

# Tanu Kumar

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Research Areas	Development, South Asia, citizen behavior, bureaucracy, governance	
Appointments	<b>World Bank</b> Governance Specialist, Public Institutions and Data Analytics Unit	2025-
	<b>Claremont Graduate University</b> Assistant Professor, Division of Politics and Economics	2022-2025
	<b>William &amp; Mary</b> Postdoctoral Researcher, Global Research Institute	2020-2022
Affiliations	Center for Effective Global Action Affiliate, University of California, Berkeley	2022-
	Governance and Local Development Fellow, University of Gothenburg	2023
	Government Department Faculty Affiliate, William & Mary	2020-2022
Education	Ph.D., Political Science, University of California, Berkeley	2020
	M.A., Political Science, University of California, Berkeley	2014
	B.A., Government and Economics, Bowdoin College	2012
Book	<b>Kumar, T.</b> , <i>Building social mobility: how subsidized homeownership creates wealth, dignity, and voice in India</i> . In press, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics).	
Articles	A. Auerbach and <b>Kumar, T.</b> "Politics in the urban periphery: Citizen-led expansion and informality at the edges of India's cities" <i>Journal of Development Studies</i> , 2025.	
	I. Ratan, A. Post, <b>Kumar, T.</b> , and M. Sheth. "When do local governments improve transparency? Bureaucratic champions for open transit data in California" <i>Urban Affairs Review</i> , 2025.	
	–Paul Sabatier Award for the best paper on science, technology, and environmental politics, APSA 2022	
	<b>Kumar, T.</b> "How the content of digital complaints shapes bureaucratic responsiveness in Mumbai." <i>Governance</i> , 2024.	
	–Coverage: India Housing Report	
	<b>Kumar, T.</b> "Home-price subsidies increase local-level political participation in urban India." <i>Journal of Politics</i> , 2022.	
	–Coverage: <i>The Washington Post</i> , and <i>Phenomenal World</i> by the Jain Family Institute	
	<b>Kumar, T.</b> and Stenberg, M. "Why political scientists should study smaller cities." <i>Urban Affairs Review</i> , 2022.	

**Kumar, T.** Post, A., Ray, I., Otsuka, M., and Pardo-Bosch, F. “From public service access to service quality: The distributive politics of piped water in Bangalore.” *World Development*, 2022.

**Kumar, T.** “The housing quality, income, and human capital effects of subsidized homes in urban India.” *Journal of Development Economics*, 2021.

–Coverage: *Ideas for India* (English and Hindi), *ThePrint*, *The Hindustan Times*, *India Housing Report*, *The Times of India*, and *VoxDev*

**Kumar, T.**, Post, A., and Ray, I. “Flows, leaks, and blockages in informational interventions: A field experimental study of Bangalore’s water sector.” *World Development*, 2018.

–Coverage: USAID Impact blog

#### Working Papers

“Democratizing bureaucracy: How can citizens demand accountability from unelected officials?” w/ G. Kruks-Wisner. *Revise and resubmit*.

–Best paper award in class & inequality, APSA 2025

“Institutional capacity for development: an analytical framework” w/ G. Kim, R. Ramalho, and S. Russell. Development policy review for *World Development*.

“(Un)Willing Partners? Citizen-bureaucrat collaboration in capacity-constrained settings” w/ G. Kruks-Wisner and D. Saunik.

#### Invited Contributions

**Kumar, T.** “Agency and autonomy at the margins of the modern Indian state.” *Perspectives on Politics* (review essay). 2025.

Hyun, C., **Kumar, T.**, Post, A. and Ray, I. “Engineering predictable water supply: The humans behind the tech.” in *An Introduction to Development Engineering*, eds. Madon, T., and Gadgil, A. Springer, 2022.

Haas, N., Haenschen K., **Kumar, T.**, Panagopoulos, C., Peyton, K., Ravanilla, N., and Sierra-Arévalo, M. “Organizational identity and positionality in randomized control trials: considerations and advice for collaborative research teams.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 2022.

**Kumar, T.** Review of *Governing Locally: Institutions, Policies, and Implementation in Indian Cities* by B. Jacob and S. Jacob (2021, Cambridge University Press). *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2022.

**Kumar, T.** “Subsidizing homeownership builds wealth, changes attitudes, and generates urban civic participation.” in *Newsletter of the Organized Section in Comparative Politics of the American Political Science Association* eds. Finkel, E., A. Lawrence and A. Mertha, 2020.

**Kumar, T.** Review of *Contesting the Indian City: Global Visions and the Politics of the Local*, ed. G. Shatkin (2014, Wiley-Blackwell). *Governance*, 2016.

#### Policy Writing

“Effective governance and state capacity are key to economic development” w/ C. Bronchi and R. Ramalho, 2025.

“Mind the gap: Citizen-led efforts to build bureaucratic responsiveness in rural India” w/ G. Kruks-Wisner and J. Mayberry. Governance and Local Development Policy Brief, 2024.

“Better than cash? Smartphones for realized financial inclusion” w/ P. Roessler and K. Cole. BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, 2022.

“Political scientists should study smaller cities.” w/ M. Stenberg. *Urban Affairs Forum*, 2022.

“Smartphone ownership and women’s financial inclusion: Preliminary results from a randomized controlled trial in Malawi” w/ P. Roessler, P. Carroll, B. Dulani, and D. Nielson. BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, 2022.

“Household-level effects of subsidized housing: Evidence from urban India.” *VoxDev*, 2022.

“Benchmarking ‘smart city’ adoption in California: Developing and piloting a data collection approach.” w/ K. Trapenberg Frick, G. Mendonça Abreu, and A. Post. University of California. 2021.

“Housing is a welfare weapon. It can help people escape poverty.” *The Hindustan Times*, 2021. Syndicated in *India Housing Report*.

“How does subsidizing housing shape political behavior?” *Ideas of India* (podcast), 2020.

“Mumbai residents win govt housing lottery and spend more on kids’ education, jobs: Study.” *ThePrint*, 2019.

“Household-level effects of affordable housing: Evidence from Mumbai.” *Ideas for India*, 2019. Also translated to Hindi.

“Here’s what Gavin Newsom, Elizabeth Warren, and Microsoft should know if they want to end the affordable housing crisis.” *The Washington Post Monkey Cage*, 2019.

## Honors

Best Paper – APSA Class and Inequality Section, 2025  
 Paul Sabatier Award – APSA Science, Technology & Environmental Politics Section, 2023  
 Susan Clarke Young Scholar – APSA Urban & Local Politics Section, 2021  
 Best Dissertation (Honorable Mention) – APSA Urban & Local Politics Section, 2021  
 DeAlva Stanwood Alexander First Prize – Bowdoin College, 2012

## Research Grants

### External

Georgetown University TPP (w/ B.Purohit and G. Kruks-Wisner), 2025	\$206,265
IPA (w/ S. Bhattacharya, P. Carroll, B. Dulani, P. Roessler, D. Nielson), 2024	\$78,408
BRAC (w/ S. Bhattacharya, P. Carroll, B. Dulani, P. Roessler, D. Nielson), 2023	\$228,012
Edward Artinian Fund for Publishing, APSA, 2022	\$2,400
Open Philanthropy, Good Ventures Fund (w/ P. Roessler), 2022	\$100,000
BRAC (w/ P. Carroll, B. Dulani, P. Roessler, D. Nielson), 2021	\$46,337
GLD, University of Gothenburg (w/ A. Auerbach), 2021	29,619 kr
Alma Ostrom and Leah Hopkins Awan Civic Education Fund, APSA, 2019	\$2,300
Weiss Family Fund for Development Economics, Harvard University, 2017	\$21,577

Weiss Family Fund for Development Economics, Harvard University, 2016	\$6,900
Governance Initiative, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, MIT, 2016	\$8,700

### **Internal**

Lincoln Family Foundation, Claremont Graduate University, 2023	\$5,000
Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2017	\$15,000
Letters and Sciences Summer Award, University of California, Berkeley, 2014	\$5,000

### **Selected Presentations**

#### **Invited Talks**

Bowdoin College, Department of Government, 2025  
University of San Francisco, Politics Lab, 2025  
PIPE Collaborative, University of Southern California, 2025 (cancelled)  
Global Governance Practice, The World Bank, 2024  
McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University, 2024  
The India Center, University of Central Florida, 2024  
Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame, 2023  
Brown-Harvard-MIT Joint Seminar in South Asian Politics, Harvard University, 2022  
Thinking Globally, Foreign Service Institute, 2022  
Urban Workshop Series, Centre for Policy Research India, 2022  
Global Politics Series, University of Virginia, 2022  
Complex Governance Seminar, American University, 2022  
The Politics Forum, The College of New Jersey, 2021  
Inequality and Policy Research Center, Claremont Graduate University, 2020  
Comparative Politics and Political Economy Seminar, UC Santa Barbara, 2020

#### **Workshops**

Comparative Urban and Distributive Politics, University of Pennsylvania, 2025 (cancelled)  
Public Institutions for Development (discussant), World Bank, 2025  
Digital Democracy Symposium (discussant), University of Virginia, 2024  
Center for Effective Global Action Research Retreat, UC Berkeley, 2024  
Historical Political Economy (discussant), University of Southern California, 2024  
What Works, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, 2024  
SoCal Public Institutions and Political Economy, 2024  
CASI India Political Economy Workshop, University of Pennsylvania, 2023  
SoCal Political Economy Workshop (discussant), CalTech, 2023  
Program on Governance and Local Development, University of Gothenburg, 2023  
Housing Politics and Policy Conference, Princeton University, 2022  
Workshop on the Political Economy of South Asia (discussant), 2022  
Visions in Methodology, Claremont Graduate University, 2021  
Southern Workshop in Empirical Political Science, Emory University, 2021  
Economics of Cities and Development, Johns Hopkins University, 2020  
Pacific Conference for Development Economics, UC Berkeley, 2020

### **Teaching**

#### **Claremont Graduate University**

Comparative Public Policy, Fall 2023, Spring 2025  
International Development: Institutions, Households, & Policy, Spring 2023, 2024, 2025  
Political Behavior in Developing Democracies, Spring 2022, 2023, Fall 2024  
Nature of Inquiry (Introduction to Data and Research Design), Fall 2022, 2023, 2024

#### **William & Mary**

Political Behavior in Developing Democracies, Fall 2021

Dissertation committees

**Claremont Graduate University**

Lama Shaiekh, Mona Shadia, Rooppreet Sohal, Ibrahim Alsuhaibani, Jennifer Verdier, Nazif Sali, Lale Pakradounian, Ani Apyan, Chisanga Chanda, Annie Chu, Sally Albar, Amir Rashed

Consulting

World Bank, Public Institutions Unit (Institutions Global Practice), 2024-2025

Service

**Claremont Graduate University**

Information Technology Committee, 2024

Co-founder of the Political Behavior Lab, Claremont Graduate University 2022-

**Discipline-wide**

Peer Review: *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Political Science Review*, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development Grants, CEGA Grant Competitions, *Journal of Development Economics*, *Housing & Society*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Journal of Urban Economics*, *Local Government Studies*, Oxford University Press, *PLOS ONE*, *PS: Political Science*, Routledge Books, *Urban Affairs Review*, *World Politics*, *Social Policy & Administration*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*

Nominations Committee, APSA Urban & Local Politics Section, 2024

Co-organizer for Virtual Workshop on Urban Politics in the Global South, 2022, 2023, 2024

Excellence in Mentoring Award Committee, APSA Public Policy Section, 2022