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Politics in South Asia

Culture, Rationality and Conceptual Flow

Introduction

This book has been compiled to celebrate the work of Professor Subrata K. Mitra whose scholarship includes a wide spectrum of research topics, writings, and teaching on South Asian politics. Following his early years at Ravenshaw College in Cuttack, Orissa (now Odisha) where he read for a B.A. (honours) in Political Science (1969), he subsequently did his MA in Political Science from Delhi University (1971). Mitra was amongst the first candidates to acquire an M.Phil. from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi (1972). Growing up in the extraordinarily dynamic environment of post-independence India where processes of state and nation building were palpable had a deep impact on his academic outlook and interests. This was a period when the foundations of modern Indian politics were being both strengthened and contested, laying the basis for a functional political and administrative system, and a deepening, multiparty democracy.

In his own words, ‘I studied politics in order to understand how society changes and what the individual can do as an agent of that process, working within the framework of the structures within which one is placed. In this process I discovered that human agency and structure can collaborate in creating new structures and this applied to post-colonial states, ensconced in traditional societies, and both negotiating change on the lines of the political vision of the founding fathers who oversaw the Transfer of Power from British colonial rule. This is the insight I took with me from Orissa to Delhi, and beyond Delhi to the United States

where I learned to analyse the process of social change through the theory of games, coalitions and rational choice'¹.

It was during this stay in the United States, as a doctoral student at Rochester University, that Subrata Mitra's particular understanding of Indian politics took shape, blending theories of measurement, spatial modelling and their operationalization through empirical puzzles drawn from the Indian context. Two of his mentors from the United States, G. Bingham Powell and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita are authors in this volume. Following the PhD, an international career began to take shape, with a stint back in India at the *Centre for the Study of Developing Societies* - CSDS. His next port of call was France as a part of the Indo-French cultural exchange programme and, in the context of which Subrata Mitra, was based at the *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* in Paris. Subsequently, he left for Germany as a post-doctoral fellow of the *Alexander von Humboldt Foundation*. At the completion of his project on paradigm-shifts in theories of development, Subrata Mitra went back to Paris and joined the French Institute of Public Opinion (*Institut Français d'Opinion Publique*) in Paris as the head of the department of multivariate analysis. He left Paris in 1985 to move to the University of Hull as the New Blood Lecturer in Indian Politics. Mitra joined the University of California, Berkeley in 1993 as the Indo-American Community Chair, and moved to Heidelberg University in 1994. During his two decades in Heidelberg as Professor and Head of Department of Political Science at the *South Asia Institute*, Mitra has held visiting professorships in Nottingham University, the Radhakrishnan Chair in the Central University of Hyderabad, India, *Directeur d'Etudes Associé* at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* in Paris and Tsinghua University of Beijing, China.

Heidelberg had always held an attraction for Subrata Mitra. Even as a young student in India Mitra had been deeply influenced by two thinkers, both of who had worked in Heidelberg. One was Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and the other, Max Weber. As a result, Mitra's "hope was to understand the global sweeping theories of Hegel through the instrumentality of human choice, which is where Max Weber is so very useful because of his concepts of the legal, the traditional/rational and the charismatic authority and the twin concepts of instrumental and

¹ Subrata K. Mitra in conversation with the editors.

value rationality”². Mitra’s work has therefore been an application of the rationality of human choice and the importance of values and tradition, drawing upon his education and political observation, both abroad and at home. Thus, *Culture and Rationality* which was the first book published after coming to Heidelberg in 1999³ laid the groundwork for a framework that he has implemented ever since, that of the ‘Critical Traditionalist’ which in the words of the author, ‘does not plead for a return to tradition, nor does it recommend to the European student of Indian politics to go native. The political scientist needs to explain the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, but not shy away from the challenge of unfamiliar questions. What they cannot explain using general political science, they should use to stretch the conceptual boundaries of political science.’(Mitra 1999:33).

According to Mitra, Indian society cannot be understood exclusively in terms of Western categories. In Western societies, after the Renaissance, man becomes the centre of the universe. All natural resources including other societies were to be put at the disposal of man, to be used for his welfare. However, such a radical rupture between the natural and the supernatural did not take place in Indian thinking. That is at the basis of the intellectual dilemma of Hegel and Weber. How can one think theoretically about societies where the gods are not dead, animals are worshiped, and plants are considered holy? The solution of Hegel and Weber to this problem was to subsume non-Western life in terms of Western categories. The political implications of this categorical supremacy of the West resulted in later being used as an intellectual justification for Western colonial rule and Western obligations to modernize non-Western societies.

New research however, reveals that the potential for an endogenous modernity existed already in the intellectual debates of Kautilya and his *Arthashastra* (4th Century B.C., ‘The Science of Material Gain’ or ‘Science of Polity’) and other classic Indian texts like the *Manusmriti* (laws of Manu). A challenge for the political science of South Asia is therefore to discover the political and moral resources of a pre-modern / pre-colonial South Asia and to understand the South Asian state as a hybridization of the endogenous and the exogenous values

² From an interview in the *South Asia Democratic Forum* (SADF) Bulletin. See SADF Bulletin No. 5, Brussels, Belgium, 19. December 2012, pp. 10-14 (Part I); and SADF Bulletin No. 6, Brussels, Belgium, 15 February 2013, pp. 28-31 (Part II). Both available at: www.sadf.eu.

³ Mitra, Subrata K. *Culture and Rationality. The Politics of Social Change in Post-colonial India*. Sage Publication: New Delhi, 1999.

derived from the Western experience of the Renaissance. With this in mind, Mitra states that there is a need “to understand how one can think of modernity not only as an input that turns tradition into a clone of modernity. The modernity, which Europe made up for itself from the Renaissance is a modernity which is empowered by methodological individualism. I have discovered that one can arrive at an endogenous modernity by marrying the values of European modernity to one’s own tradition and indigenous values. This hybridisation of the modern institutions can become the basis of civility and orderly rule in a non-Western society”.⁴ An example of how to tackle the above challenge is Mitra’s analysis of sub-national movements in India⁵. Here he showcases research on sub-national movements that goes beyond categories of the modern state, taking up the entanglement of the endogenous and exogenous a step further, by looking for deep-seated roots to modern politics in regionally embedded values and social networks. Most recently, this approach was applied to a study of the Telengana movement⁶ in which Mitra analyses the emergence and ‘banalization’ of social movements in a regional, subnational context based on a model that highlights the *rational* politics of cultural nationalism. In this context, one finds another remarkable feature of Mitra’s approach to political analysis - the appreciation for a comparative approach to the study of politics. Most of his works in this respective field are based on an intra-country comparison rather than a selection of, and from various countries. In short, Mitra sees “India itself as a comparative arena” in which he always “relies on a dense web of determinants to make his case”⁷.

As a political scientist with an area specialization in the non-Western world, Mitra’s scholarship seeks to abstract and generalize whilst cultivating and drawing on empathy for the cultural and historical context of the region. In his recently published South Asia Edition of *Politics in India*,⁸ he states, “My approach is to analyse politics from below and above, in terms of what those involved are aiming to achieve, the consequence of the aggregation of those goals, and the creation of rules with which the state seeks to run the political process in an orderly

⁴ See SADF Bulletin No. 5, Brussels, Belgium, 19. December 2012, pp. 10.

⁵ Mitra, Subrata K. and Alison Lewis (eds.), *Subnational Movements in South Asia*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996; Subrata K. Mitra, "The Rational Politics of Cultural Nationalism: Subnational Movements of South Asia in Comparative Perspective", *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 25, 1995, pp. 55-77.

⁶ Subrata K. Mitra, “Sub-National Movements, Cultural Flow, the Modern State and the Malleability of Political Space: From Rational Choice to Transcultural Perspective and Back Again”, *Transcultural Studies*, No.2, 2012, pp. 8-47.

⁷ See also Rudolph, Susanna Hoeber, “Foreword”, in Mitra, Subrata K. *The Puzzle of India’s Governance. Culture, Context and comparative theory*. Routledge: London and New York, 2006, pp. xiii-xv.

⁸ Mitra, Subrata K. *Politics in India: Structure, Process, and Policy*, Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2014.

way.” (Mitra 2014:xiii). In this way, Subrata Mitra has developed an approach that draws upon historical evolution, but not cultural determinism or an over-reliance on contingency, and the use of rational choice, but not rationalization, to understand and explain Indian politics. While he stayed true to his formal political science education, Subrata Mitra never stopped studying and exploring new ways of thinking. In his 20 years as a Professor in Heidelberg he has pursued new paths of political investigation and theory with avid interest and persistently supported scholars far outside his own fields of research.

India’s democracy is the empirical focus in the vast majority of Mitra’s publications, offering a rich and varied tapestry of theory-driven puzzles, analysis and new research questions. Bearing this in mind, Mitra has pursued a second lifelong interest, the topic of governance, which has “remained something of a fixed Pole Star” (Mitra 2006:xvii). However, in his work the study of India’s democracy seems always to give rise to insights and questions that either probe deeper into India’s own historical evolution or wider, to the neighbourhood of South Asia and beyond. Thus for instance *Democracy and Social Change in India*, published in 1999⁹ ends with a questioning of linear views of modernization in general (Mitra/Singh, 1999: 265). Thus, he asks why caste, after more than four decades of social legislation, education and liberal democratic politics, continues to play an important role in Indian political and public life. Mitra’s answer is that primordial identities have become part and parcel of competitive politics. He makes the counter-intuitive claim that in fact ‘caste consciousness (...) destroys precisely those attributes of the caste system, such as traditional social obligations, hierarchy and dominance, which the essentialist view presented as necessarily fixed in time and space’ (Mitra/Singh, 1999: 270). This view draws deeply upon the legacy of Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, who were pioneers in the study of Indian politics in the United States of America and had a great personal influence on Mitra. An article of theirs, which was presented during a visit to Heidelberg’s South Asia Institute in 2002 and was published initially in the *Heidelberg Papers on South Asian and Comparative Politics* (initiated by Subrata Mitra in 2000), is included in this volume.

In a move to further explore new avenues and directions, located at the interface between political science and area studies, Subrata Mitra joined the newly-founded *Cluster of Excellence*

⁹ Mitra, Subrata K. and V.B. Singh, *Democracy and Social Change in India. A Cross-Sectional Analysis of the National Electorate*: SAGE Publications: New Delhi, 1999.

'Asia and Europe in a Global Context' at Heidelberg University in 2008, as its first spokesperson for Research Area A, 'Governance and Administration'. A large academic institution funded by the German Federal and State governments, the Cluster comprises of four broad research areas under which a range of individual research projects are brought together from various disciplines. Centred on the intellectual trope of 'cultural flow', the main aim of this unique endeavour is to engage the humanities and the social sciences in a fruitful dialogue on the various historical, cultural, and socio-political exchange processes between the continents of Europe and Asia. In this context, Subrata Mitra led a project titled, 'Citizenship as Conceptual Flow: Asia in a Comparative Perspective'. Together with a team of researchers at Heidelberg University, the United Kingdom, India, France and South Korea he traced the conceptual development of citizenship from its European origins and its adaptations to the local requirements in India after 1947. The output of the project, which has inter alia been published in the volume *Citizenship as Cultural Flow: Structure, Agency and Power* (Springer; 2013), shows citizenship as a two-dimensional concept, comprising of a legal right to the soil and a moral affiliation to it. Mitra denotes it a 'liminal category', connecting the past to the present and the exogenous to the endogenous through cultural and conceptual flow. The novelty of this research lies not only in its innovative definition of the concept beyond its legalistic connotation, but also in its approach to measure citizenship using a multi-method approach. Staying true to his academic background outlined above, Mitra, in his study of citizenship combined quantitative approaches in the form of statistical analysis drawn from a cross-sectional, India-wide opinion survey with qualitative interpretative measures to lead towards a holistic understanding of citizenship as concept and practice in India. The project on 'Citizenship as Conceptual Flow: Asia in a Comparative Perspective' came to its conclusion in 2012 but through his continued involvement in the *Heidelberg Cluster of Excellence*, Subrata Mitra's research has continued to be highly interdisciplinary. His publications on the hybrid nature of Indian politics¹⁰, and on political iconography in Europe and India¹¹, testify to a continued desire to link the analysis of political action with questions of culture, identity and

¹⁰ See Subrata K. Mitra. 2011. 'From Comparative Politics to Cultural Flow: The *Hybrid* State, and Resilience of the Political System in India', in Phillip Stockhammer (ed.) *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridization: A Transdisciplinary Approach* (Heidelberg: Springer), 107-132.

¹¹ See Subrata K. Mitra and Lion König. 2012. 'Icons, Nations and Re-use: Marianne, France and Bharat Mata, India' in: Julia Hegewald and Subrata K. Mitra (eds.) *Re-use: The Art and Politics of Integration and Anxiety* (New Delhi: Sage), 288-313. Subrata K. Mitra and Lion König. 2013. 'Icon-ising National Identity: France and India in Comparative Perspective' in: *National Identities*, 15 (4), December, 357-377.

history. An innovative collaboration with art history and religious studies led to the edited volume *Re-use: the Art and Politics of Integration and Anxiety*.

The authors included in this volume are eminent scholars from across the world who have known, taught or worked together with Subrata Mitra. The book is divided into four sections: (1) Democracy in a Comparative Perspective; (2) The Post-Colonial State in South Asia; (3) State and Foreign Policy in South Asia and, (4) The Art of Politics. Following, is a brief summary of the articles in each section.

I. Democracy in a Comparative Perspective

The three chapters included in this section examine various facets of democracy and democratic politics. Harihar Bhattacharyya examines the *Communist Party of India (Marxist)* and the paradox of its resilience within the democratic framework of Indian politics. Bingham Powell draws attention to Western Europe and through his analysis of ideology and party polarization, demonstrates that Western models of democracy need to deal more explicitly with the challenge of explaining change. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith conduct an empirical investigation into mechanisms of mobilization in the case of Tanzania. Reading the chapters, one is reminded of the importance of comparative politics for the cross-fertilization of case studies drawn from very different cultural contexts and historical backgrounds – which provide insights into a variety of important patterns and dynamics.

Political Parties and Democracy in South Asia: The CPI-M and the Problematic of India's Liberal Democracy

Do conventional approaches to party system analysis work in a non-Western context? Harihar Bhattacharyya's contribution challenges the conventional and emphasizes the need for a critical and at once well-balanced application of theoretical assumptions that largely emanate from a Western historical background. In doing so, Bhattacharyya engages with a problem that has also been a focus of Mitra's work on party politics when he introduces the concept of

indigenization emphasizing that we need to understand “the ways and means with which political parties acquire local roots while retaining their canonical form” (Mitra 2004)¹²

Bhattacharyya’s account, in this volume, of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) and its dilemmas and paradoxes vis-à-vis Indian liberal democracy takes into consideration the specific conditions within which Indian parties emerged, operate and continuously re-create their party political environment. His analysis critically examines the empirical data to grasp and illustrate the notion of democracy as understood by the CPI (M), and the effects this has produced for liberal democratic institutions. Scrutinizing the CPI-M’s discourse on democracy Bhattacharyya traces evidence to document the anti-democratic and anti-institutional implications of the CPI-M’s ideational constructs and actual record of democratic governance. To give a broader context, he introduces the reader to some of the theoretical problems of Marxism and puts these into a historical perspective. Finally, aware that there is a tendency to examine parties largely as structural variables, Bhattacharyya argues for an approach that incorporates the role of agency.

Ideological Trends and Changing Party Polarization in Western Democracies

Following the theme of political parties and the historical evolution of party systems, G. Bingham Powell’s piece turns the focus back to Europe and addresses change over time by analysing ideological trends and political polarization. This provides a link to one of Mitra’s earliest works titled, *Governmental Instability in Indian States*¹³ that was published in 1978 and was based upon his PhD thesis at Rochester in New York State. In his dissertation, Mitra had used party manifestos to systematically analyse legislative and government party configurations an approach that was much ahead of its time and laid the foundation for future studies. Nonetheless, as Powell points out, work still needs to be done since there continues to be little knowledge about what causes party system polarization. The chapter embarks on this by exploring the relative influence and relationships between international ideological trends, election rules, domestic voter diversity and party system left-right polarization in Western democracies.

¹² Mitra, Subrata K./Enskat, Mike/Spieß, Clemens (eds.), *Political Parties in South Asia*. Praeger: Westport, Conn., 2004, p. 5.

¹³ Mitra, Subrata K., *Governmental instability in Indian states*, Ajanta Publication: Delhi, 1978.

Applying a cross-decade analysis, five hypotheses are generated from general theories and tested on the basis of various data sources such as citizen self-placement data from the *Eurobarometer*, the *World Value Survey* and the *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* (CSES) studies, and party position data from the *Comparative Manifesto Project* (CMP) and CSES. Powell demonstrates that evidence can be drawn from various statistical models that party system polarization does have major effects on ideological congruence, government stability, and short-term policy shifts, as well as on various forms of individual behaviour in general. However, other theoretical assumptions turn out to not be supported by the data. Having taken up one of the most complex puzzles in the field of party system analysis, Powell provides insights into the origins of stable and changing party system polarization.

Tanzania's Economic and Political Performance

Moving away from Europe to Africa, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith make a highly interesting application of selectorate theory to the case of Tanzania. Their article argues that by applying the framework of selectorate theory to all political systems, one can identify two groups that are core to the selection and retention of political leaders: the selectorate and the winning coalition. The selectorate are all the people who have a say in selecting a leader, e.g. all voters in a democracy whereas the winning coalition in a democracy means all those voters who provide a majority for the leader.

Provided that the leader wants to stay in power, he or she has to ensure the support of the winning coalition through the provision of private goods (such as material or financial benefits for individuals) and/ or public goods (such as better health care access or greater income equality). A central hypothesis of the selectorate theory is that the larger the winning coalition - like in a democracy with millions of votes needed for getting into and staying in power - the more *public* goods provision (rather than *private* goods provision) is utilized to secure support.

In the context of Tanzania's democratic system, Bueno de Mesquita and Smith scrutinize this hypothesis by analysing the effect of coalition size at the district level on the provision of private vis-a-vis public goods. Controlling for potential alternative explanations

such as the levels of poverty, productivity and population, the authors show that larger winning coalitions in districts favour public goods, whereas smaller winning coalitions count on private goods for securing support. This highly useful insight allows the authors to “illuminate (...) some of the problems that may hinder improved living conditions in Tanzania” and to provide concrete policy advice.

II. The Post-Colonial State in South Asia

In this section, Dietmar Rothermund explores the political transformation of the post-colonial state in South Asia. S.T. Hettige gives insights into the Sri Lankan experience of nation- and state-building while Jim Manor examines the inter-connection between politics and development in South Asia. Further exploring the broader horizon of South Asia, David Jacobson’s analysis of violence, citizenship and civility, across time and space, draws attention to differences in meaning in western as well as non-western perspectives.

India’s Social Challenges’

In his chapter on ‘India’s Social Challenges’, historian Dietmar Rothermund takes stock of the Indian Republic’s achievements in the social sector and analyses the challenges ahead. He illustrates how some notable achievements also generated new challenges, thus for instance the Green Revolution, paving the way to India’s self-sufficiency in food, also led to a dramatic increase in population. While this is today labelled the ‘Demographic Dividend’ – a quickly growing, young and hopeful India population also poses challenges in terms of urgent needs of healthcare and education, the need to combat environmental degradation and water scarcity, alleviate poverty and to address the concerns of Indian women. These are some of the major issues that the state must address in the 21st century.

Rothermund makes the further point that the legitimacy of any government depends on its ability to meet such social challenges. Since he sees neither the Centre nor the State governments in a position to provide solutions in a meaningful and lasting way, the argument is made for further decentralization and empowerment of local government structures to tackle issues of employment, healthcare, education and poverty alleviation. Therefore, entrusting the

panchayat with further responsibilities, like financial authority, appears as the most promising way forward for Rothermund.

In his contribution to the volume, the sociologist Siri T. Hettige explores the (post)-civil war political scenario in Sri Lanka, which has been marked by verbal and physical attacks on moderates, tightened state control over the media, and political control over public institutions. These developments are analysed by taking into account three key factors: post-colonial social, economic and political developments, more recent economic reforms under the influence of neo-liberalism, and the long-standing ethnic conflict that led to the steady militarization of Sri Lankan society. Hettige argues that post-independence economic and social policies did not help create a harmonious society, but hampered the growth of the private sector and increased the dependence of the wider population on the state for public resources such as credit, land, subsidized services and employment.

With the ‘open economic policy’ of the newly elected pro-market regime, which came to power in 1977, arrived neo-liberal policies. However, Hettige states that, even after 1994, despite several significant state interventions to mitigate the corrosive impact of liberal economic reforms, the general thrust towards greater market liberalization continued unabated, along with which came a heightened sense of social insecurity. The militarization of society is a consequence of the decade-long ethnic conflict that has torn the island apart. The process includes religious and private – as well as state-owned media – thus testifying to the all-pervasive impact of the military conflict. In sum, all these factors, Hettige argues, contributed to the emergence of illiberal trends in governance in the country causing a persisting sense of instability and insecurity across society that, if they remain unaddressed, will entail a further deterioration of the socio-political situation in the country.

Key Issues in the Study of State Politics in India

James Manor’s chapter on provides a highly useful and systematic entrée into some of the core questions that one needs to pose when analysing Indian politics at the state level. The author elaborates how since 1989 power was decentralised – away from the national level – and at the same time centralised within numerous federal states. Manor categorizes the Indian states

by their concentration of power and pinpoints the “increase in abuses of power” by various Chief Ministers.

With a Machiavellian focus on how politicians try to boost their power and popularity, Manor tackles questions such as: do Chief Ministers rather use ‘clientelism’, populism, or what the author calls ‘post-clientelism’, or a combination of the two? Manor argues that – given the obvious long-term disadvantages of clientelism and populism – the increase in state revenues since 2003 led to a proliferation of ‘post-clientelist’ programmes. Furthermore, Manor explores whether Chief Ministers choose to nurture, distract (by opportunities to enrich themselves), marginalise or occasionally cut down some of their subordinates? How and to what extent do Chief Ministers indulge in corruption (be it for themselves, their parties or in turning a blind eye to their corrupt subordinates)? How do Chief Ministers ‘manage’ national leaders? Which social bases for their power do they try to appeal to – does this lead to divisions among or a uniting of social groups within their state? Drawing upon his deep first-hand knowledge of politics in the numerous Indian states with their diverse (political) cultures, Manor sheds light on the “dark arts which politicians sometimes use, and to the nitty gritty of what Ashis Nandy has described as the pigsty of Indian politics”.

Citizenship and Violence: The Past and Future of Civility

In the section’s final article, David Jacobson explores the linkages between violence and citizenship. Drawing a conceptual difference between the academic consideration of violence and civility in the West and in the post-colonial world, as well as the decline in violence in Western, as opposed to non-Western states, Jacobson argues that a civil society is best attained where there is a “culture match” between state and society. Following Stephen Cornell, this ‘cultural match’ is described as “the match between governing institutions and the prevailing ideas in the community about how authority should be organized and exercised”. Statistically, societies associated with particular social phenomena are *likely* to be more prone to violence in the contemporary world. These factors include, notably, low women’s status, a high degree of fractionalization, communities with high levels of grievance, and high levels of corruption. This is to say that tribal – or clan-based societies, especially when deeply patriarchal, can be associated with relatively high levels of violence.

After discussing liberal and communitarian arguments for the decline in violence, Jacobson turns to the empirical contexts of the Middle East and Africa to illustrate his argument, before referring to India and the work of Subrata Mitra on citizenship as a policy model, “providing as it does guidance to bring a modicum of peace, with freedoms, to other post-colonial societies”.

III. State, Security and Stability in South Asia

Covering traditional as well as human security, the chapters in this section identify a number of South Asia’s most pressing security challenges. The role of the state remains crucial to the study of South Asia (see Rothermund & Mitra: *The Post-Colonial State in Asia*) and each of the three chapters included in this section addresses this point. Stability is a central concern for all South Asian states, both internally and in terms of bilateral relations. Each of the papers highlights key regional challenges with Partha Ghosh examining the impact and dimensions of migration and integration; Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah who explores the future of Afghanistan following the withdrawal of international troops; and the implications of the US pivot to Asia as analysed by Jean-Luc Racine.

'South Asia's Quest for a Refugee Convention'

Partha S. Ghosh examines in his contribution the challenges of formulating a refugee convention for the whole region. The fact that South Asia hosts the largest number of refugees, migrants, displaced and stateless persons in the world indicates its significance for security and stability in South Asia’s domestic and international politics. A major obstacle in solving South Asia’s refugee conundrum is that very little has been achieved at the regional level, most importantly within the ambit of the *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation* (SAARC). Ghosh points out that there is also a lack of domestic legislation and enthusiasm among authorities to deal with massive inter- and intra-state migration. Nevertheless, the chapter makes clear that some progress has been achieved regarding the provision of shelter and relief. Furthermore, some of the migrants have managed to acquire legal documents, which will enable them to obtain citizenship in their respective host states in due course.

To answer the question of how greater integration in terms of policy could be achieved, Ghosh's conceptual point of departure is to elaborate on the different situations and respective implications of Mandate and Non-Mandate Refugees. This helps to contextualize and illustrate the options for domestic refugee-centric legislation as well as any notions of a regional approach. In order to do so, the chapter examines both individual countries as well as bilateral relations. However, in tackling the puzzle of how to develop a regional convention for refugees, it seems that corruption, indifference and/or ethnic and communal sympathies still seem to be the bases on which citizenship is either granted or withheld.

The Withdrawal of the Foreign Troops from Afghanistan in 2014, Peace Negotiations and the Role of Pakistan

In his chapter Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah outlines the potential scenarios that could unfold after the withdrawal of US and NATO troops and the ISAF from Afghanistan in 2014. Without doubt, the pull-out of foreign combat troops represents one of the most significant events for security and stability in the extended region of South Asia and beyond. In order to analyse the implications of this on-going process, Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah draws attention to the dynamics of peace negotiations and the potential role that Pakistan can play. In order to do so, he evaluates the performance, strategies and perceptions of the US in conducting 'meaningful talks'. In addition to that, the chapter deals with the efforts of Washington to achieve a certain level of reconciliation between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

To determine the extent to which the Afghans are prepared for the post-withdrawal scenario, the chapter not only elaborates on the significance of the Doha Talks for the future positioning of the Taliban but also outlines the interests and actions of other major actors in Afghanistan, most notably the Afghan government under the leadership of President Hamid Karzai, the *Afghan High Peace Council*, and the 'Northern Alliance'. In this context, Shah pays special attention to the most crucial question: are the Taliban prepared for a comeback to political power and how would their traditional rivals react to this? In this context, Shah depicts the mixed reactions over the main trajectories from an agent-based as well as structural perspective.

From the Great Game 2.0 to the US. 'Asia Pivot': The New Geometry of South Asia's Geopolitics

Jean-Luc Racine's paper locates India within the contemporary world of evolving geopolitics. He focuses on the pressures, opportunities and challenges that face India both towards the East and West. In both regions, the United States looms large as a major player and shaper of geopolitical dynamics. Providing an analysis and overview of the events that have moulded international politics in India's immediate neighbourhood as well as the broader Asian context, Racine also addresses the role and motivations that have driven the actor, in this case India. By examining examples of Indian foreign policy and considering the views of Indian analysts and strategists, Racine draws attention to the multiple levels, often-conflicting goals and dilemmas that characterise policymaking. Two central geopolitical dramas are given particular attention in the paper - the *Great Game 3.0* referring to a post-9/11 world where Afghanistan is key and, the *US Asia Pivot*, where China is central. Eschewing a purely structural perspective, Racine asks whether India is moving towards a position of greater bargaining power and leverage. To answer this question, he considers the point that India cannot afford to be hemmed in by regional dynamics but must define and frame a global perspective.

IV. The Art of Politics

The chapters in this final section represent the perspective of three scholars who look at politics not simply through procedural dimensions but also in terms of the substantive value created through the conflictual, contested and divisive business of politics. Thus, Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph focus on civil society, Frank Pfetsch on the challenges of negotiation and Klaus von Beyme on politics and art in the time of accelerated globalisation.

Civil Society and Public Sphere as Bourgeois Rationality

Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph examine the associational forms created by Mahatma Gandhi and discuss the light that these shed on the debates about civil society and the public sphere in political and social theory. As John Keane once remarked, “reflexive, self-organizing non-governmental organizations that some call civil society can and do live by other names in other linguistic and cultural milieus” (Keane 1998: 55). As a first step, the chapter draws upon Habermas and Putnam to identify the attributes that have been used to define civil society associations. They then move on to explore Indian ‘variants’ of public sphere and civil society, including a number of 19th century examples of voluntary associations that arose out of the experiences of colonial British India.

Examining the case of India, the Rudolph’s discuss the methodological and empirical challenges that the scholar encounters in trying to establish equivalence across time and space via concepts and institutions. Justifying their choice on ontological grounds, they decide to focus on Mahatma Gandhi and his creation of the Gandhian *ashram*. The chapter studies how this “Indian” variant compares with the practice and concept of civil society and public sphere as they have evolved in European history, thought and practice.

What makes a negotiated solution durable?

Frank Pfetsch in his contribution explores a specific way by which political conflict can be solved without the use of force. In particular, he elaborates on aspects that have to be taken into consideration by political actors to make such solutions lasting. The method of achieving a non-violent solution to political conflict is to mediate a *compromise*, a feat that Pfetsch singles out. While a well-balanced solution appears to be a straightforward panacea at first sight, theoretically many facets have to be taken into consideration to make it a durable solution. Organized in two consecutive sections, the chapter first establishes the theoretical tools, like defining and distinguishing a compromise from other solutions that might be likewise benign but elusive when it comes to the question of the resilience of such solutions. Further, criteria are established that allow for a distinction to be drawn between a “true” and “false” compromise, an aspect that is of utmost importance for a profound and imperturbable conflict-scenario analysis.

Having established a well equipped theoretical toolbox, in the consecutive section, Pfetsch tests the tools by applying them to historical cases as diverse as the Munich Diktat of 1938, the Cuban missile Crisis, or the Treaty of Lisbon that was crucial for the development of the EU, to name only a few. Against this rich background, Pfetsch concludes by emphasizing the overarching importance of compromise for political negotiations, whether or not those compromises fulfil all conditions for a durable solution.

From Exoticism to Postcolonial Art – Theorizing und Politicizing Art in the Age of Globalization

The final chapter in this volume deviates from previous ones by breaking with the classical themes of political science. Klaus von Beyme illustrates his profound knowledge of the arts and art history by transcending disciplinary boundaries under the umbrella of the postcolonial discourse. He demonstrates the relevance of political debates and beliefs for the creation and interpretation of art. Von Beyme illustrates the problems that arise when ‘Eastern’ areas meet ‘Western’ theories and it appears that the discourse around this collision of worlds is much further developed in disciplines like art history, linguistics, or postcolonial studies than it is in political science. Thus, von Beyme’s chapter on the transformation from exoticism to postcolonial art might also be understood as an appeal for a similar transformation within the field of comparative politics. This entails rejecting a view of non-Western political systems as exotic and different, especially those that do not copy the institutional structures and political processes of the European and North Atlantic variants, and moving towards a more liberal and open-minded interpretation of these non-Western and postcolonial contexts.

Conclusion

The chapters of this book, diverse as they are, show one thing clearly: political science is a truly global science, which draws rich lessons from its application in diverse geographical settings. The book is also an embodiment of Subrata Mitra’s way of life. Having studied, observed and researched politics all over the world, from his undergraduate education in Orissa via his days in Rochester, Paris and Hull to his career in Heidelberg, Mitra exemplifies the global scholar like few others do. This book, which honours the India-specialist Subrata Mitra attracted contributions from so many different scholars writing on such diverse topics, is proof

of the global reach and resonance of Subrata Mitra's work and personal friendships. But he has also remained true to his origins, both geographical and scientific, and concentrated his research on India and in pursuit of answers to the persistent question, "How does this state work?" Beyond a deep-seated empiricism, the other leading question in his academic life has always been to ask, what the story of India – or for that matter, of South Asia – is the story of? Relating what one knows to what one sees in order to derive generalizable insights from specific case studies has been Subrata Mitra's guiding credo and his research and teaching are reflective of this principle.

At this point, the editors would like to take the opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the efforts made by all current and former colleagues – secretaries, lecturers, researchers, student assistants – as well as the tremendous number of eminent international scholars from all over the world – who, over the last decades helped, not only to support and contribute to Subrata Mitra's research and teaching, but also to build a vibrant department of political science dedicated to the politics of South Asia. By taking theory and context equally seriously as well as being open-minded to themes and approaches, Mitra tirelessly pushed his own work and his students towards a constant dialogue between Europe and Asia. His never-ending energy, drive and endurance to bring together well-established scholars with young promising researchers are exemplified in this present volume. Thank you, Subrata! May your mission 'to understand India in terms of the world, and the world in terms of India' from your happy abode in Heidelberg, in the company of your peers and students – past, present and future –continue its intellectual journey with customary vigour.

*Siegfried O. Wolf, Jivanta Schöttli, Dominik Frommherz, Kai Fürstenberg,
Marian Gallenkamp, Lion König and Markus Pauli.*