

Muhammad Ammar

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Political Science
Rutgers University
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EDUCATION

- PhD in Political Science (Ongoing; Expected Completion: 2029) Aug 2024 - Present
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ
Major: Comparative Politics; Minors: Research Methodology, International Relations
Advisor: Jan Kubik
- B.A. in Political Science, Drama, and Literary Translation (GPA: 3.96) Aug 2020 - May 2024
Bennington College, Bennington, VT
- Summer Program in International Journalism and Society (Grade: A) Jun 2023 - Jul 2023
The London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

1. **Muhammad Ammar**. 2021. "From Dignity Violation to Self-Immolation." *Peace Review* 33(4): 444-452. [DOI]
2. **Muhammad Ammar**. 2022. "Legitimizing a Military Dictatorship: The Referendums and General Elections of Ayub Khan and Zia ul Haq." *Journal of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences* 1(2): 39-48. [open access]

WORKING PAPERS

1. **Muhammad Ammar**, Katelyn Barnes, Michael Kenwick, and Beth Simmons. "The Securitization of Border Control in U.S. Congressional Discourse"
2. **Muhammad Ammar**. "Reward the Rich, Provoke the Poor: How Populist Communication Shapes Redistribution Preferences in Modi's India"
3. **Muhammad Ammar**, Katelyn Barnes, and Michael Kenwick. "Border Crossings of the World (V 2.0)"
4. **Muhammad Ammar**. "Modi, Khan, and the Stylistic Politics of Mediatized Populism: A Comparative Study"

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

The Borders and Boundaries Project

Aug 2024 - Present

with Michael Kenwick, Katelyn Barnes and Beth Simmons

- **Replication Assistance:** Kenwick, Michael R., Junghyun Lim, Skyler Crane, Scott Wehrwein, and Beth A. Simmons. 2025. "Estimating the Legibility of International Borders." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 122 (6): Article e2417812122. [DOI]
- **Dataset Updates:** Kenwick, Michael, Beth Simmons, and Richard McAlexander. Border Crossings of the World (V 1.1). Harvard Dataverse, 2024. [DOI] | Simmons, Beth A., and Michael R. Kenwick. "Border Orientation in a Globalizing World." *American Journal of Political Science* 66, no. 3 (2022): 853–870. [DOI]
- **Natural Language Processing/Machine Learning Assistance:** Developed a Longformer machine learning classifier gauging border relevance of congressional speeches.

The Anatomy of Right-Wing Populism

Jun 2025 - Aug 2025

with Jan Kubik and Richard Mole

- **Editorial and Administrative Assistance:** Jan Kubik and Richard C. M. Mole, eds. *The Anatomy of Right-Wing Populism: Dealing with Transformational Fatigue in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: UCL Press, 2025. [JSTOR]

Candidate Strategy and Voter Perceptions

Jun 2025 - Oct 2025

with Paru Shah and Diana Da In Lee

- **Computational Assistance:** Creating a new dataset of images of more than 30,000 legislative candidates scraped from DuckDuckGo by developing a Python pipeline and using a convolutional neural network (FairFace) to predict race, gender, and age. Validated this dataset of images by scraping state legislative candidate information from the VoteSmart API.

Leadership Intentionality Index

Aug 2024 - Aug 2025

with Michael Kenwick and Perry World House at University of Pennsylvania

- Writing replicable R code to scrape multilingual speeches from official websites, compiling their text and metadata to create country-specific text datasets, performing computational text analyses, and training other research assistants.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

Summer Institute in Computational Social Science (SICSS-Rutgers)

Summer 2026

with Michael Kenwick, Katherine McCabe, and Andrey Tomashevskiy

BENNINGTON COLLEGE, BENNINGTON, VT

First Year Forum

Fall 2023 & Spring 2024

with Barbara Alfano

Reimagining 21st Century Campus Governance

Spring 2022

with Eileen Scully

PRESENTATIONS

“The Securitization of Border Control in U.S. Congressional Discourse”, Conference Panel Presentation with Katelyn Barnes at the Perry World House Emerging Border Technologies Workshop	May 14, 2026
“The Securitization of Border Control in U.S. Congressional Discourse”, Conference Panel Presentation with Katelyn Barnes at the Consortium for Rights Analysis and Measurement, University of Rhode Island	May 9, 2026
“Supervising Semi-Supervised Topic Models: Topic Selection and Validation in STM”, Guest Workshop in PhD Course on Advanced Topics in Multivariate Statistics at Rutgers University	November 19, 2025
“Reward the Rich, Provoke the Poor: How Populist Communication Shapes Redistribution Preferences in Modi’s India”, Conference Panel Presentation at the 57th Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association	November 8, 2025
“The Global State of Democracy Indices: Is it a good IDEA to use them?”, Invited Talk at The Global State of Democracy 2025 event at Rutgers University	October 21, 2025
“Webscraping in R/Vest for Political Science”, Workshop in Research Methods Spring 2025 Workshop Series at Rutgers University	February 5, 2025

AWARDS & HONORS

Excellence Fellowship, <i>Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences</i>	2024-2029
Rutgers Democracy Lab Summer Research Fellowship, <i>Rutgers University</i>	2026
Bennington College Peter Drucker Scholarship, <i>Bennington College</i>	2020-2024
Bennington Grant, <i>Bennington College</i>	2020-2024
LSE Summer Program Scholarship, <i>Bennington College</i>	2023
The Lucille Lortel Fellowship, <i>The Lucille Lortel Foundation</i>	2022
Newman and Cox Public Action Fellowship, <i>Bennington College</i>	2022
The Presidential Award for Academic Achievement, <i>Government of Pakistan</i>	2021

SKILLS

Languages: Urdu (Native), Punjabi (Native), English (Fluent), Hindi (Fluent), French (Intermediate)

Computing: R, Python, Stata, Java, HPC Clusters, LLMs, Google Suite, Microsoft Office, Wordpress