). Since then, she has visited Bangladesh several times. Al-Falah, a Bihari organization in Dhaka, is one of the crucial partners facilitating her work in Geneva Camp, which is the largest of the sixty-six Bihari camps in Bangladesh. Twenty-five thousand of the 300,000 Biharis in Bangladesh live in extreme crowded condition in Geneva Camp. The Biharis originally migrated from India after 1947 and for two decades they were citizens of Pakistan. On December 16, 1971, when Bangladesh was founded, they became stateless. In the majoritarian view they are *dalal* or wartime collaborators. Saikia collected life stories of several families, focusing particularly on women's experiences in the camp. Also, she conducted research in West Bengal, India, and collected family stories of relatives who migrated during 1947 to East Pakistan and now live in Bangladesh as unwanted Biharis. In Pakistan, Saikia interviewed and lived in the Bihari colony of Orangi, Sector XI, in Karachi, with families of both victims and perpetrators of the violence in the war of 1971. Their stories of multiple displacements make evident the impact of the partitions in ordinary people's lives.

Haines has conducted research in Pakistan for over twenty-five years. In his new book project (under contract with Cambridge University Press) he draws a comparison of modernity and urbanism by focusing on informal communities and everyday ethics in Islamabad, Cairo and Dubai. In the section on Islamabad, he discusses the *katchi abadis* (informal settlements) where the Christian communities live. Many of the Islamabad Christians came from the Dalit labor communities in the Punjab. In his first book (2012) he analyzed the processes of marginalization in Pakistan, examining how the state constructs hierarchies of belonging and exclusion, which provides context for understanding the place of Christians today. The Dalit Christians were converts from the lowest caste of Punjab's Hindu and Sikh communities. During 1947, encouraged by the state they remained in Pakistan, but their caste status also remained because Muslims, too, maintain the inherited caste system and use it for discrimination.

In spring 2020, Haines will continue his research on the Christian communities supported by a short-term grant from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies. He will advance our collaboration with Forman Christian College (FCC) in Lahore, a Christian university, where we have long connections. We are also working with Pakistani scholars and activists, such as John Naseer who researched the Christian communities in Punjab and is currently teaching at Minhaj University, Dr. Rukhsana David at Kinnaird College, Anzar Javed who leads Starfish Pakistan (an NGO that operates schools in poor Christian communities), and Jennifer Jivan of the Christian Studies Center in Rawalpindi that does advocacy work on behalf of the Christian communities. Through these various networks we are advancing our work in the Christian villages outside of Lahore.

We are deeply committed to advancing humanistic research in South Asia and organized and conducted a number of workshops and seminars in the region, partnering with local academics. Together, we conducted a workshop at the International Islamic University (IIU) in Islamabad on the theme of *adab* or Islamic ethics, for improved understanding between the religious communities in Pakistan. We consulted with theologian Khalid Masood, the former director of the Pakistan Council of Islamic Ideology, and late historian Mumtaz Ahmed on the issue of blasphemy, the *hudud* laws ("punishable offences", literally *hudud* means borders, boundaries, limits), and Islamic values of inter-faith community building. With I.A. Rahman, Director of the Human Rights Commission, we had several discussions on human rights abuses in Pakistan.

In India, we jointly organized several workshops at the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, on local cultures of peace and on interconnected histories of South Asia. In Guwahati University, Saikia gave a public talk on the Miyahs and the problems with the national citizenship

registration process. Our public and academic engagements have been very useful for building contacts with academics, human rights lawyers, journalists, and public intellectuals.

To date, the most direct outcomes of our research on this topic include:

- International conference on “Peace and the Other,” November 7-8, 2019, Arizona State University;
- Conference paper by Yasmin Saikia on “Unstable Sandbars: The Miyah Other and Eroding Humanity in Assam,” November 7, 2019;
- Conference paper by Chad Haines on “Down the Rabbit Hole: Islamophobia and the (Im)Possibilities of Muslim Belonging in America,” November 7, 2019;
- Yasmin Saikia’s chapter “People’s Peace at Stake: An Assamese Experience,” in *People’s Peace: Prospects for a Human Future*, eds. Yasmin Saikia and Chad Haines (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2019);
- Chad Haines’s chapter “Coming Together in Peace: Community and Informality in Cairo,” in *People’s Peace: Prospects for a Human Future*, eds. Yasmin Saikia and Chad Haines (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2019);
- Yasmin Saikia’s online article “The National Registry of Citizens: Violating Muslims, Violating Humanity in Assam,” October 18, 2019 (<http://globalcit.Ceu/the-national-registry-of-citizens-violating-muslims-violating-humanity-in-assam/>);
- Yasmin Saikia’s online article “From Citizen to Termite: The case of the “Bangladeshis” in Assam,” *Suddhasar*, Issue 14, June 1, 2019 (<https://shuddhashar.com/magazine/issue-14/>);
- Yasmin Saikia’s talk “‘Illegal’, ‘Doubtful’, ‘Termites’: The Dehumanized Other of Assam,” Guwahati University, Assam, India, December 29, 2018;
- Yasmin Saikia “The Muslims of Assam: Present/Absent History,” in *Northeast India: A Place of Relations*, ed. Yasmin Saikia and Amit Baishya (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- Joint workshop on “Religious Values, Everyday Ethics, and Peace in Northeastern India,” University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, May 2018.

Section 3: Collaborators

The proposed research builds upon years of scholarly activity by both collaborators in South Asia. Saikia is a historian of South Asia, with a special focus on Assam, where she hails from. Haines is a cultural anthropologist, with a special focus on Pakistan and Islam. Jointly, they have collaborated on publishing two edited volumes on the topic of “People’s Peace,” organized a number of international conferences, and conducted a series of workshops to advance humanities-oriented approaches to peace in South Asia.

The current research project developed out of a shared scholarly concern for people’s peace. For Saikia, the idea emerged from her intensive work with victims and perpetrators of the 1971 war that created Bangladesh. In that work, she traversed the national boundaries of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, perhaps the only South Asian scholar to do so, and engaged men and women on their discourses of the war and what was lost and gained. She found in repeated sites the articulation of the loss of *insaniyat*, a South Asia concept for humanness. Haines’ interest in how liberal modernity disrupts values of Muslim community life and his interest in people’s informal practices, what he calls, “coming together,” has been a foundational approach to investigate the importance of communal ethics and local practices of humanism. This is one of the issues that we are currently studying to understand how noncitizens express and assert their own humanity.

Having already started research on the Miyahs in Assam and Biharis in Geneva Camp in Bangladesh, Saikia is taking the lead in these two sites. Haines is taking the lead on the Dalit Christians in Pakistan. We will each contribute equally to the research, as well as co-author the book. Over the three years of the project, we will each be spending 25% of our time to research and writing, including our summer leaves. In conducting the research, our responsibilities are broken down as follows:

India (Miyahs)		
Assam field research	Saikia 75%	Haines 25%
Delhi archival and background research	Saikia 25%	Haines 75%
Bangladesh (stranded Pakistanis/Biharis)		
Camp Geneva field research	Saikia 75%	Haines 25%
Dhaka archival research	Saikia 100%	
Pakistan (Dalit Christians)		
Punjab villages field research	Saikia 25%	Haines 75%
Islamabad & Lahore archival research	Saikia 50%	Haines 50%

We will write the book collaboratively. For the chapters drawn upon the case studies, the lead researcher will take primary responsibility. The conceptual chapters, as well as editing, fine tuning of arguments and ideas, and producing the finished product, will be done jointly. Since we have co-edited two volumes, we are aware of the challenges and benefits of collaborative work. As well, since both of us are at Arizona State University (ASU) and the university encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, we are confident we will be able to actualize the project. An NEH collaborative grant (type 2) will allow us to complete the work we have started with internal grants and research funds from ASU and take leave for completing the book in a timely manner for publication.

Section 4: Methods and Execution

Conceptually, we approach the study of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh as connected histories, cultures, and geographies, dimming the view of maps and borders that divide. From this perspective we approach the Miyahs, Biharis, and Dalit Christians as a window for developing a single analytical framework. We bring together multiple disciplinary methodologies for investigating the experiences of the loss of citizenship of each community and weave them together in a single narrative to tell the story of their humanity. We draw from the disciplines of history, cultural anthropology, religious studies, and South Asian studies to develop an interdisciplinary methodology. For us, methodology is not simply a research tool, it also informs our conceptual approach to highlight connected pasts and demarcated presents.

In our research we are using historical methods of archival research and secondary sources to investigate the histories of the partitions, processes of mapping citizenship, and the making of noncitizens. We will layer this with oral history and field work, including participant observations and ethnographic research, to gather first-hand accounts of the people who are directly affected by state policies of exclusion. Particularly, we will explore how ethics and values allow people to maintain the semblance of their humanity in dire conditions of dehumanization. We will add to this South Asian area studies approach to investigate how religious and cultural practices transmute and take shape in new community practices. Specifically, we are interested to explore this in the lives of the Dalit Christians who, despite conversion from Hinduism, continue to suffer oppression as lower caste in Muslim Pakistan and become the easy targets for blasphemy charges. Similarly, we will explore why, despite the Miyahs adopting Assamese, the language of the dominant majority as their mother tongue, they could not shed off their “foreignness” and rather the Assamese shun them as “illegal” Bangladeshis and reject them for their “bad smell”, sartorial appearance, food habits, and so on. The Bihari experience of living in camps is the harshest reality of Partition. The youth today try to mingle with the Bengalis by speaking Bangla, dressing like Bengalis, and even marrying Bengali girls, but at the end of the day they remain camp dwellers. “It is our grave,” in their words.

We will examine the disconnect between the high ideals, such as the Indic concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (world family) and the lived experiences of Miyah subhuman lives in India; the emptying of the concept of *ummah* in Bangladesh where the Muslim Bengalis and Biharis are enemy communities; and in Pakistan the neglect of the Islamic principle of tolerance toward the Christians as *ahl-e kitab*

(People of the Book) and replacing it with blasphemy laws to target them. Juxtaposing the gaps between the ideal concepts and lived practices, we will explore the literature produced by the Miyahs, Biharis and Dalit Christians that express their humanity in their own words as something they know and experience.

With NEH funding, we will build on our ongoing work and be able to supplement it with new research and data that is crucial for the completion of the book. The book will have five chapters: three will be substantial case studies and two will be conceptual chapters—one on Partition and the making of noncitizens, and the second one on ethics and informal practices that create and sustain community. We will commence the NEH funding in January 2021.

We will start our work in Delhi since our research on the Miyahs requires minimum archival and field work for completion. Saikia will complete her reading of the British colonial documents on the settlement of Miyahs in Assam that are available in the Indian National Archives. She has archival research permission to do this work. To document their current noncitizen condition, Haines will study the materials of the court cases that are available in the Supreme Court Archives and Senior Advocate Ejaz Maqbool in Delhi will facilitate this permission. In Guwahati, Assam, Saikia will continue the work of reading the documents on the Miyah settlements, the Assam Movement and Assam Accord of 1985, which inaugurated the anti-Bangladeshi politics, and the public debates in the legislative assembly on the Miyah question. She will apply for archival research permission to work in the Assam State Archives and the Central Secretariat Archives during her stay in Assam in 2020 for undertaking field work with the support of an internal grant from Arizona State University. Saikia will also meet with local human rights lawyers and journalists in Assam to understand the on-the-ground realities of the national registration of citizens (NRC) and continue her work with Miyah poets and novelists to discuss their literature. She will revisit her contacts in Sontoli and Lakhipur villages for undertaking the second segment of the research.

To complete the archival research on the Biharis, Saikia will consult the National Archives in Dhaka that has a small collection of the pre-1971 papers and will read the 1971 documents of the Radio Archives and Liberation War Museum, and books by Bihari authors at the Al-Falah library. She had previously collected a lot of this material for her book on the 1971 war, and the new and additional research will enable her to develop a comprehensive narrative of the state's attitude toward the Biharis. Also, Saikia will meet with journalists, legal experts and NGO advocates for the Biharis. Human Rights lawyers Sara Hossain and David Bergman, journalist Ilyas Ahmed of Al-Falah organization, and Liberation War hero Qader Siddiqi, who had publicly executed several hundred Biharis in 1972, will be the key interlocutors. She will also revive her contacts in Geneva Camp to undertake new field research.

In Pakistan, Haines will do archival research on the Dalit Christian communities at the National Archives, National Documentation Wing in Islamabad, and in the Punjab Provincial Archives in Lahore, all places he worked for previous research. As well, in Lahore, he will meet with a variety of Christian organization leaders, human rights advocates, NGO workers and academics who work on and with the Dalit Christians. This work is follow up to work he will conduct in spring 2020 and enable him to undertake focused field work in the second year.

On returning from our field work, over the summer, we will collate, organize and read the material collected from the research sites. We will document the themes and common patterns and identify the gaps that persist in our research. We will complete this work by July 2021. Throughout late summer and fall 2021, we will continue reading the secondary materials for mapping the representations of the noncitizens in popular and academic publications, develop some of the specific themes we would like to highlight in our book that are not covered in the existing scholarship, and develop our plan for conducting interviews and doing oral history in the next segment of the work. Based on Revised Federal Guidelines of 2018 we will not need permission for doing oral history with human subjects. We will combine our research findings with the secondary literature to outline three chapters, each chapter devoted to one community. At this stage, we will incorporate the archival materials into the chapters. This will also let us see what we need to accomplish in field research for completing the chapters.

In the second year of the project we will undertake both combined and solo field work in the three locations. In Pakistan, Haines will lead the field work in Lahore and Sialkot where there are large colonies of Dalit Christians. He will do intensive field work in Joseph Colony in Lahore, Youngsonabad,

outside Lahore, and identify two other villages in Sialkot, which have large Dalit Christian communities. Since the Miyah villages are mainly located in isolated island sandbars, for field work Saikia will stay in towns close to the Miyah villages. Besides putting her close to the scene of the Miyah communities, her stay in the nearby towns will allow her to meet with the local Assamese people to discuss with them their assumptions about the Miyahs, questioning how and why they construct them as subhuman. In addition to revisiting Lakhipur and Sontoli villages, she will undertake field work in the nearby village of Morisakundi. These villages are in Barpeta district, which is one the most vulnerable areas for the Miyahs. She will also do field work in two villages in Sonitpur district, which neighbor the “tribal” villages and are sites of communal violence and in Goalpara district, which borders Bangladesh. This documentation will provide a broad picture of the common patterns of Miyah life. In Bangladesh, Saikia will focus on Geneva Camp and will also visit Mirpur Camp (outside Dhaka). Haines will do intensive field work in two camps in Chittagong, which have smaller concentration of Biharis but have deep memories of the violence of 1971. The field work in these various places will enable us to develop a “witness account” that we will combine with the archival and secondary sources to complete the three chapters based on the case studies. Haines will finish the chapter on Dalit Christians and Saikia will write the chapters on the Miyahs and the Biharis.

Section 5: Workplan

<p>Year 1 Months 1-6 (January 2021 – June 2021)</p>	<p><u>Preliminary field survey and archival research</u></p> <p>Delhi, India (one week) Saikia & Haines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct archival research: Indian National Archives and Supreme Court Archives • Meet with community organizers and legal experts <p>Guwahati, India (three weeks) Saikia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct archival research: Assam State Archives • Meet with community organizers and legal experts • Network with academics and journalists, conduct field survey to select research sites <p>Dhaka, Bangladesh (three weeks) Saikia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct archival research: Bangladesh National Archives, Radio Archives, and Al-Falah Library • Meet with community organizers and legal experts • Network with academics and journalists • Camp Geneva: meet with community activists and identify potential key informants <p>Islamabad, Pakistan (two weeks) Haines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct archival research: National Documentation Center • Meet with community organizers and legal experts • Network with academics and journalists <p>Lahore, Pakistan (three weeks) Haines</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct archival research: Punjab Provincial Archives • Meet with community organizers, human rights lawyers • Conduct field survey to select research sites, identify potential key informants
Year 1 Months 7-12 (July 2021 - December 2021)	<p><u>Review initial research findings, conduct secondary research</u> Saikia & Haines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate archival material and initial field observations • Collect and peruse secondary material <p><u>Develop book proposal, develop further research agenda</u> Saikia & Haines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue secondary research • Map book manuscript • Develop further research questions/issues based on collected materials
Year 2 Months 1-6 (January 2022 – June 2022)	<p><u>Conduct intensive field research in Pakistan (Punjab, Lahore)</u> Haines (three weeks) Saikia (two weeks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carryout extensive interviews • Observe religious practices and meet with religious leaders • Map environmental and other forms of marginality • Investigate further legal issues regarding minority status of Christians <p><u>Conduct intensive field research in India (Assam, Guwahati)</u> Saikia (two and a half weeks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carryout extensive interviews • Fill in gaps that exist from previous research <p><u>Conduct intensive field research in Bangladesh (Dhaka)</u> Saikia (three weeks) Haines (two weeks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carryout extensive interviews • Observe religious practices and meet with religious leaders • Map environmental and other forms of marginality in camp life • Investigate further legal issues regarding status of Biharis
Year 2 Months 7-12 (July 2022 – December 2022)	<p><u>Book Development</u> Saikia & Haines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write three case-study chapters
Year 3 Months 1-6 (January 2023 – June 2023)	<p><u>Book Development</u> Saikia & Haines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write introduction • Develop and submit book proposal to interested presses • Write chapter on partitions
Year 3 Months 7-12	<p><u>Book Development</u> Saikia & Haines</p>

(July 2023 – December 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify press to publish manuscript with • Write final chapter on everyday ethics and the conclusion • Edit and format manuscript for submission to press
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Section 6: Final Product and Dissemination

The final product will be a co-authored book. Although we conceive it as an academic book, we will write the book with an eye for attracting a larger audience of human rights and refugee advocates as well as the common public, particularly in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh so that they can appreciate the lives of the noncitizens and support better policies for integrating rather than excluding people. Keeping the different levels of audiences in mind, we will write the book in a narrative style and it will not exceed 210 pages in length. The book will be divided into five chapters and will include an Introduction and Conclusion.

Chapter I will discuss the history of partitions, which will take a *longue dureé* view and will include the two partitions – 1947 and 1971. Along with the historical documentation, this chapter will include the lived experiences of the people who had been directly impacted. In the case of the Miyahs and Dalit Christians they had never left their home in Assam and Punjab, respectively, yet, they have become pariah communities of outsiders. The Biharis, on the other hand, migrated from India, after Partition related communal violence, to East Pakistan in 1947, but in 1971 were left behind when Pakistan splintered. By focusing on the social and political experiences of the communities, this chapter will present a thick description of Partition history and the living legacy of trauma in forty pages.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will take the readers through a journey into the inner lives of each noncitizen community by focusing on the ethnographic observations of everyday life and the discourses of the adversarial majoritarian communities. We will then discuss in each chapter the various discriminatory policies and practices, the fears and anxieties of the noncitizens and how they cope with them. Each chapter will be succinctly written in thirty pages.

Chapter 5 will discuss the religious and cultural concepts that produce meta discourses of humanity in South Asia but fail to include these people within the national human communities. We will discuss the Indic concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (world family) and the Islamic concepts of *ummah* (community of believers) and *ahle-e kitab* (People of the Book) that are discussed in the abstract sense in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, but not operationalized in reality to include the unincluded in the community of humans. We will reflect on how the noncitizens' lived ethics and values provide a critique of religious and nationalist discourses of community, producing an understanding of humanity that exists within, yet outside these discourses. We will highlight its living nature in small, informal acts of coming together, cooperation, care, neighborliness, and hospitality. We will reflect on them as lived ethics and end with a brief discussion of the literature and creative works produced by the noncitizens that become the representative form of their abiding humanity.

The Introduction will frame the larger theoretical and conceptual issues and the Conclusion will stitch the three communities together to animate a conversation on the human condition of the vulnerable in postcolonial South Asia. Our book, written with a humanities focus, will contribute to a variety of fields and approaches to the study of South Asia, as well it will offer an epistemic query on the humanity of the dehumanized, which is an urgent concern in our contemporary world experiencing multiple partitions, wars, violence, displacements and placelessness of millions who belong nowhere.

Once we have four of the chapters ready to share with a press we will start discussion with different presses. Previously, we had published with Cambridge University Press, Duke University Press, Routledge, and Syracuse University Press. Syracuse University Press has expressed interest in our current project, and Zed Books has also contacted us inquiring about our interest to publish with them. We thus have a good selection of presses for this book. During the review process of the four chapters that we will submit for a contract, we will write the remaining chapter on Partition, the Introduction, and the Conclusion. We are confident we will have a complete draft by the end of the grant period.