Kathryn Nicholson

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Education

- **George Washington University** — Washington, DC
  PhD in Economics — 2021 - 2027 (expected)
- **University of Chicago** — Chicago, IL
  Visiting PhD Student — Winter 2025
- **University of Warwick** — Coventry, UK
  Postgraduate Certificate in Economics — 2020
- **Barcelona Graduate School of Economics** — Barcelona, Spain
  Master of Science in Specialized Economic Analysis (International Trade, Finance & Development) — 2014
- **Clemson University** — Clemson, SC
  Bachelor of Science in Economics *Magna Cum Laude* — 2013
- **Universidad Carlos III de Madrid** — Madrid, Spain
  Bachelor of Science in Economics — 2013

Research Fields

- Primary Fields: Urban, Development Secondary Fields: Spatial/Trade, Environmental

Papers

- Urban Informality and Floods in Spatial Equilibrium: Evidence from Mumbai. (Job Market Paper)
  - Flooding has become among the most prevalent and costly natural disasters globally, with 20 percent of the worlds population in flood-prone areas, 90 percent of which are in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). With economic activity concentrated in cities, urban markets represent the primary center requiring climate adaptation as well as a primary source for change. Evaluating climate impacts in rapidly growing LMIC cities requires incorporating vacant land expansion alongside a potentially large informal sector. I focus on Mumbai, a major urban center facing severe inland and coastal flooding that is projected to worsen. I employ a quantitative spatial general equilibrium model featuring individuals, formal and informal firms, and formal and informal housing to quantify how flooding reshapes economic activity in Mumbai.
- What Happened to Midnight's Children? Long-run Impacts of Refugee Resettlement during the 1947 Partition of British India with Siddharth George
  - We study the economic impacts of receiving refugees during the Partition of India. We find that refugee exposure had positive long-run economic effects. Seventy years later, places that received more refugees have more economic activity documented across a wide range of development outcomes. Our findings are not driven by population growth or refugees selecting fast-growing areas, but a change in the composition and location of economic activity.
- Climate Change, Migration and Slum Growth in India 2002-2012.
  - I study a new topic in the literature on the economic response to climate change: the impact of climate change on slum growth. I find that while traditional determinants of slum growth apply in the Indian context, climate-induced factors also apply. Among areas with slums, slums in waterlogged areas are growing faster in size. Additionally, urban-urban migration is more strongly correlated with slum household and area growth than rural-urban migration.

- Navigating the Dry Corridor: Climate Change, Structural Transformation and Migration around the Corredor Seco in Central America with Remi Jedwab, Carlos Rodriguez and Roman Zarate.
    - We study the complementarities and substitutabilities between structural change, domestic migration, and international migration when poorer economies located close to richer economies are dramatically impacted by climate change. To do so, we focus on four Central American countries which have seen rising temperature and aridification changes since the mid-1970s and are close to the United States, making international trade and migration possible factors of adaptation or multipliers of the locally damaging economic impacts of climate change. We use a quantitative spatial model calibrated for multiple sectors and two-skill levels, finding large welfare losses due to climate change.

Professional Experience

- **Development Economics Planet, World Bank Group** — Washington, DC
  Economist, Consultant — May 2026 - Jun 2026
    - Developed analytical guidance note standardizing metrics for job creation and income growth for projects related to the environment sector.
- **Urban Middle East & North Africa, World Bank Group** — Washington, DC
  Economist, Consultant — May 2024 - Jun 2025
    - Executed and led data analysis–including growth and frontier benchmarking of cities–for a flagship report on MENA urban job creation, co-developing the underlying methodology to support country and city-level urban diagnostics.
    - Analyzed quantity and quality of jobs in cities in MENA to advise operations.
- **Agriculture and Food Global Engagement Unit, World Bank Group** — Washington, DC
  Research Analyst, Consultant — Mar 2021 - Aug 2022
    - Served as core team member and Secretariat representative for the G7 Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS), designing and delivering the primary GAFS Dashboard to track multilateral risk metrics.
    - Developed analytical methodology for establishing key drivers of food insecurity and analyzing food security crisis risks across agricultural and multidimensional risk factors; engineered models into internal web tools and platforms in collaboration with multilateral partners.
- **Empirical Studies of Conflict, Princeton University** — Princeton, NJ
  Senior Research Specialist — Apr 2018 - Sep 2018
    - Conducted quantitative analysis directing private sector development to fragile, conflict-affected states.
    - Delivered a policy paper to the UK DFID presenting research findings to minimize economic costs and foster development during and post-conflict.
    - Researched effect of conflict on private business sector in Middle Eastern and South Asian countries.
    - **Principal Investigators:** Dr. Ethan Kapstein, Arizona State University & Visiting Professor Princeton University; Dr. Jacob N. Shapiro, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University
- **South Asia Institute, Harvard University** — Cambridge, MA
  Research Associate — Jan 2017 - Jul 2017
    - Directed technical research on the political and economic impacts of the 1947 Partition, expanding project operations from the US to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to collect oral histories and field data.
    - Coordinated multidisciplinary project goals across political, economic and humanitarian dimensions.
    - Coded custom analysis tools, online surveys, and an interactive GIS crisis-mapping platform to identify refugee camp locations and synthesize spatio-temporal, qualitative, and quantitative data.
    - Engineered machine learning algorithms using NLP and sentiment analysis to analyze historical political speeches. Designed data entry to produce immediate, granular spatial data, valuable across disciplines.
    - **Principal Investigators:** Dr. Karim Lakhani, Dr. Tarun Khanna, Harvard Business School; Dr. Asim Khwaja, Harvard Kennedy School; Dr. Prashant Bharadwaj, University of California San Diego

- **Center for International Development, Harvard Kennedy School** — Cambridge, MA
  Research Assistant — Oct 2014 - Jul 2016
  - Executed data-intensive urban economics research investigating spatial determinants of development in India, integrating administrative data, household surveys, and satellite imagery to examine rural-urban relationships.
  - Managed, cleaned and verified large datasets using Stata, Python, UNIX and GIS tools.
  - Constructed panel of 5,000 Indian towns 1990-2011, combining sources and advanced merge tactics.
  - Assembled industry-level index of regulatory input intensity, presenting analogous, external results.
  - Actively maintained web scraping and .pdf parsing processes to collect new data.
  - **Principal Investigators:** Dr. Paul Novosad, Dartmouth College; Dr. Samuel Asher, Imperial College London

- **University Facilities, Clemson University** — Clemson, SC
  Energy Intern — May 2012 - Aug 2012
  - Performed data upgrade of campus utility metering system to advanced smart metering.
  - Individually designed evaluation procedure to measure and maximize impact of metering upgrade.
  - Launched, coded and designed website portal to showcase energy usage to public.
  - Surveyed and assessed the effectiveness of energy information delivery throughout campus.
  - Evaluated renewable energy projects based on life cycle, rate of return and cost-benefit analysis.

- **Elbing Associates, High Technology Law** — Wayland, MA
  Legal Assistant — Sep 2007 - Aug 2012
  - Consolidated large database of patent and trademark cases with automated client reporting.
  - Aided search reports for inventions over a vast range of technologies across engineering disciplines.
  - Filed patent applications. Became versed in patent and trademark law procedure.

Teaching Experience

- **George Washington University** — Washington, DC
  Graduate Teaching Assistant — Aug 2020 - May 2026
  - Graduate Teaching Assistant for Economics Undergraduate courses (ECON 1011, 1012, 2123).
  - Principles of Economics: Microeconomics ECON 1011 (7 Semesters), Principles of Economics: Macroeconomics ECON 1012 (2 Semesters), Econometrics ECON 2123 (1 Semester)
  - Designed and wrote all assessment: exams, quizzes, worksheets, group assignments. Designed lectures and exercises. Responsible for performing auxiliary teaching, holding discussion sessions, providing feedback, 75-plus students per term.
  - Advised students with empirical projects. Performed all grading. Held supplementary office hours.
  - Last semester teaching rating: 95%. Average rating all time: 91%.
  - Awarded the Philip Amsterdam Graduate Teaching Award for teaching excellence.

Languages

- English (native), Spanish (fluent), Hindi (elementary)

Policy Writing

- Kapstein, E., Shapiro, J. N., Chan, Z., & Nicholson, K. (2018). Private Sector Development in Conflict Affected States. (Policy Paper to UK DFID).
- Nicholson, Kathryn. (2015, September). Regional Country Report on the Obstacles Facing Business and Firm Growth in Africa. Inside Southern Africa: The business magazine for SADC (Southern African Development Community). Windhoek, Namibia: September 2015 Edition (Feature Article).

Presentations, Conferences

- 'Urban Informality in the Wake of Floods: Evidence from Mumbai.' Trade and Spatial Seminar. March 28, 2025. University of Chicago. & Urban Economics Association Summer School. July 23, 2025. Tufts University. & Washington Area Development Economics Symposium. May 1, 2026. Ameriacn University.
- 'Long-run Impacts of Refugee Resettlement during the 1947 Partition of British India.' Washington Area Development Economics Symposium. May 3, 2024. Georgetown University. & Development Tea. January 24, 2025. University of Chicago.
- 'The Return of Corruption in Pakistan - A Case Study of the 2018 General Elections in Pakistan.' Collective Behavior, Social Media and Systemic Risk. August 17-18, 2018. Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs, Princeton University.
- 'Crowdsourcing of Oral Histories and Historical Crisis Mapping,' with Tarun Khanna and Shubhangi Bhadada. May 8-10, 2017. Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.
- 'Crowdsourcing Memories of Partition', with Karim Lakhani. March 1, 2017. Partition Seminar Series, South Asia Institute, Harvard University.
- Focus Group Discussion, Q&A and Seminar. February 1, February 15, and March 1, 2017. Partition Seminar Series, South Asia Institute, Harvard University.

Service

- *President*, Student Association for Graduate Economists, GWU, 2022-2026

Awards, Scholarships

- **Philip Amsterdam Graduate Teaching Award**, George Washington University, 2026
- **Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship**, George Washington University, 2021-2026
- Robert Dunn Summer Fellowship, George Washington University, 2023, 2024
- **Academic Merit Scholarship**, Barcelona Graduate School of Economics, 2013-2014
- **Merit Award (Magna Cum Laude)**, College of Business and Behavioral Science, Clemson University, 2013
- Transatlantic Double Degree International Business, EU-US Atlantis Co-operation Commission, 2009-2013
- **Academic Merit Scholarship**, College of Business and Behavioral Science, Clemson University, 2009-2013

Certifications

- Graduate Teaching Assistant Certification, George Washington University, *Active*
- NIH Office Certification for Protecting Human Subjects Research Participants, *A*ctive
- Humanitarian Needs Assessment Training, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

Selected Technical Skills

- **Programming**: Python, Bash, C++, HTML, CSS, Java, Javascript, SQL, Visual Basic
- **Statistical Software**: Stata, MATLAB, R, SAS
- **Technologies**: AWS, Access, Google API, qGIS, ArcGIS, LaTeX, SVN/Git, Tensorflow

PhD Advisors

- **Remi Jedwab**, Professor, Director of IIEP, George Washington University, jedwab@gwu.edu
- **Paul Carrillo**, Professor, George Washington University, pcarrill@gwu.edu
- **Tanner Regan**, Assistant Professor, George Washington University, tanner _regan@gwu.edu
- **Stephen Smith**, Professor, George Washington University, ssmith@gwu.edu