

Nationalism Reading Group

Call for Participants

The State Capacity Initiative at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Delhi in partnership with Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN), LSE, London invites applications for a Reading group. The focus will be on Indian nationalism but we look forward to applicants researching nationalism in similar contexts of multi-ethnic, federal democracies in Asia, Africa, South America and Central Europe. Some of the recent trends around nationalism which will be of interest are authoritarianism, populism, majoritarianism. We are also keen to examine the impact of social media and tech defined statecraft on nationalism.

Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the fore many a contradictions and crises of the Indian state. On the one hand, this is a global challenge, which requires an international coordinated response transcending national boundaries, it's also highlighted the centrality of the nation-state and the 'nation' within the state. Nationalistic imaginations were called to the fore to mobilise civil society, public service professionals, ordinary citizen to assist strangers and 'imagined others' in multiple ways. On the other hand, the nature of politics and state-craft has changed to cater to the challenges of the pandemic. Rapid technology-based response, surveillance and centralisation of decision making were the call of the hour, but this may have taken deep roots in the state system. The pandemic has also solidified longer transitions and trends underway in the relationship between the state, society and the nation. The protests against the citizen amendment act, farm bill are some of the key areas of political contestations which have brought to the fore both the monochromatic imaginings of Indian nationhood and also its contestations.

Objectives

The reading group aims to gather scholars with an academic interest in nationalism and writing in popular media. The reading sessions will aim to:

- Engage with contemporary as well as classical texts on nationalism to produce insightful and accessible outputs for popular media forums
- Create a community of scholars working on nationalism, both with the 'old' issues of ethnic politics, state-building and democratic stability and 'new' ones of technology led statecraft, social media 'public'(s) and digital tools for nation-state making
- Shape popular and academic discussions on Indian nationalism in order to highlight its continuities with global structural changes in economy, politics and technology
- Create newer channels for making academic knowledge widely available

Format

The group will meet online via zoom once every month, hence we welcome applicants from all parts of the world. One commentary for a media outlet would be developed at the end of each discussion session and each participant will author atleast one commentary during the course of the reading group.

Eligibility

- Demonstrated interest and research on nationalism (while the focus is on Indian nationalism, we welcome all applicants working on nationalisms in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural contexts, with federal and democratic political systems across the world)
- Advanced doctoral students (In final phases of thesis writing)
- Early career academics working on journal articles, books on nationalism
- Journalists, independent researchers, and researchers based at think tanks, advocacy organisations, research groups working explicitly on politics of nationalism

The reading group is not envisioned as a body to be composed entirely of academics but an appreciation of academic research and commitment to engage with academic texts is important for the participants to draw the most out of the group.

Application

- Detailed CV which includes all details of educational degrees and professional positions held, publications (academic and non-academic)
- Cover letter which summarises the current research work on nationalism, reasons for participation in the reading group and its purpose in academic/career trajectory (max. 2 pages)
- Writing sample in popular media (blogposts, online commentaries, newspaper articles) and/or an academic long form piece of writing

Kindly email this material with each file tile including the full name of the applicant to nationalism.research@gmail.com latest by March 30, 2022.