

CHANDRA SHEKHAR

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Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Organizational sociology; political sociology; bureaucracy and the state; corruption; political theory; social theory

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of Oklahoma Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability	Aug. 2024–Present
London School of Economics and Political Science Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Social Policy	Oct. 2022–Aug. 2024
Harvard University Affiliate, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs	2023–2024
Yale University Visiting Scholar (host: Susan Rose-Ackerman)	2022

EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Ph.D. Public Policy and Environmental Philosophy Dissertation: <i>State, Street, and Public Goods: A Theory of Misgovernance</i> Doctoral Advisors: Janelle Knox-Hayes, Sally Haslanger, Chappell Lawson, Lawrence E. Susskind	2022
Georgia Institute of Technology M.S. Climate Change and Public Policy	2010
Indian Institute of Science (IISc) M.S. (Engineering)	2007
G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology B.Tech. Mechanical Engineering	2002

BOOK

Shekhar, C. (2026). *The Logic of Corruption: Why It Persists and Why Reforms Fail*. Cambridge University Press (forthcoming 2026).
Based on seven years of fieldwork across three state bureaucracies in India.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Knox-Hayes, J., Agarwal, S., Arango-Quiroga, J., Ashford, N., Birge, D., Carolini, G., **Shekhar, C.**, et al. (2025). The equitable resilience framework: an environmental justice strategy for community-led resilience

planning. *World Development Perspectives*, 40, 100738.

WORKING PAPERS

Shekhar, Chandra. Why Persistent Corruption? Evidence from a State Police Bureaucracy in India. Under review.

Abstract: I examine how grand corruption among senior officials causes petty corruption among street-level officials in an Indian state police bureaucracy. Using a randomized response survey of 154 serving police officials, in-depth semi-structured interviews of an additional 58 police officials, and an ethnography of street vendors at an informal marketplace, I find evidence that grand corruption causes petty corruption and that the two forms of corruption are organized around the market for public office. This causal relationship helps us understand long-standing questions about the existence and persistence of corruption in government bureaucracies and why anti-corruption reforms are difficult to implement.

Shekhar, Chandra and Janelle Knox-Hayes. Identifying the demands of justice for Indigenous groups facing environmental risks: The case of climate change-induced forced migration of a Native American community in Louisiana. Manuscript in preparation.

Abstract: What are the demands of justice when Indigenous communities suffer serious environmental harms? We analyze environmental injustices in the climate change-induced forced migration of a Native American community of southeastern Louisiana in the United States. The article uses archival analysis, the lived experiences of the community members including its Chief, and in-depth interviews of government stakeholders involved in the planning process led by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to safely relocate the Native members. The paper contends that rather than merely focusing on the fair distribution of environmental risks and benefits, the pursuit of justice should also be process-sensitive, meaningfully involve the risk-facing community, and respect its values, cultures, histories, traditions, knowledge systems, and sovereignty concerns. We argue that as the world confronts the reality of anthropogenic climate change, we must move beyond distributional equity only to focus also on recognition claims of Indigenous peoples in order to design more equitable resilience policies.

SELECTED GRANTS AND HONORS

- Presidential International Travel Fellowship, University of Oklahoma, 2026
- Member of the MIT team (with Clean Energy State Alliance, University of Michigan, Energy Trust of Oregon, Partnership for Southern Equity, Vote Solar, and University of Chicago) awarded U.S. Department of Energy funding for “Effective Knowledge Dissemination for LMI Solar: The Roles of CBOs and State Governments,” 2021–2024
- MIT Center for International Studies Fellowship, 2022
- MIT Martin Sustainability Fellowship, 2021–2022
- MIT Schwarzman College of Computing, Social and Ethical Responsibilities of Computing Scholar, 2021–2022
- American Planning Association Foundation Scholarship, 2020–2021
- MIT-wide Graduate Student Council Teaching Award, 2020
- MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning funding for field interviews in Isle de Jean Charles community relocation planning, 2020
- MIT-India Fellowship for fieldwork in India, 2017–2020
- Nadine Rodwin Fellowship for fieldwork in India, 2017

- MIT Presidential Fellowship

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Oklahoma

- Principles of Sustainability

London School of Economics and Political Science

- Understanding Social (Dis)advantages
- Global Social Policy and International Organizations
- Understanding Social Policy Research
- Research Methods in Social Policy

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Teaching Assistant)

- Microeconomics
- Planning Economics
- Quantitative Reasoning and Statistical Methods
- Making Public Policy
- Theory and Practice of Environmental Planning
- Science, Technology and Public Policy

INVITED TALKS

Scheduled, Harvard University	Fall 2026
Scheduled, Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Fall 2026
University of Oklahoma Philosophy Department	Jan. 2025
University of Rhode Island Philosophy Department	Feb. 2024
Ahmedabad University	Apr. 2023
London School of Economics and Political Science	Nov. 2022
Syracuse University	Aug. 2022
Harvard University	Mar. 2022
Northern Arizona University	Apr. 2022
Indian Institute of Management	Mar. 2021
Indian Institute of Management	Oct. 2020

REFERENCES

Professor Janelle Knox-Hayes

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, MA 02139, USA
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Professor Sally Haslanger

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Professor Lawrence E. Susskind

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