

Political Science Department Profile, SAI, Heidelberg University

November 12th, 2024

The [Department of Political Science](#) located within the [South Asia Institute](#) in [Heidelberg University](#) resides in a unique interdisciplinary space where students specialize in Indian and South Asian politics and International Relations, while at the same time benefiting from courses offered in the departments of Geography where environmental issues are salient, in Development Economics, in History, in Anthropology and in South Asian languages. Born in 1962, the South Asia Institute is unique. Each department is headed by a professor budgeted within the South Asia Institute. The South Asia Institute in Germany's oldest (1386) and [highly ranked university](#) was home to great philosophers and social scientists such as Hegel, Weber and Heidegger. The Institute's professors and teachers such as historians Dietmar Rothermund, Hermann Kulke and legal scholar Dieter Conrad have conducted significant research on India.

The Department currently has a special focus on democracy, social justice and citizen's rights. It has conducted pioneering research on the political economy of India's globalization and its regulatory institutions. Colleagues in the department continue to critically assess the evolution of India's regulatory institutions. The department is also critically tracking the trajectory of India's globalization and its capacity to become more competitive on the global stage. Furthermore, the department has engaged with the question of India's engagement with multilateral environmental negotiations and the capacity of the state to implement policies regarding climate change adaptation. These research areas are being pursued by the research staff in the department that includes PhD students.

The department is associated with three significant publications. Its Chair, [Professor Dr. Rahul Mukherji](#) edits the *Oxford Series on Institutions and Development in South Asia* published by Oxford University Press in London. Mukherji also edits *Indian Politics and Policy* (IPP), the leading international journal in that area supported by the Policy Studies Organization in Washington. Three members of IPP's core editorial team are located in the department and one is located at Oxford University's Said School of Business. The Department publishes the [Heidelberg Papers in Comparative and South Asian Politics](#).

The Department convenes the *Lecture Series on Politics and Governance in South Asia* where distinguished scholars such as Pranab Bardhan (University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley), Jack L Snyder (Columbia University, New York), Christophe Jaffrelot (CERI, Paris), Yogendra Yadav (Swaraj Abhiyan, Delhi), Rob Jenkins (City University of New York, New York), T V Paul (Mc Gill University, Montreal) and Sumit Ganguly (Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Palo Alto) have delivered lectures alongside practitioners and activists such as Harsh Mander (Centre for Equity Studies, New Delhi), Ramesh Sharma (Ekta Parishad), Amita Joseph and Mathew Cherian (Care India), among many significant others. The department successfully organized the [Conference on the Future of India's Democracy](#) on June 28 and 29 2024, in the immediate aftermath of the Indian General Elections 2024. Speakers included senior Congress Leader Mani Shankar Aiyar, Bundestag Member Thorsten Rudolph; activists and lawyers such as Harsh Mander, Prashant Bhushan and Anjali Bhardwaj; journalist Seema Chishti; and distinguished scholars such as Christophe Jaffrelot, Rajeev Bhargava, Yasmin Saikia and Yogendra Yadav.

The department's research and teaching have been supported by leading European and German institutions and organizations in the civic space such as the Humboldt Foundation, the Heinrich-Böll-

Stiftung, Akademie Bad Boll and the Rosa-Luxemburg Stiftung. The department has successfully executed the European Research Council's project titled: Global India: Horizon 2020 dedicated to training PhD students. It has received funding from Heidelberg University's schemes such as, Mobility in International Research Collaborations, and, the University's Field of Focus on Regulation and Self-Regulation.