

## Editorial Foreword

**VOICING** Expressing political concern for others can involve speaking for them or in solidarity with them. It can also involve speaking *as* others, or *instead* of them. Gestures of the latter sort are easily portrayed as ventriloquism, silencing, or identity fraud. The “voiceover” is sometimes the result of a strong identification with a weaker party; it can also suggest a social distance so pronounced that attempts to represent the Other’s voice inevitably reproduce one’s own. In popular movements and public cultures, the space available for political speech is finite. Two of our authors show how public voices (of real or imagined allies) can be appropriated and, in some cases, distorted when solidarity becomes a vehicle for dominance and control.

**Smita Lahiri** examines the efflorescence of print culture in the Philippines during the final decades of Spanish colonial rule. The new market for books, newspapers, and pamphlets included proto-novels (in Tagalog and Castilian) that offered moral instruction and pro-Spanish political views to their readers. Some of these works had authors who claimed to be *indio* or mestizo but were in reality Spanish priests who affected local personalities and linguistic styles. Lahiri tries to account for this masquerade, in which the colonizer mis/spoke as the colonized, and the diverse responses it provoked among local and metropolitan readerships.

**Laleh Khalili** explores the politics of solidarity between Hizbullah and Palestinians, in Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian territories. This alliance is a delicate relationship forged across national, sectarian, and ideological distinctions that have, at times, been sites of violent conflict between Palestinians and Lebanese, between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, and between religious and secular trends in party-based politics. Looking closely at issues of identity and authority, Khalili charts the limits of solidarity between these movements, and explains how Hizbullah effectively speaks for Palestinians and, just as often, misrepresents and co-opts them.

**POLITICAL MORALITIES/MORAL POLITIES** It is hard to combine the terms “politics” and “order” without triggering an explosion of moralizing discourses. The fallout, which has accumulated steadily for centuries, can be sifted into various grades and categories: “religion,” “ideology,” “law,” “philosophy,” “social science.” Each has a peculiar relationship to changing notions of political order. The essays that follow show how indispensable moralizing discourses are to the task of establishing, sustaining, and shifting the limits of political order.

**Judith Scheele** confronts the “official discourse” on Islam in Algeria, a discourse marked by a gap between discussion of Islam and Islamism as global concerns (about which much can be said) and discussions of Islam as a local idiom of difference (about which little can be said). This gap is reproduced in Algerian scholarship, which deals with local Islamic practice (especially the veneration of saints) or with the emergence of modern Islamism, but rarely attempts to link the two. Using Sufi orders and national Islamic movements in Kabylia as her archive, Scheele demonstrates how the gap in “official discourse” creates spaces of flexibility and variation in religious experience that are of great value to Algerians precisely because they remain, by agreement, opaque.

**Linda Darling** focuses on Muslim dynasties of the late Middle Ages and how popular models of governance, such as the Circle of Justice, were influenced by the kin-based solidarity of ruling elites, a quality Ibn Khaldun called *'asabiyya*. Darling shows that, contrary to Ibn Khaldun's theory, dynasties with high levels of *'asabiyya* tended to be short-lived, whereas those with less kin-based solidarity were more durable. Typically ruled by a slave-military class, the long-lived, low-solidarity dynasties acquired a reputation for injustice. High-*'asabiyya* regimes, ruled by tribally organized elites, were more effective in supporting legal and fiscal bureaucracies that survived the dynasty's collapse. Darling explains why this difference in regimes emerged, how it was expressed in the visual arts and literature, how it conformed to existing political theory, and what these patterns can tell us about elites and justice in Khaldunian political formations.

**Alan Strathern** takes up the issue of religious conversion as political transformation, specifically, top-down conversions in which a leader adopts a new faith on behalf of his subjects. In island Southeast Asia, Islam and Christianity spread quickly through the conversion of local rulers, yet on the mainland, Theravada Buddhist and Confucian polities effectively resisted such changes. Strathern believes this pattern is related to the presence, on the mainland, of firmly established transcendentalist religions, with their codified doctrinal traditions, ecclesiastical hierarchies, and claims on the ruler's legitimacy (and the legitimation of rule itself). In his analysis of the “intransigence” of transcendentalist rulers, Strathern reveals very old cosmological assumptions that pervade theories of political legitimacy and moral authority to this day.

**SOVEREIGNTIES AND SUBORDINATIONS** The global spread of the modern nation-state has created a pervasive sense of human comparability, of shared institutional forms and common desires for “justice,” “development,” or “security.” Even highly contestable notions such as “human rights,” which vary greatly across regions and within nation-states, are now routinely described as universal. This way of seeing is, of course, an ideological project, and the fact that nationalism grew up in an age of colonial empires,

whose radical inequalities were built into its “modular” forms, is obscured by new cultures of global equivalence. Detecting and making sense of discontinuities in the “family of nations” requires a history of exceptions. The following essays explore the idea of “state sovereignty”—over spaces and peoples—and how modern governments have invented and competed for it. What emerges, in each case, is a complex history of exceptions whose formative relationship to “rules” is now submerged in a global regime of equivalences.

**Radhika Mongia** offers a critical reassessment of Benedict Anderson’s approach to the global standardization of the nation-state form. Working with cases drawn from the history of Indian immigration to Mauritius and Canada, Mongia argues that state sovereignty has only recently been understood to entail policies that limit immigration. The latter grew out of the management of colonial populations and their movements, not out of a general assumption that nations are “inherently limited.” Immigration law has crept into and transformed prevailing notions of state sovereignty, making nations more distinct than they once were. This process, Mongia claims, is undertheorized by analysts who stress modularity (form) at the expense of historicity (content).

**Radhika Singha** addresses the British use of prison, indentured, and quasi-indentured labor from India during the First World War. Hundreds of thousands of Indians served in Mesopotamia, both as soldiers and as menials. Their movement into and out of Iraq and other theaters of conflict was a study in exceptions to exceptions to Indian immigration laws, most of which were designed to limit “indentured” labor. Singha provides a detailed account of life in various British work corps, the means of enlisting Indian workers and keeping them in service, and the caste and tribal identities that were used to structure labor pools. Singha also shows how the legal manipulations used to militarize and lend a modicum of dignity to “coolie” labor gave Indian elites a growing sense of labor as a national resource that could be managed in the interests of Indian sovereignty.

**Victor Uribe-Uran** introduces another context in which state sovereignty was shaped by exceptions and alternative sources of power: namely, the institution of church asylum in Spain’s American colonies. The right to seek sanctuary in churches, monasteries, and convents was respected by colonial authorities (and vigorously defended by church officials) well into the nineteenth century. Uribe-Uran lays out the rules of asylum and explores numerous cases in which criminals successfully used the custom to avoid prosecution in state courts. Sanctuary and those who sought it figured prominently in popular folklore and literary traditions, and churches throughout the Spanish colonies were home to a rich mix of criminals. The persistence of church asylum in the New World, long after it faded in Catholic and Protestant Europe, calls into question well-worn ideas about relationships between church and state as sovereign bodies.

**CSSH DISCUSSION** The literature on Marcel Mauss continues to grow. *The Gift*, as it were, keeps on giving, and **Keith Hart** interprets recent trends in appropriations and appreciations of Mauss. Focusing on biographical material newly available in English translation, Hart argues that Mauss' political agendas should be factored back into the on-going development of his ideas. Mauss needs to be read in new ways, Hart argues, and understanding how Mauss sought to integrate politics and intellectual life is indispensable to this project.