

# Oswaldo A. Mena Aguilar

PhD Candidate in Political Science

Graduate Center Dissertation Fellow, 2026 | Latino Data Scholar, Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies (CLACLS), 2025 | Junior Scholar, Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality, 2024  
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## RESEARCH AGENDA

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Inequality, poverty, and public policy in Latin America

Political economy of social policy, labor market regulation, and taxation

Effects of public transfers, minimum wage policy, and fiscal reform on poverty and income inequality

State capacity, policy design, and implementation in distributive politics

## EDUCATION

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**Graduate Center, City University of New York.** PhD Candidate in Political Science (Comparative Politics and Public Policy), 2021–2026. New York, United States.

Dissertation: “Predistribution, Income Inequality and the Politics of Minimum Wage and the Left in Latin America.” Expected defense: October 2026.

**Graduate Center, City University of New York.** MA in Political Science, 2024. New York, United States.

**University College London.** MSc in Democracy and Comparative Politics, 2013–2014. London, United Kingdom.

Dissertation: “Inequality, Flexibility of Labor Market Institutions, and Informal Employment in Developing Countries.”

**El Colegio de México.** BA in International Relations, 2006–2010. Mexico City, Mexico.

Dissertation: “Apuntes críticos sobre la teoría modernista del nacionalismo: Inglaterra 1066–1453.”

## PUBLICATIONS

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“Minimum wages, household inequality, and predistributive patterns in Latin America.” *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*. Accepted for publication, April 2026.

“Advocacy Coalitions or Pragmatic Coupling of Streams? Explaining policy change in Mexico’s tax reforms (2001 and 2013).” *Policy Studies Journal*, vol. 53, no. 2 (May 2025).

Selected for the Policy Studies Journal Virtual Special Issues on Economy & Welfare (17 December 2025) and Global South (16 December 2025).

## UNDER PEER REVIEW

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“Beyond the Pink Tide: Left Governments, Inequality, and the Dual Channel of Predistribution and Redistribution.” *Latin American Research Review*.

“Equality as Compass: Revisiting Norberto Bobbio’s Polar Star from Latin America.” *The Journal of Political Ideologies*.

“Left Behind? Explaining Social Transfer Redistribution Under Mexico’s First Leftist Government (2018–2024).” *Social Policy and Society*.

## POLICY REPORTS

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“Latino Economic Inequality in New York City: Income and SNAP Reciprocity, 2013–2023.” New York: Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies, CUNY Graduate Center.

## BOOK CHAPTERS

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“El nacimiento del sistema mexicano de control de exportaciones,” in *La política del comercio exterior, regulación e impacto*, Lorenza Martínez and César Hernández (eds.), Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México / Secretaría de Economía, Mexico City, 2012.

## OTHER

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“El elefante de la globalización y el ‘post-elefante’ de la crisis financiera,” *Agenda Pública*, El País, November 2022. [Link](#)

“México: progresa el salario mínimo, pero las políticas sociales son regresivas,” *Agenda Pública*, El País, 2022. [Link](#)

“México 2012: partidos, plataformas y propuestas,” *Distintas Latitudes*, revista de reflexión latinoamericana, 21 (2012). [Link](#)

“Sobre la visita de Obama, ¿cooperación o paternalismo?,” *Distintas Latitudes*, revista de reflexión latinoamericana, 11 (2011). [Link](#)

“El desarrollo de la bomba atómica en la Segunda Guerra Mundial,” *Ágora*, El Colegio de México, 7 (2009). [Link](#)

## CONFERENCES

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Beyond the Pink Tide: Left Governments, Inequality, and the Dual Channel of Predistribution and Redistribution. Latin American Studies Association (LASA), May 2026.

Minimum Wages as Predistribution: Cross-National Evidence on Household Inequality in Latin America. Red para la Economía Política de América Latina (REPAL), May 2026.

Left behind? Social transfers, relative poverty and inequality under the Left in Mexico, 2018–2022. LASA, 2024.

Political determinants of universal social policy in Latin America, 1990–2020. American Political Science Association (APSA), 2023.

Something's got to give? Congruence, cohesiveness and policy change during Mexico's tax reforms of Vicente Fox (2001, 2003) and Enrique Peña Nieto (2013). New York State Political Science Association, 2022.

## TEACHING

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Adjunct Lecturer, Social Welfare Policy in the United States. Baruch College, City University of New York (undergraduate, Summer 2026).

Adjunct Lecturer, Latin American and Caribbean Political Systems. Baruch College, City University of New York (undergraduate, Spring 2026).

Adjunct Lecturer, Social Welfare Policy in the United States. Baruch College, City University of New York (undergraduate, Spring 2024).

Adjunct Lecturer, Government and Politics in Latin America. Hunter College, City University of New York (undergraduate, Spring 2024).

Teaching Assistant, Research Methods: Scope and Analysis. Columbia University (undergraduate, Fall 2023).

Teaching Assistant, Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe. Barnard College, Columbia University (undergraduate, Fall 2023).

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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**Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality**, New York, United States. Research Assistant to Dr. Ignacio Flores, January 2022–July 2023.

**Ralph Bunche Institute**, New York, United States. Producer, International Horizons (podcast), August 2021–July 2023.

## GOVERNMENT AND POLICY POSITIONS

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**Sistema de Transporte Colectivo Metro**, Mexico City. Advisor to the Director General, October 2020–March 2021.

Redesigned key performance indicators for four strategic areas and reported daily to the Director General of Mexico City's subway system.

**Ministry of Mobility**, Mexico City. Chief of Staff to the Secretary, 2018–2019. Mexico City, Mexico.

Led the redesign and implementation of the program to replace polluting taxis with hybrid vehicles.

Coordinated the annual review process for taxi drivers, cargo transportation, and concessioned public transport.

Served as the main liaison with government agencies and municipalities.

Led the establishment of the ministry's administrative and operational structure.

**Ministry of Energy, Undersecretariat of Electricity, Federal Government**. Deputy Director General, 2014–2018. Mexico City, Mexico.

Designed and implemented prior consultation processes with Indigenous communities.

Participated in negotiation processes with labor unions and social movements.

Led the institutional response to national audits.

**Ministry of Economy, Directorate General for Foreign Trade, Federal Government**. Deputy Director, 2011–2013. Mexico City, Mexico.

Co-led the implementation of a national trade-permit system for dual-use goods to support Mexico's candidacy to the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Australia Group.

## SELECT GRANTS AND AWARDS

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Graduate Center Dissertation Year Fellowship, 2026, CUNY.

Open Knowledge Fellowship, 2026, CUNY.

Doctoral Student Research Grant, 2026.

Latino Data Scholarship, CLACLS, January 2025.

CONAHCYT Doctoral Dissertation Scholarship, September 2024.

Provost Pre-dissertation Research Award, Graduate Center-CUNY, May 2024.

Junior Scholarship, Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality, January 2024.

Ralph Bunche Institute Award for Research, 2023.

CLACLS Summer Research Fellowship, 2023.

Stone Center Luxembourg Income Study Summer Workshop Award, 2022.

Fulbright-García Robles Scholarship for Graduate Studies, 2021–2024.

University College London, Partial Tuition Scholarship, 2013–2014.

CONACYT Scholarship for Graduate Studies, 2013.

El Colegio de México, “Adrián Lajous Martínez” Prize for Best Dissertation, 2006–2010 cohort, 2011.

Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP), “Beca de Titulación” Scholarship for students completing a bachelor’s dissertation at an institution of excellence, 2010.

## **ADDITIONAL TRAINING**

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Institute for Qualitative & Multi-Method Research (IQMR), 2024. Syracuse University.

Teaching Summer Institute, Teaching and Learning Center, 2023.

Luxembourg Income Study Summer Workshop, 2022.

Quantitative Analysis of Inequalities, Escuela de Desigualdades, Instituto de Estudios Sobre la Desigualdad, 2022.

## **LANGUAGES AND SKILLS**

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English (fluent) and Spanish (native).

Stata, R, and Excel (advanced).

Archival research and structured interviews.

Income survey microdata research (SEDLAC, LIS, SWIID, ENIGH, ENOE, and ACS).