



CENTRUM FÜR ASIEN-  
WISSENSCHAFTEN UND  
TRANSKULTURELLE STUDIEN



UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG  
ZUKUNFT  
SEIT 1386

Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute  
Lecture Series on Governance and Politics in South Asia

## Searching for India

### *How Search Engines Mediate Political Knowledge*

Vihang Jumle

What role do search engines play in constructing national knowledge hierarchies? For instance, in China, state actors use domestic platforms to implicitly nurture and reproduce an idea of Chineseness that is compliant with the state discourse. But to what degree do search engines offer channels for such knowledge interventions, and to whom are such interventions beneficial in non-authoritarian countries? This talk will address these questions through a mixed-method analysis of visual representation on Google Images of the Indian elections of 2024. In the backdrop of intertwined socio-technical contexts, Mr. Jumle will argue that commercial search engines in non-authoritarian societies partly meet the same fate as they do in authoritarian regimes. By assuming the role of covert homogenizers, search engines autonomously strengthen the political status quo by imposing the mainstream dominant knowledge assumptions and hierarchies onto all and silencing minority interpretations of social reality, thus creating a uniform information ecosystem. In societies witnessing majoritarian national transformations, search engines potentially turn information catalysts, speeding up national homogenization processes.



Vihang Jumle is a doctoral candidate at the University of Bern. He researches digital technologies and their societal implications using mixed methods.



Find his work here.



**Monday, 12 May, 2025**



**14:15 pm – 15:45 pm, CET**



**CATS, Building 4130, Great Lecture Hall,  
010.01.05**