

Editor's Introduction

This is the fourth issue of *Indian Politics and Policy*. In this issue, we have a diverse set of articles and a review essay. In the first article, “India, South Africa and the Cape Town Agreement: A Diplomatic History,” Vineet Thakur and Sasikumar Sundaram argue that the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 was the first such pact in which the British Empire was not involved. Instead it was a bilateral agreement between India and South Africa. For India, the agreement was of particular significance as, for the very first time, an Indian-led delegation negotiated it.

Next, the issue features Sanjoy Banerjee’s “The Reproduction of Indian Neo-liberal Reforms: Competencies, National Identity, and International Norms, 1991-2008.” In this article, Banerjee contends that India’s 1991 economic reforms faced considerable political opposition at the start but gathered support within a few years. The crux of the article lies in an explanation of this continuity. To that end, Banerjee argues that a national identity narrative played a critical role in ensuring this steady progression. Accordingly, he shows that this involved a vision of India as an ancient civilization heading toward a destiny of revival.

The third article in this issue is a contribution from Rahul Mukherji, Himanshu Jha, and M.N. Roy, entitled “Ideas and Policy Paradigms: Explaining the fall of welfare politics in West Bengal.” This article shows how the shift in ideas lead to a different set of outcomes in welfare politics in the state of West Bengal. It shows how a gradual evolution of ideas within the ruling Communist Party led to a shift in policies based on social welfare to trickle-down economics.

The issue concludes with a review essay from Himanshu Jha focused on four significant, new books on the origins and evolution of the Right to Information Act and democracy in India.

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