

SAHANA GHOSH

A Thousand Tiny Cuts

Mobility and Security Across the
Bangladesh-India Borderlands



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Apr 25

2:00 - 4:00PM

NAH 401

What does the ongoing life of bordering look and feel like after seventy-five years of the drawing of the border? Based on long-term ethnographic research in the borderlands of India and Bangladesh, this talk invites us to consider the violence of bordering in the postcolonial world as a dynamic relationship between imaginations and material lives of mobility and security, and a profoundly gendered ordering of value. The cost of militarization across this officially “friendly” border is devaluation – of agrarian land and crops, of borderland youth undesirable as brides and grooms in their respective national hinterlands, of regional infrastructures now disconnected, and of social and physical landscapes fragmented by surveillance. The talk – drawing on the published book – grapples with the stakes of an anthropological account of such a world of transnational borderland connections in a region divided on national terms.

Sahana Ghosh is Assistant Professor Anthropology at the National University of Singapore. She uses ethnographic and feminist research methods to study, write, and teach about borderlands, gendered mobility, agrarian societies, and the imaginaries, labors, and value of security and policing in India and Bangladesh. She is currently working on a historical ethnography of soldiering in postcolonial India.