



CENTRE FOR ASIAN AND
TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES

SOUTH ASIA
INSTITUTE



UNIVERSITÄT
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Lecture Series on Governance and Politics in South Asia

Department of Political Science

Special Lecture on

Policy paradigms and path dependence: the endogenous roots of institutional displacement and drift in India

by

Prof. Dr. Rahul Mukherji and Dr. Seyed Hossein Zarhani

Heidelberg University



This lecture draws upon a paper by Professor Mukherji coauthored with Seyed Hossein Zarhani, published in the journal *Global Public Policy and Governance*, on 30 January 2021. It demonstrates the impact of path-dependent policy paradigms on institutional progression that could involve institutional journeys from democracy to authoritarianism, from federalism to centralization, and vice versa. It is posited that policy ideas are more important than material interests for the evolution of historical paths, and the sequence of path construction is equally important. This paper points to the significance of policy ideas for the construction of two sequences—a layering–tipping–displacement path—and a path of institutional drift. The paper presents case work on how the layered evolution of ideas led to a tipping point that transformed a public sector-driven regime into a private sector oriented one in 1991, thereby unleashing India’s rapid economic growth. The causal mechanism suggests that layering leading to a tipping point that displaces the old paradigm can reveal why overtly abrupt change may result from gradual endogenous processes. This is a largely unexplored causal mechanism in comparative politics. The paper also demonstrates that an ideational drift away from the federalizing frame evolved since 2014. It has resulted in famishing the Indian sub-national states for development expenditure, especially at the time of COVID-19. While scholars have suggested the causal logic behind conversion, drift, layering and displacement largely based on material factors, this paper connects ideas embedded in policy paradigms with two of these paths. Read this here: https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/md/sai/pol/mukherji-zarhani2021_article_policyparadigmsandpathdependen.pdf

Date: Monday, April 26, 2021

Time: 14:00 – 16:00, CEST

Online - Via Zoom

Meeting id: 812 5314 7896, Pass code: TheoryM21

Zoom link- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81253147896?pwd=RE1HUlFtYmRrczVkUW9Lbi9pS3E4Zz09>