

Institution: University of Cambridge
Unit of Assessment: UoA30
Title of case study: The new intellectual history of India
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The key impact in India of the work conducted by Prof C A Bayly and Dr S Kapila has been to reposition the history of ideas as a crucial tool for understanding contemporary politics. For two generations, the study of Indian politics has been dominated by economic and interest-based models and, more recently, by a notion of political 'culture' that has tended to drive ideas out. Bayly and Kapila have made common cause against this approach. The most visible public manifestation of their impact was a public meeting convened in Delhi in September 2012 bringing together political leaders, prominent journalists and leading academics. At its core were debates concerning the significance of liberalism, socialism and revolutionary activism in modern and contemporary India. There was wide coverage in the Indian national media. Their work and their joint advocacy have contributed to the new prominence assigned to ideas in contemporary Indian political discourse.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>This impact case is underpinned by work produced by individual scholars, but also crucially reflects the synergy between them. Prof Bayly has taught at Cambridge since 1970. In recent years, his work has turned to the study of the history of political ideas in modern India, culminating in the publication, in 2011, of <i>Recovering liberties. Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire</i> (3e). The aim of this study was to reinstate the role of political ideas in India's colonial and postcolonial development. In order to achieve this, the book aimed to show that liberalism in its Indian manifestations was much more than a 'discourse masking the exercise of social and political power'. It was a partly autonomous and substantially internal coherent field of political discourse that engaged with the place of the individual in a modern society and challenge of managing the challenges of populist democracy without recourse to the intrusive use of state power. The book's fundamental objective was to provide a new foundation for contemporary Indian political debate. There are close analogies with the work of Dr Kapila, who took up a lectureship at Cambridge in 2007. In her work on the 'colonial sciences of the mind', she has worked to reinstate the place of the autonomous 'self' in Indian political and scientific discourse since the mid-nineteenth-century, showing how claims about individual personhood were shaped by the dynamic interaction between Indian discourses and colonial authority. Her aim has been to challenge the assumption that the individual was a 'non-issue' in a society in which identity was supposedly exclusively determined by caste and kinship affiliations. In a study of discourses of race in nineteenth and early twentieth-century India, she shows how the 'science' of phrenology, deployed by orientalist colonial science as a means of asserting the primacy of racial categories, was also appropriated from below as a 'technique of self-knowledge' that illuminated selfhood as a 'dynamic expression of self-will and action' (3c). It is the synergy between this work and Bayly's study of the genealogy of modern Indian liberalism that provides the foundation for this impact case.</p> <p>Bayly's exploration of the origins of Indian democracy in nineteenth-century debates amongst Indian liberal intellectuals – showing, for example, how what in the West was thought of as positive liberty was articulated in India as an idea of humanist 'liberality' (udartavad) – has now been extended by Kapila to a consideration of radical, anti-liberal trends and their relationship with violence (from Tilak, Har Dayal, the Ghadr revolutionaries of the First World War through to the Sikh movement of 1980-83 which resulted in the assassination of Indira Gandhi). Kapila has also considered the ways in which the Indian context reshaped both democratic liberal and radical nationalist ideas, rupturing the relationship with their apparent Euro-American origins. Kapila and Bayly convene a research seminar on Global Intellectual History which has drawn in other scholars to help build this perspective and to situate Indian ideas in global context (3d). Two special issues of <i>Modern Intellectual History</i> (in 2007 and 2010) have been devoted to this new perspective, and</p>

have been published as two books, An Intellectual History for India (2010, edited by Kapila, with afterword by Bayly), and The Bhagavad Gita and Modern Thought (2013, co-edited by Kapila, with chapters by both Kapila and Bayly) **(3a, 3b)**. In addition, Kapila has been undertaking novel readings not only of the works of the major figures of India's independence struggle **(3f)** but also of lesser known figures whom she is reintroducing to the Indian public debate. Economic, social and cultural history have long predominated in the study of India, and Kapila's intervention has been to open up an understanding of the direct consequence of political ideas on historical change.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- a. S. Kapila (editor), An Intellectual History for India (Cambridge University Press, India, 2010), including S. Kapila, 'Self, Spencer and Swaraj: Nationalist Thought and Critiques of Liberalism' and afterword by C.A. Bayly
- b. S. Kapila (co-editor), The Bhagavad Gita and Modern Thought (Cambridge University Press, India, 2013), including S. Kapila, 'A History of Violence', and C.A. Bayly, 'India, the Bhagavad Gita and the world'
- c. S. Kapila, 'Race Matters: Orientalism and Religion, India and Beyond, 1770-1880', Modern Asian Studies, 41 (2007), pp. 471-513
- d. S. Kapila, 'Global intellectual history and the Indian political', in D. McMahon and S. Moyn (eds.), Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History (OUP, New York, 2013)
- e. C.A. Bayly, Recovering liberties. Indian thought in the age of liberalism and empire (Cambridge, 2011)
- f. S. Kapila, 'Gandhi before Mahatma: the Foundations of Political Truth', Public Culture, 23 (2011), pp. 431-48

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The most visible manifestation of the public impact in India beyond the academy was a 'Summit' organised by Kapila and convened at the Taj Mansingh Hotel, New Delhi on 10 September 2012, on 'India in the Global Age' **(5e, 5f)**. The Summit was given extensive coverage by the Indian Press and television (for example, **5a, 5f**); it was broadcast in full twice on Door Darshan, the Indian equivalent of the BBC, reaching an audience estimated at 14 million people, many of them outside the major cities. Prof Bayly was interviewed on the objectives of the meeting by Door Darshan, broadcast initially on the National Channel on 6 November 2012 and subsequently at least five times in half-hour and hour-length versions, reaching an estimated 50 million viewers **(5g)**.

The Delhi event brought together leading public figures, policy makers and historians to discuss, among other topics, ideas of Indian democracy **(5e)**. The first session, attended by Mr Kapil Sibal, Minister of Education, emphasised the importance of ideas of equality and democracy for the understanding of modern India, which at the official country level has tended to highlight the pure sciences, engineering and medicine. The Speaker of the Indian Parliament, Mrs. Meira Kumar, also acknowledged the importance of discussions of the meaning of democracy for the future of education in India **(5f)**. The concluding panel on 'Ideas of India's democracy', particularly well attended, re-articulated the link between the new histories of Indian political ideas and the present practice of its democracy; participants included (in addition to Kapila and Bayly) Gopal Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal, the prominent journalist Swapan Dasgupta, M J Akbar, editorial director of *India Today*, Manish Tewari, Congress Member of Parliament and Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee and Dr Tristram Hunt MP, member of the British Parliamentary Committee on South Asia **(5h)**.

Professor Bayly's book *Recovering Liberties* has also been widely debated in India, in the world's largest-selling English daily, *The Times of India*, and in several broadcasts on Door Darshan totalling an audience of 13 million listeners. Professor Bayly also discussed some of his conclusions at the popular Jaipur Literary festival in January 2011 that attracted more than 60,000 visitors including local school children and leading opinion makers from India and the world. He has been invited for consultations with leading political figures including the Speaker of the Indian

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Parliament, Mrs Meira Kumar. He addressed members of the Indian Administrative Service on the nature of India's democracy and ideas of liberalism in an Indian context arising out of his book during their training at the Judge Business School, October 2012. Dr Kapila has also discussed her ideas about violence, independence and democracy in India in the UK on Melvyn Bragg's 'In Our Time' (Feb. 2010) and separately on Radio 4 with Michael Portillo (Nov. 2010) and on Radio 3 with Tristram Hunt (Mar. 2011) (5b, 5c, 5d). On 26 June 2013, Lord Parekh, sometime vice-chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, hosted at the House of Lords a launch and discussion of the book edited by Kapila and Faisal Devji (*Political Thought in Action. The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*), which was attended by leaders of the British Asian community and by MPs and academics. As an MP who attended both the New Delhi summit and the House of Lords launch attests, Kapila and Bayly's work on liberal and radical political thought has played an important role on two continents in shedding new light on the present workings of India's democracy (5h).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- a. 'A War With No End', a conversation between Kapila and Indian intellectuals from the Delhi Summit, reprinted in the leading Indian newsmagazine The Open September 2012: <http://www.openthemagazine.com/article/art-culture/a-war-with-no-end> .
- b. 'Things we Forgot to Remember: Violence and Indian Independence with Michael Portillo': <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00w78jt> , Radio 4, November 2010.
- c. 'In Our Time' with Melvyn Bragg on Violence and the Indian Mutiny: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00gprnj> , Radio 4, 18 February 2010.
- d. Sunday Feature - Great British Ideas with Tristram Hunt: Hobson, Lenin and Anti-Imperialism: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00z612d/>, first broadcast BBC Radio 3, 10:15PM Sun, 6 Mar 2011
- e. India in the Global Age website: <http://www.cambridge-india.org/delhi2012/>
- f. India in the Global Age media coverage: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAdalkUmGSM>
- g. Email from person 1, Deputy Director of Door Darshan.
- h. Letter from person 2 (MP) to Dr Kapila, 15 Oct. 2013.