



**University of  
Zurich** <sup>UZH</sup>

**Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies**

# Indian Democracy Today

**8 November 2017, 17:00 – 20:00**

**University of Zurich, Rämistrasse 59, Aula, 8001 Zurich**

# Outline

India is the world's largest democracy: it has a secular constitution and an independent judiciary, a vibrant civil society, a largely free press, and it holds frequent and fair elections. Its citizens are free to choose their leaders, and persistently high voter turn outs during elections indicate that they fully embrace this freedom. Its citizens also actively embrace their right to protest, as is attested by the multiple social movements that are active throughout India. On the economic front, the country's economy has been booming, and India has among other things become a leading world provider of IT services and pharmaceutical products. But is all of this the full story? Is everything truly well with Indian democracy? Some scholars and journalists think not. They point to the entrenchment of dynastic politics, and to trends indicating rising political criminality and corruption. More recently, they have added the rise of majoritarian Hindu nationalism to their list of concerns. And is India's booming economy benefiting all Indians? Here too scholars and commentators have their doubts, and have raised questions about whether the poor are reaping any profit from soaring economic growth rates.

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**Kindly confirm your attendance by 6 November 2017: [indologie@aoi.uzh.ch](mailto:indologie@aoi.uzh.ch)**

# Schedule

17:00

## **Welcome**

Gabriele Siegert, Vice President for Arts and Social Sciences, UZH

Andrew Holland, Director Mercator Foundation Switzerland

Klaus Jonas, Dean Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UZH

17:15

## **Democracy in India: A View from the Ground**

Introduction by Nicolas Martin, Assistant Professor of Modern Indian/South Asian Studies at the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, UZH

17:30

## **The Condition of Democracy in Contemporary India**

Lecture by Patrick French, Professor for the Public Understanding of the Humanities, Ahmedabad University

18:15

## **Panel Discussion**

Patrick French, Professor for the Public Understanding of the Humanities, Ahmedabad University

Mukulika Banerjee, Associate Professor of Social Anthropology, London School of Economics and Political Science

Katharina Michaelowa, Professor of Political Science, UZH

Nicolas Martin, Assistant Professor of Modern Indian/South Asian Studies, UZH

Moderation: Angelika Malinar, Professor of Indian Studies, UZH

19:00

## **Apéro**

# Mercator Professorship in Modern Indian/ South Asian Studies

The Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies (IAOS)—founded in 2013—is the center of research and teaching on Asia and the Orient at the University of Zurich (UZH). It brings together the disciplines of Indian Studies, Islamic Studies, Japanese Studies, Chinese Studies, and Gender Studies within one institutional structure and represents the University of Zurich’s strategic focus on Asian and Oriental studies within the University, within Switzerland, and internationally. Research and teaching at the four departments cover a broad spectrum of topics from past to present; from languages, literature, religion, and philosophy to politics, economics, society, and culture.

Professor Dr. Nicolas Martin was appointed assistant professor of Modern Indian/South Asian Studies at the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies on the 1 February 2016. He obtained his PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2009 where he subsequently taught at the Department of Social Anthropology. In 2012 he became a Senior Research Fellow on a European Research Council grant on ‘Democratic Cultures’ in South Asia (based at the University College London) and joined the University of Zurich in 2016. Over the years, Professor Dr. Nicolas Martin has done research in political and economic anthropology in both India and Pakistan.

The Mercator Foundation Switzerland has played a crucial role in supporting the enlargement of the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies by first financing the chair in the Social Science of Japan, and by currently financing the new chair in Modern Indian/South Asian Studies with 2,380,000 Swiss francs over six years. The foundation also supports the University of Zurich in a variety of other ways including through the Mercator Awards for young researchers, through a project that focuses on personalised concepts of learning in heterogeneous groups (perLen), and by promoting intercultural dialogue and the exchange of knowledge with scientific institutions in Iran.

[www.stiftung-mercator.ch](http://www.stiftung-mercator.ch)

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