

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Graduate Conference on South Asia Minorities in South Asia: Perceptions and Experiences

Paris, 12-14 June, 2019

The Noria's South Asia Program invites proposals for the fourth *International Graduate Conference on South Asia* held on 12-14 June, 2019 at the *Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales* (INALCO) in Paris. This year, the conference will focus on the issue of minorities in South Asia.

The presence of religious, ethnic or linguistic minorities has always been a central feature of South Asian politics, to the extent that the region is often considered as primarily governed by identity politics. This conference aims to examine the notion of "minority" in South Asia, to unpack the links of minorities with the state and the majority population, while raising issues pertaining to their political representation.

Participants are invited to reflect upon the construction of minorities in different contexts, as both an external process, with the allocation of distinct identities by external actors, and as a process of self-construction and re-appropriation of dominant discourses.

From a top down perspective, papers are encouraged to look at the role played by states in defining identity-based social categories, accommodating certain forms of particularism while rejecting others. With regard to the competition for access to resources on a given territory by different minority and majority groups, participants can delve into the role of states as mediators of identity hierarchies. The status and position of minorities in countries like India and Sri Lanka is also affected by a "fear of small numbers", the majority believing it is in constant danger of being annihilated by minorities. These dynamics raise questions related to minorities' relations with the state and with the (perceived) majority as well as to the roles that are ascribed to them.

From a bottom up perspective, presenters are invited to analyse when and why these ethnic, religious or linguistic identities are mobilized towards political action (instead of class or gender identities for instance). When do autonomist claims prevail – potentially leading separatist insurgencies? When is an integration into the political system privileged?

Furthermore, the issue of the political representation of minorities can be harnessed to the debate on affirmative action policies and on the political ideal of representation coexisting with entrenched social stratifications. The issue of political representation of minorities will imply to study their internal divisions and the implications for the manufacturing of collective claims and political cohesiveness.

The conference is open to doctoral students and early career researchers working on South Asia. Each paper will be discussed by a senior researcher and will aim at attracting comments from the audience. Towards that end one hour will be dedicated to each paper.

How to participate

Interested Ph.D. candidates are invited to submit an abstract of maximum 500 words to southasia@noria-research.com by March 1st, 2019 at the latest. Successful applicants will be informed by March 20th. Final papers of a maximum of 8 000 words should be submitted by May 30th. The Network of Researchers in International Affairs (NORIA) aims at promoting the work of a new generation of scholars and experts in international politics. The South Asia Program and its publications can be accessed here: <https://www.noria-research.com/what-we-do/research/south-asia-program/>