

Mahua Sarkar

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*Talking with Men:
Ethnographic Research Among Transnational Labour Migrants*

Monday, 10 October 2022, 17:40-19:10 (CEST)
CEU Auditorium and via Zoom

Temporary transnational contract work and circular migration bring millions of workers from poorer parts of the world to more affluent economies every year in search of better economic and social opportunities. ‘Talking with Men’ draws on the author’s extended fieldwork among Bangladeshi male contract workers in Singapore and return migrants in Bangladesh to investigate some of the strategies through which young migrants – some barely out of their teens – negotiate the intense flux, uncertainty, and their multiple responsibilities, piecing together an interstitial life in host societies in the absence of normative diasporas. The lecture also reflects on some methodological questions that emerge in a dialogic context in which the researcher and her interlocutors are separated by class, gender, religious and national identifications, but share a common language, ethnicity, a fraught historical past, and – in Singapore – a migrant present inflected by differential access to social and economic privilege.

*A historical sociologist by training, Mahua Sarkar’s interdisciplinary research and teaching span a range of topics including contemporary guest-work regimes with focus on Bangladeshi male migrants; gestational surrogacy as racialized and gendered labour; free and unfree/constrained work under global capitalism; religious nationalisms in South Asia; Muslim and Hindu identity formation and the gender question in late colonial Bengal; and epistemological debates underlying qualitative research methods. Her current writing project is an advanced monograph entitled *Bidesh Kara (Going Abroad): Bangladeshi Contract Migrants and Contemporary Guest Work*.*

*Professor Sarkar has been a France-ILO Chair and Fellow at the Institut d’Etudes Avancées de Nantes, a EURIAS and Marie Curie Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg, Berlin, and Fellow at re:work, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She serves as a series editor for *Work in Global and Historical Perspective* (De Gruyter: Oldenbourg, Berlin and Boston).*

Online participants are invited to attend via this [Zoom link](#) (Meeting ID: 995 5755 1232; Passcode: 337756). For questions please contact Selin Çağatay (cagatays@ceu.edu).