INTRODUCTION

- Professor Lemons's current research explores the motivations of marginalized individuals who travel great distances to seek adjudication at the Amrani Shank, a renowned Islamic legal institution located in Bihar, India.
- My research this summer has sought to contextualize Professor Lemons's study within the greater field of social science scholarship that either focuses on or takes place within Bihar—a rural state located in Northeastern India.
- The development of an overview of reoccurring themes in Bihar scholarship, and of arguments that other scholars have made on related subjects, will allow Professor Lemons to draw upon relevant sources in her project, and to build upon established academic conversations between scholars of Bihar.

OBJECTIVES

- To build a comprehensive list of scholarly literature in the social sciences whose content either focuses upon, or is situated within the Indian state of Bihar.
- To distill, from this list, overarching themes and motifs in current and past in Bihar scholarship, and to catalogue the variety of arguments that scholars have made within these thematic realms.
- To illuminate which scholars are in direct academic conversation with each other, and to map these conversations.

METHODOLOGY

- Produce a literature review.
  - Search for relevant literature using the keywords “Bihar,” “North India,” “East India,” and “Northeast India,” in subject specific databases including:
    - Anthropology Plus
    - SocINDEX
    - Middle East and South Asian Studies
- Search for relevant literature using the reference lists of known works.
- Summarize the argument of each work and create a list of key words.
- Organize the literature by topic, and sub-organize the topics by discipline, in order to distill the main themes and arguments present.
- Back-search bibliographies in order to map academic conversations.

KEY FINDINGS

- I found that the most frequently reoccurring themes in social-scientific scholarship on Bihar are lower-caste politics, migration, and agriculture.
- In the adjacent graphic I present the range of main reoccurring themes that I encountered in my research. The text size of each theme corresponds to the relative frequency with which it appears in my list of literature.
- I also found that certain keywords appear frequently across broader thematic divisions, including ‘democracy/democratization,’ ‘development,’ ‘Dalits,’ and ‘group identity.’
- Finally, I noted that a significant number of academic conversations center upon gauging the development status of Bihar. The content of such conversations includes the characterization and classification of development and underdevelopment, the identification of causes and effects, and potential solutions to underdevelopment.