



CENTRE FOR ASIAN AND  
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SOUTH ASIA  
INSTITUTE



UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG  
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SEIT 1386

## Lecture Series on Governance and Politics in South Asia

Department of Political Science

# Partisanship in Developing Democracies

## *Experimental Evidence from India*

**Francesca R. Jensenius and Ankita Barthwal**

*Department of Political Science, University of Oslo*

Partisanship plays an important role in most advanced democracies, but has received little scholarly attention in developing democracies, where party-voter linkages are thought to be more transactional and unstable. Recent research finds that self-reported party attachment abounds in these contexts too, but we still know little about what motivates such attachments. In this paper, we draw on original survey data from India to explore the meaning of partisanship in a context rife with patronage politics and ethnic voting. We find high levels of partisan attachment, using both self-reported measures and affect-based partisanship scores. Contrary to the dominant narrative in India, we find that voters talk about partisanship as long-lasting and related not only to favors and social identity, but also to parties' ideological positions. Using experimental vignettes to probe what motivates partisanship, we find a strong effect on self-reported partisanship of information about the ideological commitments of major parties. Information about ethnic favoritism only produce an effect among voters who have received direct benefit from the government. The findings provide evidence against the conception of voters in the developing world being mostly concerned with their own material benefits and draw attention to the under-studied role of ideology in forging party-voter linkages.



**Prof. Dr. Francesca R. Jensenius** is Professor of Political Science at the University of Oslo. She specializes in comparative politics, comparative political economy, and research methods, with a regional focus on South Asia and has written extensively on elections and political institutions in India. She is the author of *Social Justice through Inclusion: The Consequences of Electoral Quotas in India* (Oxford University Press, 2017).



**Ankita Barthwal** is a PhD Candidate at the University of Oslo. She studies political behaviour, state capacity and party-voter relations in India.

**Date:** Monday, January 23, 2022

**Time:** 14:00 – 16:00, CET

**Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86460715352?pwd=eUtmUjBdEdVeWJKM3FwTkFHQzJXdz09>