

A Symposium on Identity, Politics and Development

Date: 28th September, Saturday

Venue: FB 620

10:30-11:30 a.m.: Dr. Nishant Chadha (SNU), *Polarization and Ethnic Voting*

The causes and effects of ethnic voting have received considerable interest in recent political economy literature. However there is still a lack of systematic empirical evidence on the causes of ethnic voting. Borrowing from a substantial literature on ethnic conflict this paper proposes demographic polarization as one of the causes of ethnic identification in politics. I provide evidence for this hypothesis by studying political events in India between 1989 and 1996. This period witnessed sudden and huge increases in the electoral fortunes of ethnic parties, the Hindu *Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)* and the lower caste *Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)*. The results of the paper demonstrate a positive association between demographic polarization and increase in the vote shares of the ethnic parties. I find that more polarized constituencies witnessed larger increases in the BJP vote share between 1989 and 1991 and also larger increases in BSP vote share between 1991 and 1996.

11:30-11:45 a.m.: Tea Break

11:45-12:45 p.m.: Dr. Sarbeswar Sahoo (IIT Delhi), *Tribal Identity, Politics of Development and Religious Conflict in Rajasthan*

Religion and exclusivist religious identity have acted as sources of conflict in India during the post-colonial period. Although Hindu-Muslim conflict has been, what Varshney (2002) calls, the “master narrative” of Indian politics, it is observed that since the 1990s the Christian populations have increasingly become the targets of violence. The central question is why has violence against the Christian population increased in different parts of India? Drawing on fieldwork in the tribal regions of Rajasthan, this paper focuses on two important and interrelated issues: (1) the contested cultural identity of the tribals (*Adivasis*), and (2) the politics of development. While the imperialist position has stressed the separateness of tribals from Hindus, the Hindu nationalists have argued that the tribals constitute an indispensable part of Hindu social and religious order. Such ambiguity has led to deep contestations over the nature of tribal identity in India. Considering this, in the name of doing development, both the Christian missionaries and Hindu nationalists have been involved in competing projects of conversion that have given rise to conflicts in the tribal regions of Rajasthan.

12:45 p.m. – 2-15 p.m. Lunch Break

2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Dr. Anirban Mukherjee (IIT Kanpur), *Community identity and skill mismatch: A study on Indian labor market*

The current paper characterizes skill mismatch in Indian labor market and finds the role of community identity in explaining the existence of skill mismatch measured by the difference between a laborer's education level and the educational requirement of a job (s)he is in. Such mismatch leads to inefficient allocation of resources asking for policy reorientation in both the education and labor sectors. We start by calculating the extent of over and under education for different industries and then estimate the role of community identity in explaining the existence of over/under education. This research agenda is inspired by the fact that network plays an important role in getting a job or being discriminated in the job market. Therefore if a community identity acts as an adverse (favorable) signal, people from that community should acquire more (less) education than the educational requirement for a job to compensate for the signal coming out of their community identities. This may lead to over or under education depending on whether the community identity transmits an adverse or favorable signal. We find that both Muslim and scheduled caste/tribe (SC/ST) identity have positive significant impact on the probability of over education. We also find that in case of under education Muslim identity is positive significant while SC/ST is not. We also find that the wage effect of over education which is found to be positive but the premium of over education is lower for SC/ST members compared to their higher caste counterpart.