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Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to apply for the position of Assistant Professor at IE University's School of Politics, Economics & Global Affairs. I am a PhD candidate pursuing a joint degree in Political Science and Agricultural & Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, expecting to complete my dissertation in the Spring of 2025. My research centers on political institutions and the challenges they face, with a particular empirical focus on South Asia. In particular, I am pursuing two research agendas: one on the effects of various institutions on political representation, and the other on contemporary institutional challenges such as misinformation and climate change.

In my job market paper, I explore how efforts to improve political representation along one dimension of identity—such as ethnicity—affects representation along another, such as gender. While over 80 countries have implemented some form of quotas, most focus on a single dimension of identity, like gender or ethnicity, even though individuals possess multiple, overlapping identities. This raises a key question: Do ethnic quotas reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities, or do they bring about change? I argue that ethnic quotas can affect women's representation if gender norms for women vary by social status. To empirically test this, I use a novel design that leverages quasi-random variation in the assignment of quotas for council member seats in rural Maharashtra. I find that quotas for marginalized caste groups not only increase women's representation on the ballot but also in political office. The evidence suggests these effects are mainly driven by more favorable gender norms for women from marginalized caste groups, allowing them to participate in electoral processes. Consequently, this paper demonstrates how social norms moderate the effects of institutional design on representation.

In the second paper of my dissertation, I examine how electoral laws regulating political entry influence the candidacy of marginalized groups. In particular, I study the impact of electoral laws in India that disqualify citizens with more than two children from contesting local government offices. Since political officeholders significantly influence the communities they govern, these laws were designed to shape social norms around family size. I leverage state-level variations in the adoption of this law and employ a difference-in-differences design to analyze its impact on political candidacy among Muslims, India's largest religious minority and one of its most marginalized groups. I find that the fertility limits significantly reduce the likelihood of Muslims contesting for local elections. Drawing on primary data from phone surveys with over 500 village politicians in Maharashtra, I argue that the decline in Muslim candidacy is largely driven by the social costs of deviating from community norms and the externalities due to the imperfect enforcement of these laws. This paper underscores that states' efforts to shape social norms through electoral laws may come at the cost of

the representation of marginalized groups. My third paper further explores the question of how political institutions shape representation by studying the implications of the voting system used to elect executives, i.e., direct or indirect system. While existing literature extensively addresses the incentives and performance of government heads under different voting systems, little attention has been paid to legislatures. I examine how change in voting systems affect who enters, stays in, or exits the electoral race for the office of legislature, with a particular focus on the impact on historically marginalized groups.

In addition to my dissertation, I work on projects that study contemporary challenges to institutions such as misinformation and climate change. These include co-authored research that implements a randomized controlled trial across 583 villages, targeting over 12,000 students in Bihar (India) to assess whether a sustained, classroom-based media literacy intervention can counter the spread of misinformation. This study is funded by the Social Science Research Council's Mercury Project Award. Another project uses a two-arm vignette experiment to explore how attributes of information—such as social norms and the identity of the transmitter—affect the dissemination of misinformation. I am also working on a new project that examines the impact of climate change-induced extreme polling day temperatures on voter turnout and electoral outcomes in state assembly elections across India.

My research, coursework, and teaching experience have shaped my teaching philosophy, which is grounded in the belief that talent can be nurtured. I believe students from all backgrounds and abilities can be trained to achieve their goals. My training has prepared me to teach classes in political economy, comparative politics, and quantitative research methods as I have served as a teaching assistant at the undergraduate and graduate levels in these fields. I can also offer specialized substantive courses on political economy of development, political inequality and quantitative research methods courses such as research design, econometrics, causal inference, and applied data analysis. Additionally, I have rich experience supervising students as I have mentored three students as part of the department's undergraduate peer mentor program.

I am excited about the opportunity to pursue a career at IE University. My affiliation with the Polarization, Identity and Misinformation Lab at Instituto Carlos III-Juan March has given me a deep appreciation for the vibrant city of Madrid, its rich culture, and its stimulating academic environment. Additionally, the prospect of relocating to Europe from the U.S. excites me, as it brings me closer to both my family in India and the region I study. I am particularly enthusiastic about how my research aligns with the department's strengths in political behavior, media, and environmental politics. I have attached my curriculum vitae, writing samples, and four letters of recommendation from my committee members and faculty collaborators—Rikhil Bhavnani, Laura Schechter, Simon Chauchard, and Yoshiko Herrera.

Please contact me if you require any additional documents, or visit my website to access my additional working papers. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Priyadarshi Amar