

Malik Altaf Hussain

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Education

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

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 (*Draft available upon request*)

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. Tyagi (2024). “Political Connections and Credit Access: Evidence from Small Businesses and Microenterprises in India.” *Small Business Economics*, Published 15 July 2024, Accepted 26 June 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-024-00950-y>.

Hussain, M.A. and M. Tyagi (2024). “Politically Connected Firms and Access to Credit: Evidence from India.” *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics*, 69, 527-542, June.

Hussain, M.A. and M. Tyagi (2020). “Role of Political Connections in Land Investment: Evidence from Rural India.” *Constitutional Political Economy*, 31, 344–362.

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

Emergent Ventures India Fellowship	<i>2024 – 2025</i>
Public Choice Fellowship	<i>2023 – 2025</i>
Bradley Fellowship	<i>2021 – 2024</i>
Mercatus Center Ph.D. Fellowship	<i>2020 – 2023</i>

Conferences and Presentations

ASREC Graduate Workshop on Economics of Religion	2025 (scheduled)
Stellenbosch University Economic History Seminar Invited presentation of job market paper	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

Languages: Kashmiri (Native), Urdu (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
Assistant Professor of Economics, George Mason University
Email: vincentgeloso@hotmail.com