

Atif Rao

Applied Economist | Public Policy | Climate & Trade | Quantitative & Mixed Methods

✉ atifrao@ksu.edu | ☎ +1-785-789-9016 | 📍 Manhattan, Kansas, USA
🌐 Website | 🔗 LinkedIn | 🎓 Google Scholar | 🐙 GitHub

Professional Profile

Applied economist and **Fulbright Ph.D. candidate in Agricultural Economics** at **Kansas State University**, with more than **10 years of combined academic, research, teaching, and policy experience** across the **United States, Germany, China, and Pakistan**. My research is at the intersection of **economics, public policy, climate risk, international trade, and data analysis**. I use **applied econometrics, large multi-source datasets, and mixed methods** to study how climate and economic shocks affect markets, trade, and policy outcomes. My international experience has strengthened my ability to **collaborate across disciplines** and communicate research to students, researchers, and **policy audiences**.

Research Interests: Applied Economics; Public Policy; Climate and Environmental Economics; International Trade; Trade Policy; Agricultural and Food Policy; Development Economics; Applied Econometrics; Data-Driven Policy Analysis.

Education

Kansas State University

Ph.D. Candidate in Agricultural Economics – Fulbright Scholar

Sep 2026

Manhattan, Kansas, USA

- Dissertation: *Three Essays on Extreme Weather, Agricultural Markets, and International Trade*.
- **Major Professor: Dr. Nelson Villoria.**
- Dissertation defense scheduled for **September 17, 2026**.

Friedrich Schiller University of Jena

M.Sc. Economics

Mar 2015

Jena, Germany

- Thesis: *An Empirical Analysis of the Impact of FDI on Innovation* – distinction in thesis.

Bahauddin Zakariya University

Bachelor in Business Administration and Information Technology

Aug 2010

Multan, Pakistan

Economics and Quantitative Training

Ph.D. Training: Econometrics I & II; Quantitative Methods; International Trade; Production Economics; Demand Analysis; Mathematical Economics; Advanced Macroeconomics; Research Methods in Economics.

M.Sc. Training: Econometrics; Empirical Methods; Advanced Microeconomics; Advanced Macroeconomics; Macroeconomic Modeling; Trade and Development; Economics of Innovation.

Publications and Working Papers

Published Article

Rao, Atif, Muhammad Ali, and Jason M. Smith (2024). "Foreign Direct Investment and Domestic Innovation: Roles of Absorptive Capacity, Quality of Regulations and Property Rights." *PLOS ONE*. [\[Article\]](#)

Working Papers

- **Rao, Atif** and Nelson Villoria. "Weather Extremes, Production Value, and Export Allocations: Evidence from Corn and Soybeans in the U.S. Midwest." *Journal of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association*, **Revise and Resubmit; revision submitted**.
- **Rao, Atif** and Nelson Villoria. "The Impact of Flood Disasters on Rice Trade Flows in Southeast Asia."
- **Rao, Atif** and Nelson Villoria. "Floods, Export Policy, and Rice Trade in South Asia: Heterogeneous Responses across Exporters."

Research and Policy Experience

Kansas State University

Graduate Research Assistant, Agricultural Economics

2022–Present

Manhattan, Kansas, USA

- Conduct independent research on **climate shocks, international trade, agricultural markets, economic adjustment, and public policy**.
- Build and analyze large multi-source datasets integrating **PRISM, CMIP6, EM-DAT, USDA NASS, USDA ERS, FAO, and international trade data**.
- Apply **panel-data methods, two-way fixed effects, PPML, gravity models, statistical analysis, robustness testing, and climate scenario analysis**.
- Use **R, Python, and Stata** for data management, econometric analysis, visualization, reproducible research, and publication-quality outputs.
- Translate empirical results into questions related to climate adaptation, international trade policy, food security, market resilience, and economic policy.

- Supported program evaluation through **stakeholder interviews, primary data collection, research instruments, field documentation, and analytical frameworks.**
- Used **MAXQDA** for qualitative coding, organization, synthesis, and triangulation of interview and field evidence.
- Worked with multidisciplinary teams to translate field evidence into evaluation findings, reports, and policy-relevant recommendations.

- Conducted policy-oriented research on **climate change, agriculture, rural livelihoods, public investment, and sustainable development.**
- Analyzed national and provincial budgets to assess **climate-related public expenditures, resource-allocation gaps, adaptation priorities, and investment needs.**
- Contributed to research on the **China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**, including infrastructure, energy, economic development, and environmental-policy implications.

- Supported economic research through literature reviews, data collection, quantitative analysis, and preparation of tables, figures, research notes, and analytical materials related to investment, innovation, growth, and economic adjustment.

Teaching and Academic Experience

- Taught **Quantitative Methods in Economics, Financial Economics, International Finance, Global Economic Issues, and Economics and Law.**
- Developed lectures, quantitative exercises, case studies, assessments, presentations, and structured course materials for students with diverse academic backgrounds.
- Co-managed an international academic program with **Utah State University**, supporting curriculum coordination, academic administration, course scheduling, and student advising.
- Delivered structured training and academic-development activities for university faculty and administrators in an international setting.

- Taught undergraduate and MBA-level microeconomics, emphasizing demand, costs, pricing, market structure, and economic decision making.

Graduate Teaching and Public Policy Fit

Prepared to contribute to graduate teaching and educational activities in **economic foundations for public policy, policy analysis and evaluation, quantitative methods, applied data analysis, international economics, climate and environmental policy, and applied econometrics.**

My teaching combines economic theory with real datasets, empirical exercises, case-based problems, interpretation of quantitative evidence, and clear communication of findings to policy and decision-making audiences.

Quantitative, Qualitative, and Data Skills

Quantitative Methods	Applied econometrics; panel-data models; two-way fixed effects; gravity models; PPML; statistical analysis; robustness analysis; scenario analysis.
Qualitative Methods	Stakeholder interviews; research instruments; field research; qualitative coding; evidence synthesis; triangulation; program evaluation; MAXQDA.
Programming Data	R; Python; Stata; Excel; Power BI; GitHub; reproducible research workflows. PRISM; CMIP6; EM-DAT; CRU; USDA NASS; USDA ERS; FAO; USITC; UNCTAD; WDI; economic, agricultural, climate, disaster, and trade datasets.
Data Management	Data cleaning; validation; harmonization; merging; quality assurance; visualization; multi-source data integration; publication-ready tables and figures.
Digital Tools Research Communication	Agentic AI and AI-assisted research workflows; Canva for visual communication and presentation design. Academic papers; technical reports; policy briefs; presentations; data visualization; teaching materials; stakeholder communication and multidisciplinary collaboration.

Awards and Honors

- **Fulbright Ph.D. Scholarship**, United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan, 2022–2026.
- **Third Place, AAEA Graduate Case Study Competition**, Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado, 2025.

Selected Conference Presentation

Weather Extremes and Agricultural Exports in the Midwest of the United States: Evidence from Corn and Soybeans
Risk and Profit Conference, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, August 2025.

Leadership and Professional Engagement

Vice President, Fulbright Kansas State Group 2025–Present
Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA

- Coordinate a **team of student volunteers** to plan and deliver academic, professional, and cultural activities for Fulbright scholars from diverse disciplines and countries.
- Collaborate with students and university partners to support **cross-cultural engagement, professional networking, and effective communication** within the international academic community.

Vice President, International Buddies Group 2024–2025
Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA

- Coordinated a **team of student volunteers** and worked with the international student office to organize orientation, social, and cultural programs for international students.
- Supported program planning and delivery while promoting **teamwork, intercultural communication, and collaboration** among students from diverse academic and cultural backgrounds.

President, Pakistan Student Association 2013–2015
Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, Jena, Germany

- Led the student association and coordinated team members in planning **academic, cultural, and student-support activities** for Pakistani and international students.
- Built collaborations with other student organizations and supported incoming international students, strengthening **cross-cultural engagement, organizational coordination, and community building**.

International Experience and Languages

International Experience	United States – doctoral research and applied economics; Germany – graduate education and research; China – five years of university teaching and academic administration; Pakistan – policy research, evaluation, and university teaching.
Languages	English (fluent); Urdu/Hindi (native); German (conversational); Arabic (basic); Mandarin (basic).

References

Dr. Nelson Villoria – Major Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, USA
nvilloria@ksu.edu

Dr. Peri Da Silva – Professor, Department of Economics, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, USA
pdasilva@ksu.edu

Dr. Aftab Qureshi – Senior Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank Group, Washington, DC, USA
aqureshi2@worldbank.org