Many countries democratised to end hereditary rule, but politics remains one of the most dynastic occupations in democratic societies. We study the economic effects of dynastic politics, using India as a laboratory. We compile detailed biographical data on all Indian legislators since 1947, and present three results using three identification strategies. First, we show that dynastic descendants reduce earnings, asset ownership and public good provision, using a close elections regression discontinuity design. Descendants perform poorly because of adverse selection and moral hazard. Second, we show that the incentive to found a dynasty motivates politicians to perform better. Using constituency boundary changes, we show that dynastic founders have positive effects on development. Moreover, politicians with a son exert more effort while in office, consistent with bequest motives. Third, we show that dynastic politics has an overall negative effect on economic development and results in a “reversal of fortune” development pattern, using an instrumental variables strategy based on the gender composition of past incumbents’ children. We develop a simple overlapping generations model with heritable human and political capital to explain these three stylised facts.
**Taking the Path Less Travelled? Long-run Impacts of Vocational Secondary Education**  
(with Afiqah Suhaemi)  
In many countries, students are assigned to different educational tracks early in life. This paper studies the long-run impacts of vocational secondary education using a natural experiment in Singapore. Students are assigned to tracks in secondary school based on a cutoff score in the nationwide Primary School Leaving Examination. Using a fuzzy regression discontinuity design and social security administrative data, we find that students assigned to the vocational track are more likely to complete secondary school (3pp) and attain a post-secondary (usually vocational) qualification (9pp), but less likely to attain a university degree (3pp). Attending the vocational track has no average effect on later-life employment, earnings or wealth, because positive effects on some students balance negative effects on others. Despite evidence that some students benefit substantially from attending the vocational track, nearly all students given the choice opt for the academic track. These patterns are consistent with a simple theory where individuals have different learning styles and there is social stigma against the vocational track.

**“Texting Criminal Politicians Out of Office: Experimental Evidence from India”**  
(with Sarika Gupta, Manoj Kumar and Yusuf Neggers)  
Adverse selection to political office is now a salient concern in some mature democracies, but it is commonplace in the developing world. In India, 9% of legislators face charges for murder, kidnapping, rape or armed robbery. Using a field experiment around the Uttar Pradesh state assembly elections, we test the theory that criminal politicians get elected because voters lack information to screen candidates and coordinate on good candidates. We partnered with 3 telecom providers and ran a voter information campaign involving over 600,000 voters. Voters in treated villages received a voice call and text message informing them about the criminal charges of all candidates in their constituency. Our campaign caused clean candidates to receive 6pp more votes and the most violent criminal candidates (ie. murderers) to receive 7.7pp fewer votes. Effects were strongest for the coordination treatment arm, in which individuals were informed that many other voters had also received the message. The results suggest that voter frictions such as information asymmetry and coordination failure may cause bad political equilibria to persist.

**“Debiasing Discriminators: Evidence from the Introduction of Neutral Referees in Cricket”**  
(with Nilesh Fernando)  
Evaluators display significant in-group bias in many contexts. This paper shows that evaluators are less biased in the presence of a neutral colleague. We compile data on all international cricket since 1893, and analyse a series of reforms that introduced neutral umpires in international cricket matches. We present four results. First, prior to the reforms, both on-field umpires shared the nationality of the home team and make 9pp more discretionary calls against the foreign team. Requiring one of the two on-field umpires to be from a neutral country eliminates this bias. Second, half of this bias reduction is due to home umpires being less partial toward their team when paired with a neutral umpire. The de-biasing effects of neutral umpires are largest when an experienced neutral umpire is paired with an inexperienced home umpire. Third, we find, consistent with this, that a further reform requiring both on-field umpires to be from a neutral country had no additional bias reduction effect. Fourth, a “career concerns” reform that introduced TV referees and match executives to monitor and assess on-field umpires has no effect on bias. Collectively, these results suggest that social pressure from colleagues can discipline discriminators.

**Work in Progress**

**What Happened to Midnight’s Children? Long-run Impacts of Accepting Refugees from India’s Partition** (with Kathryn Nicholson)  
Refugee policy is a contentious issue in many countries. Yet there remains little empirical evidence on the long-run economic impacts of accepting refugees. We examine this question by analysing refugee resettlement during the Partition of India in 1947, one of the largest population displacements of the twentieth century. Using rich data on migration flows and the location of refugee camps, we document that districts which had a Partition-era refugee camp are more industrialised today: they have more manufacturing firms, a higher share of employment in manufacturing industries, and a lower share of employment in agriculture. An instrumental variables strategy exploiting distance from the border and historical railway lines suggests a causal interpretation.

**Breaking The Curse of Cash: The Effect of Demonetisation on Corruption in India**

**Uber for Farm Equipment: The Effect of Rental Technology on Agricultural Productivity** (w/ Wyatt Brooks & Nilesh Fernando)
Who should hold the purse strings? Empirical evidence on fiscal decentralisation from Indian budgets
(with Kapil Patidar)

Teaching Experience:
2017 Development Economics (undergraduate), Prof Emily Breza
2014 Development Economics (graduate, Harvard Kennedy School), Prof Asim Khwaja, Rohini Pande & Lant Pritchett
2014 Immigration Economics (undergraduate), Prof George Borjas
2013 Political Corruption (undergraduate), Profs James Alt & Daniel Ziblatt

Research Experience and Other Employment:
2015-16 Economist, Office of Chief Economic Adviser (Arvind Subramanian), Ministry of Finance, Govt of India
2014- Co-founder, SeeHow (sports tech/IoT startup that has developed a smart cricket ball, cricket’s first consumer hardware product)
2011-12 Economist, Ministry of Trade & Industry, Govt of Singapore

Professional Activities

Presentations:
2018 Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (World Bank), Trans-Atlantic Doctoral Conference (LBS), Evidence-Based Economics meeting (Munich), American Political Science Association annual meeting, Political Economy lunch (MIT), Northeast Universities Development Conference (Cornell), Harvard University (econ)
2017 Harvard University (econ), Northeast Universities Development Conference (Tufts)
2016 Harvard University (econ), Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting

Research Grants
2018 International Growth Centre grant, The economic effects of political dynasties $11,000
2017 LEAP, Texting bad politicians out of office (with Sarika Gupta, Manoj Kumar, Yusuf Neggers) $9,230
2017 Watson Institute, Texting bad politicians out of office (with Sarika Gupta, Manoj Kumar, Yusuf Neggers) $5,000
2017 Warburg Fund, How do political dynasties affect economic development? (with Dominic Ponattu) $3,000
2017 Economics Department Fall Research Grant, Vocational education in Singapore $700
2016 LEAP, How do political dynasties affect economic development? (with Dominic Ponattu) $4,570
2016 Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative, Time vs State in Insurance (with Lorenzo Casaburi, Bheeshm Chaudhary, Jack Willis) $29,789
2016 Institute of Quantitative Social Science, Lobbyist Networks (with Andrea Passalacqua) $3,000
2016 Warburg Fund, Uber for farm equipment (with Sharan Mamidipudi) $3,800
2015 J-PAL Governance Initiative, Texting bad politicians out of office (with Sarika Gupta, Manoj Kumar, Yusuf Neggers) $48,875
2015 Weiss Fund, *Time vs State in Insurance* (with Lorenzo Casaburi, Bheeshm Chaudhary, Jack Willis) $31,600

**Languages**
English (native), Tamil, Malayalam, German, Stata, R