

# Malik Altaf Hussain

Department of Economics  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA 22030

✉ [mhusa5@gmu.edu](mailto:mhusa5@gmu.edu)  
🌐 <https://malikahussain.github.io/>  
☎ +1 (703) 953-5332

## Education

<b>George Mason University</b> , Fairfax, VA	2020 – May 2025 (expected)
Ph.D. in Economics	
Primary Fields: Political Economy, Economic History	
Secondary Fields: Development Economics, Applied Econometrics	
<b>Research Assistant</b> to Prof. Noel D. Johnson	2020 – 2023
<b>George Mason University</b> , Fairfax, VA	2023
M.A. in Economics	
<b>Jawaharlal Nehru University</b> , New Delhi, India	2014 – 2017
M.Phil. in Economics	
<b>South Asian University</b> , New Delhi, India	2010 – 2012
M.A. in Development Economics	
<b>Aligarh Muslim University</b> , Aligarh, India	2007 – 2010
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** [\[Link\]](#)  
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. 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.
- **Hussain, M.A.** and M. Azharuddin Akhtar (forthcoming). "Addressing the Challenges of Death Registration in India: A Path Forward." *Economic and Political Weekly*.
- **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

- **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

- **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](mailto:njohnsol@gmu.edu)

### **Prof. Mark Koyama**

Professor of Economics, George Mason University  
Email: [Mark.Koyama@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:atabarro@gmu.edu)

### **Prof. Vincent Geloso**

Assistant Professor of Economics, George Mason University  
Email: [vincentgeloso@hotmail.com](mailto:vincentgeloso@hotmail.com)