Intra Community Dialogue and Dissent: Zoroastrian Diaspora and the Bombay Parsis

by Univ.Prof. Dr. Kamala Ganesh
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The paper looks at the recent debates and controversies in the Bombay Parsi community, both internal and with the Zoroastrian diaspora, over the issue of conversion and intermarriage. In the context of many examples in India and elsewhere of the coercive power of communities over their members, the Parsi case is an example of democratic dissent as in fact constituting the substance of ‘community’. The expression and outcomes of these controversies on identity are important to track also for theoretical reasons, since the dialectic between the locally anchored and the transnational groups illumines aspects of an expanded and revised concept of ‘community’.

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The lecture is the third in a series of presentations about India (co)organized in the summer term 2009 by the Center and the Institute. Former lectures were given by Prof. Anil Bhatti and Prof. Abduhr Rahman Momin about issues of Indian culture and development.