

Maha Rafi Atal Curriculum Vitae

Department of Management, Society and Communication
Copenhagen Business School
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PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2018 – present: Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Management, Society and Communication, Copenhagen Business School
Member, CBS Sustainability Centre and Centre for Business and Development Studies
Chair, Knowledge and Global Development research cluster, CBDS

2019: Visiting Fellow, Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development, University of Johannesburg

EDUCATION

Ph.D., 2019: Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge
Thesis: “When Companies Rule: Corporate Political Authority in India, Kenya, and South Africa.”
Committee:
Supervisors: Dr. Alastair Fraser (SOAS); Prof. Helen Thompson (Cambridge)
Examiners: Prof. Jason Sharman (Cambridge); Prof. Anna Leander (Graduate Institute, Geneva)

M.A, 2009: Business and Economics Journalism, Columbia University
Thesis topic: Corporate history of General Motors, focused on technological innovation and the role of automotive manufacturing in post-war America

B.A. (Hons.), 2008: History and Comparative Literature, Brown University
Thesis: “Anglo-French Relations and Radical Politics: The Case of GWM Reynolds, 1835-1853”
Member, Phi Beta Kappa Society
2006-2007: Visiting Student (History and English), University of Oxford

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

2018: “The Cultural and Economic Power of Advertisers in the Business Press,” *Journalism* (2018) 19 (8): 1078-1095. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917725162>.

2017: "White Capital: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Failure of Transformation in post-apartheid South Africa" *Extractive Industries and Society* (2017) 4 (4): 735-743.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2017.10.007>

2015: (with Gabrielle Petersen) "A 'place-in-the-world': Foreign Interventions in Africa," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* (2015) 28 (2): 205-209.

2008: "GWM Reynolds in Paris, 1835-1836: A New Discovery," *Notes and Queries* (2008) 55 (4): 448-453.

Book Chapters

2017: "Competing Forms of Media Capture in Developing Democracies," in Anya Schiffrin, ed. *In the Service of Power: Media Capture and the Threat to Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Center for International Media Assistance).

Under Review

"The Nature of (Corporate) Power: Making Room for Ideology in the Study of Private Governance," Under review at *International Organization*, March 2020

Conceptual paper laying out the failures of economics, history and political science in explaining corporate governance work and linking these to the limits of Weberian state theory. Argues that the concept of 'Rule' provides a mechanism for describing the political authority of corporations and other non-state actors that does not depend on state weakness or failure, and is more attuned to the ideological, rather than instrumental, dimensions of private governance. This approach challenges the Weberian understanding of the state holding or requiring a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

"The Janus Faces of Silicon Valley," Revise and Resubmit, *Review of International Political Economy*, January 2020

Examines the power of "platform companies" which are both purveyors of their own products, and as the hosts of "platforms" that circumscribe, and profit from, the activities of other organizations. Argues that in addition to the economic power conferred by this model, the platform companies benefit from being able to straddle regulatory categories by operating as both players in the marketplace and makers of the marketplace, and demonstrates that company officers consciously cultivate and exploit this ambiguity.

Works in Progress

When Companies Rule: Book manuscript considering corporate social responsibility as a governance regime in India, Kenya and South Africa, and situating these cases in the history of corporations as governing authorities from colonial times to the present. Challenges recent accounts of globalization which frame corporate power as a new phenomenon linked to state weakness and "deterritorialisation," by developing a new model of corporate power as "Company Rule."

“A ‘California Effect’ for Human Rights: South Africa and the Bilateral Investment Regime,” To be submitted to Regulation and Governance

Empirical paper examining the fallout of South Africa’s 2015 decision to withdraw from investment treaties and renegotiate its investment relations on terms that require foreign corporations to comply with the country’s stringent racial justice legislation. Argues that the partial success of this policy suggests that emerging markets have greater scope to raise regulatory standards than “race to the bottom” scholarship holds.

Cut Where We Can: The Impact of U.S. Protectionism on Labor Standards in Asia” To be submitted to Review of International Political Economy

Empirical paper considering the labor rights impact of recent US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement and increasing US protectionism towards China. Through firm-level analysis of manufacturers in textiles and electronics, shows that these two distinct policy moves are combining to lower labor standards in Asia while encouraging a shift of production from higher to lower standard areas within the region.

Research Reports

2012: Drugs and Violence in Mexico: Public Policy vs Public Opinion. Hills Program on Governance, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C. March 21.

2010: Governance of Financial Institutions. Hills Program on Governance, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., March 31.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2019-2021: Co-investigator, *Commodifying Compassion*, \$672,000. Collaborative project funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark researches the rise and consequences of commercial products sold to benefit humanitarian causes. As Co-I, responsible for case study research in the United States, United Kingdom and India, as well as contributing to comparative findings incorporating project research in Italy, Denmark, Peru and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Lead on project’s digital and mass media output.

2019: Awarded Research Travel Grant from Otto Mønsted Fonden

2014: Awarded Doctoral Research Grant from Cambridge Political Economy Society

2013: Awarded Atlantic Studentship at Trinity Hall, Cambridge

2009: Awarded Research Travel Grant from Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting

INVITED TALKS

2019: “When Corporations Rule: Platform Power,” Invited address, Sheffield Political Economy Institute Annual Conference, British Academy, London, November 8th

2019: “White Capital: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Limits of Transformation in post-apartheid South Africa,” Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development, Johannesburg, October 7th

2019: “The Nature of (Corporate) Power: Making Room for Ideology in the Study of Corporate Political Authority,” Institute for International Management, Loughborough University, May 16th

2019: “Reporting Human Rights Today,” Centre for Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge, May 1st

2019: “The Do’s and Don’ts of Storytelling,” IT University, Copenhagen, Denmark, April 4th

2019: “The Janus Faces of Silicon Valley,” *Political Economy on Trial* workshop, hosted by *Review of International Political Economy* and *New Political Economy*, Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute, University of Sheffield, March 18th

2018: “Corporate Surveillance and Corporate Social Responsibility,” Technologies in Practice, IT University, Copenhagen, September 19th

2018: “Corporations as Political Authorities: Implications for the Theory of the State,” Department of Philosophy, TU Dortmund, January 12th

2017: “Advertising Practice and the Construction of News,” Department of Sociology, University of Sussex, December 13th

2016: “Corporation of Our Making: Nicholas Onuf and the Politics of CSR,” Bavarian School of Public Policy, University of Munich, December 8th

2016: Invited participant, workshop on the politics of corporations, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, May 7th

2016: “Company Rule: Why Companies Govern in India and South Africa,” Sussex Centre for Conflict and Security Research, University of Sussex, April 13th

2016: “Advertisers as Subjects: How Native Advertising and Ad Targeting Affect Business Coverage,” School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, April 1st

2015: “Fighting HIV/AIDS: How Companies Can Keep Employees and Communities Healthy,” Planet Earth Institute Conference on Science in Africa; London, United Kingdom, July 21st

2011: “Wall Street and the Public Interest,” Parsons The New School for Design, October 7th

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

March 2020: “Identity, Access, and Positionality in Organizational Research: Findings from India, Kenya and South Africa,” Accepted to International Studies Association conference, Honolulu, Hawaii. Conference cancelled due to coronavirus.

March 2020: “A ‘California Effect’ for Human Rights: South Africa and the Bilateral Investment Regime,” Accepted to International Studies Association conference, Honolulu, Hawaii. Conference cancelled due to coronavirus.

October 2019: “Globalizing regulation: Can the trade and investment system hold global corporations to account?,” World Trade Organization Public Forum, Geneva, Switzerland. Organized and convened panel on regulation, featuring Professor Timothy Meyer (Vanderbilt Law School), Michael Addo (Notre Dame University) and Joe Zhang (International Institute for Sustainable Development).

June 2019: “The Nature of (Corporate) Power: Making Room for Ideology in the Study of Corporate Political Authority,” Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics annual conference, New York, USA.

June 2019: “The Janus Faces of Silicon Valley,” Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics annual conference, New York, USA.

April 2019: “The Nature of (Corporate) Power: Making Room for Ideology in the Study of Corporate Political Authority,” Political Studies Association annual conference, Nottingham, UK

December 2018: “The Nature of (Corporate) Power: Making Room for Ideology in the Study of Corporate Political Authority,” Corporate Entanglements conference, Utrecht University

June 2018: “The Nature of (Corporate) Power: Making Room for Ideology in the Study of Corporate Political Authority,” Law in Global Political Economy Conference, Institute for Global Law and Policy, Harvard Law School

June 2017: “Are 'Company Towns' Cities?: The Political Geography of CSR in India, Kenya and South Africa,” Urbanism in the Global South Conference, Centre of Development Studies, University of Cambridge

September 2016: “White Capital: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Failure of Transformation in post-apartheid South Africa”; African Studies Association of the United Kingdom Annual Conference, University of Cambridge

July 2016: “White Capital: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Failure of Transformation in post-apartheid South Africa,” Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute Biennial Conference, University of Sheffield. Organized panel on corporations as governance actors, also featuring Professor Bobby Banerjee (Cass Business School) and Angela Kalyta (McGill University).

June 2016: “The Golden Cage: Labour Control and Social Utopia in an Indian Oil Town.” Society for Socio-Economics Annual Conference. Organized panel on corporations and governance, also featuring Dr. Adnan Naseemullah (Kings College London), Dr. Matthew Amengual (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Dr. Sameeksha Desai (Indiana University).

June 2016: “Company Rule: Corporations as Political Authorities,” European Academy of Management Annual Conference. Paris, France.

April 2016: “Company Rule: Corporations as Political Authorities,” Business History Conference (Annual Meeting); Portland, Oregon

April 2015: “Company Rule: Corporations as Political Authorities,” World Interdisciplinary Network on Institutional Research Symposium on the Nature and Governance of the Corporation; Lugano, Switzerland

April 2014: “The British Raj was a Corporate Bailout,” Marshall McLuhan Symposium on ‘Big Stories, Small Scales’; Trinity Hall College, University of Cambridge

December 2013: “Company Rule: Corporations as Political Authorities”; Judge Business School Annual Conference, University of Cambridge

DEPARTMENTAL AND SEMINAR PAPERS

2020: “‘There’s an App for That’: Mobile Finance, Monopoly Banks and Economic Development in South Africa,” Business and Development Studies seminar, Copenhagen Business School

2020: “The Nature of (Corporate) Power: Making Room for Ideology in the Study of Corporate Political Authority,” VELUX Workshop, Copenhagen Business School

2019: “The Janus Faces of Silicon Valley,” Knowledge and Global Development seminar, Copenhagen Business School

2018: “The Nature of (Corporate) Power: Making Room for Ideology in the Study of Corporate Political Authority,” Business and Development Studies seminar, Copenhagen Business School

2018: “Advertising Practice and the Construction of News,” Wolfson Press Fellowship Lecture Series, Wolfson College, University of Cambridge

2017: “Corporate Social Responsibility and Political Control in Kenya and South Africa,” African Studies Seminar, Cambridge, Research Centre Seminar

2016: “Under the Elephant Trunk: Land, Labor and the Securitization of Welfare in post-colonial Kenya,” Africa Research Forum, Cambridge, Research Group Seminar

2015: “The Golden Cage: Labour Control and Social Utopia in an Indian Oil Town,” Development Studies Department, Cambridge, Departmental Seminar

2015: “The Golden Cage: Labour Control and Social Utopia in an Indian Oil Town,” Department of Politics, Cambridge, Departmental Seminar

2014: “Company Rule: Corporations as Political Authorities,” Department of Politics, Cambridge, Departmental Seminar

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2019-present: Lecturer and Supervisor, Copenhagen Business School

Teach masters’ course on politics of globalization including contributing to syllabus design, lecturing, leading seminars and marking essays and exams

Supervise dissertations in the Business and Development Studies masters program

2018: Affiliated Lecturer, University of Cambridge

Solely responsible for all lectures and supervisions for the political economy module within Politics of Africa course at the Department of Politics and International Studies.

2014-2018: Undergraduate Supervisor, University of Cambridge

Supervised undergraduates on courses in the politics of Africa (2014-2018), comparative politics (2017-2018) and international relations (2017-2018). Duties included leading group discussions to discuss readings and concepts from lectures, and marking student essays. Additionally, coordinated separate program of supervisions

and examinations on African politics for students visiting Cambridge from foreign universities, who are not formally enrolled in the Cambridge degree

2016-2017: Supplementary Lectures, University of Cambridge

Lectured on new institutional economics and fragile states to economics undergraduates (November 2016) and on global economic governance in the post-crisis era to politics and sociology undergraduates (February 2017)

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Cambridge Review of International Affairs: Acting Editor-in-Chief, September 2017 to January 2018; Editor-in-Chief, February 2014–February 2015; Managing Editor, November 2013–January 2014.

CRIA is a student-run, peer-reviewed journal of international affairs. As Editor-in-Chief, oversaw peer review process, provided strategic direction on the planning of special themed issues, and managed copyediting and production of each issue, including liaising with publisher. Responsible for editing online content and blog, producing speaker series, and handling fundraising, publicity and media outreach. After a successful full-term, returned in an acting capacity to shepherd journal through a period of transition.

Peer reviewing: *American Political Science Review* (2020-present), *Review of International Political Economy* (2019-present), *Competition and Change* (2018), European Academy of Management Annual Conference (2016)

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

2019-present: Director, Knowledge and Global Development Cluster, Centre for Business and Development Studies, Copenhagen Business School. Lead nine-member research cluster focused on critical approaches to development studies from varied disciplinary perspectives, including anthropology, economics and political science. Duties include convening a seminar series, fostering research and teaching collaboration among cluster members, and contributing to overall Centre governance.

2019-present: Media Officer, Centre for Business and Development Studies, Department of Management, Society and Communication, Copenhagen Business School. Developed traditional and social media strategy for the Centre, conduct media training for all Centre staff, and liaise with Centre administrators on ongoing implementation.

2016-2017: Senior Editor, *In the Long Run*, Founding editor of departmental blog on politics and international affairs, overseeing a team of six masters students and commissioning articles and video from scholars both within Cambridge and from around the world.

2016-2017: Convenor, Gender in Academia seminar series. A series of workshops on challenges facing women and other minorities launched in conjunction with wider departmental review of gendered discrimination, which aimed to identify - and develop solutions to - problems faced by women and minority students and faculty.

2017: Member, Athena Swan Steering Committee, a departmental committee on gender equality, tasked with drafting an action plan of concrete steps the department will take to earn its Athena Swan Bronze Award, and formulating the Athena Swan application.

2017: Convenor, Graduate Lecture Series, a series of supplementary lectures to core undergraduate courses delivered by doctoral students. Lectures exposes undergraduates to current research, and allow doctoral students to develop lecturing skills.

MEDIA COVERAGE

2015-present: guest on BBC Radio programmes, including Radio 3's *Free Thinking*, Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* and Radio 5 Live's *Breakfast*. Selected clips available at:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b069yb6k> and
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09ovdk3>

2016-2017: recurring panellist on ACAST "Talking Politics" podcast, weekly discussion of US, UK and global politics.

POLICY CONSULTING AND OTHER NON-ACADEMIC WORK

2016-2018: Member, Trade Policy Working Group, RISE Stronger
RISE is a new organization in the United States providing evidence-based advocacy that links experts at the national and international level with political organizing at the grassroots level. The trade policy working group prepares research, memoranda and policy briefs that can be used by local grassroots chapters throughout the United States.

2010-Present: Co-founder and Executive Director, Public Business
Nonprofit investing in public interest reporting about the wider economic, environmental and social implications of business actions, provides research grants to reporters, coordinates public events on topics in business accountability and advances dialogue between journalism, academia and nonprofit organizations.

2005-Present: Journalist
Cover international political economy including economic governance and international development; economic policy and regulation; and natural resources and commodity markets. Published in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Newsweek*, *BusinessWeek*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The New Statesman*, *Mint* (Wall Street Journal Indian affiliate), and the *Columbia Journalism Review*, among others. Detailed journalistic CV available upon request. Key highlights:

2014-2016: [columnist on the private sector and development, SciDev.net](#).

2012: Winner, South Asian Journalists' Association Award for Best Commentary for [essay on political economy of protest](#)

2011: *Forbes* cover story on [Christine Lagarde and the International Monetary Fund](#)

2009-2010: Foreign correspondent, South Asia, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting

2009: *New Statesman* cover story on [antitrust and privacy challenges to Google](#).

SKILLS

Multimedia: Final Cut Pro, Photoshop, Illustrator.

Programming: Intermediate skills in HTML, CSS, PHP; Beginner in Python, JavaScript

LANGUAGES

Fluent in English, French, Hindi, Urdu; Beginner in Spanish and Swahili.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/AFFILIATIONS

Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE); International Studies Association (ISA); Political Studies Association (PSA); South Asian Journalists Association (SAJA); Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YFPF)