Title: Political Institutions, Public Goods, and Migration

Speaker: Prof. Veda Narasimhan, NYU-Abu Dhabi

Area: Economics

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Abstract:

Throughout the nineties, many low- to middle income countries were engaged in political and administrative decentralization, but we still have surprisingly little evidence on the effectiveness of those policies. This paper looks at an exogenous shock to decentralization in local political institutions in India in 1992, and the effect that these had in the short-term on public good provision, and in the long-term on economic activity and migration behaviour. I find that villages with direct access to a decentralized village institution have differential economic activity, a greater provision of infrastructure-related public goods, and higher population growth over the long-term. I complement this analysis by introducing a novel aggregate RDD methodology to study district-level migrations flows, and find that this population growth seems to be driven predominantly by rural-rural migration, and could be partially mitigated by higher levels of rural-urban migration.

Speaker Profile:

Veda Narasimhan is an Assistant Professor of Economics in the Social Science Division at NYU Abu Dhabi. Before that, she pursued a PhD in Economics at the University of Zurich. She is an applied micro-economist, working at the intersection between political economy and development economics. Her research looks at how political institutions impact local development and the extent to which rural development programs impact both aggregate growth and urbanization. Her current research projects focus on India, with topics related to migration, trade, urbanization, and local economic development.

Narasimhan holds an MSc in Economics from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Before this, she received a BA in Economics with a Minor in Political Science from McGill University.

Webpage Link: https://nyuad.nyu.edu/en/academics/divisions/social-science/faculty/veda-binod-narasimhan.html