

Meet the 2020 First Generation Scholar Accessibility Grant Recipients

JASMINE SCOTT | AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

The APSA Committee on the Status of First Generation Scholars in the Profession works to bring focused attention to the ways in which class, economic inequality, and mobility can affect political scientists' ability to thrive educationally and professionally throughout their careers. In October 2020, the Committee matched contributions to the APSA Annual Fund to support the professional development of first gen scholars in the profession. Learn more about this year's recipients of the First Generation Scholar Accessibility Grant below.

Muhammad Hassan Bin Afzal (He/Him/His) is a PhD candidate in Kent State University's Political Science Department. His research focuses on global health crises and how that affects both public health and social policies. Hassan's dissertation, "Immigration Rhetoric and Policies During Global Health Crises: Well-being and Health Concerns for the Global Migrant Communities,"



conducts an empirical analysis to assess the connection between policy entrepreneurs' role and the changing nature of immigration policies during global health crises. His comprehensive paper was accepted at the 2020 Region 10 Humanitarian Technology Conference (R10HTC) with full funding. His work has been published in peer-reviewed journals. In addition to his research, Hassan is also an accomplished instructor and taught undergraduate courses in Bangladesh, India, and Malaysia.

He received a BS degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from AIUB; a PGCE in Optical Engineering Techniques from the University of Nottingham, UK; an MS degree in IT from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; and an MBA in Management from Idaho State University, USA. He also worked as a Business Analyst for the Bengal Solutions at Idaho State University. He collaborated and led projects for FEMA, SBDC, and local businesses. Hassan is incredibly grateful for the First Generation Scholar Grant's support that facilitated him to attend the 2020 APSA Annual Meeting and network meaningfully with fellow participants.

Thomas Benson is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Political Science & International Relations at the University of Del-

aware. His research is focused on environmental and ecological justice, sustainability, urban governance, and smart cities. He obtained an MA in political science & international relations at the University of Delaware in 2019, and an LLB (Law) at the University of Leeds (UK) in 2016.



Glen Billesbach is a PhD student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida, where he studies political theory and international relations. His research interests include critical, historical, and theoretical approaches to technology and environmental politics. Glen's current project explores the impact of climate change science on political action. In it, he attempts to amplify neglected theories of technology to better assess the role of institutions such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).



Before becoming a Florida Gator, he earned degrees at Iowa Western Community College, Richmond the American International University in London, the University of Nebraska Omaha, and the London School of Economics. While completing these degrees, Glen was engaged as a leader in several organizations. At UF, he serves as the treasurer and department representative in the union (Graduate Assistants United) and organizes a political theory workshop series for students and faculty (UF Political Theory Workshop). After completing his PhD, Glen hopes to craft a career in academia where he can spend his time doing what he loves: teaching political theory, researching technology and the environment, and working to improve educational opportunities for low-income and minority students.

Elizabeth Dorsom is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Missouri. Her research focuses on the impact of resources on politics and policy. Specifically, she is interested in understanding how resources such as information, institutionalization, and professionalism impact policy adoption and feed-



back and, therefore, promote quality government. Her dissertation explores the influence of such resources at the congressional and state legislative level by examining legislative position-taking as well as legislative outputs such as sunset provisions. She uses a variety of methods in her research, including both qualitative methods—

such as interviews, case study research, and text analysis—and quantitative methods, such as survey and field experiments. She is a 2020–2021 Humane Studies Fellow through the Institute for Humane Studies at George Mason University and was previously an Oskar Morgenstern Fellow through the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

Elizabeth is the first in her family to pursue an academic career and is grateful for the support of the First Generation Scholar Grant that allowed her to attend the 2020 APSA Annual Meeting.

Qingming Huang is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida. His research interests include ethnicity and nationalism, state building, authoritarian politics, and communism and post-communism. His dissertation examines how the founding myths of party-states contribute to the resilience of communist regimes in East Asia. He is the first in his family to study abroad and pursue a career in academia. He is grateful for the support provided by the First Generation Scholar Accessibility Grant.



Maricruz Ariana Osorio is a PhD student at the University of California, Riverside. Broadly, her work looks at the political engagement and behavior of marginalized groups, with an emphasis on women and immigrants. She has published this work academically and has contributed to other forms of publicly available scholarship,

including policy reports, blogs, and encyclopedia entries. Her dissertation investigates the role of gender in forming risk assessments, whether risks are perceived to be risks themselves or risks are believed to be risks to their community at large. She analyzes how those risk assessments contribute to the political participation, in all its different forms, of marginalized immigrant communities. Her dissertation looks at how agency might manifest differently by citizenship status and hopes to add to our understanding of political participation.



Justin Zimmerman is a fourth-year PhD student at Northwestern University, studying institutional trust in race-class subjugated communities in Chicago. Justin received a Bachelor of Arts in political science and philosophy in 2009 and a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in organizational management in 2011

from The University of Alabama. For seven years, Justin resided in Washington, DC, where he supported the Department of Treasury Enterprise Business Solutions (EBS) team as an acquisitions consultant with Octo Consulting Group and served in multiple roles with the Department of State. He currently resides in Chicago, Illinois with his wife and son. ■



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