



Book talk with

Prof. Dr. Adam Michael Auerbach
(American University Washington, D.C.)



ADAM MICHAEL AUERBACH & TARIQ THACHIL

Migrants and Machine Politics

HOW INDIA'S URBAN POOR SEEK
REPRESENTATION AND RESPONSIVENESS



15 February 2023 16.00-17.30 KOL-G-210 Rämistrasse 71 8006 Zürich

As the Global South rapidly urbanizes, millions of people have migrated from the countryside to urban slums, which now house one billion people worldwide. The transformative potential of urbanization hinges on whether and how poor migrants are integrated into city politics. Popular and scholarly accounts paint migrant slums as exhausted by dispossession, subdued by local dons, bought-off by wily politicians, or polarized by ethnic appeals. *Migrants and Machine Politics* shows how slum residents in India routinely defy such portrayals, actively constructing and wielding political machine networks to demand important, albeit imperfect, representation and responsiveness within the country's expanding cities.

Drawing on years of fieldwork in India's slums, including ethnography, interviews, surveys, and experiments, Auerbach and Thachil reveal how migrants harness forces of political competition—as residents, voters, community leaders, and party workers—to sow unexpected seeds of accountability within city politics. This multifaceted agency provokes new questions about how political networks form during urbanization. In answering these questions, *Migrants and Machine Politics* overturns longstanding assumptions about how political machines exploit the urban poor to stifle competition, foster ethnic favoritism and entrench vote-buying.

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The event will be held in
hybrid mode

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