

Robert A. Blair

Brown University
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Academic appointments

Brown University

2021- Associate Professor of Political Science and International and Public Affairs
2015-21 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 ([link](#))

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

24. “The Promise and Pitfalls of Conflict Prediction: Evidence from Colombia and Indonesia” (with Samuel Bazzi, Christopher Blattman, Oeindrila Dube, Matthew Gudgeon, and Richard Peck). 2021. *Review of Economics & Statistics*, forthcoming ([link](#))
23. “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). *American Political Science Review*, in press ([link](#))
 - Best Paper Presented at APSA in 2020 Award, APSA Experimental Research Section
22. “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). 2021. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, in press ([link](#))

21. “When Do UN Peacekeeping Operations Implement Their Mandates?” (with Jessica Di Salvatore and Hannah Smidt). 2021. *American Journal of Political Science*, in press ([link](#))
20. “Foreign Aid and Soft Power: Great Power Competition in Africa in the Early 21st Century” (with Robert Marty and Philip Roessler). 2021. *British Journal of Political Science*, in press ([link](#))
19. “Civil War and Citizens’ Demand for the State: An Empirical Test of Hobbesian Theory.” 2021. *British Journal of Political Science*, in press ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
17. “UN Peacekeeping and the Rule of Law.” 2021. *American Political Science Review* 115(1): 51-68 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
8. “International Intervention and the Rule of Law after Civil War: Evidence from Liberia.” 2019. *International Organization* 73(2): 365-398 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))

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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))
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 ([link](#))

REVISE & RESUBMIT

“Military Policing Exacerbates Crime and Human Rights Abuses: A Randomized Controlled Trial in Cali, Colombia” (with Michael Weintraub). *Nature Human Behaviour*, revise & resubmit ([link](#))

“Public Trust, Policing, and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from an Electoral Authoritarian Regime” (with Travis Curtice, David Dow, and Guy Grossman). *Social Science & Medicine*, revise & resubmit ([link](#))

“UN Peacekeeping and Democratization in Conflict-Affected Countries” (with Jessica Di Salvatore and Hannah Smidt). *American Political Science Review*, revise & resubmit ([link](#))

UNDER REVIEW

“Can Americans Depolarize? 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) ([link](#))

“Can Community Policing Improve Police-Community Relations in an Authoritarian Regime? Experimental Evidence from Uganda” (with Guy Grossman and Anna Wilke) ([link](#))

WORKING PAPERS

“A Global Analysis of Policymaker Support for Competing Aid Regimes” (with Samantha Custer and Philip Roessler)

“Legitimacy After Violence: Evidence from Two Lab-in-the-Field Experiments in Liberia” ([link](#))

“*Mano Dura*: An Experimental Evaluation of Military Policing in Cali, Colombia” (with Michael Weintraub)

“Public Works and Intimate Partner Violence: Experimental Evidence from Egypt and Tunisia” (with Eric Mvukiyehe)

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

“Peacekeeping, Security Sector Reform, and the Rule of Law.” 2021. In Han Dorussen (ed.), *Handbook on Peacekeeping and International Relations*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, under contract

“Restoring Police/Community Relations in Uganda” (with Guy Grossman and Anna Wilke). 2021. In Graeme Blair, Fotini Christia, and Jeremy Weinstein (eds.), *Crime, Insecurity, and Community Policing: Experiments on Building Trust*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, under contract

BOOK REVIEW

Review of *Committed to Rights: UN Human Rights Treaties and Legal Paths for Commitment and Compliance*, by Audrey Comstock. 2021. *Perspectives on Politics* 20(1): 284-6 ([link](#))

SELECTED POLICY REPORTS

Policing Practices to Build Community Trust and Legitimacy in the Global South. 2022. Committee on the Evidence to Advance Reform in the Global Security and Justice Sectors, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine ([link](#))

Couples Therapy for a Divided America: Evaluating the Effects of a Depolarization Workshop (with Hannah Baron, Danny Choi, Laura Gamboa, Jessica Gottlieb, Amanda Robinson, Steven Rosenzweig, Megan Turnbull, and Emily West). 2021 ([link](#))

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

Building Trust in a Reformed Security Sector: A Field Experiment in Liberia (with Sabrina Karim and Benjamin Morse). 2016. IGC ([link](#))

Patterns of Trust and Compliance in the Fight Against Ebola: Results from a Population-Based Survey of Monrovia, Liberia (with Benjamin Morse and Lily Tsai). 2015. IGC ([link](#))

Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation in Liberia (Part 2): Prospects for Conflict Forecasting and Early Warning (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman). 2012. IPA ([link](#))

Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation in Liberia (Part 1): Results from a Longitudinal Study (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman). 2011. IPA ([link](#))

Can We Teach Peace and Conflict Resolution? Results from an Evaluation of the Community Empowerment Program in Liberia (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman). 2011. IPA ([link](#))

SELECTED RELATED PUBLICATIONS

“How would we know if it’s time to protest Trump’s maneuvers?” (with Steven Rosenzweig). 2020. *The Boston Globe* ([link](#))

“Get ready to protest like democracy depends on it” (with Steven Rosenzweig). 2020. *The Boston Globe* ([link](#))

“Democratic Erosion in Comparative Perspective: Lessons from a Multi-University Consortium” (with Hannah Baron, Jessica Gottlieb, and Shelby Grossman). 2019. *APSA Comparative Politics Newsletter* XXIX(1): 77-84 ([link](#))

“Looking abroad increases optimism about our democracy in the US” (with Hannah Baron and Shelby Grossman). 2019. *Inside Higher Ed* ([link](#))

“In Liberia, the UN mission helped restore confidence in the rule of law.” 2019. *The Washington Post* (*Monkey Cage*) ([link](#))

“When is a warlord better than no warlord?” (with Pablo Kalmanovitz). 2017. *The Washington Post* (*Monkey Cage*) ([link](#))

Fellowships & awards

- 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

- 2020 J-PAL, \$40,000 (with Travis Curtice, David Dow, and Guy Grossman)
- 2019 IOM, \$40,000 (with Manuel Moscoso, Andrés Vargas, and Michael Weintraub)
IPA, \$220,000 (with Michael Weintraub)
IPA, \$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, \$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, \$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, \$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
 MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, \$15,000
 NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, \$12,300
- 2010 Humanity United, \$140,000 (with Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman)

Workshops, seminars, & conferences

- 2022 *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
Democracy, Conflict, & Polarization Seminar Series, EGAP
- 2021 *International Relations Seminar*, Waseda University
International Relations Colloquium, University of Oxford
Penn Identity & Conflict Lab Workshop, University of Pennsylvania
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
Latin American Studies Program Seminar, Cornell University
Annual Meeting, APSA
National Conference, ISA
Online Economics of Crime Seminar
Comparative Politics Colloquium, UC Berkeley
Security, Peace, and Conflict Seminar, Duke University
Comparative Politics Workshop, University of Chicago
 Boston-Area Working Group in African Political Economy (B-WGAPE)
- 2020 *Comparative Politics Workshop*, Northwestern University
The Pursuit of Peaceful Polling, Folke Bernadotte Academy
Strategic Studies Group, Oxford University
Annual Meeting, APSA
International Security Brown Bag Seminar, Harvard Kennedy School
Social Unrest and Violent Conflict in Times of Pandemics, Households in Conflict Network
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
Annual Conference, EGAP
Comparative Politics Seminar, Stanford University
Comparative Politics Colloquium, UC Berkeley
National Conference, ISA
Annual Meeting, APSA
International Relations Seminar, Stanford University
Design Symposium, US DoS and EGAP
Replication Seminar, UC San Diego
- 2018 *CISAC Research Seminar*, Stanford University
International Politics Seminar, Columbia University
Annual Meeting, APSA
The Next Frontier of Peacekeeping, Yale University
NYU-CESIS Annual Conference, NYU
Comparative Politics Seminar, Boston University
- 2017 *Joint Degree Program in Social Policy Seminar*, Princeton University
International Political Economy Seminar, SAIS
Annual Conference, EGAP
Contemporary African Political Economy Research Seminar (CAPERS)
International Development Seminar, William & Mary
Working Group in African Political Economy (WGAPE)
Brown Bag Lunch Seminar, AidData
- 2016 *New Perspectives on the State, Violence and Social Control*, University of Chicago
Evidence-Based Approaches to Conflict Prevention and Mitigation, US DoS and EGAP
Working Group on Security Sector Reform, Folke Bernadotte Academy
National Conference, ISA
Brown Bag Seminar, Folke Bernadotte Academy
China and the African State, USAID
Unequal Security in the Americas, Brown University
- 2015 *Comparative Politics Colloquium*, UC Berkeley
Democracy in Africa, Brown University
Semi-Annual Conference, Political Instability Task Force
Brown Bag Lunch Seminar, Harvard School of Public Health
Working Group in African Political Economy (WGAPE)
National Conference, ISA
African Economic Development, Harvard University
Economics of Ebola, IGC
Microfoundations of Conflict and Violence, Households in Conflict Network and World Bank
- 2014 *Faculty Colloquium*, Naval War College
Global Justice After Colonialism, McGill University
Semi-Annual Conference, Political Instability Task Force
Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, Folke Bernadotte Academy
Contemporary African Political Economy Research Seminar (CAPERS)
Field Experiments in International Relations, Princeton University

- 2013 *Hacia la Reconstrucción del País*, Pontifica Universidad Javeriana
Annual Meeting, APSA
Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, Folke Bernadotte Academy
National Conference, ISA
Local Perceptions of UN Peacekeeping Operations, UN OROLSI and NUPI
- 2012 *Annual Meeting*, APSA
Department of Machine Learning Colloquium, Carnegie Mellon University
National Conference, MPSA
- 2011 *Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations*, Folke Bernadotte Academy

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 (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

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

- 2021- Consultant on police reform

USAID

- 2019-20 Consultant on police accountability

Overseas Development Institute

- 2015-17 Consultant on survey data analysis

Political Instability Task Force

- 2014-17 Consultant on forecasting civil wars

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 Consultant on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) in Cote d'Ivoire

Small Arms Survey

- 2010 Consultant on violence in Liberia

Professional service

EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

- 2021- Co-Chair, EGAP Democracy, Conflict, and Polarization Priority Theme Steering Committee ([website](#))
- 2021- Member, EGAP Crime Reduction and Police Accountability Priority Theme Steering Committee ([website](#))
- 2021- Member, Security Sector Reform Advisory Network, UN Department of Peace Operations
- 2017- Coordinator, Democratic Erosion Consortium ([website](#))
- 2017-19 Chair, EGAP Peer Response Committee
- 2015-21 Member, *Studies in Comparative International Development* Editorial Collective

REFEREE

American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Conflict Management and Peace Science, 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, Political Geography, Political Science Research & Methods, Review of International Organizations, World Bank Economic Review, World Development, World Politics

Academic affiliations

- 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 Working Group on Security Sector Reform
- 2011- Member, Folke Bernadotte Academy Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations