

# Saba Karim Khan

## Contact Information:

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Author, award-winning filmmaker, and Instructor at New York University, Abu Dhabi. My debut novel, *Skyfall*, was published by Bloomsbury and was short-listed for the UBL Literary Awards. My debut doc-film, *Concrete Dreams: Some Roads Lead Home*, produced by the Doha Film Institute (DFI) won awards at film festivals in Paris, Tokyo, Berlin, NYC, Toronto, Sweden and India and is now on Amazon Prime Video. My writing, interviews, and talks have appeared in *The Guardian*, *BBC*, *The Independent*, *Khaleej Times*, *The Emirates Literature Festival*, the *Lahore Literary Festival*, the *NYUAD Institute*, *Wasafiri*, *Huff Post*, *Verso*, *Think Progress*, *DAWN*, *The Friday Times*, *Gulf News*, *The National*, and *Express Tribune*. Before joining the Academy, I worked as Country Marketing and Public Affairs Head at Citigroup.

My research and writing focus on the global South and the gulf, the politics of feminism and sexual harassment, religious radicalism, modern-day slavery, social movements, and South Asian diasporas. My projects employ creative writing, visual storytelling, qualitative research methods, ethnographic fieldwork, visual anthropology, digital ethnography, and new media technologies, particularly interdisciplinary methods that bridge the arts, policy and social sciences. I am also trained in digital qualitative methods, such as online interviewing and digital ethnographies.

I regularly moderate talks at the literary festivals including discussions with authors such as Mohsin Hamid, Reza Aslan, Avni Doshi, Ann Hiatt, etc.

## Education:

- PhD, University of Sussex (Social Anthropology) – completion date: December 2023
- MPhil, Social Anthropology, University of Oxford, United Kingdom Sept 2008-2009
- MSc, Social Anthropology, University of Oxford, United Kingdom Sept 2007-2008
- BSc (Hons), Social Sciences, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan (**graduated on the Dean's Honor List**) - June 2006
- A Levels - Karachi Grammar School, Sept 02 | O Levels - Karachi Grammar School, Sept 00

## Employment:

Citibank, Country Marketing and Corporate Affairs Head, 2009-2012

## Academic Employment:

**Instructor**, Sep 2019 to date. Social Sciences rep on the Academic Staff Committee until Jan 2023.

**New York University** - Abu Dhabi, UAE

**Associate Instructor**, Oct 2016 to Sep 2019

**New York University** - Abu Dhabi, UAE

- Work as an Instructor in the Social Sciences Division (Social Research and Public Policy)
- Courses:
  1. Ethnographic field research
  2. Practicum in social research
  3. Logic of social inquiry
  4. Foundations of modern social thought
  5. Wealth and inequality
  6. Education and society
  7. Gender revolutions
  8. Digital diplomacy
  9. Capstone Seminar
  10. Interview Methods
  11. Women and Work in the Gulf
  12. Islam and Society
- **Consistently received an "excellent" performance ranking appraisal by the department**

### Storytelling Projects:

- **Novel, *Skyfall***. Published by Bloomsbury' Dec 20
- **Visual ethnography project titled "Concrete Dreams: Some Roads Lead Home"**: A documentary produced by the Doha Film Institute, which has won awards at film festivals in Berlin, Sweden, NYC, Toronto, USA, Paris and India and is now on Amazon Prime: <https://sabakarimkhan.com/filmmaker/>
- **The Troublemakers" book project**: based on fieldwork on sexual harassment experiences among urban, middle- and upper-class Pakistani women.
- **Where Stars Are Born Out of Anarchy**: upcoming documentary film, exploring the role of hip-hop music in bringing about social change in Pakistan.

### Academic Publications (completed and in preparation):

<https://sabakarimkhan.com/publications/>

- **Book Chapter, Pink Tax**: exploring the skewed impact of Covid-19 through interviews with South Asian women. Book chapter published in *Mothers, Mothering and Covid-19: Dispatches from a Pandemic* – Pink Tax – Demeter Press, Canada, March 2021
- **Book Chapter**: published in anthology, *Ways of Being: Creative Non-fiction by Pakistani Women* (January, 2023)
- **Celebrating chaos: the power of untidy realities in ethnographic research** – published in *Excursions* journal
- **Navigating ethics in the digital age: an interdisciplinary approach**: Theory and Practice in *Research Ethics* – published in *Sentio* journal
- **Article "What Can I Do with My Ostensibly Useless Social Science Degree?"**: published in *Guftugoo*, LUMS
- **"Join the Jihad": Unpacking Imran Khan, New Media Politics and the Promise of a Naya (New) Pakistan**': an ethnographic and interview based study of social movements in South Asia, exploring the rise of Imran Khan and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf as a social movement that challenged dynastic politics and became a metaphor of hope for the country – PhD, University of Sussex

- **Jihad and violence in Afghanistan:** examining the relationship between jihadist propaganda and tolerance for violence among young Afghani men – with *Daniel Karell, Yale University*
- **Taxi drivers in the Gulf:** Why are you staying? Normative expectations and reverse migration from the Gulf during times of economic hardship – an interview-based project seeking narratives of private taxi drivers in the UAE and their lives during the pandemic – with *Malte Reichelt, New York University Abu Dhabi; Institute for Employment Research (IAB) and Katharina Klaung*
- **Covid-19 and the possibilities of indoor ethnographies:** with Prof. John O'Brien
- **Aleph Review:** Humour Meets Horror and it's Far from Funny, published in 2022

### Journalistic Publications:

- By-lines in The Guardian, The Independent, Khaleej Times, Wasafiri, Huff Post, Verso, Think Progress, DAWN, The Friday Times, Gulf News, The National, and Express Tribune.
  - Columnist for Khaleej Times
- More at: <https://sabakarimkhan.com/publications/>

### Previous Teaching Experience:

- Experience with teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students:
  1. **Visiting Faculty, IBA, Karachi** – courses taught: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology – undergraduate level (2010), Communication Skills – MBA students (2010)
  2. **Citibank Training Institute** – seminar and training lead (CSR) for modules on women and micro-entrepreneurship, volunteerism and the rise of NGOs, notions of gender in the global south
  3. **Teaching Assistant, Lahore University of Management Sciences (2004-06)** – courses supported:
    - Culture and Religion: Ritual, Witchcraft and Belief
    - Comparative Sociological Theory
    - Intro to Philosophy
    - Ethics and Society
    - Applied Ethics
    - Human Behavior

### Conferences and Workshops:

- **Agency, Female Subjectivity, and the Literary Imagination: Encountering Emirati Women Writers' Voices (Workshop Lead):** based on a grant by the Arab-German Young Academy (AGYA), Berlin – in collaboration with Dr Laila Prager
- **Social Inequalities in the Gulf and Beyond:** presented project on migrant workers during Covid at this workshop at NYU Abu Dhabi, held in collaboration with the University of Cologne

- **Sixth Annual South Asia Conference, South Asia in Transformative Times (upcoming April 2023):** presenting on panel titled “Voices from South Asia: literature, film, the performing arts, politics, and media” at this conference organized by the Ireland India Institute, Dublin City University
- **Creative Industries Festival 2023 at Oxford Brookes University (upcoming May 2023):** panel discussion on Makings Journal and its value not only for academics but also for creatives and professionals outside of academia
- **Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) conference** - Anthropological and archaeological imaginations: past, present and future – Bristol. **Paper presented:** “Islamic and its Mystical Realm: Redefining the Ritual Dichotomy”
- **EHEM Changing Universities Conference** - Istanbul. **Paper presented:** The Implications of the Changes that have been taking place on the structure of higher education fields and the role of universities with respect to the construction of national and international elites

### **Research and Technical Skills:**

- Ethnographic fieldwork
- Interview Methods
- MAXQDA – qualitative coding

### **Languages:**

- English (advanced)
- Urdu (native)
- Persian (basic)

### **Grants and Awards:**

- NYUAD publication grant: x3
- University of Sussex, Researcher-led initiative grant x2
- Diversity and Inclusion Fund Grant, NYUAD
- Graduated on the Dean’s Honor List (undergraduate)
- Awarded an 80% merit scholarship at LUMS and a full scholarship at the University of Oxford
- Recipient of the Noon Scholarship (for Pakistani students at Oxford) and the Bestway Foundation grant, Cowasjee Foundation grant and Infaq Foundation grant for study at the University of Oxford
- Ex member of the American Business Council’s Corporate Social Responsibility Sub-committee
- Won the extra mile award for going over and above the job role at Citi (2011)
- Received a promotion at NYUAD to “Instructor” – Sep 2018