

Manuel Meléndez-Sánchez

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Government, Harvard University

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EDUCATION

Harvard University

Ph.D. in Political Science

Cambridge, MA

Expected May 2025

University of Oxford

M.Sc. in Politics Research

Oxford, United Kingdom

November 2017

Harvard University

A.B. in Government with Certificate in Latin American Studies

Cambridge, MA

March 2016

PRIMARY RESEARCH INTERESTS

The politics of organized crime; democracy, authoritarianism, and regime transitions; Latin American politics; mixed methods.

PUBLICATIONS

Articles

"The Bukele Model: Will It Spread?" (with Alberto Vergara), *Journal of Democracy* 35(3): 84-98, 2024.

"Millennial Authoritarianism in El Salvador," *Journal of Democracy* 32(3): 19-32, 2021.

Under Review

"Far Right by Convenience: El Salvador's Nayib Bukele." Chapter in volume on the far-right in Latin America (edited by Cristóbal Rovira-Kaltwasser et al).

Others Publications

"Review of 'Violent Victors: Why Bloodstained Parties Win Postwar Elections,'" *Peace & Change* 49(2): 201-203, 2024.

"Lessons from El Salvador's Authoritarian Turn," Newsletter of the Democracy and Autocracy Section, American Political Science Association, August 2022.

WORK IN PROGRESS

On Organized Crime, Public Security, and Democracy

"Criminal Electioneering: A Conceptual Framework"

"The Personnel Economics of Law Enforcement" (with Matthew Pecenco and Carlos Schmidt-Padilla)

"What Democracy? How Priors About Democracy Shape the Security vs Rights Tradeoff"

"When Do Criminal Groups Target Voters? Evidence from Guatemala"

On Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Regime Transitions

"Asymmetric Institutional Trust and Democratic Backsliding"

"Democracy and Authoritarianism in Central America" (volume co-edited with Steven Levitsky)

"Political Establishments and Democracy" (with Steven Levitsky, Aaron Watanabe, and Daniel Ziblatt)

"Running Against Autocracy: Evidence from Guatemala's 2023 Election"

ADDITIONAL WRITING

Technical Reports

"The Far-Right in El Salvador." Prepared for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2023.

"Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes: El Salvador Report." Prepared for USAID, 2023.

"Political Institutions in El Salvador, 2014–Present." Prepared for The World Bank, 2021.

Public Scholarship

By-lines in *El Faro*, *Lawfare*, *Plaza Pública*, *ReVista*, *Slate*, and *The Washington Post*.

MAJOR FELLOWSHIPS & RESEARCH GRANTS

Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, American Political Science Association and National Science Foundation	2022-23
USIP-Minerva Peace and Security Scholarship, US Institute of Peace	2022-23
Frederick Sheldon Traveling Fellowship, Harvard University	2022-23
Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics	2018

TALKS, PRESENTATIONS, AND CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Conferences Organized

Democracy and Authoritarianism in Central America Conference (scheduled)	2025
El Salvador Political Economy Workshop	2019

Invited Talks, Panels, and Lectures

Canning House; Georgetown University; Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro; Red Iniciativa Centroamericana; Syracuse University; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and University of Maryland; US Agency for International Development (USAID)	2024
Canning House; Central American Politics Consortium; The Citadel; Colby College; National Democratic Institute (NDI); Programa Estado Nación (Costa Rica); Universidad del Pacífico (Perú); University of Utah	2023
Escuela de Comunicación Mónica Herrera (El Salvador); Universidad del Pacífico (Perú)	2022
University of Pittsburgh	2021
Canning House; London School of Economics	2017

Conference and Workshop Activity

American Political Science Association; Conference on Crime, Conflict, and Security Institutions in the Americas; Latin American Studies Association; Workshop on the Far-Right in Latin America	2024
American Political Science Association; Latin American Studies Association	2019
Latin American Studies Association	2018

TEACHING AND ADVISING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Awards

Derek C. Bok Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching of Undergraduates - Awarded each year to five Teaching Fellows from across Harvard University.	2021
Certification of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University - Received every eligible semester.	Various

Courses in Comparative Politics

The Politics of Organized Crime (Lead Instructor)	Spring 2022, Summer 2024
Comparative Politics in Central America (Lead Instructor)	Spring 2024
Authoritarianism (Head Teaching Fellow)	Fall 2023
Comparative Politics in Latin America (Head Teaching Fellow)	Spring 2021
Foundations of Comparative Politics (Head Teaching Fellow)	Fall 2020, Summer 2022

Courses in Methods and Research Tools

Qualitative and Mixed Methods (Teaching Fellow)	Spring 2020
Formal Political Analysis I - Graduate Level (Teaching Fellow)	Fall 2019
Government Department Writing Fellow	Fall 2021
Senior Thesis Writers' Seminar	2021-22, 2023-25

Advising Roles

Honors Thesis Advisor, Department of Government, Harvard University	2018-19, 2022-24
Non-Resident Tutor, Leverett House, Harvard University	2018-20

SERVICE

External

Country Expert, "Measuring Internet Politics," Digital Society Project	2023
External Reviewer, Faculty Research Grant Proposals, The City University of New York (CUNY)	2022
Reviewer, Cambridge University Press	2021

Internal

Co-Organizer, Tuesday Seminar Series, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies	2023
Co-President, Graduate Student Association, Government Department	2019-20
Student Coordinator, Political Violence Workshop	2019-20
Graduate Student Peer Advisor, Government Department	2018-20
Student Coordinator, Comparative Politics Speaker Series	2018-19

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Political Risk Consultant, GeoQuant	2023-Present
Consultant, NORC and US Agency for International Development (USAID)	2022-23
Consultant, The World Bank	2021