

Book review: Corinna R. Unger: Entwicklungspfade in Indien - Eine internationale Geschichte, 1947-1980. Göttingen: Wallstein 2015. ISBN 978-3-8353-1754-3

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Rezension / review

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Schmidt, J. S. (2019). Book review: Corinna R. Unger: Entwicklungspfade in Indien - Eine internationale Geschichte, 1947-1980. Göttingen: Wallstein 2015. ISBN 978-3-8353-1754-3. *International Quarterly for Asian Studies (IQAS)*, 50(1-2), 182-184. <https://doi.org/10.11588/iqas.2019.1-2.10350>

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Importantly, Maheshwari argues that attacks against artists are a new and unique practice and differ from existing modalities of demonstration and from forms of extreme violence such as riots and genocide. Towards the end of the book, the author contends that “artists are an embodiment of both the magnificence and the violence of the times they live in” (p. 339). The book discusses attacks that have targeted the artistic production of the elites, whose status has shaped both the attacks and their outcomes (these range from murder to banning but also to the granting of the right to screen a film). However, what takes place outside the realm of Indian society’s upper echelons? While the book sheds light on the unknown and often unidentified assailants, the relation between free speech and those lesser-known artists residing in smaller cities, who have been attacked without generating any momentum, as the author mentions, have not found space in the book’s analysis. Thinking comparatively, it is certainly true that elite artists (and other high-profile members of the cultural world) are subject to a climate of intimidation and potential censorship and violence – and the book demonstrates this very effectively; however, the routine and lethal violence experienced by minorities, Dalits and indigenous persons, as well as the gender violence that occurs as a matter of fact, actually point to the overall freedom of expression of elite cultural producers and their ability to fight cases in court.

Art Attacks deserves to be read widely as it offers much food for thought on the shifting texture of Indian society, the limits of democracy, but also the role of “containment” by those who consider themselves arbiters not only of visual and material worlds but of the very nature of culture.

Manuela Ciotti

CORINNA R. UNGER, *Entwicklungspfade in Indien. Eine internationale Geschichte 1947–1980*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015. 319 pages, €34.90. ISBN 978-3-8353-1754-3

In her book, Corinna R. Unger, Professor of Global and Colonial History at the European University Institute in Florence, gives a profound and detailed overview of the different developmental approaches in postcolonial India. While outlining the different theories underlying development policy in India, she ties the actual development work to the international conditions at the time. This overview not only conveys the circumstances affecting Indian international politics in general but also illustrates how strongly global development work rests upon strategic and political calculations that go beyond altruistic and social motives. The book demonstrates through many examples that

development policy in postcolonial India cannot be regarded as an isolated sphere but rather as a multifaceted product of colonial history, domestic and foreign policy, the Cold War, geographic location and many other factors. Furthermore, postcolonial India is partly depicted as a kind of experimental laboratory in which the different developmental approaches were tested, optimised and discarded over time – from support for cooperatives and low-threshold community development to universal and technical solutions that resulted in major industrial projects.

The publication is divided into two main parts, examining rural development on the one hand and industrialisation and urbanisation on the other hand. In the first part the author illustrates how assistance with self-help approaches competed with technical solutions, revealing the motives behind the shifts and the main actors involved. In the 1950s the dominant approach was Community Development, which was seen as a tool for nation building and strived not only for economic but also for social development and resulted in the Etawah Project in Uttar Pradesh. Using examples like this, Unger provides an in-depth look at the different motives, challenges, players and successes in postcolonial development policy in India. In detail she describes the achievements but also obstacles and criticised aspects of Community Development, which ultimately resulted in the switch to a different strategy, namely the Green Revolution, which promoted technology-based agricultural intensification.

The second chapter provides insight into different industrialisation projects and urban development strategies. Unger points out how the Rourkela steel mill, which was a major industrialisation project executed by West Germany, was intertwined with economic interests, infrastructural barriers and political issues. Moreover, the example demonstrates the attempts of the industrialised countries to re-educate the Indians with a so-called Protestant work ethic (p. 153). In contrast to the low-threshold approaches, the actions in Rourkela were not aimed at the social structure of the Indian population. The author manages to describe the project in sufficient detail so as to demonstrate its presentation in the Indian and German media at the time as well as the feelings of superiority and insensitivity it aroused among a wide range of Germans. Lastly, Unger deals with urban development in India using the examples of Rourkela, Chandigarh and Kolkata. By describing the different actions that were undertaken to build or develop these cities, she enables the reader unfamiliar with urban design to obtain an idea of the variety of different urban development approaches, concepts and goals – ranging from representative purposes to the improvement of living conditions in slums – and of the importance of a functioning city administration.

The author concludes with a summary of three different categories of knowledge in the field of development aid: theoretical knowledge, popular

knowledge and functional aggregated knowledge (pp. 280ff). Although those forms of knowledge are briefly described, it would have been beneficial to elaborate further on the conclusions and the implications that can be drawn from this categorisation for future development activity. In comparison to the sharply analysed case studies this overview unfortunately remains shallow. However, Unger further elaborates on the discrepancies between theory and practice and outlines the importance of learning from the executive actors rather than simply examining expert opinions (p. 285). This multidimensional actor-centred view used in the book demonstrates the large number of players and interlinkages between the private and public spheres in development policy. Finally, the author concludes that development must be seen as a concept that changes in line with contemporary interests, problems and socio-economic contexts.

Overall, the author provides deep insight into the chosen examples and reflects upon the measures from various perspectives. The clear structure of the book, as well as the many interim results, summaries and conclusions make it easy to follow the main themes. Unger uses matching examples that also emphasise the heterogeneity of Indian culture, society and history. The focus on practical implementation enables the reader to acknowledge that Western models and theories cannot be copied as they stand but need to be adapted to the cultural framework on site. The author manages to show the emergence as well as the practical implementation of various concepts and the conclusions that can be drawn from them. In so doing, she demonstrates her wide knowledge of the subcontinent and its diverse culture. Although the examples are suitable for underlining the history of development in India, it would have been interesting to gain an insight into the developmental actions or inactions in conflict areas such as Kashmir or the Northeast. Nevertheless, the historical-epistemological analysis is a vivid and also entertaining way to reconstruct the history of Indian development, in which politics and knowledge reciprocally evolve. Sadly, the analysis ends in the 1980s. The book sparks an interest in following up the development policies that have continued since that time.

Julia Sophie Schmidt