Uma Ilavarasan

Department of Government, Harvard University

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PRIMARY RESEARCH INTERESTS

Bureaucratic politics and structure; social and industrial policy; American and comparative political economy; American political development; state-society relations; mixed methods and archival research.

EDUCATION

Harvard University   Cambridge, MA
Malcolm Wiener Ph.D. Research Fellow in Poverty and Justice
Ph.D. in Political Science   Expected May 2027
M.A. in Political Science   May 2023
- *Dissertation:* "From Monopoly to Monopsony: When States Use Contracts to Enforce Policy"
- *Committee:* Alisha Holland (chair), Daniel Carpenter, Stephanie Ternullo, Torben Iversen

Reed College   Portland, OR
B.A. in Economics   May 2019

WORKING PAPERS & WORK IN PROGRESS

Working Papers
- "The Microfoundations of Power-Sharing: Citizen Support for and Opposition to Political Sectarianism in Lebanon" (with Melani Cammett, Aytuğ Şaşmaz, and Sami Atallah)

Works-in-Progress
- *Automated Cognitive Debriefing* (with Gary King, Brandon Stewart, and Musashi Jacobs-Harukawa)
- *Policy Cycles* (with Aidan Connaughton and Julius Wilson)
- "The physics of state-building: professional science as a catalyst for bureaucratic development in the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany"

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & RESEARCH AWARDS

Weatherhead Graduate Student Associate Research Grant ($1,370)	2024
Institute for Quantitative Social Science Research Grant ($3,000)	2024
Center for American Political Studies Seed Grant ($1,000)	2024
Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Research Fellowship ($12,000)	2020–present
Harvard University Presidential Scholarship ($20,000)	2019–present
Reed College Gerald M. Meier Award for Distinction in Economics	2019
Reed College Economics Summer Research Program Student Fellowship ($4,500)	2017, 2018

TEACHING & ADVISING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Awards

Certificate of Distinction in Teaching — Various
- Received every eligible semester.

Courses Taught

Undergraduate-level
- Law & Inequality (Teaching Fellow) — Spring 2023, Spring 2024
- Authoritarianism (Teaching Fellow) — Fall 2023
- Introduction to Probability and Statistics (Lab Teaching Assistant) — Spring 2018

Graduate-level
- Quantitative Social Science Methods I (Teaching Fellow) — Fall 2022

Advising Roles
- Honors Thesis Advisor (3x), Harvard University Department of Government — 2024-2025
- Concentration Advisor, Harvard University Department of Government — 2024-2025

TALKS, PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

External

Presenter
- Midwest Political Science Association — 2025
- The Contracting State: How and Why Governments Rely on Private Contractors; American Political Science Association; PolMeth — 2024

Organizer
- Harvard Experimental Political Science Conference — 2021

Internal
- Harvard American Politics Research Workshop — 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024
- Harvard Comparative Politics Research Workshop — 2023
- Harvard Experiments Working Group — 2020
- Harvard Graduate Political Economy Workshop — 2020

SERVICE

Coordinator, GETTING-Plurality Research Workshop — 2023–
Co-Coordinator, American Politics Speaker Series — 2023–
Executive Board, Harvard Government Graduate Student Association — 2020-2021
Co-Coordinator, Harvard Experiments Working Group — 2020-2021
Data Fellow, Harvard University Department of Government — 2019-2020
Departmental Representative, Harvard Graduate Student Council — 2019-2020

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Fotini Christia, MIT Department of Political Science — 2020–2021
Jon Rork, Reed College Department of Economics — Summer 2018
Kimberly Clausing, Reed College Department of Economics — Summer 2017

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Consultant, American Civil Liberties Union	2023 –
Financial Economist, U.S. Department of the Treasury	2021–2022
Assistant Political Researcher, DHM Research	2016

OTHER SKILLS & AFFILIATIONS

Affiliations and Memberships
Weatherhead Graduate Student Associates Program; Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies; Allen Lab for Democracy Renovation; GETTING-Plurality Research Network; Institute for Quantitative Social Science; Center for American Political Studies; American Political Science Association; Midwest Political Science Association; MIT Global Diversity Lab (2020-2021)

Languages
French

Software
LaTeX, R, STATA

REFERENCES

Alisha Holland
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Last updated: January 8, 2025