

Title: Citizenship, Inequality and Urban Governance: A Study of Indian Cities

Speaker: Prof. Patrick Heller, Prof. Ashutosh Varshney, and Prof. Siddharth Swaminathan, Brown University

Area: CPP

Date: 12.08.2025, Venue: P22 @ 4.30-6PM

About the Seminar

In this seminar, the speakers discuss the results of the *Citizenship, Urban Governance and Inequality* (CIUG) project. Based on a comparative study of 14 Indian cities and survey results from 31,803 households the project examines the quality and coverage of basic services and how urban Indian citizens use their civil, political, and social rights in cities. The focus in particular, is on patterns of urban inequality and segregation. The overview report for the project can be found [here](#).

Speaker Profiles



[Prof. Patrick Heller](#)

Prof. Patrick Heller is the Lyn Crost Professor of Social Sciences and the Director of the Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia at the Watson School for International and Public Affairs at Brown University.

His main area of research is the comparative study of social inequality and democratic deepening. He is the author of "The Labor of Development: Workers in the Transformation of Capitalism in Kerala, India" (Cornell 1999) and co-author of "Social Democracy and the Global Periphery" (Cambridge 2006), "Bootstrapping Democracy: Transforming Local Governance and Civil Society in Brazil" (Stanford 2011) and "Deliberation and Development: Rethinking the Role of Voice and Collective Action in Unequal Societies" (World Bank Group 2015). Prof. Heller has published articles on urbanization, comparative democracy, social movements, development policy, civil society, and state transformation. His most recent collaborative project - [Citizenship, Inequality, and Urban Governance \(CIUG\) in India](#) - has generated multiple reports and articles.



[Prof. Ashutosh Varshney](#)

Prof. Ashutosh Varshney is the Sol Goldman Professor of International Studies and the Social Sciences and political science at Brown University, where he also serves as director of the Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia.

His books include "Battles Half Won: India's Improbable Democracy" (2013), "Collective Violence in Indonesia" (2009),

"Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India" (Yale 2002), "India in the Era of Economic Reforms" (1999) and "Democracy, Development and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India" (Cambridge 1995).

His research and teaching cover three areas: ethnicity and nationalism, political economy of development and South Asian Politics and political economy. His academic papers have appeared in World Politics, Perspectives on Politics, Comparative Politics, Daedalus, Journal of Development Studies, World Development, Journal of Asian Studies, Journal of Democracy, Journal of East Asian Studies, Foreign Affairs and Economic and Political Weekly. In addition to professional journals, he also contributes guest columns to newspapers and magazines and is a contributing editor for the Indian Express.

Prof. Varshney is currently working on three projects: a multi-country project on cities and ethnic conflict, the political economy of urbanization in India, and Indian politics and society between elections.



[Prof. Siddharth Swaminathan](#)

Prof. Siddharth Swaminathan is currently a visiting research affiliate at the Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia at Brown University.

His research focuses on urban governance, state capacity, and subnational comparative politics in India. He has previously held faculty positions at Azim Premji University, the Institute for Social and Economic Change, La Sierra University, and California State University. He has published in journals such as the American Journal of Sociology, Studies in International Comparative Development, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Social Science and Medicine, Economic and Political Weekly, International Interactions, among others. He is the co-author (with Suhas Palshikar) of "Politics and Society between Elections in India" (2021) - a study of subnational socio-political attitudes. He is also a member of the Lokniti Network.