

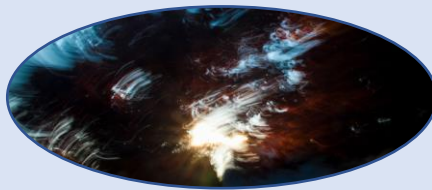


South Asia Forum

Lecture Series

Spring Semester 2021

Everyone is cordially
invited to participate!



ISEK University of Zurich
Andreasstrasse 15

30th March 2021, 4.15-6 pm

Katy Gardner (London School of Economics and Political Science)

Cool yourself and be strong: negotiating feminism and kinship in the emotions work of Bangladeshi marriage advisors

Online only: contact Lindsay Vogt (lindsay.vogt@uzh.ch) or Anina Meier (anina.meier@uzh.ch) for the meeting link

Abstract: In this paper I argue that the emotions work of marriage advisors in a feminist NGO in Dhaka enables them to move between contrasting discourses of feminist critique of patriarchy on the one hand, and endorsement of patriarchal kinship on the other. Building upon Ahmed's theorisation of emotions as 'sticking' to particular bodies in order to uphold normative forms of power, I argue that emotions work allows the advisors to slide between different political positions, for talking about emotions has a similar 'fuzzy' effect to the fuzz words described in theorisations of development discourse. Meanwhile the stickiness of emotions is variable, especially when feminist advisors attempt to subvert gendered norms and stick shame onto a violent man. Finally, through ethnography of 'marriage victims' held at a secure facility, the paper shows how emotions work can involve slippage, from feminist discourses of empowerment, into patriarchal kinship norms, which when enacted by the state can be highly repressive.

Katy received her PhD from LSE Anthropology in 1990. After a brief spell working as a junior social development advisor she taught at Sussex until 2013 when she returned to the LSE as a Professor of Anthropology. Her academic work has focussed on migration from Bangladesh to the UK; transnational families, the life course, aging and childhood; issues surrounding 'development' and CSR in Bangladesh and the relationship between Anthropology and Development. Her books include: Songs at the River's Edge: Stories from a Bangladeshi Village, 1991 (Virago); Global migrants, local lives: Travel and transformation in rural Bangladesh 1995 (OUP); Anthropology, Development and the Post Modern Challenge (with David Lewis) 1996 (Pluto Press); Age, narrative and migration: the life course and life histories of Bengali elders in London. 2002 (Berg) and Discordant development: Global capitalism and the struggle for connection in Bangladesh. 2012 Pluto Press. She has also published three novels. Katy's current research is concerned with marital problems, divorce and counselling in Dhaka.