

Robert A. Blair

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Academic appointments

Brown University

2022- Arkadij Eisler Goldman Sachs Associate Professor of Political Science and International and Public Affairs
2015-21 Joukowsky Family Assistant Professor of Political Science and International and Public Affairs

Stanford University

2018-19 Center for International Security and Cooperation Junior Faculty Fellow

Education

Yale University

2015 PhD in Political Science

Universidad de los Andes

2007 MSc in Resolution of Armed Conflicts

Brown University

2006 BA in Education Studies, Comparative Literature, and Creative Writing

Publications & working papers

BOOK

Peacekeeping, Policing, and the Rule of Law after Civil War. 2020. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

- Reviewed in *Perspectives on Politics*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *African Studies Review*, *Governance*, *International Peacekeeping*, and *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

38. “The Democratic Erosion Event Dataset (DEED)” (with Hannah Baron, Jessica Gottlieb, Laura Paler, Julie Weaver, and Benjamin Yoel). 2026. Forthcoming, *Nature Scientific Data*
37. “Why Do Citizens Support Ineffective Military Policing Policies? Evidence from Field and Survey Experiments in Colombia” (with Michael Weintraub and Jessica Zarkin). 2026. Forthcoming, *Journal of Politics*
36. “*Mano Dura*: An Experimental Evaluation of Military Policing in Cali, Colombia” (with Lucía Mendoza and Michael Weintraub). 2026. *American Journal of Political Science* 70(2): 673-690
35. “Depolarization and Its Discontents: Experimental Evidence on Affective Polarization and Willingness to Confront Racism and Misinformation from Two Online Workshops” (with Jessica Gottlieb, Marie Schenk, and Christopher Woods). 2025. In press, *Political Psychology*
34. “Content That’s as Good as Contact? Vicarious Intergroup Contact and the Promise of Depolarization at Scale” (with Lee-Or Ankori-Karlinsky, Jessica Gottlieb, and Samantha Moore-Berg). 2025. In press, *Political Science Research & Methods*

33. “Public Works and Intimate Partner Violence: Experimental Evidence on Women’s Economic Empowerment from Egypt and Tunisia” (with Eric Mvukiyehe). 2025. *British Journal of Political Science* 55: e148
32. “Depolarizing within the Comfort of Your Party: Experimental Evidence from Online Workshops” (with Jessica Gottlieb, Marie Schenk, and Christopher Woods). 2025. *Political Communication* 42(6): 925-950
- Honorable Mention, Best Paper Award, APSA Political Psychology Section, 2024
31. “Elites, the Aid Curse, and Chinese Development Finance: A Conjoint Survey Experiment on Elites’ Development Finance Preferences in 141 Low- and Middle-Income Countries” (with Samantha Custer and Philip Roessler). 2025. *American Journal of Political Science* 69(4): 1519-1540
30. “Couples Therapy for a Divided America: Assessing the Effects of Reciprocal Group Reflection on Partisan Polarization” (with Hannah Baron, Danny Choi, Laura Gamboa, Jessica Gottlieb, Amanda Robinson, Steven Rosenzweig, Megan Turnbull, and Emily West). 2025. *Political Behavior* 47: 1363-1388
29. “An Events-Based Approach to Studying Democratic Erosion” (with Hannah Baron, Jessica Gottlieb, and Laura Paler). 2024. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 57(2): 208-215
28. “Interventions to Counter Misinformation: Lessons from the Global North and Applications to the Global South” (with Pablo Argote, Jessica Gottlieb, Brendan Nyhan, Laura Paler, and Charlene Stainfield). 2024. *Current Opinion in Psychology* 55: 101732
27. “UN Peacekeeping and Democratization in Conflict-Affected Countries” (with Jessica Di Salvatore and Hannah Smidt). 2023. *American Political Science Review* 117(4): 1308-1326
26. “Little Evidence That Military Policing Reduces Crime or Improves Human Security” (with Michael Weintraub). 2023. *Nature Human Behaviour* 7(6): 861-873
25. “Preventing Rebel Resurgence after Civil War: A Field Experiment in Security and Justice Provision in Rural Colombia” (with Manuel Moscoso, Andrés Vargas, and Michael Weintraub). 2022. *American Political Science Review* 116(4): 1258-1277
- Best Paper Award, APSA Experimental Research Section, 2021
24. “Civil War and Citizens’ Demand for the State: An Empirical Test of Hobbesian Theory.” 2022. *British Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 1748-1768
23. “The Promise and Pitfalls of Conflict Prediction: Evidence from Colombia and Indonesia” (with Samuel Bazzi, Christopher Blattman, Oeindrila Dube, Matthew Gudgeon, and Richard Peck). 2022. *Review of Economics & Statistics* 104(4): 764-779
22. “Public Trust, Policing, and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from an Electoral Authoritarian Regime” (with Travis Curtice, David Dow, and Guy Grossman). 2022. *Social Science & Medicine* 305: 115045
21. “When Do UN Peacekeeping Operations Implement Their Mandates?” (with Jessica Di Salvatore and Hannah Smidt). 2022. *American Journal of Political Science* 66(3): 664-680
20. “Policing Ethnicity: Lab-in-the-Field Evidence on Cooperation, Discrimination, and Ethnic Balancing in the Liberian National Police” (with Kyle Beardsley, Michael Gilligan, and Sabrina Karim). 2022. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 17(2): 141-181
19. “Foreign Aid and Soft Power: Great Power Competition in Africa in the Early 21st Century” (with Robert Marty and Philip Roessler). 2022. *British Journal of Political Science* 52(3): 1355-1376
18. “Community Policing Does Not Build Citizen Trust in Police or Reduce Crime in the Global South” (with Graeme Blair, Fotini Christia, and Jeremy Weinstein et al.). 2021. *Science* 374(6571): eabd3446
- Honorable Mention, Luebbert Best Article Award, APSA Comparative Politics Section, 2023
17. “UN Peacekeeping and the Rule of Law.” 2021. *American Political Science Review* 115(1): 51-68

16. "Foreign Aid and State Legitimacy: Evidence on Chinese and US Aid to Africa from Surveys, Survey Experiments, and Behavioral Games" (with Philip Roessler). 2021. *World Politics* 73(2): 315-357
15. "Policing and the Legacies of State Predation: Evidence from a Survey and Field Experiment in Liberia" (with Benjamin Morse). 2021. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(10): 1709-1737
14. "Engineering Informal Institutions: Long-Run Impacts of Alternative Dispute Resolution on Violence and Property Rights in Liberia" (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman). 2021. *Journal of Politics* 83(1): 381-389
13. "Is Theory Useful for Conflict Prediction? A Response to Beger, Morgan, and Ward" (with Nicholas Sambanis). 2021. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(7-8): 1427-1453
12. "Building Credibility and Cooperation in Low-Trust Settings: Persuasion and Source Accountability in Liberia During the 2014–2015 Ebola Crisis" (with Benjamin Morse and Lily Tsai). 2020. *Comparative Political Studies* 54(10-11): 1582-1618
11. "Forecasting Civil Wars: Theory and Structure in an Age of 'Big Data' and Machine Learning" (with Nicholas Sambanis). 2020. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(1): 1885-1915
10. "Foreign Aid and State-Society Relations: Theory, Evidence, and New Directions for Research" (with Matthew Winters). 2020. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55(2): 123-42
9. "Establishing the Rule of Law in Weak and War-torn States: Evidence from a Field Experiment with the Liberian National Police" (with Sabrina Karim and Benjamin Morse). 2019. *American Political Science Review* 113(3): 641-657
8. "International Intervention and the Rule of Law after Civil War: Evidence from Liberia." 2019. *International Organization* 73(2): 365-398
7. "Teaching Trump: Why Comparative Politics Makes Students More Optimistic About US Democracy" (with Hannah Baron and Shelby Grossman). 2019. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 52(2): 347-352
6. "International Gender Balancing Reforms in Postconflict Countries: Lab-in-the-Field Evidence from the Liberian National Police" (with Kyle Beardsley, Michael Gilligan, and Sabrina Karim). 2018. *International Studies Quarterly* 62(3): 618-631
5. "Predicting Local Violence: Evidence from a Panel Survey in Liberia" (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman). 2017. *Journal of Peace Research* 54(2): 298-312
4. "Public Health and Public Trust: Survey Evidence from the Ebola Virus Disease Epidemic in Liberia" (with Benjamin Morse and Lily Tsai). 2017. *Social Science & Medicine* 172: 89-97
3. "On the Rights of Warlords: Legitimate Authority and Basic Protection in War-Torn Societies" (with Pablo Kalmanovitz). 2016. *American Political Science Review* 110(3): 428-440
2. "Patterns of Demand for Non-Ebola Health Services During and After the Ebola Outbreak: Panel Survey Evidence from Monrovia, Liberia" (with Karen Grepin, Benjamin Morse, and Lily Tsai). 2016. *BMJ Global Health* 1: e000007
1. "How to Promote Order and Property Rights under Weak Rule of Law? An Experiment in Changing Dispute Resolution Behavior through Community Education" (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman). 2014. *American Political Science Review* 108(1): 100-120

WORKING PAPERS

“Can Community Policing Improve Police-Community Relations in Low-Income Countries?” (with Guy Grossman and Anna Wilke). Revise & resubmit, *World Development*

“Can Partisanship Motivate Americans to Depolarize? Experimental Evidence from 5 Million Voters” (with Jessica Gottlieb, Marie Schenk, and Christopher Woods). Under review

“Killing in the Amazon: Local Political Power and Violence Over Land and the Environment in Brazil” (with Mariana Carvalho, Débora Duque, and Felipe Parra)

“UN Peacekeeping, Human Rights, and the Consequences of Mandate (Non-)Implementation” (with Jessica Di Salvatore and Hannah Smidt). Under review

JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUE

“Special Issue on Foreign Aid, Service Delivery, and State-Society Relations in the Developing World” (with Matthew Winters). 2020. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55(2): 123-256

BOOK CHAPTERS

“Foreign Aid” (with Amani Diallo and Sophia Janssens). 2025. In Daniel Stockmeyer, Stephen Sawyer, and Audrey Gagnon (eds.), *IPSA Companion to Political Science: A Practical Introduction to the 200 Most Important Concepts*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Cham

“Restoring Police-Community Relations in Uganda” (with Guy Grossman and Anna Wilke). 2024. In Graeme Blair, Fotini Christia, and Jeremy Weinstein (eds.), *Crime, Insecurity, and Community Policing: Experiments on Building Trust*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 439-484

“Peacekeeping, Security Sector Reform, and the Rule of Law.” 2022. In Han Dorussen (ed.), *Handbook on Peacekeeping and International Relations*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 134-147

“On the Ground: Local Legacies of Gender Reforms in the UN Mission in Liberia” (with Kyle Beardsley, Michael Gilligan, and Sabrina Karim). 2017. In Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping: Women, Peace, and Security in Post-Conflict States*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 136-64

BOOK REVIEWS

Local Peace, International Builders: How UN Peacekeeping Builds Peace From the Bottom Up. By William G. Nomikos. 2025. *Governance* 38:e70038

Committed to Rights: UN Human Rights Treaties and Legal Paths for Commitment and Compliance. By Audrey L. Comstock. 2021. *Perspectives on Politics* 20(1): 284-6

COMMISSIONED POLICY REPORTS

Interventions to Counter Misinformation: Lessons from the Global North and Applications to the Global South (with Pablo Argote, Jessica Gottlieb, Brendan Nyhan, Laura Paler, and Charlene Stainfeld). 2023. USAID

Policing Practices to Build Community Trust and Legitimacy in the Global South. 2022. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

The Effectiveness of Police Accountability Mechanisms and Programs: What Works and the Way Forward (with Adam Bushey, Elizabeth Constable, Stacia George, Brooke Lawson, Peggy Ochandarena, Eric Scheye, Andrew Solomon, and Laura Van Berkel). 2020. USAID

DATASET

Democratic Erosion Event Dataset (DEED) (with Rodrigo Balvanera, Hannah Baron, Jessica Gottlieb, Laura Paler, and Julie Anne Weaver). 2025. Democratic Erosion Consortium

- Honorable Mention, Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Best Dataset Prize, APSA Comparative Politics Section, 2025

Fellowships & awards

2025 Theda Skocpol Emerging Scholar Award, APSA Comparative Politics Section

2021 Early Career Research Achievement Award, Brown University

2018 Henry Merritt Wriston Fellowship, Brown University
Junior Faculty Fellowship, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University

2008 Sterling Fellowship, Yale University

2006 Fulbright Fellowship

External grants

2024 US State Department, \$344,000 (with Jessica Gottlieb and Laura Paler)
J-PAL Humanitarian Protection Initiative, \$9,900 (with Mariana Carvalho and Débora Duque)

2023 Arnold Ventures, \$25,000 (with Graeme Blair, Santiago Tobón, and Anna Wilke)

2022 US State Department, \$1,738,000 (with Jessica Gottlieb and Laura Paler)

2020 J-PAL Crime & Violence Initiative, \$40,000 (with Travis Curtice, David Dow, and Guy Grossman)

2019 IOM, \$40,000 (with Manuel Moscoso, Andrés Vargas, and Michael Weintraub)
IPA Peace & Recovery Program, \$220,000 (with Michael Weintraub)
IPA Peace & Recovery Program, \$57,000 (with Michael Weintraub)
Hewlett Foundation, \$95,000

2018 UNDP, \$124,000 (with Manuel Moscoso, Andrés Vargas, and Michael Weintraub)
Social Science Research Council, \$10,000
Folke Bernadotte Academy, \$4,000 (with Hannah Smidt)
APSA Centennial Center, \$5,000
IPA Peace & Recovery Program, \$115,000 (with Guy Grossman)

2017 EDI, \$288,000 (with Guy Grossman)
EGAP, \$239,000 (with Guy Grossman)

2016 Folke Bernadotte Academy, \$17,000 (with Hannah Smidt)
KfW Development Bank, \$40,000 (with Manuel Moscoso, Andrés Vargas, and Michael Weintraub)

2015 Folke Bernadotte Academy, \$28,000 (with Manuel Moscoso, Andrés Vargas, and Michael Weintraub)
KfW Development Bank, \$63,000 (with Manuel Moscoso, Andrés Vargas, and Michael Weintraub)

2014 Folke Bernadotte Academy, \$35,000 (with Sabrina Karim and Benjamin Morse)
ISA, \$21,000 (with Simone Dietrich, Philip Roessler, and Matthew Winters)
IGC, \$40,000 (with Benjamin Morse and Lily Tsai)
Omidyar, \$45,000 (with Benjamin Morse and Lily Tsai)

2013 USAID, \$85,000 (with Philip Roessler)
IGC, \$75,000 (with Sabrina Karim and Benjamin Morse)

- Vanguard Charitable Trust, \$37,000 (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman)
- 2012 Humanity United, \$107,000 (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman)
Folke Bernadotte Academy, \$30,000 (with Kyle Beardsley, Michael Gilligan, and Sabrina Karim)
Folke Bernadotte Academy, \$7,100
ISA, \$9,300
NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, \$12,300
- 2010 Humanity United, \$140,000 (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman)

Presentations

WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, & THEMATIC CONFERENCES

- 2026 *Regional Meeting*, ESOC; *Postgraduate Colloquium*, Universidad de los Andes
- 2025 *International Relations Seminar*, UC San Diego; *Comparative Politics Workshop*, Stanford University
- 2024 *International Security Colloquium*, University of Washington; *Annual Meeting*, ESOC
- 2023 *Crime + Policing in Comparative Perspective*, University of Pennsylvania; *Inside the Box Seminar*, Vanderbilt University; *Latin American Conference: Crime, Conflict, and Migration*, ESOC
- 2022 *The Puzzle of Peace*, UNU-WIDER; *Law & Conflict Seminar*, University of Arizona; *Political Economy Seminar Series*, Duke University; *Evidence to Advance Reform in the Global Security and Justice Sectors*, National Academy of Sciences; *Research Talk Series*, Folke Bernadotte Academy
- 2021 *Comparative Politics Colloquium*, UC Berkeley; *Security, Peace, and Conflict Seminar*, Duke University; *Comparative Politics Workshop*, University of Chicago; *International Relations Colloquium*, University of Oxford; *Penn Identity & Conflict Lab Workshop*, University of Pennsylvania; *Latin American Studies Program Seminar*, Cornell University; *International Relations Seminar*, Waseda University; *Department of Government Speaker Series*, University of Essex; *Comparative Politics Workshop*, University of Pennsylvania; *The Future of Global Governance*, European GLOBE Project; *Business & Society Program*, Aspen Institute; *Online Economics of Crime Seminar*; *Working Group in African Political Economy (WGAPE)*
- 2020 *Comparative Politics Workshop*, Northwestern University; *Strategic Studies Group*, University of Oxford; *International Security Brown Bag Seminar*, Harvard Kennedy School; *The Pursuit of Peaceful Polling*, Folke Bernadotte Academy; *Social Unrest and Violent Conflict in Times of Pandemics*, HiCN; *Security, Peace, and Conflict Seminar*, Duke University; *Governance, Justice, and the Rule of Law in Conflict-affected States*, Folke Bernadotte Academy
- 2019 *Research Seminar*, UC Davis; *Research-Policy Dialogue*, UN DPO and Folke Bernadotte Academy; *Comparative Politics Seminar*, Stanford University; *Comparative Politics Colloquium*, UC Berkeley; *International Relations Seminar*, Stanford University; *Design Symposium*, US State Department and EGAP; *Replication Seminar*, UC San Diego; *Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations*, Folke Bernadotte Academy
- 2018 *CISAC Research Seminar*, Stanford University; *International Politics Seminar*, Columbia University; *The Next Frontier of Peacekeeping*, Yale University; *NYU-CESS Annual Conference*, NYU; *Comparative Politics Seminar*, Boston University
- 2017 *Joint Degree Program in Social Policy Seminar*, Princeton University; *International Political Economy Seminar*, SAIS; *International Development Seminar*, William & Mary; *Contemporary African Political Economy Research Seminar (CAPERS)*; *Brown Bag Lunch Seminar*, AidData; *Working Group in African Political Economy (WGAPE)*
- 2016 *New Perspectives on the State, Violence and Social Control*, University of Chicago; *Brown Bag Seminar*, Folke Bernadotte Academy; *Evidence-Based Approaches to Conflict Prevention and Mitigation*, US State Department

and EGAP; *China and the African State*, USAID; *Working Group on Security Sector Reform*, Folke Bernadotte Academy

2015 *African Economic Development*, Harvard University; *Comparative Politics Colloquium*, UC Berkeley; *Brown Bag Lunch Seminar*, Harvard School of Public Health; *Micro-Foundations of Conflict and Violence*, HiCN; *Semi-Annual Conference*, Political Instability Task Force; *Economics of Ebola*, IGC; *Working Group in African Political Economy (WGAPE)*

2014 *Faculty Colloquium*, Naval War College; *Global Justice After Colonialism*, McGill University; *Field Experiments in International Relations*, Princeton University; *Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations*, Folke Bernadotte Academy; *Semi-Annual Conference*, Political Instability Task Force; *Contemporary African Political Economy Research Seminar (CAPERS)*

2013 *Local Perceptions of UN Peacekeeping Operations*, UN OROLSI and NUPI; *Hacia la Reconstrucción del País*, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana; *Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations*, Folke Bernadotte Academy

2012 *Department of Machine Learning Colloquium*, Carnegie Mellon University

2011 *Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations*, Folke Bernadotte Academy

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

AEA Annual Meeting, 2023

APSA Annual Meeting, 2012, 2013, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

EGAP, 2017, 2019, 2022, 2023

ISA National Conference, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2021, 2024

MPSA National Conference, 2012, 2013

Teaching

Brown University

Democratic Erosion (undergraduate)

Post-Conflict Politics (undergraduate)

Security, Governance, and Development in Africa (undergraduate)

Proseminar in Comparative Politics (graduate)

Quantitative Research Methods II (graduate)

Experiments in the Social Sciences (graduate, summer short course)

Humanitarian Response and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (BIARI, summer short course)

Yale University

Post-Conflict Politics (undergraduate)

Related employment experience

USAID

2022-24 Academic expert on interventions to counter misinformation

National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

2021-22 Academic expert on interventions to improve police-community relations

USAID

2019-20 Academic expert on interventions to increase police accountability

Overseas Development Institute

- 2015-17 Academic expert on survey data analysis
- Political Instability Task Force**
- 2014-17 Academic expert on conflict forecasting
- Varieties of Democracy**
- 2013- Country expert on Liberia and Sierra Leone
- Freedom House**
- 2012-14 Country expert on Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone
- UN OROLSI**
- 2011-12 Academic expert on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) in Cote d'Ivoire
- Small Arms Survey**
- 2010 Academic expert on crime and violence in Liberia

Professional service

EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

- 2021- Steering Committee Co-Chair, [EGAP Democracy, Conflict, and Polarization Priority Theme](#)
- 2021- Steering Committee Member, [EGAP Crime Reduction and Police Accountability Priority Theme](#)
- 2021- Member, Security Sector Reform Advisory Network, [UN Department of Peace Operations](#)
- 2017- Co-Founder and Co-Director, [Democratic Erosion Consortium](#)
- 2015-21 Editorial Collective Member, [Studies in Comparative International Development](#)

REFEREE

AEJ: Applied Economics, American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, British Journal of Political Science, Cambridge University Press, Comparative Political Studies, Conflict Management and Peace Science, Conflict, Security, & Development, International Organization, International Peacekeeping, International Security, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Development Studies, Journal of Experimental Political Science, Journal of Peace Research, Journal of Politics, Oxford University Press, Perspectives on Politics, Political Behavior, Political Geography, Political Science Research & Methods, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, PS: Political Science & Politics, Review of International Organizations, Security Studies, Social Science & Medicine, World Bank Economic Review, World Development, World Politics

Academic affiliations

- 2024- Faculty Affiliate, Brown University Swearer Center for Public Service
- 2021- Faculty Affiliate, Brown University Africa Initiative
- 2019- Faculty Affiliate, Brown University Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies
- 2016- Member, EGAP
- 2016-19 Faculty Affiliate, Brown University Humanitarian Innovation Initiative (HI²)
- 2014-15 Research Fellow, AidData
- 2011- Member, Folke Bernadotte Academy Research Working Groups