

# ENTERTAINING HINDUTVA

## Competition, Privatization and Violence in Indian Soap Operas since 2000

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*Colloquium of the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology,  
November 27, 12:00 – 14:00 c.t., Room R03 Schloss Hohentübingen.*



The soap opera continues to occupy a central place in the TV viewing habits of hundreds of millions of media consumers in India. Yet, it has remained the most understudied format in the extensive scholarship on the role of media in organizing and visualizing Hindu nationalism (Hindutva). Based on recurrent fieldwork between 2002 and 2017, this talk will elaborate on three main aspects that mark an intrinsic correspondence between the expanding soap opera production under neoliberal politics and the popularization of Hindutva: 1. the travel and transformation of an originally US commercial genre that rejects narrative coherence and invites participation and projection; 2. the collapse of the social and creative authority of writers and producers; and 3. the everyday normalization, through the Hindu symbolic, of competition (for virtue and supremacy), privatization (of problems, property and women) and violence (against deserving others).

