

August 30, 2025

Graduate School of Social Sciences
Hitotsubashi University

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the Lecturer position in Political Science at Hitotsubashi University. I am currently a postdoctoral fellow at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and a member of the Institute Carlos III Juan March (IC3JM) and the POLARCHATS ERC project. I received a joint Ph.D. in Political Science and Agricultural & Applied Economics from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, conferred in May 2025. I am a scholar of comparative political behavior and Indian politics, focusing on major institutional challenges such as political inequality and misinformation in an increasingly polarized world. My research and teaching interests align closely with the department’s interdisciplinary substantive and methodological focus.

My dissertation, “Essays on Political Candidacy and Representation in India’s Local Governments,” investigates how electoral institutions shape political representation. Drawing on administrative data from over 20,000 village council elections in India’s panchayat system, which governs over 600 million rural citizens, I examine when and why well-intentioned institutional reforms succeed or backfire.

My job market paper contributes to the theory of unintended intersectional institutional effects, examining how caste quotas increase women’s candidacy in India’s village governments. I find that women’s candidacy is approximately 1.5 times higher in seats with caste quotas compared to seats without any quotas, and electoral success is 2 times higher. These effects are driven primarily by different social norms for women in marginalized caste groups, as they do not face the purity-based restrictions that constrain privileged caste women’s participation in activities outside the home and also because of lower political competition in seats with caste quotas. My second paper provides a theoretical framework for understanding the norm-institution conflict, showing that seemingly neutral fertility requirements for contesting village elections reduce the likelihood of a Muslim candidate by 0.07 percentage points, while having no statistically significant effects on other groups, as Muslim candidates face unique community pressures that create higher social costs for legal compliance. My third paper extends this framework to executive selection methods, demonstrating the effects of changing from indirect election of village heads to direct election on political entry. Together, these papers establish that it is critical to account for institutional spillovers when assessing the effects of well-intentioned reforms.

My second research stream examines the role of digital misinformation in shaping political behavior. In a randomized controlled trial funded by the Social Science Research Council, my coauthors and I evaluated a media literacy intervention implemented in 583 villages in Bihar (India), involving

more than 12,000 students. The intervention significantly improved the ability of the students to distinguish true from false information, with effects sustained months after treatment. This work, conditionally accepted in the *American Political Science Review*, offers direct implications for policymaking and democratic resilience. This research has been recognized with the APSA Experimental Research Section Best Paper Award (2025) and received Honorable Mention for the APSA Comparative Politics Section Sage Best Paper Award (2025). Another ongoing co-authored project uses a two-arm vignette experiment in rural Bihar to explore how attributes of information, such as social norms and the identity of the transmitter, affect the dissemination of misinformation.

My research combines experimental methods, administrative data analysis, and field-based research to illuminate the dynamics of representation and information in contemporary democracies. Looking ahead, I plan to expand my research in three directions. First, I will examine how information environments interact with local institutions to shape governance outcomes, bridging my work on institutional design and misinformation. Second, my objective is to extend the institutional spillover framework through comparative analysis across democracies in the global south. Third, I will investigate how digital technologies reshape barriers to political participation for marginalized groups. These research directions rely heavily on fieldwork, and hence I plan to pursue KAKENHI funding, particularly the Young Researcher grant.

I am enthusiastic about contributing to Hitotsubashi's teaching mission through courses in comparative politics, political economy, political behavior, and quantitative research methods. My teaching experience spans mathematics and computation for social scientists, microeconomics, and quantitative research methods, where I developed curriculum and provided instruction across diverse student populations. I am eager to offer specialized courses in South Asia politics, political inequality, misinformation, causal inference and experimental design, areas where my research expertise can directly enhance student learning. My teaching approach combines analytical rigor with practical application, emphasizing how students can use empirical tools to understand real-world political and economic phenomena. Through Wisconsin's peer mentor program, I have guided undergraduate research projects and fostered student academic development.

Hitotsubashi's emphasis on empirical rigor, interdisciplinary research, and global engagement makes it an ideal environment for my academic contributions. I am particularly enthusiastic about how my research aligns with the department's strengths in gender, institutions, and political behavior. With rich field experience in India and current academic ties in the US and Europe, I am well positioned to contribute to the institution's global academic ecosystem.

Thank you for considering my application. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to Hitotsubashi University's tradition of excellence in social science research and education. Please have attached my curriculum vitae and writing samples. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Priyadarshi Amar