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The American Bar Foundation Announces New 2019-20 Doctoral Fellows

CHICAGO, April 23, 2019 — The [American Bar Foundation](http://americanbarfoundation.org) (ABF) has awarded its 2019-20 doctoral fellowships to three emerging scholars who will work in residence at the ABF offices in Chicago beginning in September 2019.

The ABF offers several diverse fellowship opportunities intended to foster the next generation of scholars engaging in original and significant research in the fields of law, social science and higher education. Fellowships offered include: the [ABF/NSF Doctoral Fellowship in Law and Inequality](#), which is co-sponsored by the [National Science Foundation](#) (NSF) to encourage original and significant empirical and interdisciplinary research on the study of law and inequality; the [ABF/AccessLex Institute Doctoral Fellowship in Legal and Higher Education](#), which is co-sponsored by AccessLex Institute to assist emerging scholars who research issues of access, affordability or value in legal and higher education; and the [ABF/NU Doctoral Fellowship](#), co-sponsored by [Northwestern University](#) (NU) to encourage original and innovative research on law, the legal profession and legal institutions.

Among a highly competitive applicant pool, **Jessica Lopez Espino** was awarded the ABF Doctoral Fellowship in Law and Inequality, **Elizabeth Bodamer** the ABF/AccessLex Institute Doctoral Fellowship in Legal and Higher Education, and **Ari Tolman** the ABF/Northwestern University Doctoral Fellowship.

“We are looking forward to welcoming our new cohort of doctoral fellows in September,” said ABF Executive Director, Ajay K. Mehrotra. “These junior scholars, who are completing their dissertations, will become an integral part of the ABF community and continue our proud tradition of fostering the next generation of leading empirical and interdisciplinary legal scholars.”

Doctoral fellows are immersed in the intellectual and interdisciplinary community of the ABF by participating in a weekly seminar series with leading scholars from around the country, working closely with ABF faculty, who serve as mentors helping to guide and direct their research, and participating in workshops and discussions with other Fellows. [Alumni](#) of the fellowship program have moved on to promising careers as tenure track professors, legal practitioners, and social science researchers.

Qualified scholars interested in applying for an ABF fellowship can learn more about the application process and requirements [here](#).

About the ABF’s 2019-20 Doctoral Fellows:



Ari Tolman is J.D./Ph.D. candidate in sociology at Northwestern University, where she is a Law and Science Fellow, a Graduate Fellow in Legal Studies, and a Mellon Foundation Graduate Fellow in Science Studies. Her research is focused on the intersection of law and health, with a particular emphasis on science and medicine in the criminal justice system. Her

dissertation, “Criminal Prosecution of Prisoners with Mental Illness,” examines the scope, frequency and process by which prisoners with mental illness are charged with new crimes while in jail in the U.S. Her scholarship has been published in peer-review and law review journals, including *The Lancet*, *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, and *Northwestern University Law Review*. Ari received her B.A. in Sociology and Neuroscience and Behavior from Wesleyan University in 2010 and her M.A. in Sociology from Northwestern in 2015. Prior to attending graduate school, she worked as Program Director at Shining Hope for Community in Nairobi, Kenya, as a post-graduate fellow at the ACLU of Michigan, and as a research assistant at

Harvard Medical School's Department of Global Health and Social Medicine. As a law student at Northwestern, Ari worked as a legal intern at the Uptown People's Law Center and at the Children and Family Justice Center of Northwestern Law's Bluhm Legal Clinic. She also served as Editor-In-Chief of the *Northwestern University Law Review* from 2017-2018.



Elizabeth (Liz) Bodamer is a doctoral candidate in sociology at Indiana University Bloomington. Her research focuses on inequality in the legal profession and legal education. Her dissertation, "The Balancing Act: The Experiences of Minoritized Students in Law School," uses quantitative data to examine how experiences of bias and discrimination, diversity and support systems

affect law students' sense of belonging. Elizabeth has presented at the National Association of Law Student Affairs Professionals (NALSAP) and the Law and Society Association Annual Conference. She was also a panelist at the Indiana State Bar Association during the summer of 2018. She received her M.A. in sociology from Indiana University, her J.D. from Indiana University Maurer School of Law, and her B.A. in sociology from the University of Notre Dame. As a Ph.D. student at Indiana, she was also the Director of Student Affairs at Indiana University Maurer School of Law for four years.



Jessica Lopez Espino is a doctoral candidate in anthropology at New York University. Her dissertation, "Anxieties of Ethnolinguistic Disorder: Litigating the Right to Parent," analyzes the interactions between parents and court actors involved in child maltreatment hearings to determine how ideologies of parenthood shape legal evaluations of low income parents' ability to successfully parent and maintain custody of their children. Her work draws on anthropology of law, linguistic anthropology, and critical race theory to explore the particular experiences of Spanish-dominant Latinx litigants in juvenile courts, the growing trend of Latinx involvement in child welfare, and the role of

language access in litigating the rights of parents in juvenile courts. Jessica is a recipient of the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship for doctoral research. She received her B.A. in Anthropology and Applied Language Studies from University of California, Berkeley and her MPhil in Anthropology at New York University. Prior to returning to graduate school, she worked as a college counselor and as a legal assistant for asylum cases.

About the American Bar Foundation

The [American Bar Foundation](#) (ABF) is among the world's leading research institutes for the empirical and interdisciplinary study of law. The ABF seeks to expand knowledge and advance justice through innovative, interdisciplinary, and rigorous empirical research on law, legal processes, and legal institutions. To further this mission the ABF will produce timely, cutting-edge research of the highest quality to inform and guide the legal profession, the academy, and society in the United States and internationally. The ABF's primary funding is provided by the [American Bar Endowment](#) and the [Fellows of The American Bar Foundation](#).