

Wiring the nation: telecommunication, newspaper-reportage, and nation building in British India, 1850-1930

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Abstrak

So far, the history of telegraphy has been written from a technological perspective and, as a result, as a history of Western progress and modernity. In contrast, this book focuses on the social, cultural, and political consequences of the telegraph. British India between 1850 and 1930 serves as an example in how far and to what extent telecommunication influenced, shaped, and transformed the then existent multiple British Indian public spheres with regard to the additional and overarching emergence of an all-India public sphere after the turn of the nineteenth century. This new all-India public sphere became the promoter of the Indian national movement. As an intrinsic part of this transformation, newspaper reportage in British India underwent massive changes due to telegraphic news messages as that was the case in many other countries of the world in the age of globalization and nationalization during the above-mentioned period. It is this new perspective which makes this volume not just another contribution to the history of Indian nation-building, but one that places the history of a gradually and slowly imagined Indian nation in an international, intercontinental, and even transnational setting. It is therefore argued that the emergence of the Indian national movement took place in a context of worldwide connected and entangled communication networks which deeply influenced the press landscape and journalism of British India and which eventually helped to imagine an Indian nation in an internationally organized world.