

Malik Altaf Hussain

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Education

George Mason University , Fairfax, VA Ph.D. in Economics Dissertation: <i>Essays in Economic History and Public Health</i> Primary Fields: Political Economy, Economic History Secondary Fields: Development Economics, Applied Econometrics Research Assistant to Prof. Noel D. Johnson	2020 – May 2025 (expected)
George Mason University , Fairfax, VA M.A. in Economics	2023
Jawaharlal Nehru University , New Delhi, India M.Phil. in Economics	2014 – 2017
South Asian University , New Delhi, India M.A. in Development Economics	2010 – 2012
Aligarh Muslim University , Aligarh, India B.A. in Economics	2007 – 2010

Research Interests

Development Economics, Historical Political Economy, Economics of Religion, Culture and Economics, Long Run Economic Growth and Applied Econometrics

Job Market Paper

- **Pox, Piety, and Paradox: The Economics of Vaccination in British India** [\[Link\]](#)
This paper presents new historical evidence on the cultural roots of vaccine hesitancy and its medium-term effects. Using a newly compiled district-level dataset with religion-specific vaccination rates across colonial India (1868-1878), I examine how Hindu religious beliefs affected smallpox vaccination uptake. An instrumental variables approach using historical Hindu temple desecration sites shows that a one standard deviation increase in Hindu population share leads to a 0.89 to 1.98 percentage points decrease in Hindu vaccination rate at the district level. These effects are specific to Hindu populations and operate through religious and cultural practices. By 1891, a one standard deviation increase in Hindu share is associated with 17.7 and 12.6 percentage point increases in unmarried and widow ratios among young adults aged 10-25. The findings highlight the societal impact of culturally-driven vaccine hesitancy and guide culturally sensitive health policies.

Publications

- **Hussain, M.A.** and M. Azharuddin Akhtar (2025). "Addressing the Challenges of Death Registration in India: A Path Forward." *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 60, Issue No. 4, 25 Jan 2025. [\[Link\]](#)
- **Hussain, M.A.** and M. Tyagi (2024). "Political Connections and Credit Access: Evidence from Small Businesses and Microenterprises in India." *Small Business Economics*. [\[Link\]](#)
- **Hussain, M.A.** and M. Tyagi (2024). "Politically Connected Firms and Access to Credit: Evidence from India." *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics*. [\[Link\]](#)
- **Hussain, M.A.** and M. Tyagi (2020). "Role of Political Connections in Land Investment: Evidence from Rural India." *Constitutional Political Economy*. [\[Link\]](#)
- **Hussain, M.A.**, Malvika Tyagi, Deepak Kumar, and Md Tajuddin Khan (forthcoming). "Flushed with Success: How Participation in Social Schemes Influence Toilet Adoption in Rural India." *Journal of Biosocial Science*.

Working Papers

- **Mistrust and Vaccination in Colonial India: 1870-1926** (with Noel D. Johnson)
- **Religion and Consumption of Drugs in Colonial India** (With Noel D. Johnson and Shruti Rajagopalan)
- **Colonization in a Network of Allies**
- **Railways and Health Outcomes in Colonial India**

Fellowships and Awards

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| • Emergent Ventures India Fellowship | 2024 – 2025 |
| • Public Choice Fellowship | 2023 – 2025 |
| • Bradley Fellowship | 2021 – 2024 |
| • Mercatus Center Ph.D. Fellowship | 2020 – 2023 |

Conferences and Presentations

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| • ASREC Conference on Economics of Religion | 2025 (scheduled) |
| • ASREC Graduate Workshop on Economics of Religion | 2025 (scheduled) |
| • Stellenbosch University Economic History Seminar, (invited) | 2025 (scheduled) |
| • Markets and Society Conference, Mercatus Center | 2024 |
| • International Conference on Indian Business and Economic History, IIM Ahmedabad | 2023 |
| • ACES Political Economy Summer School, UC Berkeley | 2023 |
| • PPE Summer School, Chapman University | 2023 |
| • ASREC Graduate Workshop on Economics of Religion, Chapman University | 2022 |

Skills

Skills: R (Intermediate), Stata (Proficient), QGIS (Geospatial Analysis); LaTeX (Document Preparation)

Additional Information

- **Nationality:** Indian
- **Date of Birth:** 10/22/1988
- **Languages:** Kashmiri (Native), Urdu (Native), Hindi (Native), English (Fluent)

Referee

Constitutional Political Economy, International Tax and Public Finance, Review of Development Economics, Small Business Economics, European Financial Management

References

Prof. Noel D. Johnson – PhD advisor

Professor of Economics, George Mason University
Email: njohnsol@gmu.edu

Prof. Mark Koyama

Professor of Economics, George Mason University
Email: Mark.Koyama@gmail.com

Prof. Alex T. Tabarrok

Bartley J. Madden Chair in Economics, George Mason University
Director, Center for the Study of Public Choice
Email: atabarro@gmu.edu

Prof. Vincent Geloso

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Email: vincentgeloso@hotmail.com