

# Austin L. Wright

Harris School of Public Policy  
The University of Chicago  
1307 East 60th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Phone: (210) 367-6854  
Office: Harris Public Policy, 2005  
Email: [austinlw@uchicago.edu](mailto:austinlw@uchicago.edu)  
Homepage: [www.austinlwright.com](http://www.austinlwright.com)

**Fields:** political economy; management, strategy, operations.

**DEI:** URM; first gen. college grad.

## Academic Positions

**Assistant Professor** *The University of Chicago*, Harris School of Public Policy, Jul. 2016

*Faculty Director:* DPSS; IPAL; DAC; DSC-GDP IV.

*Affiliations:* Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts; Becker Friedman Institute (BFI); Empirical Studies of Conflict Project (ESOC).

*Honors:* Most Outstanding Faculty Member Award, 2022-2023; *Last Lecture* Address, 2021; Most Outstanding Junior Faculty Member Award, 2016-2017.

**Visiting Faculty** *Yale University*, School of Management, Sep. 2021-Aug. 2022  
Leitner Political Economy Group, Sep. 2022-Jun. 2024

## Education

**Ph.D.** *Princeton University*, Jun. 2016

*Honors:* National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (GRFP); President's Fellowship; Parker D. Handy Prize Fellowship in Public Affairs; Office of Diversity & Inclusion Research Grant; George Kateb Prize for Best Preceptor.

**B.S.** *The University of Texas at Austin*, Aug. 2009

**B.A.** *The University of Texas at Austin*, Jun. 2009

*Honors:* Dean's Distinguished Graduate (top 12 in college cohort); Phi Beta Kappa; High Honors; Special Department Honors (senior thesis, 3×); Bill and Melinda Gates Millennium Scholarship; Top Prize, ICPSR Undergraduate Research Paper Competition; NFA-NIET National Champion (2×).

## Research

### *Published Papers*

- [1] Public response to government alerts saves lives during Russian invasion of Ukraine. With David Van Dijke, Mark Polyak. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, May 2023.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2022-148.
- [2] Rebel Capacity, Intelligence Gathering, and Combat Tactics. With Konstantin Sonin. *American Journal of Political Science*, January 2023.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2018-74.
- [3] Social Alignment and Social Control: Reporting the Taliban in Afghanistan. With Patrick Bergemann. *Sociological Science*, April 2023.
- [4] Information Operations Increase Civilian Security Cooperation. With Konstantin Sonin. *The Economic Journal*, April 2022.

- Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2019-130.  
—Coverage: [VoxDev Podcast](#)
- [5] Televising Justice during War. With Andres Uribe and Stephen Stapleton. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, March 2022.
- [6] Unmasking Partisanship: How Polarization Influences Public Responses to Collective Risk. With Maria Milosh, Marc Painter, Konstantin Sonin, and David Van Dijke. *Journal of Public Economics*, December 2021.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2020-102.  
—Coverage: [Pandemic Economics Podcast: Uncovering the Politics of Mask Usage](#), [VoxEU CEPR](#), [Washington Post](#), [The Guardian](#)
- [7] Science Skepticism Reduces Compliance with COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place Policies. With Adam Brzezinski, Valentin Kecht, and David Van Dijke. *Nature Human Behavior*, October 2021.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2020-56.  
—Coverage: [VoxEU](#)
- [8] Security Transitions. With Thiemo Fetzer, Pedro CL Souza, and Oliver Vanden Eynde. *American Economic Review*, July 2021.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2020-176  
—[American Economic Association Research Highlights Podcast](#)  
—Coverage: [VoxEU CEPR](#), [The Guardian](#)
- [9] Poverty and Economic Dislocation Reduce Compliance with COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place Protocols. With Konstantin Sonin, Jesse Driscoll, and Jarnicka Wilson. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, November 2020.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2020-40.  
—Coverage: [NPR](#), [VoxEU](#)
- [10] Insurgent Learning. With Francesco Trebbi, Eric Weese, and Andrew Shaver. *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy*, September 2020.  
—National Bureau for Economic Research (NBER) Working Paper no. 23475.
- [11] Political and Environmental Risks Influence Migration and Human Smuggling across the Mediterranean Sea. With Kara Ross Camarena, Sarah Claudy, and Jijun Wang. *PLoS One*, July 2020.
- [12] Places to Hide: Terrain, Ethnicity, and Political Violence. With David B. Carter and Andrew Shaver. *Journal of Politics*, October 2019.
- [13] Civilians, Control, and Collaboration during Civil Conflict. With Luke Condra. *International Studies Quarterly*, August 2019.
- [14] Border Walls and Smuggling Spillovers. With Anna Getmansky and Guy Grossman. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, July 2019.  
—The Pearson Institute (TPI) Discussion Paper no. 41
- [15] The Logic of Insurgent Electoral Violence. With Luke Condra, James Long, and Andrew Shaver. *American Economic Review*, November 2018.  
—[American Economic Association Chart of the Week: State Un-building](#)

*Circulating papers and funded projects*

- [1] Aid Fragmentation and Corruption. With Travers Child and Yun Xiao. Conditionally accepted: *Review of Economics and Statistics*.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2021-69.
- [2] Courting Civilians during Conflict: Evidence from Taliban Judges in Afghanistan. With Donald Grasse and Renard Sexton. Conditionally accepted: *International Organization*.
- [3] Refugee Return and Conflict: Evidence from a Natural Experiment. With Christopher Blair. Revisions requested: *American Economic Review*.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2021-82
- [4] Losing on the Home Front? Battlefield Casualties, Media, and Public Support for Foreign Interventions. With Thiemo Fetzer, Pedro CL Souza, Oliver Vanden Eynde. Revisions requested: *American Journal of Political Science*.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2021-52
- [5] Conceptualizing and Measuring Territorial Control in Civil Wars. With Maria Ballesteros and Christopher Blair. Proposal accepted: *World Politics*.
- [6] The Economic Origins and Consequences of Territorial Control.  
—BFI Data Grant, 2021-2022.
- [7] Isolation and Insurrection: How Partisanship and Political Geography Fueled January 6, 2021. With David Van Dijke, Konstantin Sonin.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2021-13.  
—Coverage: [The Daily Beast](#), [Salon](#)  
—Methodological Supplement: Using Mobile Device Traces to Improve Near-Real Time Data Collection During the George Floyd Protests. [\[link\]](#)
- [8] Economic Competition and Civilian Support for Rebel Reintegration. With Amanda Kennard and Konstantin Sonin.
- [9] Propaganda during Armed Conflict: Evidence from the Islamic State in Afghanistan. With Travers Child, Kai Gehring, Sarah Langlotz, and Rossella De Sabbatta.
- [10] Civilian Abuse, Counterinsurgent Operations, and Wartime Informing. With Luke Condra, Jacob Shapiro, and Andrew Shaver.  
—The Pearson Institute (TPI) Discussion Paper no. 42.
- [11] Economic Shocks and Rebel Tactics.  
—Runner-up, **Best Paper Prize**, 2015 UCLA COMPASS Conference on Comparative Politics  
—Households in Conflict Network (HiCN) Working Paper no. 232.
- [12] The Politics of Proxy Warfare: Evidence from Ceasefire Violations in the Ukraine. With Natalie Ayers, Bakdaulet Baitan, George Beknazar, Christopher Blair, and Konstantin Sonin.
- [13] Red lines and Negotiables: How Exposure to Wartime Violence Influences Support for Peace Settlements in Ukraine. With Thomas Zeitzoff, Anna Getmansky, Tolga Sinmazdemir, Sasha Jason, Nadiya Kostyuk.  
—National Science Foundation (NSF) RAPID grant no. 2226883.

- [14] Corruption and Political Mobilization: Evidence from a Natural Experiment. With Luke Condra.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2021-59.
- [15] Political Economy of Crisis Response. With Arda Gitmez and Konstantin Sonin.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2020-68.

### *Policy Papers*

- [1] Tracking Mask Mandates during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Geet Chawla, Luke Chen, Anthony Farmer, IPAL Lab, and DPSS Lab.  
—Becker Friedman Institute (BFI) Working Paper no. 2020-104.
- [2] Attacks on Energy Infrastructure Undermine Democratic Institutions. With Rebecca Lordan-Perret, Peter Burgherr, Matteo Spada and Robert Rosner. *Energy Policy*, September 2019.
- [3] Why do terrorists claim credit? *ICPSR Special Bulletin*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2009).
- [4] Connecting the Red Corridor: infrastructure development in conflict zones. With Oliver Vanden Eynde, Jamie Hansen-Lewis and Jacob N. Shapiro (*International Growth Centre* [working paper](#)).

### Invited Talks & Workshops

**2023** (Includes Scheduled) LSE/UCL/IFS, UC Berkeley (Goldman), Georgia Tech, UC Davis, AEA, NBER, ESOC, Brown University, University of British Columbia + Berkeley PE Conference, LSE **2022** University of British Columbia + Berkeley PE Conference, Yale University (Leitner), NBER Summer Institute, ESOC, Harvard University, Princeton University, Vanderbilt University, University of South Carolina, London School of Economics, Bocconi University (Economics, CLEAN Seminar) **2021** Durham University, Yale University (Sociology), Washington University in St. Louis (International Relations), Emory University, ESOC, APSA ( $\times 2$ ), HiCN **2021**: Conflict, Migration, and Displacement, NBER Summer Institute (virtual), Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), University of California, San Diego (Applied Economics), United States Defense Intelligence Agency, ASSA (Economics of National Security Association) **2020** (Includes Scheduled/Canceled) Allied Social Science Associations (ASSA, Economics of Violence), Catholic University of Louvain (UCLouvain), New York University (International Relations), Vanderbilt University (~~COVID~~), Washington University in St. Louis (~~COVID~~), London School of Economics (~~COVID~~), ESOC (~~COVID~~), Berkeley-Cornell Formal Theory Seminar (virtual), University of Chicago COVID-19 series (virtual), NBER Summer Institute (virtual), APSA (virtual), University of Chicago Center for Spatial Data Science (virtual), New York University (Political Economy, virtual). **2019** Georgetown University, World Bank Research Group, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University Workshop on Data Science and Conflict, United States Military Academy (West Point), Political Economy in the Chicago Area (PECA), Northwestern University, University of California, Berkeley, Ohio State University Workshop on Military History, Facebook Workshop on Online/Offline Hate, World Bank DIME Data Science Conference, University of Zurich, ESOC, Paris School of Economics Workshop (Economics of Conflict), Bozeman Security Studies Workshop. **2018** Princeton University, Big Data panel at PeaceCon 2018, Pearson Global Forum, University of Chicago / Becker Friedman Institute Development Day, Paris School of Economics, American Economic Association Annual Meeting (Economics of National Security), World Bank (Social, Urban, Rural, and Resilience), Emory University (virtual), Dartmouth College (virtual). **2017** American University of Afghanistan (Kabul), UoC Law School, University of Pittsburgh (Public Affairs), National Bureau for Economic Research (NBER) National Security, NBER Summer Institute ( $\times 2$ ), High School of Economics (Moscow), Economics of Crime Workshop, NEWEPS, ESOC ( $\times 2$ ), Emory University (virtual), United States Armed Forces, Center for Global Health Engagement. **2016** Prince of Songkla University, Royal Thai Army [Counterinsurgency Division], Thai

Department of Special Investigations [US equivalent: Federal Bureau of Investigation], Universidad del Rosario, International Political Economy Society (IPES), University of Washington (PS/Evans) Workshop on Voting, American Political Science Association (APSA), Empirical Studies of Conflict (ESOC) Annual Meeting, World Bank / Asia Foundation Workshop on Violence Monitoring. **2015** American University (SIS), University of California Riverside, University of Chicago (Harris), University of Southern California (SIR/SSI), University of Minnesota, Connecticut College, University of Iowa, Vanderbilt University, European Political Science Association (EPSA); UCLA Conference on Comparative Politics; Northeast Workshop in Empirical Political Science (NEWEPS) ( $\times 2$ ). **2014** Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA); International Studies Association (ISA).

## Teaching

**Instructor**, *Statistics for Data Analysis II*, Winter 2017, Winter 2018, Winter 2019, Winter 2020, Winter 2021, Winter 2023 [Harris]

**Instructor**, *Big Data and Development*, Winter 2023 [Harris]

**Instructor**, *Data Analysis for International Development*, Autumn 2019, Autumn 2020 [Harris]

**Instructor**, *Policy Lab on Global Conflict*, Winter 2018, Winter 2019 [Harris]

**Instructor**, *Insurgency in South and Southeast Asia*, Winter 2017 [Harris]

**TA**, *Human Rights*, Spring 2014 [Princeton]

**TA**, *Violent Politics*, Fall 2012 [Princeton]

**High School Instructor**, *Mathematics* (Teach For America), July 2009 - June 2011

## University and Professional Service

### *Faculty Director*

**Data and Policy Summer Scholars Program** In 2018, I launched and continue to direct DPSS. This program introduces students to elements of the Harris Core—teaching them how to solve basic and intermediate analytical tasks with the tools of causal inference we teach our full-time masters students.

**Data Analytics Credential Program** In 2021, I launched and continue to direct DAC, a an evening short course in data analytics and open-source coding intended for working professionals.

**International Policy Action Lab** In 2020, I launched and continue to co-direct IPAL with team members at Peking University. This multi-university program focuses on econometrics and open-source coding. The component I direct is focused on an intensive applied exercise—a Capstone project—where students work in a clinic-like setting on a real policy issue with original data.

**DSC-GDP** In 2022, Harris launched and continue to co-direct DSC-GDP (IV = 2023). This custom credential program focuses on policy-making for public servants, advancing evidence-based policy evaluation through coursework in political economy, economics, econometrics, and open-source coding.

### *Advising*

#### *Masters students and their placements*

**Wenyan Deng** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Political Science PhD)

**Changwook Ju** (Yale University, Political Science PhD)

**Morgan Spangler** (UCLA, Political Science PhD)

**Sebastian Hernandez** (Yale University, Political Science PhD)

**Mengxi Sun** (University of Pittsburgh, Economics PhD)

**Arvind Ilamaram** (University of Chicago, Comparative Human Development PhD)

**Weihong Qi** (University of Rochester, Political Science PhD)

*PhD students and their placements*

**Rebecca Lordan-Perret** (Phd Dissertation Advisor, placement: University of Basel, Postdoctoral Researcher on Energy Market Modeling)

**Mariana Laverde** (Masters Thesis Advisor, placement: Postdoctoral Fellow at Yale University, Assistant Professor at Boston College)

**Olga Namen** (Coauthor on Dissertation Chapter, placement: Innovations for Poverty Action)

*Undergraduate students writing honors theses*

**Tamar Honig** (Global Studies)

**Hannah Walter** (Economics)

**Paul Soltys** (Public Policy)

*Research assistants and their placements*

**Maria Ballesteros** (Harvard University, Government PhD)

**Arica Schuett** (Emory University, Political Science PhD)

**Ryan Teehan** (University of Chicago, Masters in Computer Science)

**Mariya Milosh** (University of Chicago, Masters in Computational Analysis and Public Policy)

*University Representative*

*American Institute of Afghanistan Studies*

*Journal Reviewer*

*American Economic Review, American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, The Journal of Politics, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Conflict Resolution, International Security, World Bank Economic Review, Journal of International Economics, World Politics, Transactions in GIS, Political Research Quarterly, Conflict Management and Peace Science, Journal of Development Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics, American Economic Review Insights, International Studies Quarterly, MIT Press (Economics)*

**Fellowships & Awards**

- National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2012 - 2015
- University Nomination, ProQuest, Best dissertation in the social sciences in the past two years, 2016
- The Americorps Teaching Award, 2012
- Princeton External Fellowship Prize, 2012-2015
- Princeton University President's Fellowship, 2011 - 2016
- Parker D. Handy Prize Fellowship in Public Affairs, 2011 - 2016
- Niehaus Center for Global Governance Research Grant, 2011 - 2012
- Rhodes Scholar Nominee [unanimous selection], 2010
- Dean's Distinguished Graduate [top 12 in College of Liberal Arts], 2009
- Phi Beta Kappa, 2009
- Top Prize, ICPSR Undergraduate Research Paper Competition, 2009

- The William Jennings Bryan Prize in Government for Best Thesis of the Year, 2008
- George H. Mitchell Student Award for Academic Excellence, 2008
- Audre and Bernard Rapoport & Robert D. King Fellowship, 2008
- Presidential Scholar, 2005 - 2009
- Bill and Melinda Gates Millennium Scholar (full ride), 2005 - 2009
- Howard and Nancy Terry Scholar (full ride), 2005 - 2009
- Admiral Bobby R. Inman Scholar, 2007
- Hispanic Bar Association Scholar, 2007
- Minnie Stevens Piper Scholar, 2005-2009
- Emo Jean Cottrell Scholar, 2005-2009
- Baumberger Endowment Scholar, 2005-2009
- Jesse H. Jones Centennial Scholar, 2005-2009
- HACER-McDonald Scholar, 2005-2009
- Marion Burke Smith Travel Grant Recipient, 2008
- H. Malcolm Macdonald Scholar, 2007

**Public speaking awards:** **NFA-NIET:** *Individual Pentathlon Sweepstakes*: Overall National Runner-Up (2009); *Extemporaneous Speaking National Champion* (2009); National Runner-Up (2008); *Persuasive Speaking National Champion* (2009); *Impromptu Speaking National Finalist* (3rd Place: 2009), Quarter-Finalist (2008); *Rhetorical Criticism National Semi-Finalist* (2008); *Informative Speaking National Quarter-Finalist* (2009); **AFA-NIET:** *Extemporaneous Speaking National Runner-Up* (2008), Finalist (5th Place: 2009), Semi-Finalist (2006), Quarter-Finalist (2007); *Impromptu Speaking National Runner-Up* (2009); *Persuasive Speaking National Finalist* (3rd Place: 2009); *Communication Analysis National Semi-Finalist* (2008)

## Technical Languages

**Data capture:** Python, JavaScript

**Data analysis:** Stata, R, ArcGIS, QGIS

**Typesetting:** L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Microsoft Office Suite [certified]

Last updated: November 7, 2023