

Book Reviews

Suryakant Waghmore. 2013. *Civility against Caste: Dalit Politics and Citizenship in Western India*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications. xxxvii + 235 pp. References, index. ₹750 (hardback).

For some time now, dalit politics has occupied centre stage in critical studies of caste, partly due to the spectacular rise of one political party (the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)), but also partly due to a tacit view that dalits are the quintessential subjects (sociologically, economically and morally) capable of making an Indian history that would be truly emancipatory. Scholarly debates here revolve around how the category dalit or Bahujan would enable mobilisation and collective action against caste and whether (and if so, how) dalit politics would take up the question of opposition to caste and casteism systematically. Not surprisingly, the notion of ‘civil society’ and its potential to radically shape the character of Indian democracy became central to this debate.

This book attempts to show how dalits make their own histories and in that process, remake basic ideas of democratic life (namely, politics and civility) within conditions that are not of their own making and which are in fact hostile in every conceivable manner to their project. Drawing upon ethnographic work and engagement with scholarly arguments about politics, caste and civil society in India, sociologist Suryakant Waghmore puts forth four arguments with quiet certitude: that dalit politics—especially via ‘new associations’ such as grassroots dalit movement non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and dalit political parties—(i) *civilises* Indian society and civil society, (ii) *politicises* caste, (iii) enables *reform* of the Indian state, and (iv) *makes relevant* the positive uses of caste in India.

He makes his arguments by telling us the story of two organisations: a political party (BSP) and a grassroots NGO (Manavi Hakk Abhiyaan (MHK)). Both work for issues central to the lives of dalits in the Marathwada region (Beed district) of Maharashtra. The opening and concluding chapters frame the analytical intervention of the book—a

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reworking of the idea of 'civil society' in India and an argument for dalit politics to be viewed as performing the task of, what sociologist J. Alexander has termed, 'civil repair' (p. xxxvii). Working with a notion of civil society as a space that allows for 'expanding spaces of political freedoms' (pp. 4ff), Waghmore charts out a path different from both postcolonialist and liberal views of civil society that are deeply pessimistic about civil society in India. In contrast, his objective is to illustrate how dalit politics is engaged in performing 'a revolution in the realm of civility and civil relations' (p. 200). Such a claim raises questions about the content of this 'civility' and the reasons for the appearance of this civility. This is the core of the rest of the book's substantive chapters.

Chapter 2 sets up the historical context for the emergence of the two focal organisations of this book in the wake of the Dalit Panther movement. Here we get an analytical outline of the contrasting political identities, structure and charismatic leaderships of the BSP and MHA including the Mahar and Mang dynamics of politicisation and recruitment. The next two chapters construct two elements of the context within which dalit politics arguably needs to be viewed by scholars—the continued violence and social exclusion of dalits in material and symbolic (ritualised) ways and the 'internationalist human rights' regime which dalit organisations access for grassroots struggles. Here the author points to the increasing retributive violence faced by dalits (from Marathas) when they assert their dignity on the one hand, but also how dalits play non-retributive politics and thus constrain 'caste incivilities' in civil society. He also poignantly makes his scholarly point about how dalit NGOs such as the MHA in its struggle for redistribution of land, far from depoliticising dalit politics, actually vernacularises the human rights discourse to bring the (previously marginalised) issue of *gairaan* land to the centre of local politics in Marathwada.

Chapters 5 through 8 are subtle attempts at navigating the charge made by scholars (e.g. Omvedt) that dalit politics is really *jāti* politics, not anti-caste politics. The author makes an interesting argument here about how the BSP's politics plays a role in aiding the substantialising of caste identities (and in this sense, not anywhere close to aiding an annihilation of castes) but that it does this ultimately to keep an anti-caste ideology and affective sense of politics alive. The latter is achieved according to the author by the fact that the collective sense of Bahujan is really a tapestry woven by the BSP in which each caste is a 'minority' with a consciousness

of being aggrieved by the caste system. In many ways, this chapter is one of the best attempts to soberly analyse the phenomenon of the BSP from the perspective of what it means to a dalit politics, neither valourising it nor demonising it. In an analogous fashion, the discussion of MHA and the shaping of Mang political identity presents a complex picture of how caste substantialises yet retains an anti-caste politics. Mangs attempt to create a *swabhimani* identity based on their jāti, yet manage to turn their historical and sociopolitical antagonism to Mahars into an overall anti-caste critique of Hindu and dominant caste identity. Finally, one learns how electoral politics puts pressures on dalit organisations to compromise their anti-caste ideologies in order to survive in the caste-as-arithmetic system of political parties. The concluding chapter is a brief summary of the main points about the need to view dalit politics as affirming civil society even if they appear from time to time to have not lived up to their stated principles.

The book could have been titled: Who Needs Civil Society? Or, What Dalit Politics Has Done for Indian Society? Interestingly, the last chapter is sub-titled ‘Why Dalits Need a Civil Society?’ It is a brave attempt to rescue dalit politics from being condemned to the dustheap of history, as having the potential but having failed for whatever reasons. The arguments in this book are significant for sociological and political understanding of civil society in India since they run counter to several scholarly arguments that (i) are dismissive of dalit politics as being unable to carry out its historical tasks having reached an *impasse*; (ii) view NGOs in a totalising manner as an inherently *depoliticising* force acting to aid management of society rather than its transformation; (iii) critique civil society in India as either deficient from the normative idea of a space for *voluntarist* associational life or as a *bourgeois* space that does not quite capture the needs of ‘community’ in India; and (iv) reject the possibility of the *relevance* of caste to genuine progressive politics.

While the author does succeed in locating dalit politics within the parameters of violence against dalits, social exclusion and electoral cooptation and hence opens up some space for calibrating scholarly assessment and expectations, it still leaves some basic questions for further research: what does it mean for dalit politics to survive as a force in electoral politics and yet have its anti-caste ideology marginalised? While it is clear that dalit politics has not reached any *impasse* in the sense of

lack of ideas and room to manoeuvre in politics, there is still the need to subject notions of graded inequality at the margins to greater scrutiny while shaping an anti-caste political ideology. Such a project will obviously not gain a hold over dominant castes, but if it is deferred indefinitely by dalit groups, its implications would be devastating. Though this falls outside the purview of this book, it may remain a task to be engaged with by scholars and activists alike.

This book is very readable, intellectually sharp, yet relatively free of jargon. It could be useful as a text for upper-level students of politics and caste. Last but not the least, Waghmore in some reflexive parts of the book shows how fieldwork-based research could ethically locate itself within movements and organisations in ways that do not compromise on their scholarly or political integrity.

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BALMURLI NATRAJAN

Satish Deshpande, ed. 2014. *The Problem of Caste*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan. xi + 422 pp. Tables, notes, references. ₹595 (paperback).

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The Problem of Caste is an excellent collection of select articles from the *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)* published between 1958 and 2013. It carries 40 essays carefully excerpted into chapters and selected from 467 articles published on caste in the EPW in the last six decades. This book is a great resource for students and scholars interested in researching caste as the collection gives the reader insights into the developments and debates in the study of caste.

The chapters are organised into six thematic sections. Section I on 'Disciplinary Perspectives' does well to discern the apathy of certain disciplines (except law, sociology, social anthropology and politics) to the issue of caste. This section has 10 essays which cover some of the key interpretations of caste; Srinivas's essay in some ways furthers Dumont's thesis through Sanskritisation while Dipankar Gupta's intervention emphasises the multiple and discrete nature or hierarchies. Kumkum Roy's essay on Kosambi's interest in caste highlights how caste needs to be interpreted beyond religious texts to comprehend embedded class dimensions.

Andre Béteille's essay does well to raise doubts on the tenacity of caste in present times. Caste is fast eroding in various spheres, suggests Béteille. Thorat and Attwell's essay on job discrimination in urban labour markets suggests that caste-erasure may well survive caste discrimination in newer forms. Marc Galanter's essay though dated brings out the persistence of untouchability and the lack of a sympathetic attitude in the judiciary evident in the way untouchability is interpreted. Rajni Kothari's essay notes the dynamism of brahmanism and the challenge dalit politics poses to the seduction of Sanskritisation.

Gopal Guru's seminal essay on the theoretical Brahmin and empirical Shudra turns the gaze on academic-intelligentsia instead and comments on the nature of hierarchical transactions in the social sciences. Sundar Sarrukai's essay is a response to Gopal Guru, which co-implicates the Brahmin—through producing a phenomenology of untouchability. Guru and Sarrukai in some ways return to Dumont in their abstract engagement with untouchability.

Section II has essays classified under caste and class. Sheth suggests that caste is not reproducing itself anymore and refers to the new changes as evident in *classifications* of caste groups where the Shudras (peasant caste) have moved on to become middle class which align themselves irrespective of social standing. Sheth however distinguishes these new horizontal power relations from Srinivas's horizontal stretch (referred to as cognate *jatis*). While Sheth argues that caste has ceased to reproduce itself as it did earlier, Carol Upadhyay's essay on the Information Technology (IT) industry presents how the ideology of merit and the politics of caste-based networks/hiring reproduce caste privilege.

Anand Chakravarti's essay suggests that caste continues to be the fundamental basis of social inequality in rural Bihar even as the traditional and new dominant castes consolidate their power. Meena Gopal's essay engages with the question of caste and gender in the growing informal sector.

Section III on 'Caste and Politics' has eight essays. The essays by Gail Omvedt and Mohan Ram on the Sayashodhak Movement and Ramswami Naicker respectively deal with non/anti-Brahmin movements of the colonial period. I.P. Desai's essay on the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat argues that the agitation was more of an anti-dalit agitation aimed at defending the moribund Hindu hierarchy under the vocabulary of merit. K. Balagopal offers an impressive class defence against what

he terms the Anti-Mandal Mania of early 1990s. Teltumbde engages with the question of violence against dalits. He explodes several myths that he works out including the one of *bahujanwad* to argue that *only* the class approach can unite the oppressed.

Baldev Raj Nayar's is an excellent pick by Satish Deshpande as it highlights the workings of rural democracy for dalits in rural Punjab. In the 1960s, one of Nayar's Jat Sikh respondents from the Akali Dal explained, 'SCs too will vote with us [or else] we will stop their fodder' (p. 183). Against this backdrop Sudha Pai's essay can be read, which unravels the rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and its strategies of political empowerment of dalits. She compares the BSP with the unsuccessful Congress efforts to retain dalit and tribal support in the state of Madhya Pradesh (MP).

Section IV comprises five articles broadly focusing on the vexed relation between caste and state, particularly the way caste rewrites itself into technologies of governance. Padmanabh Samarendra reiterates that the idea of caste was produced out of the colonial census. Despite the flawed nature of modernist [colonial] modes of counting communities/caste, Deshpande and John see merit in counting caste as it could help us deal with the elite morality of caste blindness. Tharu et al. present the foundational role of reservation in recovering politics. K. Balgopal raises a question of underrepresented dalits and their claims for specific representation. The current forced inclusion of certain dominant groups into the category of Other Backward Castes (OBCs) can be better understood by reading Marc Galanter's seminal essay on the challenge of identifying backward classes.

V. Geetha's essay explores the centrality of women's liberation in the Self-Respect movement where citizenship animated not merely claims made on the state, but on society as well and called forth a social commitment to the destruction of caste, wily faith and gender differences (p. 331). The persistence of middle-caste dominance and violence against women and dalits is however better explained in Prem Chowdhry's essay titled 'Enforcing Cultural Codes: Gender and Violence in Northern India'. The deep intersections of caste, honour and property that construct the violent control of women's sexuality among Jats in Haryana has only aggravated with the coming in of the Hindu Succession Act which confers hereditary property rights on women. Anandhi et al.'s study of an exceptional village where dalits form a numerical majority (68 per cent) and are not dependent on the dominant

caste for their livelihoods points out that dalit (men) if given the political and economic power too, produce new (hyper) masculinities that affect both dalit and non-dalit women.

The collection, despite its strength of coverage across six decades, faces the obvious limitation of drawing only from the *EPW*. Much exciting scholarship on caste has also been published outside the *EPW*. No doubt, missing are essays on caste amongst non-Hindus, caste and the diaspora, caste in Hindutva, caste and food, caste and reflexivity in social sciences. Despite several good essays, much focus on dalits also leaves out the study of Brahmins and the dominant rural castes. The sections are not neatly drawn. This, however, only helps us understand the complex nature of caste and its persistence better. The last section on contemporary explorations raises the questions of self, caste and the complex nature of Indian modernity that remains caste-affected and caste anxious. Befitting to the title of the book, the last essay by Gopal Guru calls for an archaeology of the untouchability-ridden Indian mind and urges us to look for caste where it is difficult to locate.

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Sukhadeo Thorat and Nidhi Sadhana Sabharwal, eds. 2014. *Bridging the Social Gap: Perspectives on Dalit Empowerment*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications. xxvii + 279 pp. Tables, figures, bibliography, index. ₹995 (hardback).

DOI: 10.1177/0069966715592777

The book is a contribution to issues related to the overall development of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) from a human development perspective associated with income, health, education, physical environment and freedom. The editors have selected contributors from diverse disciplines—economics, development studies, demography, sociology and administration.

The introduction deals with two major interrelated concepts—human development and social exclusion. In the context of socially disadvantaged groups, namely, ex-untouchables and adivasis, ‘liberation from discrimination’ is taken into account as a necessary pre-condition for human development (p. xxiv). And, the concept of social exclusion or

discrimination termed structural refers to the lack of access and entitlement to economic, civil, cultural and political rights. To overcome the problems of discrimination, deprivation, exclusion and isolation of SCs and STs, the government adopted various measures of Constitutional provisions, special legislation, development strategies, empowerment and inclusive policies. All these are briefly outlined.

In order to comprehend the contemporary scenario, Sukhadeo Thorat and Prashant Negi present evidence of the prevalence of traditional forms of discrimination and the infliction of indignity, torture and brutal attacks on ex-untouchables. The everyday incidences which make it difficult to even adopt a means of livelihood such as repairing a cycle, selling milk or bread have been highlighted. Also, the growing number of registered cases of atrocities against adivasis have been given in tables.

Both Sukhadeo Thorat and S. Venkatesan have examined disparities in human development and poverty by social groups, namely, SCs, STs and non-SC/STs, at national and state levels. Their study found that in 2000, the rate of improvement in the levels of human development for SCs and STs was lower. As regards human poverty, disparity ratios indicate a greater gap between SC/STs and non-SC/STs in 2000 in comparison to 1990. Ashwini Deshpande has also noted similar findings.

Based on the 2001 Census and National Sample Survey (NSS) (1999–2000) data on educational attainment of children, Sachidanand Sinha draws attention to the problems of out-of-school children and school dropout rates among SCs. He observed that the greater magnitude of out-of-school children among SCs was in Bihar, including Jharkhand. And, the highest school dropout rates in 2000–02 for SCs were recorded in Rajasthan followed by Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Further, he attributed the educational deprivation mainly to the practice of social discrimination, that is, making children sit separately and serving mid-day meals outside the classrooms. Moreover, using census data, Sinha examined housing and household amenities as prerequisites of human development and the quality of life. He reports that the housing shortage increased from 933 (per 1000 households) in 1961 to 974 in 2001. Further, in 2001, 8.1 per cent of SC households were in dilapidated houses, in contrast to 4.8 per cent of non-SC/ST households. The highest proportion of these SC households were from the states of Orissa, Bihar, Assam, Kerala and Delhi.

To assess the health conditions of SCs and STs as compared to non-SCs/STs, both Vijay Kumar Baraik and P.M. Kulkarni used the Sample

Registration System (SRS) and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). The study observes a higher Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) for SCs and Child Mortality Rate (CMR) for both SCs and STs in comparison with non-SC/STs. The CMR was high in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. For the prevalence of high IMR and CMR, under-nutrition has been a major factor, markedly in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Besides, the reach of programmes of child immunisation, Vitamin A supplementation and curative care under the public health service system have been marked by undercoverage in some large states (Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Karnataka).

M. Thangaraj analyses the occupational diversification among social groups on the basis of the Population Census and NSS data. He observes a gradual decline in the agricultural workforce across all social groups and an occupational shift towards the non-agricultural sector such as factories, plantation trade, commerce, transport, mining and construction. Between 1981 and 2001, the increase in other workers was observed to be higher among SCs (11.70 per cent) than among non-SC/STs (9.89 per cent) and STs (5.54 per cent). The NSS data for the period 1999–2000 indicates the increase of SC households in self-employment but this figure is still lower than for non-SC/ST households. While indicating occupational diversification, it was found that the SCs had poor access to both land and capital resources across the states. Both R.S. Deshpande and Motilal Mahamalik made similar observations in their essay on asset holdings. In urban areas, the proportion of SC and ST casual labour households was more than for non-SC/STs. Also, public employment for SCs during the economic reform period has sharply fallen by 6.8 percentage points.

In the analysis based on NSS data (1999–2000) on Current Daily employment and unemployment status, both Sukhdeo Thorat and Chittaranjan Senapati observed the unemployment rates for SC males and females in rural India and for SC males in urban India to be the highest among all social groups. Moreover, both Thorat and Senapati outlined the impact of the reservation policy for SCs and STs and reiterated the issue of reservation in the vast private sector.

Thus, the contributors have observed overall improvements among social groups, but in analysis, indicated disparities in human development and human poverty indices between SCs and STs on the one hand and between SC/STs and non-SC/STs on the other hand over the period

1983–2000. Nevertheless, considering individual components in the indices such as per capita consumption, nutritional status, access to public health services, literacy and educational levels and capital assets, the editors of the book observe that the level of improvement for SCs and STs is relatively lower. In addition, given the practice of discrimination and exclusion against SCs and STs, the editors suggest policy of interventions to address this.

The book contains sharp analyses of official statistics on areas such as poverty and employment. However, there is some overlap in two chapters of the book, which use the same data source in focusing on the incidence of poverty and the status of employment/unemployment. Further, throughout the book, the analysis is confined to official statistics alone and is devoid of any explanation on inter-social group disparities. In the title of the book, the editors have used the term ‘Dalit’ as synonymous with Scheduled Castes, in which some tribes, for example, the Gond in Uttar Pradesh and the Banjara in some states, have been listed. The British government evolved the term Scheduled Castes for untouchable castes. After Independence, some non-untouchable communities have also been included in the category. One of the editors, Nidhi Sabharwal, mentions the Constitutional framework in her chapter. Its analytical elements could have been used to develop both human development and empowerment perspectives. Nevertheless, the book is worthwhile to readers in the study area and to planners for a policy thrust.

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Nilika Mehrotra. 2013. *Disability, Gender & State Policy: Exploring Margins*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications. 304 pp. Tables, notes, appendices, references, index. ₹895 (hardback).

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Nilika Mehrotra’s book is a well-documented account of a range of issues around disability, gender and caste in the context of India. It highlights these dimensions as multiple marginalities in recent globalising times. Using an intersectional approach, Mehrotra argues that caste, gender and disability implicate and impact the access and opportunities available to persons that account for the marginalities. Mehrotra emphasises that social

and cultural frames on the one hand and the economic frame on the other set the context within which a person with low caste status, disability and of the female gender, is likely to suffer the most.

The nine chapters of the book comprise Mehrotra's research papers and articles written over a decade of her work in the field of disability. The author has explored different issues concerned with disability in each chapter. Beginning the book with the debate around the definition of disability, the author has traced the predominance of the charity and medical model in defining disability to changes following increased awareness about the social and rights-based approach to disability. The author takes note of the role of the state and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as agents of intervention and traces the development and role of the Disability Rights Movements (DRM) in India in making the changes possible. According to Mehrotra, NGOs have been able to help mainly in the rehabilitation and service delivery aspects for people with disability rather than in making structural changes that the state might be expected to initiate. The counting of persons with disability in the census and National Sample Survey, which is a basic human right for any citizen of a country, is attributed to the awareness campaigns spearheaded by the DRM.

The author has attempted to highlight the different dimensions of being a woman and that too disabled. She also examines the problems arising of the intersection of multiple identities—of being a woman, disabled and belonging to a low caste, for example. While addressing each of the areas, the author has substantiated and linked key issues with her fieldwork in Haryana, adding to the strength of the book.

The book is made accessible to a lay audience through a number of examples and case studies that help relate to the issues the author is discussing. Because the book is a collection of previously published papers, the case studies are sometimes repeated, but the author argues that this is intended to bring back the reader to the cases so that they can understand the multiple contexts relating to the issue of disability in India.

An important issue in India is the complex interplay between the concepts of intellectual disability, gender and personhood. Intellectual disability and mental health are two issues that are much misunderstood in the Indian context and are often categorised as mental conditions to be feared. With the help of socio-historical and cross-cultural variability along with its linkages to class, urbanisation and modernisation, the author reveals how families and persons with mental disability, especially

women with disability, negotiate the social compulsions for 'normalcy' and competent adulthood in contrast to those with physical disability.

Throughout the book, the author has emphasised the proposition that disability is culturally constituted, socially negotiated and gendered. She argues that while disability does not in itself discriminate between caste, class and gender, the cultural values, the social structure and the availability of resources do impact the management of disability. For example, limb disability in rural Haryana which has intensive agriculture with high labour requirements is high among Jats on the one hand and Harijans on the other. As the Jats are relatively prosperous, they buy fodder-cutting machines used mainly by women who also meet with accidents using them (p. 163). Another point she makes is that in an agricultural society, 'intellectual' disability is absorbed fairly easily by society and there is a need for intensive labour and all working bodies can be included within the system. Through the use of case studies, especially in chapter 6, the author describes sensitively the strategies for supporting persons with disability, especially women with disability, used by families in negotiating family, work and society.

The book will be useful for students and researchers working in the area of disability related issues. While noting that the debates on the issue of disability largely refer to the western context and western models, an attempt is made by the author to conceptualise disability in the South Asian context. In sum, the book concisely brings together the fundamental understanding about disability issues for first time readers wanting to understand the disability scenario in South Asia, especially India.

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UPALI CHAKRAVARTI

Kalpana Kannabiran, ed. 2014. *Women and Law: Critical Feminist Perspectives*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications. xxi + 305 pp. Tables, notes, references, index. ₹995 (hardback).

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This is a very useful collection of essays providing critical feminist insights in the field of law. In the words of the editor:

In looking at the theme 'women and law', our concern in this volume has been to look at women's life and worlds—in some parts—and the

extent to which the law has touched them. Where the law has in fact touched lives, the quality of that engagement—legislative, interpretative, positive, restitutive, punitive—is of critical significance (p. xv).

The book is a tribute to Leela Dube, Lotika Sarkar and Vina Mazumdar who were pioneers of women's studies with their *Report on the Status of Women in India* (1974). It includes 11 essays written on a range of subjects concerning women, focusing on a history of the making of laws, the absence of laws, the discriminatory application of laws, trends and future prospects, and judicial responses. It also covers some uncharted subjects like state violence and women. Even though chapters 1–5 and 7 were published earlier in journals, their inclusion in the book has made them accessible to a wider readership.

The first essay 'Bringing Rights Home: Review of the Campaign for a Law on Domestic Violence' by Indira Jaising records the history of making the law on domestic violence, as well as presents the periodic review of the functioning of the Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act. The next essay is by Flavia Agnes on 'Conjugal Property, Morality and Maintenance'. She bemoans the absence of the concept of matrimonial property and critically analyses the economic status of women and their subjugation in the family. Chapter 3, 'Women, Forest Spaces and the Law: Transgressing the Boundaries' by Sagari R. Ramdas, gives a detailed account of struggles of adivasi women's rights to forest spaces and how law and various schemes of the government have resulted in marginalising the women and denying them their traditional rights. Chapter 4, 'Women's Rights and Entitlements to Land in South Asia: Changing Forms of Engagement' by Meera Velayudhan, focuses on non-entitlement of women to agricultural land and its impact on their status in India and other South Asian countries. These essays could have been better if certain parallels could be drawn from experiences from the countries discussed. In chapter 5, 'Outside the Realm of Protective Legislation: The Saga of Unpaid Work in India', Padmini Swaminathan examines the concepts of 'women's work' and 'women as workers' and shows that despite reports of various committees and commissions relating to work status of women, labour law has remained ineffective and how women's work has largely remained unpaid and they are denied worker status. Kalpana Kannabiran in chapter 7, 'Judicial Meanderings in Patriarchal Thickets: Litigating Sex Discrimination in India', has critically examined how the

judicial techniques of differentiation, classification and discrimination have been used to deny discrimination against women in a wide range of areas within the family and labour laws. Chapter 9 contains the essay by Anita Ghai and Rachana Johri on 'Prenatal Diagnosis: Where Do We Draw the Line?' The authors challenge the unquestioned acceptance of abortion of a foetus with disability and argue that it does not add to but restricts women's choices.

There are four new essays in the book. In chapter 6, 'Gender Equality at Workplace: A Frozen Agenda', D. Nagasaila reflects on her experience as a labour law practitioner. She has examined the Industrial Disputes Act, the Trade Union Act, the Maternity Benefit Act and the Equal Remuneration Act and found that while there is space for bringing in gender parity within the legislations through trade unions and collective bargaining, but it does not materialise in practice as women workers do not have access to these mechanisms. Chapter 8 by Shruti Pandey on 'Women's Health and Law in India: Trends of Hope and Despair' argues that the right to health is an umbrella right and is 'determined by and is a determinant of every other human right' (p. 231). She examines laws and judicial decisions dealing with various aspects of health and how patriarchal values have restricted women's rights over her body and procreation. Patriarchy and feudalism have made the overlap between reproduction and sexuality even more prominent in India. Zoya Hasan, in chapter 10, deals with the aspect of 'Religion, Feminist Politics and Muslim Women's Rights in India'. She candidly discusses the role and stand of political parties vis-à-vis the Uniform Civil Code and how the agenda of the Uniform Civil Code was relegated to the background with the call for reform within. She points out that all the debates gloss 'over the economic, political and social problems that define the everyday experiences of Muslim women' (p. 271). In the last chapter, 'Women and State Violence: Where is Justice', Anita Tiphagne does a case study of Veerappan, the sandalwood smuggler, and how various actions taken by the state resulted in state violence on women.

The refreshing thing about all the essays is that they have avoided jargon and offer easy reading with many ideas to reflect upon. I recommend this book as a basic reading for all pursuing women's studies, especially in the realm of law.

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Ranjana Padhi. 2012. *Those Who Did Not Die: Impact of the Agrarian Crisis on Women in Punjab*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications. xxxi + 182 pp. Tables, maps, notes, bibliography, index. ₹650 (hardback).

DOI: 10.1177/0069966715592784

Located in the southernmost part of Punjab, the Malwa region was once the cradle of the Green Revolution. It is now witnessing what the author Ranjana Padhi describes as the ‘most acute’ impact of the agrarian crisis, in the form of peasant suicides. While peasant suicides represent the extreme manifestation of the crisis, and the most debated, there is barely any discussion of its impact on those who continue to live and cope with the crisis. The book is an intervention in this direction. It focuses on the impact of peasant suicides on women in the Malwa region of Punjab. It is on ‘those who did not die’, mainly wives and mothers who continue to live and cope with familial and societal responsibilities that encumbered the victims and drove them to committing suicides. Based on structured questionnaires, interviews, meetings with spouses and mothers of peasant suicide victims, Padhi attempts to comprehend the agrarian crisis through what she terms as ‘the subjective reality of dispossession’ (p. xvii).

The book clearly emerges from the larger politics within which the author is located. Padhi’s closeness and reliance on the peasant unions in identifying and conducting the research is deliberate and part of her politics. By engaging union members in the research, the stated intention is of initiating a dialogue on the crisis across differences of caste, class and gender, and exploring the possibility of organising women as part of the union to address common concerns over the crisis. Through micro narratives of women from victim families, Padhi demonstrates how the agrarian crisis reconfigures capitalism, patriarchy and gender as structures of domination and discrimination.

The book has six chapters. All the chapters seek to illustrate what ‘women’s subordination in an agrarian milieu represents’ (p. xxvi). Chapter 1 outlines the key features of the crisis and its repercussion on agrarian society. As is known, the boost given to agricultural production through Green Revolution technology brought about fundamental changes in the nature of agrarian society. The initial prosperity soon gave way to indebtedness among medium and small farmers, who could not cope with the increased costs of production, and with many selling land to pay off debts. Particularly significant in her analysis is the assertion that while

it may seem that the crisis has affected the medium to small farmers in the region, its impact can be felt across all sections of the community. Although about 70 per cent of the suicides are among the Jat Sikhs or the main landowning community, the Scheduled Caste groups or Majhabi Sikhs and the Ramdasia account for 14.7 per cent and 7.4 per cent of the suicides in the region respectively.

The disquieting effect of the Green Revolution has been on the social and moral fabric of the agrarian society. Disposable incomes, particularly among rich farmers, brought with it changes in lifestyles that eventually reinforced patriarchal norms and practices across all communities. One of the most obvious changes, discussed in detail by Padhi in chapter 2, is the devaluation of women's work and labour, decline in ownership and control over land and the withdrawal of women from agricultural labour, particularly among the cultivating castes such as the Jat Sikhs. The only women visibly involved in daily wage labour are dalit women. Padhi observes how growing landlessness among Jat Sikhs in victim families has worsened the situation for women. She describes how the fear of social ostracism has further reduced the limited options available for women seeking work within and outside agriculture. One of the major reasons for indebtedness and the immediate cause for peasant suicides are social expenses incurred to bear the costs of weddings and paying dowry. Dowry has emerged in the post Green Revolution era as an important status symbol even among the non-propertied classes, the implications of which are more far reaching than just 'social'. In chapter 3, Padhi elaborates the complex ways in which dowry has devalued women and emasculated the already impoverished classes into a trap of indebtedness and suicides.

In chapter 4, Padhi attributes various health ailments such as cancer, psychosomatic disorders, acute anxiety, drug addiction and alcoholism to the agrarian crisis. In fact, a train from Bhatinda to the Acharya Tulsi Regional Cancer Treatment and Research Centre in Rajasthan has been named as the 'Cancer Express', as hundreds of people commute daily from the region for regular check-ups and treatment. Commercialisation of health care has aggravated the crisis. Indebtedness has increased and so has ill health. The vicious cycle sustains the deadlock. Chapter 5 discusses the impact of the agrarian crisis on the family as an institution. As the site that has borne the brunt of the crisis—economic, social and psychological—Padhi illustrates how women cope with families that clearly appear to be fragmented, demoralised and divided.

Chapter 6 describes the specific challenges facing women of victim families. Ostensibly these challenges emerge from a lack of support from family members and denial of agency that women experience in decision making. However, read differently, they appear according to Padhi as voices seeking support and making demands of the family, neighbours, the state and the peasant unions, as a part of a liberation project seeking social transformation. The conclusion refers to the increasing participation of women in the ongoing protests by peasant organisations in the region against the withdrawal of state subsidies and land acquisition for a large development project. In this she alludes to a consciousness among women regarding the relationship between the crisis and their plight. Thus, even as the book presents women as victims of a crisis not of their making, it ends on the hope that women will shape their future through resistance.

However, the author does not elaborate upon the nature of the relationship between women, particularly of victim families, and peasant unions despite her close association with both during her research. She does not explore the interplay of patriarchy and caste within the politics of resistance, as the same is as critical if not more in the radical politics that she envisions. This notwithstanding, the strength of the book is the clarity and the political conviction with which it is written. The book is a significant contribution to the field of development and agrarian studies. It can serve as an important text for students in comprehending the impact of the agrarian crisis with all its complexities.

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Chitralekha. 2012. *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Violence: Naxalites & Hindu Extremists in India*. New Delhi: Routledge. xix + 326 pp. Tables, bibliography, index. ₹795 (hardback).

DOI: 10.1177/0069966715592786

Chitralekha attempts a fundamental revision in studying political violence in contemporary India by asking a set of important questions: ‘What is the everyday, working context within which *ordinary* people are led to such...extraordinary acts of violence? Who really are these people and how do they rationalize their own practice?’ (p. 25). Arguing for a need to look into the life-world of the ‘extremist’ beyond specificities of political

ideology, the book investigates such life-worlds of both Left and Right-wing 'extremists'. The book contains several tables to map the people interviewed in the course of this study (about 40 Naxalites in Bihar and Jharkhand; and about 25 participants in Gujarat violence in 2002) based on their socio-economic locations, standard of living, ideas of good life, rationale for engaging with political violence and ideological association. The principal strength of the book lies in the rich source material and the way details of the immediate events, and their effects on the organisational structures, are laid out.

The endeavour to bring together the life-worlds of political actors in oppositional mobilisations is a mark of innovative thinking. A detailed discussion on the methodological aspects of such an exploratory study, however, would have been helpful to understand the overall framework of the research. There is a reference to 'extensive anthropological fieldwork' (p. 3) while greater details are provided on the researcher's experiences of the field. In the context of the formidable body of scholarship on anthropological fieldwork, the wealth of source material would have been more accessible if questions of representation, of recording hitherto unheard 'voices', of narrativising what people say and what people do not say, were addressed. Given the main thematic of all interviews: performing violence, it seems that understanding the silence, the unease, the hesitation on the one hand, and the lack of regret, or apathy on the other hand, in various oral histories constitute one of the most important dimensions of analysis. The analysis of interviews, however, takes all that is said by the interviewee *prima facie*, only occasionally allowing for a more complex exploration of orality in an interview situation. The four substantial chapters—'Left Extremists in Bihar and Jharkhand: Historical Context, Ideology, Organisation Structure and Dynamics'; 'Committed, Opportunists and Drifters: Redescribing the Naxalites in Jharkhand and Bihar'; 'Hindu Extremists in Ahmedabad: Who are They and Why are They Ready to Kill Muslims?'; and 'Hindu Extremists in Rural and Adivasi Gujarat: Sadarpura and Palla'—narrate the 'standpoint of footsoldiers of the Naxalite movement' (p. 80) as well as the 'driving forces that made them [participants in Gujarat Violence in 2002] willing to kill Muslims' (p. 135). The focus on the point of view of the participants—in both cases—is highlighted in these narrations through small excerpts from the interviews. Reference to the extensive scholarship on oral history, including significant feminist and postcolonial interventions, could have

helped the final analysis to access the nuances of the spoken word—silences, intonations, repetitions—in a conversation structured by the conventions of the interview method.

While the emphasis on the perspectives of perpetrators of violence is the most noteworthy contribution of this study, a discussion on the interdisciplinary location of the study would have made a contribution to the conceptual framework of studying political violence. Although the conceptual framework reflects the author's familiarity with a certain tradition of sociological theories on political unrest and political theories dealing with ethnic violence, the framework does not take into account the intellectual turns in the scholarship on collective mobilisations, contentious politics, political violence and militancy in the last three decades. A reference to psycho-biography (p. 5), coupled with a tantalisingly short discussion of Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* (pp. 25–26), invites the reader to expect a broad horizon of theoretical devices featuring Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt and Franz Fanon, which will eventually throw light on the angularities of the life-world of extremists. A meaningful engagement with the sociology of emotions, especially reflections on the relationship between passion and politics, on the anthropology of violence, and a more sustained discourse on 'extremism' would have been valuable for charting the uneven contours of political violence. Since killing emerges as the core performance of extremism, the problematic of violence becomes circumscribed by an individual act; and yet reflections on the anthropology of mourning or martyrology—both concerned with individual death—rarely find any mention within this problematic.

Though the span of the research is wide-ranging, we cannot avoid asking one basic question—what makes Naxalites in Bihar and Jharkhand, and perpetrators of violence in Gujarat in 2002 comparable?

In the first few pages of this book, a reader encounters the word 'uncanny' a few times and the uncanny refers to the similarities the author has found in the life-worlds of Naxalites and Hindu Extremists. In more senses than one, the rest of the book is an exploration of this 'uncannily similar explanations' (pp. 5, 7). Since the book brackets away the basic differences between the Naxalite movement in Bihar and Jharkhand and Hindu Extremist activities in Gujarat, the 'uncanny' becomes a search for a universally valid rationale for the act of killing. However, some reflections on the regional culture and, perhaps most importantly, spatio-temporal specificities of the 'extremists' in relation to the vast academic as well

as popular literature would have enhanced the quality of comparability. The Communist Party of India and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh came into being in colonial India in the 1920s, in response to a political context that was specific to and at the same time transcendental of the borders of the British Empire. How two different political ideologies took shape through different modes of activism in postcolonial India and their diverse trajectories may have indicated new ways of covering this difficult terrain of comparative study. Further, it would have been useful to have a discussion of how oral histories, published academic studies, political pamphlets and other archival records are compared to narrate the life-worlds of activists? How would comparable contexts in terms of region and period be constructed? Further, in this 'life-world' described, an entire range of imaginative experiences and practices—love, romance, songs, poetry, stories, visual images and dance—are absent. The exploration of 'uncanny' fails to venture into the many practices of everyday life that animate the mind of the political actor.

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David N. Gellner, ed. 2013. *Borderland Lives in Northern South Asia*. Durham, USA: Duke University Press. vii + 310 pp. Tables, figures, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 (paperback).

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This collection of 10 essays adds to anthropological studies of borderlands. In the introduction, editor David Gellner remarks that the chapters bring together three bodies of literature that have rarely been addressed together: work on borderlands, ethnographic perspectives on the state and studies following from James C. Scott's work that engage with those who seek the state versus those who evade it. The essays suggest a 'new subregion', that is, 'Northern South Asia', encompassing 'India's mainly mountainous northern borders that enclose this subregion' (p. 1).

Many of the chapters address border-crossings as a means to unsettle the idea of the border as a 'natural' divide between nation-states. Ethnographies of border crossings on the India–Nepal border addressed by Sondra Hausner and Jeevan R. Sharma or the Indian 'enclaves' within Bangladesh described by Jason Cons help to understand the micro-politics

of space, belonging and identity at the interstices of the nation-state. As Hausner and Sharma remind us, performances of state power at its borders are not always geared towards the ‘other’ situated across its border, but often seek to contain their own citizens by limiting their trans-border mobility. In their study of Nepali migrants to India, they suggest that ‘if borders are places of significance for both states and land migrants, it is because they are the last place the former can claim any territorial sovereignty over the latter and the first place a national can shake free of the state’s dominion’ (p. 97). Similarly, Vibha Joshi draws attention to a lack of easy identification of insider/outsider when it comes to border identities. As an Indian national, she nevertheless cannot presume ease of access to Nagaland. The policing of state borders is simultaneously directed inwards and out, and this is a shifting relationship. Annu Jalais addresses the *longue duree* of border crossings and draws attention to the ways in which elite constructions of history have tended to determine the manner in which Partition is remembered in the Bengal borderlands. She seeks to recuperate subaltern histories of the region that often compromise statist narratives of Bengali regional patriotism and identity.

Just as cross-border mobility helps to unsettle notions of territorial fixity, ethnographic perspectives on the state seek to open up the state to critical scrutiny, dislodging it as a monolithic conceptual or territorial apparatus. In many of these essays, the state is a recurrent actor albeit one that remains ethnographically opaque, save for a few notable exceptions. Thus Deepak K. Mishra’s essay on the political economy of Arunachal Pradesh grants the state too much agency to determine the scale and scope of modernisation in the region, while Radhika Gupta’s contribution is a much more nuanced understanding of how borderland people engage with the state on different registers, making it difficult to generalise a relationship of either cooperation or opposition to the state. She makes a critical point that we ought not to reify borderland residents’ relationships with their state borders as always-already in a state of intransigence or opposition. ‘The relationship of borderlanders to the state in Kargil... defies any easy categorization of Kargilis either as manipulated subjects of the state or as those offering a radical stance of resistance’ (p. 69).

Nayanika Mathur draws attention to how the state is often complicit in the naturalisation of borders using political, sensorial and affective technologies that render the border an integral part of the regional imaginary. Just as Kargil is a territorial border that is re-located at the heart

of the state in the aftermath of the 'Kargil War', Hindu pilgrimage sites on the edge of the border state of Uttarakhand are imagined as central to Hindu nationalist narratives. Thus, 'Chamoli is imagined simultaneously as central and eternal to the Hindu nation even while it is positioned at its very edge' (p. 85).

Some essays help to think through borders that are not necessarily political or international state borders at all. In Kargil, there is an additional border between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims that does not map neatly along state, regional or international borders. Annu Jalais discusses boundaries that cleave people across class and religious lines, irrespective of their state borders. Perhaps the strongest reminder that we should not over-determine borderland studies with studies of actual political borders comes from Anastasia Piliavsky's essay on a traditional 'thieving' caste in Rajasthan whose territorial sphere of activity intersects with those of the police stations they are affiliated with. Each police beat functions as a mutually exclusive sphere of authority. Her study is crucial to underscore how 'aspects of borderlands are as vividly present deep within the territories of national states as on their peripheries' (p. 41). She concludes with a suggestion that border studies 'shift analytical weight from the imagined territorial entity of the borderland to the structural phenomenon of the border' (p. 41).

This is a suggestion that the present volume could have taken more seriously, for the essays, with one notable exception, do indeed demonstrate a preference for the interstices of state authority. In addition, the coinage of 'Northern South Asia' further restricts one's imagination to geopolitical renditions of the region rather than mark a shift from conventional political iterations of the border, something that the volume would no doubt like to do. Further, recent work on borderlands has established that the key question is no longer limited to conceptualising the reach of the state—through either its absence or presence—but is to explore the nature of negotiations and transactions that emerge between states and populations across space and time and indeed to address how the nature of the state itself cannot be understood as static. A more nuanced historicisation of the state itself is missing from many of these essays. Finally, while the Himalayan borderland has been stated as the preferred site for this collection, though it is not clear why that is the case, the absence of research from Pakistan stands out starkly, even as the Bengal delta finds mention. Recent work from across the Line of Control in the

Kashmir valley or Gilgit–Baltistan would have added to a collection on Himalayan borderlands. While the Introduction is titled ‘Northern South Asia’s Diverse Borders, from Kachchh to Mizoram’, work on neither area is represented in the review essay or the chapters that follow.

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Janaki Nair. 2012. *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan. xii + 358 pp. Figures, notes, bibliography, index. ₹695 (hardback).

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This is yet another fine book from Janaki Nair. In *Mysore Modern*, a collection of her essays written over many years, Nair persuades us to take a fresh look at many questions—of the nature of the colonial/monarchical modern, of the region, of the princely state and of the modes of reading power. How to think about the modern as a historical question has now been a familiar, if still unsettling issue. Nair argues that with the killing of Tipu Sultan in 1799, the modalities that were put together by the collaborative and subservient Wodeyar family were primarily invested in both obliterating the memory of Tipu and producing itself as an ancient royalty. Further, they configured a modern that decidedly undermined the incipient democracy even as governmental technologies were being engineered by a proactive colonial state. She also suggests that this model prefigured many of the central techniques that the postcolonial Indian state perfected in what is now known as the registers of a passive revolution.

The book contains eight chapters apart from the introduction that delineates the above argument. The substantive chapters are arranged in a 4-1-2-1 formation. The first four chapters work with the ‘realm of the visual’—namely, transforming styles of painting, architecture and urban planning—that take shape over the course of the 19th and (well into the) 20th centuries ‘as communications of...power’. The fifth chapter discusses K. Venkatappa, the most prominent and mythologised artist of the 20th century Mysore/Karnataka, as a figure who animates the many shifts that were underway in the Mysore modern project—spatially from the successfully invented and museumised city of Mysore to the ‘real’

power centre of Bangalore, from the older caste economies of art/ist to the governmentalised economies, from palace-centred artisanry to the modern romanticised anti-economic economy of art. The next two chapters work through the space of the law in detailing the modalities of the licit and the illicit in the modern being forged. The last chapter, detailing the so-called ‘unification’ of Karnataka effected in 1956, maps how the discourse of development became the most effective ground of persuasion as against history to imagine the Kannada nation.

This is a splendid, detailed scholarly work. What is particularly fascinating is Nair’s demonstration of ways of reading art that enables us to think about transactions of power between the coloniser and the princely state. She neither reduces art to an illustration of the real nor does she produce it as an autonomous realm. From representing the protagonist as a soldier (in the art work that Tipu legitimises) to the one where he is a man of leisure (the art that the Wodeyars commission); in reading the Wodeyar art as that which is invested in creating a hoary unbroken lineage; in the ways in which Mysore as an urban space is decidedly invented and museumised in the 20th century even as Srirangapatna is singularly produced as the space in which the British triumphed; narrating through the figure of Venkatappa the shifts in the functions of art and the artist vis-à-vis the newer spaces of statecraft, Janaki Nair skilfully demonstrates the productive ways of deploying art to read changing modalities of power. The chapters work well together and in themselves.

I am not sure of the rest though. Indeed with the chapter on Venkatappa itself, the uncertainties of weaving together essays written disparately come up. While the focus of the preceding chapters is on art itself even as urban spatiality is presented as a concern, with Venkatappa there is little reading of his art in itself. The chapter and the argument encoded within it surely work but some handholding as to how one transitions from the previous chapters to this would have been useful. This becomes starker in the succeeding chapters. Again they are all well argued in themselves but how they connect with her journeying through the visual realm is not clear. Is it a substantive argument—that is, is it to suggest that in the specific instance of Mysore (or in the instance of any Princely State), the registers of law and visibility are central in making sense of the nature of modern? Or is it a conceptual argument that for the modern, the registers of law and the visual are key?

Also, for decades now, the vacuity of the Universal has been laid bare, either by demonstrating the multiplicities and historical possibilities that were not to be or by pointing to the definitional exclusions that are inherent to any claim of the Universal. While for postcolonial studies this perhaps continues to provide rhetorical opportunities, I am unsure why this concern with establishing the distinctive trajectories of the modern should continue to exhaust us anymore.

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Per Ståhlberg. 2013. *Writing Society through Media: Ethnography of a Hindi Daily*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications. 248 pp. Notes, references, index. ₹750 (hardback).

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Per Ståhlberg's *Writing Society through Media: Ethnography of a Hindi Daily* has opened the field for sociologists of news/journalism in India. Although this detailed ethnographic study of a newspaper, *Dainik Jagran*, conducted in the later part of the 1990s, was available outside India, now this revised edition has made it available to scholars in the country.

Since the publication of Robin Jeffery's path-breaking study of the newspaper revolution in India, there has been a growing interest in the study of Indian-language news media. The later part of the 1990s was a compelling time to be an ethnographer of news in India. This was the period when we saw the rise of Hindi-language newspapers as a factor in the social and political changes taking place in north India.

Ståhlberg's study of newsroom culture, routines, beat systems and the macrostructure of news layout, described in the book with the use of a metaphor, 'cartography of news', in the context of the Lucknow edition of *Dainik Jagran* has filled the gap in our understanding of how news organisations and newsrooms work in north India. Ståhlberg writes, 'By focusing on an occupation that describes—but is simultaneously inscribed—contemporary Indian society, I am attempting to discuss a professional practice in relation to processes of cultural globalization, modernity and political imagination' (p. 21). He shows compellingly how news media, in this case *Dainik Jagran*, and the beat reporters working for the newspaper, on a daily basis, negotiated fragments of society in

Lucknow and over a period of time socially constructed a representation of the city and state on pages of the newspaper.

Even though India has the largest and most diverse, relatively free news media, interest among scholars in the field of sociology of news in the country, until now, was limited. The bulk of the early research in the sociology of news was done in the United States and Britain. The studies by Ståhlberg and others, mentioned in the introduction to the book, have made valuable contributions to the field that, until recently, was dominated by Eurocentric/American understandings and explanations.

Since the early days of research into the relationship between the press and society, sociologists have paid special attention to relationships of individual journalists to news organisations and news organisations to society. Some of the early sociologists of news media such as Robert Park, Warren Breed and David White were especially interested in understanding how social control was fostered inside the newsrooms of mainstream newspapers. The work of the pioneers laid the foundations for a research programme on news work—its routines, beat systems and rules of professional practice.

Later studies in the sociology of news/journalism showed that news organisations had evolved into institutions with routines, rules and norms that shaped their occupational behaviour and production with surprising similarities. The detailed newsroom studies by Gaye Tuchman, Philip Schlesinger and Mark Fishman showed how news, like any other industrial product, was manufactured and socially constructed.

Ethnographic work done by Herbert Gans inside American news organisations showed how the world view of journalists is shaped by the norms in which they are socialised, and also the dominant ideology of the middle class—a class to which they themselves belong and the class for which they produce the news for daily consumption. The classic study of the British Broadcasting Corporation by Tom Burns showed how the news work inside the national public broadcaster and its organisational structure shaped the public imagination of an entire nation.

Similarly, Ståhlberg presents a thick description of the *Dainik Jagran* newsroom in Hazrat Ganj, Lucknow. He writes, making keen observations like,

Sub-editors spent their whole working day here except for an occasional stroll out to the Hazrat Ganj market. For reporters it was a place where

they started their working day, coordinated their activities and where they returned at the end of the day to file their stories (p. 134).

By learning how the newsroom was organised, the workflow and routines of the staff, we learn about the hierarchical structure that is embedded in the beat system and daily routines of the editors and reporters. Despite the hierarchy we learn that everyone at the paper wants to be a beat reporter, mostly because of the small perks and connections a reporter can make with important and powerful people in a city's bureaucracy and politics.

The growing importance of the Indian-language news media, more specifically Hindi in north India, has changed the political field and relationship of politicians, government official and political parties with journalists of vernacular news media. This, in a way, has also empowered the non-English speaking middle classes. Ståhlberg shows how politicians in Lucknow were more interested in reaching out to reporters of Indian-language newspapers such as *Dainik Jagran*. They knew this was an effective medium with which to influence the overwhelming sections of society who do not read English-language newspapers. And even advertisers were aware of the growing influence of the Hindi press in north India. One of the advantages of relying on journalists of the Indian-language press was that they often came from similar social backgrounds as their readers. The literature on news suggests that the news values flow in the same direction as the news flow. However, in a way, the news food chain flowed from the Indian-language press in the hinterland to the English-language press in metropolitan cities, whereas, professional values and norms of journalism flowed in the reverse direction, that is, from the English-language press to the Indian-language press.

Ståhlberg's ethnographic study of *Dainik Jagran* in Lucknow is a major milestone in advancing media studies in South Asia. One of the major problems with news media studies has been that these studies are quick to engage in normative analysis, especially from the perspective of manipulation and propaganda, but there are a few studies that have attempted to understand and explain the socio-cultural processes in the function and organising of news media. Normative analysis must follow the understanding and explanation of socio-cultural processes at work in the news media from the perspective of occupation, organisation and political institution in a democratic society with a relatively free press.

Relative to normative analysis, this sort of study often requires more time and effort. We need more studies on sociological processes behind news production and consumption. This is what makes Ståhlberg's work significant. I hope this will spur more research in understanding social, political and economic processes rather than normative commentaries that often become a substitute for research.

The value of this work is not diminished despite a looming presence of 24/7 news television in the Indian public spheres and the growing penetration of social media. News television has emerged as the most important source of political news, but most Indians still get most of their news about events and developments in their locality from the newspaper, which is also substantiated by the still-growing circulation of newspapers.

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ANUP KUMAR

Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. 2014. *Destination India: From London Overland to India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. xiii + 201 pp. Plates, notes, references. ₹450 (paperback).

DOI: 10.1177/0069966715592797

Traveller's tales have long been a source of valuable information, although not always reliable, about the countries visited including, sometimes, information unavailable in internal sources. Who would have known about Alexander's 'visit' to India (there are no Indian accounts of it) had not Megasthenes written about it in 4th century BCE? For the medieval period, we have the incredibly rich ethnography of Al-Beruni (early 11th century), and later such accounts as those of Ibn Battuta and Niccolao Manucci, the latter a visitor to the Emperor Shahjahan's court (late 17th century), replete with intrigues. Then the numerous narratives of the colonial period. Rarely do these accounts tell us anything significant about the traveller on the road. *Destination India* does so, and, besides, tells us of India in the second half of the 20th century by succinctly summarising the authors' large and impressive published corpus on the political sociology and political economy of the country. The worth of this little book should not be judged by its brevity. Altogether, it is a delightful and informative read, which will be accessible to the general reader as well as the scholar.

A young American couple in their mid-twenties, newly awarded Harvard PhDs in Political Science, and post-doctoral scholarships in their pockets, the Rudolphs travelled in a specially fitted Land Rover in July–August 1956, from London to Jaipur, in about four weeks. Part I of the book is the travel diary they maintained while on the road, from Salzburg (Austria) to Peshawar (Pakistan), passing through Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan. It is a Europe still not fully recovered from World War II, rather pre-industrial, farms and farmers everywhere, and soldiers too. The landscape and the hillscape are fascinating, and all goes well. Greece looks better off, and then the ‘Orient’ is reached in Turkey, a combination of West and East, this juxtaposition being very visible in Istanbul—something that holds good even today. The Rudolphs have in their baggage many things for the road (most importantly food items), for the destination, and for their research (conceptual baggage). On page 30, we read (entry of August 2): ‘We saw no veils on women or special hats on men in Istanbul. All except visiting country folk wear *the modern dress*’ (emphasis mine). This conceptual distinction between tradition and modernity is something they gave up as their research on India progressed; the Rudolphs are perhaps best known for having said during the high noon of modernisation theories that the modernity of tradition is what one found in India, not bipolar, unilinear ‘development’. But I am anticipating what must follow.

Space does not permit extensive quotation, but I simply must not leave out this gem (entry of August 12), with Tehran behind them:

Since we are a nation in which toilet habits get a good deal of anxious attention, a word about such conditions on such a trip. The deserts are wide and lovely between Persia and Pakistan, and Yugoslavia and Turkey are rich in bushes. Only in India and Pakistan, where there are few empty spaces and every bush has a bullock and its owner behind it, do natural processes become a problem for him or her who requires privacy (p. 57)!

So they already knew this though yet not there. A later addition to the diary?

By the time the Rudolphs are in Afghanistan, they find out that their ‘built-in advantage as Sahib types’ opens many doors (p. 79). Hospitality in abundance but the roads worse than anywhere before, if seen at all.

All odds are overcome, including the first and only flat tyre of the long journey caused by a horseshoe nail, but fixed. And no health problems at all throughout the long journey, except a bad cold that Susanne had early on the road. Turkey and beyond, no water, just hot *chai* (tea). ‘The fool’s luck’ is how they describe their smooth, trouble-free journey. Finally, on 20 August, in Peshawar: ‘When the dessert, an English sweet, was brought on [in Dean’s Hotel], and tea was served with a pitcher of hot milk, we drank to England and to Pakistan and celebrated our emergence from the underdeveloped areas into the developed [*sic!*] Indian sub-continent’ (p. 104). A review, even a larger one than I am able to write, can be anything more than an invitation to read this delightful travel diary of just over a hundred pages.

Part II of the book, ‘Writing India: A Career Review’ (pp. 110–66), is an excellent succinct review of the Rudolphs’ intellectual journey from the dominant paradigms of modernisation theory and American political science in the 1950s to the first steps they took in the 1960s onward through the decades to the end of the century by when they had established themselves among the leaders of innovative thinking about contemporary India. They were among the first social scientists, alongside their Indian colleagues such as, notably, M.N. Srinivas and Rajni Kothari, to point out that modernisation proceeds not by displacement but juxtaposition, that it is a dialectical rather than dichotomous process. They analysed the political role of caste associations in democratic politics, the traditional roots of Gandhi’s charismatic leadership of India’s national movement and the evolving of new patterns of law and judicial procedures in their now classic work, *The Modernity of Tradition* (1967), which is still in print. They discussed a wide range of issues in many subsequent publications, authored jointly or individually, including the construction and meaning of political culture, state formation, the dynamics of economic regimes, the role of civil society and the media, the anticipation of what we now know as post-modernism by Gandhi and so on. In all these explorations, they opened ‘area studies’ narrowly conceived to international comparison, challenging all along the way ‘the imperialism of categories’ (an important essay from 2005 bearing that title forms Part III of the book). In their methodological innovations, they showed the importance of prioritising ‘questions’ over ‘methods’.

Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph formally are political scientists but in their scholarly interests, knowledge and practice they defy such labelling:

they are social anthropologists as well and scholars of law and literature. Serendipitously, they discovered the monumental diary of a Rajput nobleman soldier, Amar Singh, and presented a small fraction of its opening volumes in their *Reversing the Gaze* (2000), which has the subtitle of ‘A Colonial Subject’s Narrative of Imperial India’. The Rudolphs have also engaged in important contemporary intellectual debates, such as the ‘Orientalism–Occidentalism’ debate generated by Edward Said’s famous book, and more recently ‘the clash of civilizations’ thesis of Samuel Huntington and others, always coming down on the radical but reasonable side, often against the current, but constructively. All this is amazingly well summarised in Part II of the book.

The Rudolphs, in a way, closed their formal career as active scholars in 2003 when a conference was organised in their honour by their colleagues and students at the University of Chicago with international participation (most regretfully, I had to stay away from it because of prior commitments). But they have continued to work and visit India. Their most recent visit to India was in early 2014 when they both received the Padma Bhushan from the President of India.

This is not the place to go into my personal friendship with Lloyd and Susanne. Suffice to say, I first met them in 1967 at a conference on politics and higher education in India which they organised in New Delhi. Since then they have been among my most abiding and positive intellectual interlocutors and personal friends. They have given us, my wife Uma and me, many ‘gifts’, above all the gift of their abiding friendship.

Let me, then, say that I consider *Destination India* also a wonderful ‘gift’ to all those who may or may not have known Lloyd and Susanne personally but who have been intellectually stimulated by their work.

In conclusion, I would like to very briefly mention another small book, *Yatrik: Reflections on an Overland Journey*, by the late Kirsty Powell, an Australian teacher of English, edited and published in 2013 by her husband Keith Powell, a retired medical doctor now in Canberra. The book written in 1975, a few months before Kirsty’s tragic death in a car accident, is an account of their journey by road, in July–October 1959 (three years after the Rudolphs travelled to India), from Bombay through south, central and north India, to England via Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and onward through Europe. It is an excellent companion volume to *Destination India*. The Powells’ Peugeot station wagon did not at all behave as well as the Rudolphs’ Land Rover, but their experiences on the

road were no less fascinating, mixing frustration with the likes of customs officials and car mechanics in Bombay, with the spontaneous friendship of simple villagers on the road to Tumkur in Karnataka. They visited me in my ancestral home in Srinagar (Kashmir) when my sister's wedding ceremonies were in progress! I may add, 'Yatrik' was suggested to Keith and Kirsty as a suitable name for their vehicle by my wife Uma and me, when we became their shipmates on the S.S. *Strathaird* (P & O) from Sydney to Bombay.

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