

Ratna Okhai
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EDUCATION

PHD IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS, School of Public Administration, University Central Florida, Orlando, Florida **May 2023**

FIELD: Public Policy and Governance

DISSERTATION: *Interorganizational Networks and Coordination in Emergency Management: Policy and Practice in Response to Disasters*. A study using mixed-methods and triangulation of survey, content analysis, social media and focus group data to understand how policy/plan and implementation of interorganizational networks depict effectiveness during disaster response, and impact continuing public policy decisions regarding emergency management planning.

Committee: Naim Kapucu (Chair), Yue “Gurt” Ge, Claire Knox, Luis Santiago, and Christopher Zobel

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA), School of Public Affairs, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida **December 2015**

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE, NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT, School of Public Affairs, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida **August 2014**

BA IN POLITICAL SCIENCE, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University Central Florida, Orlando, Florida **August 2013**

PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC POSITIONS

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, School of Public Affairs, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida **August 2023 – Present**

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT, School of Public Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida (with Dr. Naim Kapucu) **January 2021 – May 2023**

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSOCIATE, School of Public Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida **August 2021 – May 2023**

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT, School of Public Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida (with Dr. Tom Bryer) **May 2020 – August 2020, January 2021 – May 2021**

SPECIAL PROJECTS INTERN, Planning and Development Services, City of Sanford, Florida, **February – November 2019**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT FELLOW, International City and County Managers Association, City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida **August 2016 – September 2018**

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles:

Moore, P. and **Okhai, R.** (2024). Embedding social equity in disaster response: Simulation case study. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*.

Abukhalaf, A. H. I., **Okhai, R.**, Naser, A. Y., von Meding, J., Cohen, S. L., Mehdipour, H., & Abusal, D. M. (2023). COVID-19 outbreak impact on the wellbeing of migrants in US college towns: The Case of Gainesville, Florida. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 96, 103973.

Sadiq A. A., **Okhai, R.**, Tyler, J., & Entress, R. (2023). Public Alert and Warning System Literature Review in the USA: Identifying Research Gaps and Lessons for Practice. *Natural Hazards*, 1-34.

Kapucu, N., **Okhai, R.**, Ge, Y., & Zobel, C. (2022). The Use of Documents for Creating, Analyzing, and Visualizing Network Data in Emergency and Crisis Management. *Natural Hazards*.

Kapucu, N., **Okhai, R.**, & Hu, Q. (2022). Network Governance for Coordinated Disaster Response. *Public Administration Quarterly*.

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters:

Okhai, R. & Henley, T. N. (2024). Call the Budget Police! How the Public Service Value of Ontology and Epistemology can Support Public Administrators in an Environment of Unpoliced Grey Budgeting and Finance. In A. M. Olejarski and S. M. Neal (Eds.). *Empowering Public Administrators*. Routledge

Okhai, R. & Kapucu, N. (2024, *forthcoming*). Networked governance for coordinated disaster response. In K. Moloney, G. Billingsley, B. G. Jeong, T. E. Thornton, P. S. Pulido, & E. Zeemering (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook on Crisis and the Public Sector*. Taylor & Francis

Book Review Essay:

Okhai, R. (2024). Review of the book *Intersectionality and Crisis Management: A Path to Social Equity* by H. J. Knepper, M. D. Evans, and T. J. Henley (Eds.), New York, NY, Routledge, 2023. 148 pp. In *Teaching Public Administration*.

Okhai, R. (2021). Review of the book *The Routledge Handbook of Ethics and Public Policy* by A. Lever and A. Poama, New York NY: Routledge, 2018. 560 pp. In *Public Administration Review*.

Works in Progress:

Hoang, T., **Okhai, R.**, Hwang, J., Sabharwal, M. (*submitted book chapter*). Breaking the Glass Cliff: Understanding and Overcoming Challenges for Women in the Public Sector Leadership Roles.

Noor, N., Hasan, S., **Okhai, R.**, Kapucu, N., Ge, Y. (*revise and resubmit*). Social Media-based Crisis Communication: Assessing the Engagement of Local Agencies in Twitter during Hurricane Irma. *International Journal of Information Management*.

Witkowski, K., **Okhai, R.** & Neely, S. R. (*submitted article*). Public Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare: Ethical Concerns and Opportunities for Patient-Centered Care.

Okhai, R. & Bukalova, D. (*submitted*). *Where Are All The Women? Leadership in Public Administration and Policy*

Okhai, R. (*submitted*). *Assessing Social Media Based Crisis Communication of Local Agencies During Hurricane Irma.*

Entress, R., **Okhai, R.** & Knox, C. C. (*revise and resubmit*). *Hurricane Evacuation and Administrative Burdens: Special Needs Shelter Policies During Hurricane Irma.*

Bukalova, D. & **Okhai, R.** (*in progress*). *Leadership Considerations and Gender: Local Government Leaders and Competence Perceptions.*

Conference Papers and Presentations:

Okhai, R. & Kapucu, N. (2024, April). *The Role of Multi-Level Network Governance in Implementing Resilience Plans and Policies.* International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM) Annual Conference. (Tampere, Finland).

Okhai, R. – panel convener (2024, April). *World in Disasters: Resilient Communities, Adaptable Practices and Future Needs.* American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Annual Conference. (Minneapolis, MN).

Okhai, R. & Kapucu, N. (2023, November). *Resilience Polices for Regional Coordination in Response to Disasters.* Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) Annual Conference. (Atlanta, GA).

Okhai, R. & Bukalova, D. (2023, September). *Where Are All The Women? Leadership in Public Administration and Policy.* International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual Conference. (Austin, TX).

Okhai, R. (2023, June). *Interorganizational Networks and coordination in Emergency Management: Policy and Practice in Response to Disasters.* Public Management Research Association (PMRA) Annual Conference. (Utrecht, Netherlands).

Okhai, R. (2023, April). *Assessing Social Media-Based Crisis Communication of Local Agencies During Hurricane Irma.* International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM) Annual Conference. (Budapest, Hungary).

Okhai, R. (2022, March). *Interorganizational Networks and coordination in Emergency Management: Policy and Practice in Response to Disasters.* American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Annual Conference. (Virtual).

Haupt, B., Knox, C. C., Brown, C., and **Okhai, R.** (2022, October). *Teaching Cultural Competence and Social Justice in Emergency Management and Homeland Security Programs – Panel.* Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) Annual Conference. (Chicago, IL).

Okhai, R. (2022, September). *Local Government and its Public: The Impacts of the Terminology on Decision-Making.* International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual Conference. (Columbus, OH).

Okhai, R. (2022, September). *Interorganizational Networks and Coordination in Emergency Management: Policy and Practice in Response to Disasters*. International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual Conference. (Columbus, OH).

Noor, N., Hasan, S., **Okhai, R.**, Kapucu, N., Ge, G. (2023, January). *Social Media based Crisis-Communication: Assessing the Engagement Activities of Local Agencies in twitter during Hurricane Irma*. Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting. (Washington, D.C.).

Kapucu, N., **Okhai, R.** (presenter), Ge, Y. and Zobel, C. (2022, May). *The Use of Documents for Creating, Analyzing, and Visualizing Network Data in Emergency and Crisis Management*. Public Management Research Association (PMRA) Annual Conference. (Phoenix).

Kapucu, N., **Okhai, R.** (presenter), and Hu, Q. (2022, March). *Network Governance for Coordinated Disaster Response*. American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Annual Conference. (Jacksonville).

Kapucu, N., **Okhai, R.** (presenter), Ge, Y. and Zobel, C. (2022, March). *The Use of Documents for Creating, Analyzing, and Visualizing Network Data in Emergency and Crisis Management*. American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Annual Conference. (Jacksonville).

Okhai, R. (2022, March). *Interorganizational Networks and Coordination in Emergency Management: Policy and Practice in Response to Disasters*. Public Administration Research Conference (PARC) Annual Conference. (Orlando).

Okhai, R. (2021, June). *Government 3.0 and service provision: Examples from the Republic of South Korea? What People Leave Behind* (WPLB) Annual Conference. (Virtual).

Okhai, R. (2021, March). *Home Rule Preemption: Punitive or Regulatory?* 15th Public Administration Research Conference (PARC) Annual Conference. (Virtual).

FUNDED RESEARCH

National Science Foundation (NSF) grant:

Leveraging Smart Technologies and Managing Community Resilience through Networked Communities, (Award #1952792; September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2023; \$1,225,000 award)
Graduate Research Assistant

Core responsibilities:

- Built content codebook using plans and policies of eight (8) Central Florida counties and Orlando
- Completed literature reviews for manuscript
- Worked collaboratively to publish one (1) manuscript in *Public Administration Quarterly*, one (1) manuscript forthcoming to *Natural Hazards*, one (1) accepted conference presentation with another subproject group of the grant, and a forthcoming book chapter for a Routledge handbook
- Presented research for both manuscripts at the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) annual conference
- Presented research for one manuscript at the Public Management Research Conference (PMRC)

Downtown Community Engaged Research:

Cross-Sector Partnerships and the University of Central Florida Downtown Community Engaged Research Efforts, Graduate Research Assistant

- Reached out to faculty and compiled data on those working on downtown community engaged research
- Created mock-ups of completed projects for possible website feature, including aligned UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Organized faculty directory, including relevant headshots, associated projects and any other resources provided

Research Interests:

Network Governance, Emergency and Crisis Management, Local Government, Smart Cities, Public Policy in Practice, Gender and Leadership

Skills and Competencies:

METHODOLOGY COMPETENCY: MAXQDA (Qualitative Data Analysis), SAS and SPSS (Statistical Analysis), EndNote (Citation Analysis), Prezi (Virtual Presentation), UCINET (Network Analysis), Dedoose (Qualitative Data Analysis)

COMPUTER COMPETENCY: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Teams), Apple Operating System, Windows Operating System, Zoom Video Conferencing

LANGUAGE SKILLS: Gujarati (native), English (fluent), Hindi (fluent), Spanish (conversational)

TEACHING

Graduate Courses:

PAD 6060 Public Organizational Theory Spring 2024

Undergraduate Courses:

PAD 3003 Introduction to Public and Community Service (Online) Fall 2023

PAD 4720 Research Methods in Public Administration (Research-Intensive Designation) Fall 2022

PAD 4395 Disaster Response and Recovery (Online) Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Summer 2023

PAD 4390 Hazard Mitigation and Preparedness Fall 2021

CERTIFICATES

University of South Florida – Online Instruction Certification September 2023

Emergency Management Higher Education Symposium, FEMA, 3.2 IACET CEU June 2022

Preparing Tomorrow’s Faculty, UCF, Professional Development Course May 2021

SERVICE

University Service:

University of Central Florida

- UCF International City/County Managers Association (ICMA) Student Chapter 2020 – 2023
- Served as the Vice President and now President for the student chapter, during which time we seamlessly transitioned our speakers to Zoom, and successfully received \$500 from Student Government to sponsor the networking social at the Public Administration Research Conference (PARC)

University of South Florida

- USF Bobby Green ICMA Student Chapter 2014 – 2016
- Served as the Secretary/Treasurer, Vice President, and finally the President for the student chapter, during which time we secured an annual \$1,000 donation from the City of Auburndale, raised over \$500 through 50/50 raffles during the annual FCCMA conferences, and organized ICMA conference attendance of up to 9 student members

Professional & Community Service:

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

2019 – Present

- Serving on the communications team for the Section on Emergency Management (SECM) (2023 – Present)
- Served on the communications team for the Section on Complexities and Network Studies (SCNS) (2022 – 2023) \
- Served as conference volunteer for the 2022 annual conference in Jacksonville

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

2014 – Present

- Served on the conference planning committee for the 2023 conference in Austin, TX, 2022-2023
- Served on the “Welcome Ambassadors” committee, 2018 – 2019
- Secured a competitive 2-year fellowship with the City of Fort Lauderdale, 2016 – 2018

Florida City and County Managers Association (FCCMA)

2014 – Present

- Serving on a two-year term on the Conference Planning Committee (2023 – 2025)
- Serving on the Next Generation Task Force – Focused on engaging students and local governments through internship programs and programmatic support for ICMA student chapters at Universities (2023 – Present)
- Served a two-year term on the Communications Committee – Assist with City presentations for milestone council-manager government years, and write for *Management Matters* monthly newsletter (2021 – 2023)
- Have served two-year terms on the Conference Planning (2018 – 2020) and Professional Development & Training (2018 – 2020) Committees

The Junior League of Greater Fort Lauderdale

2016 – 2018

- Served as Assistant and then Chairwoman of the annual Fall Fundraisers, presiding over a team of 15 volunteer members to procure sponsorships, donations and raise almost \$50,000 over the course of two years

MANUSCRIPT REVIEW

International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction
International Journal of Public Administration
Journal of Emergency Management
Natural Hazards Review
Public Integrity
Public Management Review
Review of Public Personnel Administration
Urban Governance

HONORS, AWARDS, & RECOGNITIONS (AWARDED)

ASPA Founders' Fellowship Award, American Society for Public Administration, 2023 (ASPA presentation and conference attendance support)

Emerging Leaders Scholarship, Florida City and County Management Association, Annual Conference, 2023 (fully funded conference attendance)

The Section on Professional and Organizational Development Scholarship, American Society for Public Administration, Annual Conference, 2023 (\$250 monetary award)

Public Management Research Association (PMRA) Academic Writing Workshop, Bogota, Colombia, 2023 (fully funded for conference including travel)

3 Minute Thesis Finalist, University of Central Florida, 2022 (Presenting final November 2022)

ICMA Form of Government Graduate Student Symposium Presentation Award, International City/County Management Association, Annual Conference, 2022 (\$1,000 monetary award)

The Dr. Thomas T.H. Wan Endowed Scholarship, University of Central Florida, 2022 (\$1,000 monetary award)

The Gerald-Mark Breen Memorial Scholarship, University of Central Florida, 2022 (\$1,000 monetary award)

The Meier Public Management Research Conference Travel Inclusion Award, Public Management Research Association, Annual Conference, 2022 (\$500 monetary award)

Raymond C. Sittig Scholarship, Florida City and County Management Association, Annual Conference, 2021 (\$5,000 monetary award)

Member, Pi Alpha Alpha, The National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration for excellence in the study and practice of public affairs and administration, 2015

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS, & AFFILIATIONS

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

Section on Complexities and Network Studies
Section on Emergency and Crisis Management
Section on International and Comparative Administration
Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA)
Next Generation Task Force
Conference Planning Committee
International City/County Managers Association (ICMA)
SheLeadsGov Initiative
International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM)
Pi Alpha Alpha, National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration
Public Management Research Association (PMRA)

PENDING AWARD AND GRANT APPLICATIONS

USF Humanities Institute Summer Research Grant (\$5,000)

UCF 2023 Outstanding Dissertation in the Social Science, Humanities, Education, Business, Art and Health Category, University of Central Florida, 2024

UCF 2023 Outstanding Teaching in the Social Science, Humanities, Education, Business, Art and Health Category, University of Central Florida, 2024

UCF 2023 Outstanding Activity in the Social Science, Humanities, Education, Business, Art and Health Category, University of Central Florida, 2024

The ICMA Tranter-Leong Fellowship, International City/County Management Association, 2024 (\$5,000 award for global knowledge exchange travel)

UNSUCCESSFUL AWARD AND GRANT APPLICATIONS

USF Women in Leadership and Philanthropy 2023 Dr. Kathleen Moore Faculty Excellence Award (\$5,000)