

# Mahesh Somashekhar

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## APPOINTMENTS

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Assistant Professor, *University of Illinois-Chicago Department of Sociology*, 2018-

- Affiliate, *Stone Center for Research on Wealth Inequality and Mobility (University of Chicago)*
- External Affiliate, *Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology (University of Washington)*

Postdoctoral Research Associate, *University of Washington Department of Sociology*, 2016-2018

- Research Fellow, *eScience Institute*
- Affiliate, *Evans School of Public Policy and Governance*
- Affiliate, *Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences*
- Member, *Urban@UW Initiative*

## EDUCATION

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PhD, Sociology, Princeton University, 2016

MA, Sociology, Princeton University, 2010

BS, Engineering Management Systems (Economics Minor), Columbia University, 2005

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Refereed Articles

Somashekhar, Mahesh. "Race, Class, and the Displacement of White Residents from Gentrifying U.S. Neighborhoods." Forthcoming at *Social Problems*.

**Somashekhar, Mahesh**, Chris Hess, Ian Kennedy, and Kyle Crowder. 2024. "How Do Real Estate Actors Advertise in Mixed-Income Neighborhoods? The Importance of Home Security." *Socius*. [<http://doi.org/10.1177/23780231241260253>]

**Somashekhar, Mahesh** and Giacomo Negro. 2024. "Where the Great Cities Go, Do Other Cities Follow? Divergent Trajectories of LGBTQ Organizational Growth Across the United States During the AIDS Crisis." *Journal of Homosexuality* 71(9):2073-2098.

- Project mentioned in Harper's Bazaar

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2023. "The Business Ownership Patterns of Undocumented Immigrants in the United States: An Exploratory Study." *Social Currents* 10(1):60-83.

**Somashekhar, Mahesh**, James Buszkiewicz, Scott W. Allard, and Jennifer Romich. 2022. "How Do Employers Belonging to Marginalized Communities Respond to Minimum Wage Increases? The Case of Immigrant-Owned Businesses in Seattle." *Economic Development Quarterly* 36(2):108-123.

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2021. "Can We Bring Culture into the Large-Scale Study of Gentrification? Assessing the Possibilities Using Geodemographic Marketing Data." *Urban Affairs Review* 57(5): 1312-1342.

- Featured on the Urban Affairs Forum Blog

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2020. "Racial Inequality between Gentrifiers: How the Race of Gentrifiers Affects Retail Development in Gentrifying Neighborhoods." *City & Community* 19(4):811-844.

- Media Coverage by the Chicago Defender and This Week in Sociological Perspective

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2019. "Neither Here nor There? How the New Geography of Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship Disadvantages African Americans." *Social Problems* 66(3):373-391.

- Winner, AAG Business Geography Specialty Group Student Paper Competition, 2015
- Featured on the American Sociological Association's Works-in-Progress Blog

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2019. "Ethnic Economies in the Age of Retail Chains: Comparing the Presence of Chain-Affiliated and Independently Owned Ethnic Restaurants in Ethnic Neighborhoods." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45(13):2407-2429.

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2018. "Has the Suburbanization of Ethnic Economies Created New Opportunities for Income Attainment?" *Social Science Quarterly* 99(1):62-79.

Yeung, King-To and **Mahesh Somashekhar**. 2016. "Sensing Agency and Resistance in Old Prisons: A Pragmatist Analysis of Institutional Control." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 33(3):79-101.

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2014. "A Theoretical and Empirical Foundation for the Study of Non-Urban Ethnic Economies in the U.S." *Michigan Sociological Review* 28:1-34.

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2014. "Diversity through Homophily? The Paradox of How Increasing Similarities between Recruiters and Recruits Can Make an Organization More Diverse." *McGill Sociological Review* 4:1-18.

### Public Engagement

Commenter for "King and Gandhi: Unfinished Business." 2023. Produced by *CAN TV*, January 19. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1D7sWmCh0A>.

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2021. "Can We Bring Culture into the Large-Scale Study of Gentrification? Assessing the Possibilities Using Geodemographic Marketing Data." *Urban Affairs Forum* (<https://urbanaffairsreview.com/2021/09/15/can-we-bring-culture-into-the-large-scale-study-of-gentrification-assessing-the-possibilities-using-geodemographic-marketing-data/>).

**Somashekhar, Mahesh** and Giacomo Negro. 2020. "Commentary: Chicago is Right to Study Whether Gay-Owned Businesses Should Get Contract Set-Asides." *Chicago Tribune*, January 30, p. A16.

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2019. "Why Some Immigrant Entrepreneurs Thrive Where African-American Entrepreneurs Cannot." *Work in Progress: Sociology on the Economy, Work and Inequality* (<http://www.wipsociology.org/2019/08/07/why-some-immigrant-entrepreneurs-thrive-where-african-american-entrepreneurs-cannot/>).

### Policy Briefs

Boris, Elizabeth T., Loren Renz, Mark A. Hager, Rachel Elias, and **Mahesh Somashekhar**. 2008. *What Drives Foundation Expenses and Compensation?* Washington D.C.: Urban Institute.

## **MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW**

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**Somashekhar, Mahesh**, Chris Hess, and Ian Kennedy. "The Business of Christian Nationalism: Examining Retailers' Descriptions on a Christian Conservative Alternative to Amazon.com."

## **WORKING PAPERS**

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**Somashekhar, Mahesh**, Jason Orne, Giacomo Negro, and Fabrizio Perretti. "An Organizational Theory of Cultural Enclaves: The Case of Gay Villages in the United States."

## **GRANTS**

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**Somashekhar, Mahesh** (PI), Eric Wright (Co-PI), and Giacomo Negro (Co-PI). "Understanding Gentrification and Commercial Displacement in Neighborhoods across the U.S." \$425,726. National Science Foundation.

UIC COVID-19 Faculty Research Relief Fund, 2022 (\$15,000)

UIC Committee on Social Science Research Grant Development Fund, 2021 (\$5,000)

University of Washington Office of Postdoctoral Affairs Travel Grant, 2017 (\$600)

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

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Faculty Fellow, UIC Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy, 2023-2024 & 2019-2020

Recipient, R. Stephen Warner Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, 2023

Funded Participant, Russell Sage Foundation Summer Institute on Migration Research Methods, 2020

Funded Participant, University of Cincinnati Conference on Quantitative Approaches to Studying Gentrification in the United States, 2019

Scholarship Recipient, University of Washington Summer Institute in Statistics and Modeling in Infectious Diseases (Module on Spatial Statistics in Epidemiology and Public Health), 2017

AAG Business Geography Specialty Group Student Paper Award, 2015

Funded Participant, Berkeley Summer Workshop in Formal Demography, 2015

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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### *As Professor, University of Illinois-Chicago*

SOC 201: Introductory Sociological Statistics

SOC 300: Introduction to Sociological Research Methods

SOC 500: Sociological Research Methods

SOC 502: Sociological Statistics

SOC 503: Intermediate Sociological Statistics

### *As Instructor, University of Washington*

SOC/STAT/CSSS 221: Statistics for the Social Sciences

SOC 215: Urban Sociology

PB AF 565: GIS and Public Policy

## **MENTORSHIP**

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### *Qualifying Exam Committees*

Race and Ethnicity, 2019-present

Organizations and the Economy, 2019-present

### *Graduate Advising*

Jessie Miller, 2024-present (Dissertation Committee Member)

Ni'Shele Jackson, 2023-present (Dissertation Committee Member)  
Victoria Isaac, 2023-present (Research Assistance)  
Kasi Woods, 2023-2024 (Research Assistance)  
Ian Schuster, Graduate College, 2022-2023 (Research Assistance)

### Undergraduate Advising

Eunice Cho, Urban Planning and Policy, 2023-present (Research Assistance)  
Jessamyn Lopez, Sociology, 2022-2023 (Research Assistance)  
Nimisha Sharma, Urban Planning and Policy, 2020-2022 (Research Assistance)  
Kristi Leach, Sociology, 2021 (Independent Study)

## **INVITED PRESENTATIONS**

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“Race, Class, and the Displacement of White Residents from Gentrifying U.S. Neighborhoods.”  
*Ohio State University (Institute for Population Research)*, Columbus, OH, 2024  
*Northwestern University*, Evanston, IL, 2023

“How Do Landlords Attract Tenants into Mixed-Income Neighborhoods? The Importance of Home Security.”  
*Johns Hopkins University*, Baltimore, MD, 2022

“How Do Employers Belonging to Marginalized Communities Respond to Minimum Wage Increases? The Case of Immigrant-Owned Businesses in Seattle.”  
*University of Illinois-Chicago (Department of Public Administration)*, Chicago, IL, 2022

“An Overview of Gentrification Studies and Perspectives.”  
*University of Chicago*, Chicago, IL, 2021

“Racial Inequality between Gentrifiers: How the Race of Gentrifiers Affects Retail Development in Gentrifying Neighborhoods.”  
*Wichita State University*, Wichita, KS, 2020  
*Northwestern University*, Evanston, IL, 2019  
*University of Chicago*, Chicago, IL, 2018

“Neither Here nor There? How the Changing Geography of Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship Disadvantages African Americans.”  
*University of California-Riverside*, Riverside, CA, 2020  
*Evans School of Public Policy and Governance*, Seattle, WA, 2016

“Rethinking Data Science for the Social Sciences: Urban Sociology.”  
*University of Washington*, Seattle, WA, 2016

“The Expanding Geography of Ethnic Economies and Its Effect on Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Workers.”  
*Georgetown University*, Washington, DC, 2014

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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“Who Comprises the Parallel Economy? Examining Retailers’ Descriptions on an ‘Anti-Woke’ Alternative to Amazon.com.”

*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Montreal, QC, 2024

“The Displacement of White Residents from Gentrifying U.S. Neighborhoods.”

*Population Association of America Annual Meeting*, Columbus, OH, 2024

“Race, Class, and the Displacement of White Residents from Gentrifying U.S. Neighborhoods.”

*Gentrification & Displacement: What Can We Do About It? An International Dialogue*, Boston, MA, 2023

“The Gentrification of White Neighborhoods and the Residential Mobility of White Displaces.”

*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Philadelphia, PA, 2023

“Gentrification, White Neighborhoods, and the Spatial Demography of White Displacement.”

*Chicagoland Demography Workshop*, Chicago, IL, 2023

“How Do Landlords Attract Tenants into Mixed-Income Neighborhoods? The Importance of Home Security.”

*Urban Affairs Association Annual Meeting*, Nashville, TN, 2023

“The Organizational Ecology of an Epidemic: How the AIDS Crisis Affected LGBTQ Organizations Across the United States.”

*Social Science History Association Annual Conference*, Chicago, IL, 2022

“The Effect of the AIDS Crisis on LGBTQ-Serving Organizations in the United States.”

*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Los Angeles, CA, 2022

“How Do Immigrant-Owned Firms Respond to Minimum Wage Increases?”

*Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Annual Research Conference*, Austin, TX, 2021

“Home Security, Privatized Amenities, and the Promotion of Micro-Segregation in Craigslist Rental Advertisements.”

*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Virtual, 2021

“Is Residential Segregation Always Spatial Separation? Home Fortification in Mixed-Income Neighborhoods Across the United States.”

*Population Association of America Annual Meeting*, Virtual, 2021

“Can We Bring Culture into the Large-Scale Study of Gentrification? Assessing the Possibilities Using Geodemographic Marketing Data.”

*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Virtual, 2020

“Can We Measure Gentrifiers in Addition to Measuring Gentrification? The Possibilities Using Geodemographic Marketing Data.”

*Conference on Quantitative Approaches to Studying Gentrification in the United States*, Cincinnati, OH, 2019

“Where Goes the Gayborhood? The Evolution of LGBTQ Organizational Clusters in the U.S.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, New York, NY, 2019

“The Spatial Consolidation of Businesses into Philadelphia’s Gayborhood, 1945 – 2015.”  
*Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting*, Philadelphia, PA, 2019

“The Entrepreneurship Patterns of Undocumented Immigrants in the United States.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Philadelphia, PA, 2018

“If You Build It, They Will Come: Retailers and Racial Gentrification.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Montreal, QC, 2017

“The Diversity of Chain Retailers and the Communities They Enter.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Seattle, WA, 2016

“Second-Generation Immigrant Entrepreneurship: An Intergenerational Success Story?”  
*Population Association of American Annual Meeting*, Washington, DC, 2016

“Reaching Out or Reaching In? On the Location of Suppliers to Firms in Resource Deprived Business Clusters.”  
*Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL, 2015

“New Destinations, Transnational Spaces, and the Importance of Long-Distance Social Ties to the Most Marginalized Ethnic Entrepreneurs.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, CA, 2014

“Spatial Diversity in the Decline of Ethnic Economies during the Great Recession.”  
*Population Association of American Annual Meeting*, Boston, MA, 2014

“Did Ethnic Economies Buffer Immigrant Workers from the Effects of the Great Recession?”  
*Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting*, Baltimore, MD, 2014

“A Theoretical and Empirical Foundation for the Study of Non-Urban Ethnic Economies in the United States.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, New York, NY, 2013

“The Suburbanization of Ethnic Economies across America, 1990-2010.”  
*Population Association of American Annual Meeting*, New Orleans, LA, 2013

“Heterogeneity through Homophily? How Dyadic Similarities Can Make Organizations More Diverse.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Las Vegas, NV, 2011

“The Social Integration of the Civic Generation: Effects of World War II on Freemasonry in Anacostia, Washington DC.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Atlanta, GA, 2010

“The Effects of World War II on Freemasonry in Anacostia, Washington DC.”  
*Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting*, Boston, MA, 2010

“What Drives Foundation Expenses and Compensation?”  
*ARNOVA Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL, 2007

## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY**

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### *Service to the Discipline*

Section Organizer, Community & Urban Sociology Section, American Sociological Association  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Montreal, QC, 2024

Section Council Member, Community and Urban Sociology Section,  
*American Sociological Association*, 2023-2026

Associate Editor, *Sociological Perspectives*, 2020-2023

Member, Jane Addams Best Article Award Committee, Community and Urban Sociology Section,  
*American Sociological Association*, 2021

Co-Organizer, Workshop on “Urban Homelessness and Underserved Communities.”  
*Eighth International Conference on Social Informatics*, Seattle, WA, 2016

### *Service to the University*

Panelist, “Engaging with Theory for Papers and Proposals.”  
*University of Illinois-Chicago (Department of Sociology)*, Chicago, IL, 2023

Rachel Gordon Statistics Award Selection Committee, Department of Sociology  
*University of Illinois-Chicago*, Chicago, IL, 2022-

Advisory Committee Member, Inter-Disciplinary Social Science and Data Science Working Group  
*University of Illinois-Chicago*, Chicago, IL, 2018-

Organizer, Quantitative Research Working Group  
*University of Illinois-Chicago*, Chicago, IL, 2018-

Departmental Advisory Committee, Department of Sociology  
*University of Illinois-Chicago*, Chicago, IL, 2023-2025

Graduate Committee, Department of Sociology  
*University of Illinois-Chicago*, Chicago, IL, 2023-2024 & 2019-2020

Colloquium Committee, Department of Sociology  
*University of Illinois-Chicago*, Chicago, IL, 2021-2023



Search Committee, Department of Sociology  
*University of Illinois-Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2021*

Undergraduate Committee, Department of Sociology  
*University of Illinois-Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2020-2021*

Teaching Aide, “Version Control with Git.”  
*University of Washington Software Carpentry Workshop, Seattle, WA, 2017*

### Meetings

Mentor, “Networking Session for Underrepresented Minority Gentrification Scholars.”  
*Gentrification & Displacement: What Can We Do About It? An International Dialogue, Boston, MA, 2023*

Discussant, Panel Session on “Small Business and Commercial Displacement.”  
*Gentrification & Displacement: What Can We Do About It? An International Dialogue, Boston, MA, 2023*

Panel Presider and Co-Organizer, “Reimagining Urban Sociology through Data Science.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, 2023*

Panel Presider and Co-Organizer, “Queer Placemaking Outside of the Gayborhood.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, 2022*

Co-Chair and Discussant, “Residential Segregation: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives”  
*Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, 2022*

Panel Organizer, “Analyzing the Heterogeneous Effects of Local Labor Market Regulations on Employers and Low-Wage Workers.”  
*Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Annual Research Conference, Austin, TX, 2021*

Presider, Roundtable Sessions on “Organizations in Urban Sociology” and “Entrepreneurship.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY, 2019*

Discussant, Panel Session on “Segregation and Attitudes around the World.”  
*Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 2017*

Presider, Roundtable Session on “Race, Gender, and Class and Critical Analyses across Contexts.”  
*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, 2014*

### Reviewer

Occasional Reviewer, *Academy of Management Entrepreneurship Division, American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, City & Community, Diaspora Studies, Housing Policy Debate, International Migration Review, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, Journal of Urban Affairs, PLOS One, Planning Perspectives, Population Research & Policy Review, Social Forces, Sociological Perspectives, Social Problems, Sociological Spectrum, Sociological Theory, Urban Affairs Review, Urban Studies, Work and Occupations*

Memberships

American Sociological Association (ASA)  
Population Association of America (PAA)  
Urban Affairs Association (UAA)  
Association of American Geographers (AAG)  
Scholars Strategy Network (SSN)