

Pratik Mahajan

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Research Fields: Comparative Politics, Political Economy of Development, South Asia

Research Focus: Forest and Tribal Governance, Democratic Backsliding, Political Candidacy and Representation

Education

Yale University

PHD POLITICAL SCIENCE

- Fields: Comparative Politics, Quantitative Methods, Political Economy

New Haven, CT

2025-current

McGill University

MA POLITICAL SCIENCE (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES OPTION)

- Fields: Comparative Politics (Primary), Methods (Secondary)
- Committee: Dr. Narendra Subramanian, Dr. Aaron Erlich, and Dr. Dietlind Stolle

Montréal, QC

2022 - 2024

McGill University

BA FIRST-CLASS HONOURS

- Honours Political Science, Minor Concentration Philosophy
- Allen Oliver Fellowship for Highest Departmental GPA

Montréal, QC

2019 - 2022

UWC Mahindra College

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

- 2-year Residential Program

Paud, India

2017 - 2019

Research

FOREST AND TRIBAL GOVERNANCE

Property, Power, and Participation: How Land and Political Rights Transform Forest Governance in Tribal India

Dissertation in Progress

DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING

How Discretion Shapes Civil Society–Opposition Party Alliances Against Democratic Backsliding

(With Feyaad Allie) Working Paper

When Civil Society Overreaches: Voter Aversion to Expansive Civil Society Electoral Mobilization

(With Feyaad Allie) Working Paper

Integrating Citizen Awareness into the Study of Democratic Backsliding

(With Alyssa Heinze) Working Paper

POLITICAL CANDIDACY AND REPRESENTATION

Brokered Majoritarianism: Turncoat Minority Politicians and Mixed Returns to Ideological Transformation

Working Paper

Aspirational Tolerance: Political Ambition And Tolerance of Dynastic Politicians

(With Rahul Verma) Working Paper

Ambition and Ascent: How Formal Positions Shape Party Worker Attitudes

(With Feyaad Allie and Rahul Verma) Working Paper

Disproportionate Vacancy: How Bias and Selective Mobilization Shape Politician Vacancies in India's Village Councils

(With Alyssa Heinze) Work in Progress

Published Datasets

Subdistricts of India by Scheduled Status: An Original Dataset Linked to SHRUG, Development Data Lab (2024)
Harvard Dataverse Link

All India SHRUG Shrid (Villages and Towns) Matched to Corresponding Local Governance Bodies Using LGD Codes (2025)
Harvard Dataverse Link

Awards, Fellowships, & Grants

YALE

Sterling Prize Fellowship (Yale) *USD 7,000* (2025-2027)

MCGILL

CSDC Academic Travel Grant, *CAD 1,000* (2023-2024)

CAnD3-CSDC Fellowship for Training in Data Science and Population Dynamics, *CAD 10,750* (2023-2024)

CSDC Methods Training Grant for ICPSR Summer School at UMichigan, *CAD 3,000* (2023)

McGill Faculty of Arts Graduate Mobility Award for Fieldwork in India, *CAD 3,000* (2023)

ISID Entrance Fellowship, McGill University, *CAD 1,650* (2022-2023)

Faculty of Arts Graduate Entrance Fellowship, McGill University, *CAD 8,350* (2022-2023)

Allen Oliver Fellowship, *Highest departmental GPA (3.97) in Political Science*, *CAD 3,000* (2022)

Dow-Hickson Scholarship by McGill's Department of Philosophy, *CAD 2,000* (2021-2022)

Alexander McKenzie Scholarship by McGill's Department of Political Science, *CAD 1,000* (2021-2022)

Arts Research Internship Award (ARIA), *CAD 5,000* (2021)

James McGill Entrance Scholarship, *CAD 3,000* (2019-2020)

NON-MONETARY AWARDS

CAnD3 Data Visualization Dragon's Den Competition, *Third Prize with Bertram Melix and Megan Skowronski* (2024)

McGill University Faculty of Arts Dean's Honour's List, *3 consecutive academic years* (2019-2022)

Davis-Mahindra Scholar at UWC Mahindra College, *Outstanding Student Leadership* (2018-2019)

Presentations

CONFERENCES

September 2025. American Political Science Association (APSA), Vancouver, BC (*Scheduled*)

June 2024. Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA), Montréal, QC

March 2024. Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship (CSDC) Graduate Conference, Québec City, QC

INTERNAL

March 2023. Finalist at McGill's 3-Minute-Thesis Competition.

October 2021. Arts Research Internship Awards (ARIA) Project Presentations at McGill, Montréal, QC.

Teaching Experience

INSTRUCTOR

Conjoint Analysis: Visual and Interview Approach (*CSDC Winter Methods School, Université de Montréal, Jan 2024*)

TA FOR MCGILL COURSES

Evaluations Available Upon Request

POLI 311 Introduction to Quantitative Methods (*Prof. Aaron Erlich, Jan-Apr 2024*) **4.5/5.0**

POLI 210 Political Science Research Methods (*Profs. Dietlind Stolle and Aaron Erlich, Sep-Dec 2023*) **4.4/5.0**

POLI 435 Identity and Inequality (*Prof. Narendra Subramanian, Jan-Apr 2023*) **4.7/5.0**

POLI 349 Foreign Policy of Asia (*Dr. Jaeyoung Kim, Sep-Dec 2022*) **4.6/5.0**

Research Assistance

May – Jul 2021 & May- Jun 2022: Spinoza and Servitude (*For Prof. Hasana Sharp, Dept. of Philosophy, McGill*)

May - Jul 2020: Bio-Medical Ethics (*For Tammy Molina, Interior Health of British Columbia*)

Select Media Contributions

"Review or Retention." *The Times of India, Dec 2024.*

"Ladki, bahin...but ethnic groups, caste too." *The Times of India, Oct 2024.*

"Democracy's Slow March" *with Alyssa Heinze. The Times of India, Oct 2024.*

"Maha Questions From Opposition's Small Allies." *The Times of India, Sept 2024.*

"Maharashtra LS polls have never been muddier." *with Vikramaditya Thakur. The Times of India, May 2024.*

"Adivasi Agency and Environmental Jurisprudence in India" - interview with Dr. Geetanjay Sahu. *ISID Talk Series, May 2023.*

"Why India's Plan for A New Parliament May Spell A Challenging Future For Its Democracy." *The McGill International Review, May 2021.*

"Education in India: A Duty Forsaken During COVID-19." *The McGill International Review, July 2021.*

Research Skills

QUANTITATIVE

- Conjoint and Vignette Experiments
- Causal Inference: DiD and RDD
- Multiple Linear Regression
- Spatial regression and mapping

SOFTWARE

- R and R Markdown
- LaTeX and Overleaf
- GitHub
- Qualtrics
- GIS

QUALITATIVE

- In-depth interviews
- Participant Observation and Shadowing
- Discourse Analysis
- Enumerator Recruitment and Training

LANGUAGES

- English (Fluent)
- Marathi (Fluent)
- Hindi (Fluent)
- *Bhil language family* (Intermediate Proficiency)
- French (Elementary Proficiency)

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

McGill University

CONSORTIUM ON ANALYTICS FOR DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING (CAND3)

- 10-month-long training program in data analytics and application to population dynamics.

Montréal, QC

2023 - 2024

University of Michigan

ICPSR SUMMER PROGRAM IN QUANTITATIVE METHODS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

Ann Arbor, MI

2023

Fieldwork

May 2025-July 2025: Maharashtra and Gujarat, India

- Interviews, observation of PESA gram sabhas, and fielding surveys on Tribal Forest Governance project in 5 districts.

July 2024-April 2025: Across Maharashtra, India

- Participant observation, shadowing, interviews, administrative data collection, training over 30 enumerators and managing 5 in-person surveys for projects on democratic backsliding and political candidacy and representation.

September 2024: Haryana, India

- Observing collaboration between grassroots organizations and party workers during Haryana's state elections.

May-July 2023: Nandurbar and Dhule Districts, Maharashtra, India

- Conjoint survey experiment and interviews in 40 villages, managing a team of 4 enumerators.

May-June 2018: Jalgaon and Nandurbar Districts, Maharashtra, India

- Interviews in 5 tribal villages to study the implementation of the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act.

References

Available upon request