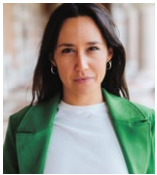# Meet the 2023 Fund for Latino Scholarship Recipients

INDIA SIMMONS | PROGRAM MANAGER, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS

The APSA Fund for Latino Scholarship's primary goal is to encourage and support the recruitment, retention, and promotion of Latina/o political scientists, especially students and tenure-track junior faculty. The secondary goal of the Fund is to support research on Latino politics in the United States. Grants for the 2023 cycle were awarded to those individuals whose purposes most clearly match the goals of the fund, and whose proposals most persuasively demonstrate capacity for successful completion. Applications for the Fund close annually each June. Learn more about the Fund for Latino Scholarship at https://www.apsanet.org/fls
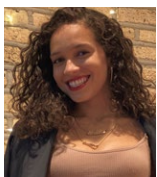
IRIS ACQUARONE

Iris Acquarone is a PhD candidate at Rice University specializing in comparative politics. Her research investigates the causes and consequences of political representation, with a particular focus on historically marginalized groups in Western democracies. Her dissertation research examines the conditions that cause: (1) party gatekeepers to select candidates from marginalized groups and, (2) incentivize candidates from those groups to emerge, combining field elite experiments, survey experiments, and observational analysis. In other works, she explores the interrelations between political institutions, attitudes and behavior, and political representation outcomes. Iris holds a master's degree in political science, a graduate diploma in economics, and a graduate certificate in teaching and learning. She is an instructor of quantitative analysis for social sciences and serves in multiple service roles at the institutional and disciplinary level. In the past, Iris has worked on reducing gender and racial inequality from a public policy standpoint in association with researchers and social, governmental and international organizations in Uruguay, and intends to continue promoting change through publicly engaged research. She used the 2023 Latino Scholarship Fund to attend the 2023 APSA Annual Meeting to present her work on party candidate selection.

NICOLETTE ALAYON

Nicolette Alayon is a PhD candidate in political science at Northwestern University, where she focuses on studying relationships between celebrities and influencers on social media, with a particular interest in TikTok. Her research explores the role of content creators in shaping political discussions in the digital era. Specifically, Nicolette investigates the influence of Latino content creators and their power to mobilize their community.
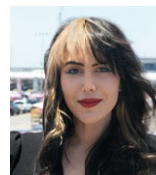
SONJA CASTAÑEDA DOWER

Sonja Castañeda Dower is a PhD student in the department of political science at the University of Chicago. Sonja uses various quantitative and qualitative methods and research designs to study identity, representation, and intergovernmental dynamics, with a particular focus on indigenous politics and political autonomy and sovereignty. The APSA Fund for Latino Scholarship will support Sonja in a conference presentation of her paper "Assimilation and Delegation," which introduces a formal model and case studies that address two central questions: (1) under what conditions are indigenous people(s) likely to assimilate, and (2) how will decisions over assimilation affect the state's willingness to delegate policy-setting authority? Sonja holds a master's in political science from the University of Chicago, a master's in politics and education from Columbia University - Teachers College, and a bachelor's in English literature from University of Wisconsin – Madison.

ESTEFANÍA CASTAÑEDA PÉREZ

Estefanía Castañeda Pérez is a postdoctoral fellow at the Penn Migration Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her PhD and MA from the department of political science at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a BA in political science and interdisciplinary studies from San Diego State University. Her research focuses on border politics, state power and institutions through the lens of Latinx racialization. In particular, she examines how routine contact with state institutions affect the racialization, citizenship, incorporation, and well-being of transborder commuters in the Mexico-US borderlands. Her educational aspirations have been informed by her experience commuting daily from Tijuana to San Diego as a first-generation, transborder student for more than a decade. As a community-engaged scholar, she has advocated for transborder and migrant communities, and held workshops on meeting the needs of transborder youth at the local and national level. Her research is supported by numerous associations such as the American Political Science Association, the National Science Foundation, and the Ford Foundation. Her work has been published in *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, and in academic blogs such as NACLA and the NYU Latinx Project Intervenxions Blog.

SAMANTHA CHAPA

Samantha Chapa is a PhD candidate in the department of political science at the University of Houston. Her National Science Foundation-funded research broadly focuses on the political rights and representation of migrants and people of color. Her dissertation focuses on the impact of local, urban policies on immigrant and minority groups. She has presented work on immigrant inclusion in urban politics, the effects of policy on anti-immigrant sentiment, and the international diffusion of sophisticated migrant tracking methods. Her work has been published in the *British Journal of Politics* and *East European Politics and Societies*. Pri-
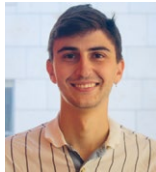
or to graduate school, she worked at BakerRipley—a non-profit—for three years, where she provided legal representation as a Department of Justice Accredited Representative to vulnerable immigrants in the Houston-area. As part of her work with BakerRipley, she also worked to establish Deportation Defense Houston, which provided detained immigrants in the Houston-area with free legal representation in their immigration court proceedings. She completed her bachelor's in English and history at Rice University.
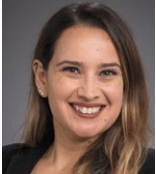
ELIZABETH ECHAVARRIA

Elizabeth Echavarria is a PhD student in the department of political science at the University of Washington, Seattle and is interested in comparative politics, methodology and environmental politics. Her research seeks to explore non-state actor's involvement in decision-making processes from the domestic to the global level. Prior to her doctoral studies, Elizabeth worked as a program and project manager at various NGOs. She holds a BA in political science from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and a MSc in public policy from University College London, which she completed thanks to a Chevening Award. With the support of the Fund for Latino Scholarship, Elizabeth attended the 2023 APSA Annual Meeting and presented her co-authored research exploring the integration of social justice issues as part of environmental non-governmental organizations' missions and programmatic scope as evidence of the tension between mission preservation and mission expansion in changing political and social contexts.

ALEJANDRO FRYDMAN

Alejandro Frydman is a PhD student in the department of political science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His research largely focuses on the politicization of Latino identity. He plans to explore the intersection of a pan-ethnic Latino identity and national heritage identities, focusing on the political implications of heritage-based diversity within the Latino community. Additionally, he is interested in survey methodology. Before graduate school, Alejandro worked in political campaigns and survey research. He obtained a BA in political science from Washington University in St. Louis. With the support of the Fund for Latino Scholarship, Alejandro plans to begin fieldwork across US cities conducting in-depth interviews with Latino community members.

MARIANNA GARCIA

Marianna Garcia is a third-year PhD student at the University of California, San Diego. Her research interests focus on US immigrant politics and institutional inclusion. Her current project explores state legislative behavior, non-electoral incentives, and the support for pro-immigrant policies that expand the rights of undocumented individuals. In addition, Marianna is a research associate at NYU's Center for Social Media and Politics (CSMaP) where she focuses on the study of online misinformation, politics, and Latino communities. Her work has been featured in national outlets such as The *Washington Post's* Monkey Cage. Marianna holds a master's in public policy, with a focus on social policy and programs, design and evaluation. Her research experience includes field research in California immigrant communities, survey design, ethnographic work, facilitating focus groups, and historical analysis. With the support of the Fund for Latino Scholarship, Marianna attended the 2023 APSA Annual Meeting and presented her co-authored research on Latinos, social media, and political misinformation.

IGNANGELI SALINAS-MUÑIZ

Ignangeli Salinas-Muñiz is a PhD candidate at the University of Michigan. Her research centers on representation, accountability, and possibility in the US territories and other US geographical pockets where racial and ethnic minorities experience limited democracy. Her interest in United States imperialism and uneven democracy guides her work at various intersections. With the support of the Fund for Latino Scholarship, she attended the 2023 APSA Annual Conference. There she presented co-authored work on polarization, presidential incentives, and the development of abortion bans in foreign aid. Ignangeli completed her undergraduate degree in political science at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez. She is an NSF GRFP recipient and an RBSI alum.

ANGIE TORRES-BELTRAN

Angie Torres-Beltran is a PhD candidate in the department of government at Cornell University. For the 2023-2024 academic year, Angie will be a USIP Peace Scholar Fellow, a Research Fellow with the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard Kennedy School, a Predoctoral Fellow at the Center for US-Mexican Studies at the University of California-San Diego, and a Predoctoral Fellow at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. Her research examines the political causes and consequences of gender-based violence, with an emphasis on political behavior and institutions in conflict-afflicted countries. More specifically, her dissertation examines how gender-based violence shapes political behavior, the historical legacies of modern state-building processes on women's equality, and women's public services and justice preferences. Her work has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the American Political Science Association, and the Empirical Study of Gender Research Network. Angie holds a MA in government from Cornell University and BA in international and global studies from the University of Central Florida. With the support of the Fund for Latino Scholarship, Angie attended the 2023 APSA Annual Meeting to present co-authored research on how and why improvements in women's rights are accompanied by violence against women.

RICARDO VEGA LEÓN

Ricardo Vega León is a doctoral candidate in political science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His research lies in the intersections of the history of political thought and political economy, the political theory of race and empire, and the transnational politics of slavery and abolition. His dissertation explores how the anti-slavery ideas of eighteenth and nineteenth century liberal political economists reproduced racial capitalism in the Atlantic World. With support from the Fund for Latino Scholarship, Ricardo presented a paper at the 2023 APSA Annual Meeting. ∎