

Sumitra Badrinathan

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POSITIONS **Assistant Professor of Political Science** Fall 2022 –
American University, [School of International Service](#)
Department of Politics, Governance, and Economics

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Oxford 2021 – 2022
Reuters Institute, [Trust in News Project](#)

EDUCATION Ph.D. in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania 2016 – 2021
MA in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania 2018
MA in Political Science, University of Chicago 2015
BA in Psychology, St. Xavier's College Mumbai 2014

RESEARCH Misinformation, South Asia, Political Communication, Experimental Methods, Partisanship,
FIELDS Social Media, Polarization, Democratic Norms

PUBLISHED (13) Badrinathan, Sumitra and Simon Chauchard. 2025. The Religious Roots of Belief
ARTICLES in Misinformation: Experimental Evidence from India. Forthcoming, *British Journal of Political Science*

(12) Badrinathan, Sumitra, Simon Chauchard, and Niloufer Siddiqui. 2025.
[Misinformation and Support for Vigilantism: An Experiment in India and Pakistan.](#)
American Political Science Review 119(2): 947–965

– Winner of the 2025 APSA Rajni Kothari Award for Best Paper in South Asian Politics

– Coverage: [The Hindu](#), [Scroll](#), [Political Science Now](#)

(11) Fletcher, Richard, Sumitra Badrinathan, et al. 2025. [Who Wants Impartial News? Investigating Determinants of Preferences for Impartiality in 40 Countries.](#) *International Journal of Communication* 19: 23–38.

– Coverage: [Neiman Lab](#)

(10) Fletcher, Richard, Sumitra Badrinathan, et al. 2025. The link between changing news use and trust: Longitudinal analysis of 46 countries. *Journal of Communication* 75(1): 1–15

(9) Badrinathan, Sumitra and Simon Chauchard. 2024. [Researching and Countering Misinformation in the Global South](#). *Current Opinion in Psychology* 55: 101–113

(8) Badrinathan, Sumitra and Simon Chauchard. 2023. ["I Don't Think That's True, Bro!" Social Corrections of Misinformation in India](#). *International Journal of Press/Politics*: 1–23

– Coverage: [Hindustan Times](#), [The Print](#), [Scroll](#)

(7) Mont'Alverne, Camila, Amy Ross Arguedas, Sumitra Badrinathan, Benjamin Toff, Richard Fletcher, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2023. [Domain-Specific Influence on Facebook: How Topic Matters when Assessing Influential Accounts in Four Countries](#). *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, 3

(6) Mont'Alverne, Camila, Sumitra Badrinathan, Amy Ross Arguedas, Benjamin Toff, Richard Fletcher, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2023. [Fair and Balanced: What News Audiences in Four Countries Mean When They Say They Prefer Impartial News](#). *Journalism Studies*: 1-18

(5) Ross Arguedas, Amy, Sumitra Badrinathan, Camila Mont'Alverne, Benjamin Toff, Richard Fletcher, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2023. [Shortcuts to Trust: Relying on Cues to Judge Online News from Unfamiliar Sources on Digital Platforms](#) *Journalism*: 1-23

(4) Kim, Eunji, Sumitra Badrinathan, Donghyun Danny Choi, Sabrina Karim, and Yang-Yang Zhou. 2022. [Navigating Insider and Outsider Status as Researchers Conducting Field Experiments](#). *PS: Political Science & Politics*: 1–5

(3) Ross Arguedas, Amy, Sumitra Badrinathan, Camila Mont'Alverne, Benjamin Toff, Richard Fletcher, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2022. ["It's a Battle You Are Never Going to Win": Perspectives from Journalists in Four Countries on How Digital Media Platforms Undermine Trust in News](#). *Journalism Studies*: 1-20

(2) Badrinathan, Sumitra. 2021. [Educative Interventions to Combat Misinformation: Evidence From A Field Experiment in India](#). *American Political Science Review* 115(4): 1325–1341.

– Winner of the 2021 APSA Paul Lazarsfeld Best Paper Award

(1) Badrinathan, Sumitra, Deepaboli Chatterjee, Devesh Kapur, and Neelanjan Sircar. 2021. [Partisan Disagreement: The Role of Media, Personal Networks and Gender in Forming Political Preferences](#). *Urbanisation* 6(1): 141–157.

UNDER
REVIEW

[Countering Misinformation Early: Evidence from a Classroom-Based Field Experiment in India](#), with *Simon Chauchard, Florian Sichart, Priyadarshi Amar*

– R&R, American Political Science Review

Home and Away: Explaining the Political Behavior of the Indian American Diaspora, *with Milan Vaishnav and Devesh Kapur*

– R&R, Political Behavior

The Effect of Labeling False Social Media posts in Brazil, India, and the UK, *with Richard Fletcher, Benjamin Toff, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen*

Examining Urban/Rural Gaps in Trust in News Across Four Countries, *Richard Fletcher, Benjamin Toff, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen*

BOOK
PROJECT

Seeds of Discord: How Misinformation Erodes Democratic Norms in South Asia, *with Niloufer Siddiqui and Simon Chauchard*.

– Proposal accepted for Cambridge Elements series on Politics of Development and book workshop scheduled 09/2025

BOOK
CHAPTERS

Badrinathan, Sumitra, and Devesh Kapur. 2021. “Religion, Caste, Class, Politics: How Urbanization Affects Social Interactions and Political Behaviors.” In *Colossus: The Anatomy of Delhi*, edited by Sanjoy Chakravorty and Neelanjan Sircar. Cambridge University Press

WORK IN
PROGRESS

Deconstructing Meta-Narratives of Misinformation to Counter Prejudice: A WhatsApp-based Experiment, *with Niloufer Siddiqui and Simon Chauchard*

The Political Economy of Local Journalism and Misinformation: Evidence from North India, *with Adam Auerbach*

Sharing Falsehoods in an Information-poor Environment: An Experiment with Indian Teenagers, *with Priyadarshi Amar, Simon Chauchard, Florian Sichart*
[pre-analysis plan](#)

Norms of Deference and Belief in Misinformation, *with Simon Chauchard*
[pre-analysis plan](#)

The effect of corrections on false COVID-19 social media posts in Brazil, India and the UK, *with Richard Fletcher et al.*
[pre-analysis plan](#)

Ethnic Identity vs. Partisan Loyalty: A Multi-Experiment Analysis of Indian American Voting Preferences, *with Milan Vaishnav and Devesh Kapur*

From Pilot to Policy: Successes and Lessons from a Long-Term Media Literacy RCT in India, *with Priyadarshi Amar, Simon Chauchard, Florian Sichart*

GRANTS & FUNDING	2025 American University SIS Collaborative Research Award w/ Sarah Khan for Gendered Dimensions of Misinformation in South Asia: \$20,000
	2022 Social Science Research Council’s Mercury Project Award for Bihar Information and Media Literacy Initiative (BIMLI) : A Grassroots Media Literacy RCT for Rural Populations in India: \$500,000
	2022 Facebook Foundational Integrity and Impact Research Award for Misinformation and Vigilantism in India and Pakistan: Determinants and Solutions: \$100,000
	2021 Sobti Family Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania: \$12,500
	2020 Wharton School Russell Ackoff Doctoral Student Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania: \$3,000
	2018 Judith Rodin Research Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania: \$10,000
SELECT MEDIA	Badrinathan, Sumitra, Devesh Kapur, and Milan Vaishnav. 29 March, 2025. “Indian Americans and the future of US-India ties.” <i>Hindustan Times</i>
	Interview on the Grand Tamasha Podcast. 5 November, 2024. The Indian American Vote in 2024.
	Badrinathan, Sumitra, Niloufer Siddiqui, and Simon Chauchard. September 16, 2024. “Ohio cat rumors – and why misinformation about minorities goes viral.” <i>Good Authority</i>
	Interview for Scroll. May 31, 2024. Interview: Debunking, correcting misinformation helps but it is not enough to change strong beliefs.
	Interview on Big World Podcast. 1 August, 2023. Disinformation Part 1: India.
	Interview on Scope Conditions Podcast. 27 February, 2023. Can we Immunize Against Misinformation? With Sumitra Badrinathan.
	Badrinathan, Sumitra. 7 June, 2021. “India is facing an epidemic of misinformation alongside covid-19.” <i>The Washington Post</i>
	Badrinathan, Sumitra, Devesh Kapur, and Milan Vaishnav. 15 October, 2020. “Why Indian Americans are not becoming Republicans any time soon.” <i>Monkey Cage</i>
	Badrinathan, Sumitra, and Simon Chauchard. 28 January, 2020. “Is there a way to counter fake news on WhatsApp?” <i>Hindustan Times</i>
POLICY WRITING	Badrinathan, Sumitra, Devesh Kapur, Milan Vaishnav, and Annabel Richter. 10 March, 2025. Foreign Policy Attitudes of Indian Americans: 2024 Survey Results. <i>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace</i> Press: BBC

Badrinathan, Sumitra, Devesh Kapur, and Milan Vaishnav. 28 October, 2024. [Indian Americans at the Ballot Box: Results From the 2024 Indian American Attitudes Survey](#). *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*
 Press: [Foreign Policy](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Semafor](#)

Mont'Alverne, Camila, Sumitra Badrinathan, Benjamin Toff, Amy Ross Arguedas, Richard Fletcher, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 22 September, 2022. [The trust gap: how and why news on digital platforms is viewed more sceptically versus news in general](#). *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*
 Press: [Scroll](#), [Newslaundry](#), [Quint](#)

Badrinathan, Sumitra, Devesh Kapur, and Milan Vaishnav. 14 October, 2020. [How Will Indian Americans Vote? Results From the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey](#). *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*
 Press: [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#), [Axios](#), [Reuters](#), [NDTV](#)

TALKS AND WORKSHOPS 2025 (scheduled): Penn CP seminar, Columbia Media Effects Empirical Workshop, CASI Political Economy Workshop, NYU Political Psychology Meeting

2024: Council on Foreign Relations, Democratic Erosion Consortium, George Washington CP Seminar, Yale South Asia, UMontreal Summer School, Brown-Harvard joint seminar, Michigan South Asia Seminar

2023: University of Maryland Seminar, Google News Fighting Misinformation Initiative

2022: NYU Comparative Politics Workshop, Brown-Harvard-MIT Joint Seminar on South Asian Politics, Aarhus University

AWARDS	American University SIS Collaborative Research Award	2025
	American University SIS Award for Outstanding Scholarship	2025
	APSA South Asia Section's Rajni Kothari Best Paper Award	2025
	APSA Political Communication Section's Paul Lazarsfeld Best Paper Award	2021
	University of Pennsylvania Dean's Award for Distinguished Teaching	2019
	Penn Prize for Excellence in Teaching by Graduate Students	2019

TEACHING & ADVISING Instructor, American University: Political Misinformation (Spring 2025), Comparative Political Economy (Fall 2024), Experimental Design (Spring 2025)

Teaching Assistant, University of Pennsylvania: [Statistics for Political Science](#) (Fall 18), Political Change (Fall 19), International Human Rights (Spring 18), Intro to American Politics (Fall 17)

Undergraduate Advising at AU: Megha Rastogi, Jeremy Schaefer, Tanishka Khanna

Research Assistants: Josiah Gottfried (AU), Sukhmani Khalsa (AU),
Tipanna Pujari (India), Saneet Chakradeo (AU)

CONFERENCE TALKS 2025: SPSA Conference, EPSA Conference (scheduled), APSA conference (scheduled)

2024: U of Rochester Conference on Applied Methods, UVA Digital Democracy Symposium, APSA, ICA, CASI Political Economy Workshop, SSRC Symposium

2023: SPSA Conference, MPSA Conference, EPSA Conference, APSA Conference, CASI India Political Economy, MIT Polarization Workshop

2022: MPSA, ICA, APSA, Berlin Meetings on the Political Economy of Development (MoPED), International Fact-Checking Network Global Fact 9 Conference

2021: APSA, International Journal of Press/Politics Conference, SPSP Annual Convention, Digital Democracy Workshop, University of Zurich

2020: Harvard Experimental Political Science Conference, APSA, SPSA

2019: APSA, NYU Experimental Social Sciences Conference, MIT Gov/Lab Political Behavior of Development Conference, SPSA Conference

SERVICE Editorial Board, British Journal of Political Science

Reviewer for: American Political Science Review, Nature Human Behavior, Nature Communications, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, Journal of Development Economics, Political Behavior, Political Psychology, Harvard Kennedy Misinformation Review, Perspectives on Politics, Journal of Quantitative Description, Comparative Political Studies, British Journal of Political Science, International Journal of Communication, National Science Foundation

Advisory Board: UC3M [Polarization, Identity and Misinformation](#) (PIM) lab, Stanford/Dartmouth/Penn [Polarization Research Lab](#)

American University Service: Search Committee Member for Political Economy tenure track search (2023); Faculty mentor in undergraduate Olson Scholars Program (2023, 2024), PhD Placement Director 2024-25; PhD Committee 2024-25

Disciplinary Service: Award committee member for APSA Political Communication Section Paul Lazarsfeld Best Paper award (2022)

LANGUAGES Native: English, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil; Intermediate: French (C1), Spanish (A2)

FIELDWORK India: Bihar, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan

CITIZENSHIP India

REFERENCES **Prof. Guy Grossman**
Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Pennsylvania
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Prof. Marc Meredith
Professor
Department of Political Science
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