

Mahesh Somashekhar

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APPOINTMENTS

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

PhD, Sociology, Princeton University, 2016

MA, Sociology, Princeton University, 2010

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

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Articles

Somashekhar, Mahesh and Ian Kennedy. “The Business of Christian Nationalism: Examining Retailers’ Descriptions on a Christian Conservative Alternative to Amazon.com.” Forthcoming at *Sociology of Religion*.

Somashekhar, Mahesh. “Race, Class, and the Displacement of White Residents from Gentrifying U.S. Neighborhoods.” Forthcoming at *Social Problems*. [<http://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spae070>]

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>]

- Featured in the Council on Contemporary Families Blog

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 in 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.

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

Kennedy, Ian and **Mahesh Somashekhar**. “Political Partisanship, Religion, and Local Commerce: The Spatial Distribution of Retailers Listed on a Conservative Christian Online Business Directory.”

WORKING PAPERS

Calder, Ryan†, **Mahesh Somashekhar** †, and Ian Kennedy. “What is an Alt-Right Economy, and How Does it Evolve? By Reorienting from Commerce to Finance.”

†Equal first co-authors

Mahesh Somashekhar, Giacomo Negro, Victoria Isaac, and Eunice Cho. “How Do Local Community Organizations Respond to Gentrification? The Reaction of LGBTQ-Serving Organizations to the Gentrification of U.S. Gay Villages.”

Victoria Isaac and **Mahesh Somashekhar**. “Where do Queer-Serving Congregations Take Root? A Demographic Analysis of the Distribution of Queer-Serving Congregations Across U.S. Counties.”

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Somashekhar, Mahesh. 2024. “How the Real Estate Industry May Make Community Tensions Worse in Mixed-Income Neighborhoods.” *Council on Contemporary Families Blog* (<https://thesocietypages.org/ccf/2024/11/05/untitled/>).

Contributor to “ZIP Codes: Delivering More Than You Bargained For.” 2024. Podcast produced by *Don't Drink the Milk – The Curious History of Things*, September 10. [<https://pod.link/1704462801/episode/3381505ce47713451ad1bc683292904f>]

Commenter for “King and Gandhi: Unfinished Business.” 2023. Television program 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/>).

Contributor to “LeBron James and Two Models of Justice & Disparate Effects of Black and White Gentrifiers.” 2021. Podcast produced by *This Week in Sociological Perspective*, February 18. [<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/lebron-james-and-two-models-of-justice-disparate/id1502882677?i=1000509735702>]

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/>).

GRANTS

Somashekhar, Mahesh (PI), Eric Wright (Co-PI), and Giacomo Negro (Co-PI). “Understanding Gentrification and Commercial Displacement in Neighborhoods across the U.S.” National Science Foundation, 2024-2027 (\$425,726)

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

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

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

Qualifying Exam Committees

Race and Ethnicity, 2019-present
Organizations and the Economy, 2019-present

Graduate Advising

Jessie Miller, 2024-present (Dissertation Committee Member)
Victoria Isaac, 2023-present (Research Assistance)
Ni'Shele Jackson, 2023-present (Dissertation Committee Member)
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

“Political Partisanship, Religion, and Local Commerce: The Spatial Distribution of Retailers Listed on a Conservative Christian Online Business Directory.”
University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2025.

“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

“Assessing the Impact of Gentrification on LGBTQ+ Spaces in the United States, 1973-2023.”
Social Science History Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, 2025

“‘Shoot Now, Pay Later’: The MAGA Economy Extends from Commerce into Finance, 2023-2025.”
Social Science History Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, 2025

“Discrepancies in Displacement: How Gentrification Affected Residents, Retailers, and Non-Profits in U.S. Gayborhoods, 1991-2008.”
American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 2025

“Political Partisanship, Religion, and Local Commerce: The Spatial Distribution of Retailers Listed on a Conservative Christian Online Business Directory”
American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 2025

“The Business of Christian Nationalism: Examining Retailers’ Descriptions on a Christian Conservative Alternative to Amazon.com.”
Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 2025

“Where do Queer-Serving Congregations Take Root? A Demographic Analysis of the Distribution of Queer-Serving Congregations Across U.S. Counties.”
Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 2025

“How Do Local Community Organizations Respond to Gentrification? The Reaction of Queer-Serving Organizations to the Gentrification of U.S. Gay Villages.”
European Group for Organizational Studies Annual Colloquium, Athens, Greece, 2025

“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 American 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

“What Drives Foundation Expenses and Compensation?”

ARNOVA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 2007

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Service to the Public

Task Force Member, Small Business Anti-Displacement Network Data Initiative

National Center for Smart Growth, 2025-

Service to the Discipline

Section Co-Organizer, Community & Urban Sociology Section, American Sociological Association

American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 2025

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

Advisory Member, Data Science Major Curriculum Development Committee
University of Illinois-Chicago (College of Arts & Sciences), Chicago, IL, 2024-

Member, College Colloquium Committee
University of Illinois-Chicago (College of Arts & Sciences), Chicago, IL, 2024-2025

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-

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, 2023-2025 & 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*, *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, *City & Community*, *Diaspora Studies*, *Housing Policy Debate*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *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*, *SSM – Population Health*, *Social Forces*, *Social Problems*, *Sociological Inquiry*, *Sociological Perspectives*, *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 for the Sociology of Religion (ASR)
European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS)
Association of American Geographers (AAG)
Scholars Strategy Network (SSN)