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Academic appointment

Latin American Public Opinion Project, Vanderbilt University
Research fellow (predoctoral), 2016–

Education

Nuffield College, University of Oxford
Junior Visiting Scholar (predoctoral), 2015–2016

University of Wisconsin–Madison
Ph.D. in Political Science, 2018 (expected)
Major Field: Comparative Politics
Minor Field: Methodology
M.A. Political Science, 2013

University of Cambridge
M.Phil. Development Studies, 2011

Johns Hopkins University
B.A. International Studies, 2010

Dissertation

Divide to rule: deconcentration as coalition formation

Committee: John Ahlquist (chair), Rikhil Bhavnani, Scott Gehlbach, Noam Lupu, and Nils Ringe

Deconcentration—the creation of new sub-national units of government—has quietly become commonplace, with nearly 400 episodes across 126 countries over the period 1960–2010. Recent studies have argued that deconcentration is the product of local and national elites jointly pursuing new districts for patronage and electoral gain. Yet this perspective leaves unresolved why patterns of contestation over deconcentration fail to map onto dominant cleavages such as partisanship or ethnicity, and how such conflicts get resolved. I argue that rulers instead pursue deconcentration to manipulate political coalitions such as factions or parties. First, I study a model of non-cooperative coalition formation, finding that elite preferences over deconcentration can be induced by expectations about coalitional alignments under alternative player sets. Second, I test the empirical implications of my theory with supervised machine learning models, using new data on deconcentration worldwide over the period 1960–2010. I demonstrate that my theory does a better job of explaining variation in deconcentration than do alternative theories. Third, a central implication of the theory is that shocks to coalitional bargaining can destabilize equilibrium coalitions, making deconcentration much more likely during periods of re-equilibration. I test this prediction by merging and extending data on sudden leadership deaths, finding that such exogenous shocks lead to a significant increase in the probability of deconcentration. Finally, I draw on archival materials to trace the coalition-manipulation mechanism through a close case comparison of three statehood claims in early post-colonial Nigeria.

Publications

2. “A New Measure of Congruence: The Earth Mover’s Distance” (with Noam Lupu and Lucía Selios). 2017. *Political Analysis* 25 (1): 95-113.
1. “Mass-Elite Congruence and Representation in Argentina” (with Noam Lupu). 2017. In *Malaise in Representation in Latin American Countries: Chile, Argentina, Uruguay*, eds. Alfredo Joignant, Mauricio Morales, and Claudio Fuentes. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 281-302.

Work in progress

4. “Divide to Rule: Deconcentration and Coalition Bargaining.” Job market paper.
3. “Conditional Relationships in Dynamic Models.” *Under review*.
2. “Affluence and Congruence” (with Noam Lupu). *Under review*.
1. “Measuring Distributional Distance” (with Andy Eggers).

Conference activity

8. American Political Science Association annual meeting, 2017 (paper)
7. Society for Institutional and Organizational Economics, 2017 (paper)
6. American Political Science Association annual meeting, 2016 (paper)
5. Society for Political Methodology annual meeting, 2016 (poster)
4. European Political Science Association annual meeting, 2016 (paper)
3. Political Studies Association Methods Conference, 2016 (paper)
2. Nuffield College Graduate Student Conference, 2016 (paper)
1. Society for Political Methodology annual meeting, 2015 (poster)

Awards and grants

13. Summer Initiative Funding, University of Wisconsin–Madison Political Science, 2017
12. University Fellowship, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2012-2017
11. APSA Class & Inequality Section graduate travel grant, 2016
10. Election Research Center Conference Funding, 2016
9. Summer Initiative Funding, University of Wisconsin–Madison Political Science, 2015
8. National Science Foundation graduate travel funding (to attend PolMeth), 2015
7. Summer Initiative Funding, University of Wisconsin–Madison Political Science, 2014
6. “Excellent” Performance, Teaching Evaluation Committee, 2014
5. Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Award, 2013-2014 (declined)
4. Summer Initiative Funding, University of Wisconsin–Madison Political Science, 2013
3. Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Summer Award, 2013
2. Distinction, M.Phil. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2011
1. Phi Beta Kappa, Johns Hopkins University, 2010

Professional experience

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Project Assistant to:

Nils Ringe (European Union, linguistic preferences), 2016
Rikhil Bhavnani (India, mobilization, development), 2013–2016
John Ahlquist (methodology, maximum likelihood), 2014–2015
Noam Lupu (voting behavior, electoral institutions), 2013–2014
Mark Copelovitch (financial crises), 2013–2014

Teaching Assistant for:

Introduction to American Politics (undergraduate, Spring 2013)
African International Relations, (undergraduate, Fall 2012)

Grader for: The Politics of Sport (undergraduate, Fall 2013)

Department of Africana Studies, Bowdoin College

Research Assistant for Olufemi Vaughan (Nigeria, state formation), 2011–2013

Department for International Development (DFID)

Research Consultant, Policy Division, Politics and the State Team, 2009

Office of Tom Brake, Member of Parliament

Constituency assistant, 2008

Service and affiliations

Member/affiliate, APSA, EPSA, PSA, and the Elections Research Center at UW–Madison
Coordinator, Political Economy Colloquium, Wisconsin–Madison, 2014–2015
Co-Coordinator, Political Behavior Research Group, Wisconsin–Madison, 2014–2015
Student Rep., Computer Services Committee, Wisconsin–Madison, 2014–2015
Web Admin, African Politics Conference Group, 2013–2014

Skills

Software: L^AT_EX, R, Stata, Python, Stan, JAGS, SurveyToGo, QGIS, Bash, Git, Slurm
Languages: Spanish (Intermediate), Japanese (beginner), Yorùbá (beginner)

References

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