

Maha Rafi Atal

Curriculum Vitae

School of Social and Political Sciences
University of Glasgow
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PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

August 2024 – Present: Adam Smith Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Political Economy, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow

November 2024 – Present: Senior Research Associate, Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development, University of Johannesburg

2021 – 2024: Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Global Economy, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow

2018 – 2021: Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Management, Society and Communication, Copenhagen Business School

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: Alastair Fraser (SOAS); Helen Thompson (Cambridge); Jason Sharman (Cambridge); Anna Leander (Graduate Institute, Geneva).

M.A, 2009: Business and Economics Journalism, Columbia University

B.A. (Hons.), 2008: History and Comparative Literature, Brown University
Member, Phi Beta Kappa Society
2006-2007: Visiting Student (History and English), University of Oxford

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

2026: (with Sofie Elbaek Henriksen and Lisa Ann Richey) "Commodifying Commission in the Digital Age: The Promise and Perils of Tech for Good," *Big Data and Society*. 12(3). Doi: 10.1177/20539517261470748

2026: (with Jack Taggart, Seth Schindler, Sarah Logan, Alina Utrata, Erin Lockwood and Daniel Drezner) "Oligarchic Sovereignty: Technology and the Future of Global Order," *Review of International Studies* 52(1): 1-23. Doi: 10.1017/S0260210525101599

2025: (with Pamela Mondliwa) "Afrofuturist Ambiguities: Inclusion and Consolidation in South African Digital Finance," *Big Data and Society*. 12(3). Doi: [10.1177/20539517251351321](https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517251351321)

2024: (with Kathleen Riach, Craig Smith and Robert McMaster) "Adam Smith: His continuing relevance for contemporary management thought," *European Management Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2024.01.005>

2022: "Globalizing Regulation: A New Progressive Agenda for Trade and Investment." *Global Perspectives* 3(1). doi: [10.1525/gp.2022.39794](https://doi.org/10.1525/gp.2022.39794).

2021: (with Lisa Ann Richey) "Commodifying Covid-19: Humanitarian Communication at the Onset of a Global Pandemic," *New Political Science* 43 (4): 421-450. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2021.199753>

2021: "Measuring the Wages of Whiteness: A Project for Political Economists," *Global Perspectives* 2 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1525/gp.2021.22154>

2021: "The Janus Faces of Silicon Valley," *Review of International Political Economy* 28 (2): 336-350. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2020.1830830>

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

2025: (with Jeroen Veldman) “Taming the Cheshire Cat: on the governance of (transnational) corporations,” In: Haskell, John D. (ed.) *Research Handbook on Law and Political Economy [2nd Ed.]*. Series: Research handbooks on globalisation and the law series. Edward Elgar Publishing: Northampton, pp. 534-544.

2024: “Corporate Social Responsibility: Development on Whose Terms?,” in Emil Dauncey, ed. *The Companion to Development Studies. 4th edition* (Routledge).

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).

Research Reports and Working Papers

2026: Energy, Trade, and Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Order: Implications for Scotland's Energy Future, Scottish Council on Global Affairs, Glasgow, UK. July 21st.

2023: The Development Promise of a Green Steel Deal. Roosevelt Institute. Washington, D.C. July 18.

2022 (with Stephanie Trapnell and Dieter Zinnbauer): Merchants of Integrity? Commodity Trading and Corruption Research for a World in Transition. Global Integrity and UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Washington D.C. and London, UK. October 17.

2021: (with Adriano Pedrana and Lisa Ann Richey) The Institutional Context of Humanitarian Helping in Contemporary Italy, Centre for Business and Development Studies, 3 May.

2020: ‘Not Every Time is the Right-Time for Real-Time Marketing’: Branding in the Covid-19 Pandemic, Centre for Business and Development Studies, August 7.

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

2025-2026: Co-investigator, “The Wealth of Nations at 250,” an academic conference and public engagement programme funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh (PI Graeme Roy)

2025-2026: Awarded £5,500 by CIVIS Alliance for “*Green Industrial Development in Southern Africa*,” seed funding for workshop bringing together researchers from UK, Sweden and South Africa with policymakers from regional governments and NGOs. Produced three proposals for larger research/policy development projects.

2025-2026: Awarded £14,973 by the Economic and Social Research Council Impact Acceleration Account for “The World in 1776/2026,” a public engagement programme for the 250th anniversary of the *Wealth of Nations* focused on contemporary legacies of slavery, empire and colonial corporate power.

2025-2026: Awarded £8,845 by the British Academy for “The World in 1776/2026: *The Wealth of Nations* at 250,” a commemorative conference and planned edited volume

2022: Awarded \$13,500 by Global Integrity to consult on its UK FCDO-funded Anti-Corruption Evidence programme. Led research team of three investigating corruption and accountability in the commodities sector.

2021: Awarded \$2500 from World Bank/Government of New Zealand for “Globalizing Regulation: A New Progressive Agenda for Trade and Investment.” This grant formed part of *Rethinking Multilateralism*, a \$50,000 collaborative international project using social science research to develop a new policy agenda for global economic governance.

2019-2023: 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. Led 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

2026: “Arbitration Courts as Hybrid Organizations: Legitimacy, Adaptability, and Transnational Governance,” Université Laval, Quebec City, June 1st

2026: “When Companies Rule: Corporate Power from the East India Company to Silicon Valley,” University of the Witwatersrand, May 14th

2026: “Energy, Trade, and Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Order

Implications for Scotland's Energy Future,” Scottish Council on Global Affairs, February 12th

2025: “Digital Governance, Corporate Power and Labor Rights in European Supply Chains,” Kings College London, May 15th

2025: “Raising the Table Stakes: Sustainability Standards and (the end of) Sustainable Development,” Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development, University of Johannesburg, April 15th

2025: “Company Rule in the Age of Trump,” John Hopkins University, March 10th

2024: “Corporations of Our Making: Private Government and Its Discontents in the 21st Century,” Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute, October 1st

2024: “Rights in the Corporate Kingdom: Procedural and Substantive Democracy in Disney’s Celebration,” Loyola University Chicago, April 12th

2023: “Corporations of Our Making: Private Government and Its Discontents in the 21st Century,” Kings College London, October 18th

2023: “Globalizing Regulation: A New Progressive Agenda for Trade and Investment,” World Bank/George Mason University, April 11th.

2022: “A ‘California Effect’ for Human Rights: South Africa and the Bilateral Investment Regime,” Erasmus University Rotterdam, November 10th.

2022: “Company Rule: How Corporate Ideology Shapes Private Governance,” York University, October 19th

2022: “Exploring the Political Economy Difference,” Baldy Center, SUNY-Buffalo Law School, June 10th

2022: “Digital Economy and Security,” Georgetown University Mortara Center, April 29th.

2019: “When Corporations Rule: Platform Power,” Invited plenary 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 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
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

September 2025: “Public and/or Private: State Capture, Techno-futurism and the Historical Precedents of Platform Power,” American Political Science Association, Vancouver, CA

July 2025: “The Regulation of Transnational Corporations via Responsibility and Accountability: Complements, Substitutes or Contradictions?” (with Kelly Kollman), Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, Montreal, CA

March 2025: “Varieties of Neoliberal Development: The Shifting Role of the Private Sector in American Humanitarian Assistance,” International Studies Association, Chicago, US

August 2024: “Are Corporations Robots? Artificial Personhood and the Politics of the Post-Human,” World Science Fiction Convention, Glasgow UK

June 2024: “Raising the Table Stakes: Sustainability Standards and (the end of) Sustainable Development,” Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, Limerick, Ireland.

March 2024: “Public and/or Private: State Capture, Techno-futurism and the Historical Precedents of Platform Power,” International Studies Association, San Francisco, USA.

March 2024: “Digital Governance, Corporate Power and Labor Rights in Global Supply Chains,” International Studies Association, San Francisco, USA.

March 2023: “Varieties of Neoliberal Development: A Retrospective Case Study of USAID,” International Studies Association, Montreal, Canada.

March 2023: “Globalizing Regulation: A New Progressive Agenda for Trade and Investment,” International Studies Association, Montreal, Canada.

January 2023: “Globalizing Regulation: A New Progressive Agenda for Trade and Investment,” Allied Social Science Associations, New Orleans, USA. (Virtual presentation.)

July 2022: “The Origins of Surveillance Capitalism: Monopoly Power, Labor Control and Digital Surveillance in Global Supply Chains,” Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

April 2022: “The Origins of Surveillance Capitalism: Monopoly Power, Labor Control and Digital Surveillance in Global Supply Chains,” International Studies Association, Nashville, USA.

April 2022: “Legitimizing Solidarity: Corporate Partnerships and the Political Climate for Humanitarianism,” International Studies Association, Nashville, USA

July 2021: “Legitimizing Solidarity: Corporate Partnerships and the Political Climate for Humanitarianism,” European Association of Development Institutes annual conference, virtual due to coronavirus.

July 2021: “Commodifying COVID: consumption as compassion in a global pandemic,” Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics annual conference, virtual due to coronavirus.

April 2021: “Commodifying COVID: consumption as compassion in a global pandemic,” International Studies Association annual conference, virtual due to coronavirus.

July 2020: “Legitimizing Solidarity: Corporate Partnerships and the Political Climate for Humanitarianism,” Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics annual conference, virtual due to coronavirus.

July 2020: “A ‘California Effect’ for Human Rights: South Africa and the Bilateral Investment Regime,” Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics annual conference, virtual due to coronavirus.

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

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2021-present: Lecturer and Supervisor, University of Glasgow

Lecture at the bachelor’s level on political economy and at the master’s level on international political economy and sustainability

Convene and teach “Pop Culture and Politics,” an upper-level undergraduate elective using novels, films, music and television to explore concepts in political and international relations theory

Convene and teach “Corporate Social Responsibility in the Global Economy,” a master’s seminar on the role of business in society

Supervise dissertations in Economic and Social History and Politics and International Relations at the undergraduate and masters level

2019-2021: Lecturer and Supervisor, Copenhagen Business School
Coordinate bachelor's course in international political economy: solely responsible for syllabus design, principally responsible for lecturing, leading seminars and marking essays and exams
Teach masters courses on politics of globalization, applied international political economy, and gender and race in development, including contributing to syllabus design, lecturing, leading seminars and marking essays and exams
Supervise dissertations in the Business and Development Studies masters program

2019-present: Adjunct Instructor, IT University, Denmark
Guest lecturer on the Digital Innovation and Management MSc program. Lecture on digital misinformation and nonfiction writing skills.

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).

2016-2017: Supplementary Lecturer, 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

Convenor, Regulation and Governance Network, Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, 2024-present

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.

Peer reviewing: *Regulation and Governance* (2024-present), *Review of International Political Economy* (2019-present), *American Political Science Review* (2020-2021), *Competition and Change* (2018), European Academy of Management Annual Conference (2016)

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

2024-present: Co-convenor and Impact Lead, Political Economy Futures Forum, College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow

2022-2025: Mobility Coordinator, Politics and International Relations and Economic and Social History, University of Glasgow

2019-2021: Director, Knowledge and Global Development group, Centre for Business and Development Studies, Copenhagen Business School. Led nine-member research group focused on critical approaches to development studies from varied disciplines, including anthropology, economics and political science. Duties include convening a seminar series, fostering research and teaching collaboration, and contributing to overall Centre governance.

2019-2021: 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, conducted 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 to identify 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, a UK-wide gender equality scheme.

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

2022: guest on *Freakonomics* podcast series on the life and work of Adam Smith

2015-present: guest on BBC Radio and TV programmes, including Radio 3's *Free Thinking*, Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* and Radio 5 Live's *Breakfast* and BBC News *Business Today*. Selected clips available at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b069yb6k> and

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b090vdk3>

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

POLICY CONSULTING AND OTHER NON-ACADEMIC WORK

2023: Policy Advisor, US Trade Representative. Provided advice to senior US diplomats on strategy in ongoing trade negotiations with the European Union.

2021: Policy Advisor, Eliza Orlins for DA, candidate for district attorney in New York.

Provide expertise on the intersection of law and economics to the campaign, including drafting policy papers on long-term economic impacts of incarceration and on new enforcement approaches to white-collar and corporate crime.

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

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

LANGUAGES

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

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/AFFILIATIONS

Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE); International Studies Association (ISA); South Asian Journalists Association (SAJA); Association for the Promotion of Political Economy and the Law (APPEAL)