

# ANKIT BHATIA

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Program Director: David Steinberg  
Graduate Administrator: John Youngs

[dsteinberg@jhu.edu](mailto:dsteinberg@jhu.edu)  
[jyoungsl@jhu.edu](mailto:jyoungsl@jhu.edu)

## Contact Information

Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)  
Johns Hopkins University  
555 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20001  
Email: [abhati17@jhu.edu](mailto:abhati17@jhu.edu)  
Mobile: 1-202-390-3558  
Personal Webpage: <https://ankytbhatya.github.io/>  
Academic Profile: [Google Scholar](#)

## Education

PhD. in International Development & Economics, Johns Hopkins University, 2020-25 (expected)  
*Field Exams: International Development, International Economics, South Asia*  
*Dissertation Title: Essays on Infrastructure, Urbanization, and Economic Development*

Integrated M.S. & B.S. (Honors) in Economics, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT), 2009-14  
*Thesis Title: Modelling the Effects of Patent Litigation on Firm's Innovation*  
*Awards: Director's Medal for Best Master's Thesis; Best Policy Paper (Planning Commission, Government of India)*

## References

Devesh Kapur  
School of Advanced International Studies  
Johns Hopkins University  
[dkapurl@jhu.edu](mailto:dkapurl@jhu.edu)  
+1 (202) 663-5633

Filipe Campante  
School of Advanced International Studies  
Johns Hopkins University  
[fcampan2@jhu.edu](mailto:fcampan2@jhu.edu)  
+1 (202) 663-5687

Shoumitro Chatterjee  
School of Advanced International Studies  
Johns Hopkins University  
[shoumitroc@jhu.edu](mailto:shoumitroc@jhu.edu)  
+1 (202) 663-5628

Adam Auerbach  
School of Advanced International Studies  
Johns Hopkins University  
[aauerbach@jhu.edu](mailto:aauerbach@jhu.edu)  
+1 (202) 663-5600

Eeshani Kandpal  
Senior Fellow, Centre for Global Development  
[ekandpal@cgdev.org](mailto:ekandpal@cgdev.org)

Arvind Subramanian  
Former Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India  
[asubramanian@piie.com](mailto:asubramanian@piie.com)

## Research Interests

Development Economics, Economic Geography, Infrastructure Governance  
Methods: Spatial Micro-econometrics, Impact Evaluation, Machine Learning/ NLP

## Employment & Research Positions

- Research Assistant, Pravin Krishna and Ryan Kim, Johns Hopkins University, 2023-24
- Research Assistant, Devesh Kapur and Arvind Subramanian, Johns Hopkins University, 2021-23
- Consultant, Political Economy Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New Delhi, 2019
- Research Associate, Centre for Policy Research (CPR), New Delhi, India, 2015-19
- Consultant, Brookings Institution, Global Metropolitan Program, New Delhi, 2015
- Consultant, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), New Delhi, 2014
- Research Intern, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, Summer 2013
- Policy Intern, Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog), Government of India, Summer 2012

## Publications

### Policy Papers

- “Tracking Reforms In Land Leasing And Change In Land Use: Evidence from Gujarat and Karnataka”, **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace**, August 2021
- “The Legal Regime And Political Economy Of Land Rights in Scheduled Areas of India”, (with Namita Wahi), **Centre for Policy Research**, March 2018
- “Land Acquisition in India: A review of Supreme Court cases from 1950 to 2016”, (with Namita Wahi and Pallav Shukla) **Centre for Policy Research**, March 2017
- “Building smart cities in India: Allahabad, Ajmer, and Visakhapatnam” (with Shamika Ravi, Adie Tomar, and Joseph Kane) **Brookings Institution**, August 2016

### Popular Commentary/ Digital Projects

- “Mapping 1000 Land Laws” (<https://landlawsofindia.org/>), **Centre for Policy Research**, August 2022
- “Policy Winds, Land Rights, and Wrongs” **LongShorts, Transfin**, Audio Podcast, July 2019
- “Municipal Bond Market Could Be The Answer To Smart Cities” (with Shamika Ravi), **The Wire**, 2016
- “For Smart Cities To Succeed, Local Governance Is A Must” (with Shamika Ravi), **The Wire**, 2016
- “A Governance-First Approach To India’s Smart Cities” (with Adie Tomar), **Brookings Institution**, 2015

### Working Papers

- “Protected Land Rights, Misallocation, and Dead Capital: Evidence from India” (Job Market Paper)  
Using a geographic Regression Discontinuity Design, this study examines the long-term impact of protected land rights on the structural transformation of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs). By analyzing a law that restricts land transfers between targeted and out-groups within IPAs, I explore how land restrictions undermine agglomeration and perpetuate poverty. Geocoding IPA boundaries from colonial archives and combining them with high-resolution raster data on built-up areas, I argue that legal discontinuities in property rights contributed to lower land conversion, effectively misallocating land to low-productivity uses. Furthermore, restrictions on land leasing and mortgaging led to land asset undervaluation, adversely impacting the welfare of targeted communities.
- “Bridges, Market Access, and City Growth”  
Using a two-way fixed-effects model on market access, this study explores how bridge connectivity influences city growth and the spatial distribution of firms across 8,000 city clusters in India. By constructing a counterfactual market access measure that removes bridge connections from the transportation network (following Donaldson and Hornbeck, 2016), I isolate the marginal impact of bridges. Preliminary analysis with a newly geocoded dataset of 1,172 large bridges reveals that bridge connectivity contributed to approximately 12% of built-up area growth in the post-liberalization period. Additionally, there is evidence of spatial sorting of manufacturing firms away from bridge sites, aligning with urban agglomeration models. The effects are most pronounced in cities with active urban land development authorities, indicating their crucial coordination and market clearing role.
- “NIMBYism, Eminent Domain, and Infrastructure Growth” (with Devesh Kapur)  
Using natural language processing (NLP) on text-based e-Gazettes, this study creates a unique dataset on land acquisitions by sector, location, and time to examine inefficiencies in infrastructure development. By integrating this dataset with project-level data on cost and time overruns, the analysis reveals why some sectors perform more efficiently than others in developing critical infrastructure. This study provides key empirical insights into infrastructure governance and challenges existing theories.

### Work in Progress

- Development at Crossroads: Impact of Road Development in Afghanistan (with Ritwiz Sarma)  
Using a staggered Difference-in-Differences (DID), this study examines the impact of road development on insurgent violence during the reconstruction period (2001–2010).
- Comparative political economy of infrastructure land development in China and India (with Liu Chen)

## Distinctions and Fellowships

- Oskar Morgenstern Fellowship in Quantitative Political Economy, Mercatus Centre, 2024-25
- Dissertation Grant, Institute of Humane Studies, George Mason University, 2024
- Residency Fellowship, Institute of Humane Studies, George Mason University, 2024
- ICPSR Summer School Fellowship in Quantitative Methods, University of Michigan, 2022
- Summer Research Grant, Johns Hopkins SAIS, 2020-24
- PhD Graduate Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University, 2020-24
- Anubhav Fellowship, Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago, New Delhi, 2019
- Pre-Doctoral Research Fellowship, University of Bergen, Norway, 2017
- Outstanding Research Project, Oxford Consulting Group & Indian Norwegian Research Council, 2016

## Teaching Assistant (Master's level)

- International Trade (Fall'24), Pravin Krishna
- Quantitative Methods II (Spring'24; Fall'23; Spring'23), Shoumitro Chatterjee
- Economic Development (Fall'24; Fall'23; Fall'22), Shoumitro Chatterjee
- Applied Econometrics (Spring'22), Ritam Chaurey

## Conferences & Workshops

- 2024: Econometrics Society, Winter School; Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (ACEGD), ISI Delhi; India Management Research Conference (IMRC), IIM Ahmedabad; DMV PhD Research Conference, Johns Hopkins University; Annual South Asia Conference, Ireland India Institute, Dublin City University
- 2023: 7<sup>th</sup> India Land Development Conference, New Delhi
- 2020, 4<sup>th</sup> CPR-Land Rights Initiative's Annual Conference, New Delhi
- 2019: National Seminar on Displacement of Scheduled Tribes in India, New Delhi; National Consultation on Documenting Land Conflicts in India, Raipur; Samvaad Conclave, Tata Steel, Jamshedpur
- 2017: World Bank Brown Bag Lunch Series, India; Bergen Exchanges on Law and Social Transformation, University of Bergen, Norway
- 2016: National Smart Cities Conference, New Delhi; Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India; National Workshop on Land Records Digitization, School of Democracy, Jaipur

## Activities

- Co-founder, Moolya Foundation, a non-profit skill training digital platform, 2020-Ongoing
- Co-organizer, Annual Conference, CPR Land Rights Initiative, 2016-2019
- Governing Council, Entrepreneurship Cell, IIT Kharagpur, 2012-14

## Skills & Certifications

- Programming: R, STATA, Python, Arc-GIS, SQL, C++, LaTeX
- Certifications: Data Mining & Big Data Analytics; NLP PyTorch; Advanced R-GIS
- Languages: English (fluent), Hindi (native), Punjabi (basic)

## Personal

- Date of Birth: July 26, 1991
- Citizenship: India, F-1 Visa