

RACHEL A. SCHWARTZ

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of International and Area Studies
David L. Boren College of International Studies
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Assistant Professor of International and Area Studies, University of Oklahoma, Fall 2022-present

Assistant Professor of Political Science, Otterbein University, 2020-2022

Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Inter-American Policy and Research (CIPR), Tulane University, 2019-2020

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI, USA
Ph.D. in Political Science, 2019
M.A. in Political Science, 2015

Haverford College, Haverford, PA, USA
B.A. in Political Science and Latin American and Iberian Studies, 2011

BOOK

2023. *Undermining the State from Within: The Institutional Legacies of Civil War in Central America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009219907>

- Recipient of the APSA 2020 Gabriel A. Almond Award for the best dissertation in comparative politics

- Selected as one of Democracy Paradox’s “Top 5 Books of 2023”

SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

Forthcoming. “Embracing the Crisis of Research Design: How the Collapse of Case Selection in the Field Can Uncover New Discoveries.” *Perspectives on Politics*.

2024. “Leveraging Country Expertise: How Scholars in International Studies Can Support the Asylum Process” (with Hannah S. Chapman). *International Studies Perspectives* [open access]. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekae002>.

2023. “How Guatemala Defied the Odds” (with Anita Isaacs). *Journal of Democracy* 34(4): 21-35. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2023.a907685>.

- The most-read article published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2023

- Also published in Spanish: “Cómo Guatemala desafió los pronósticos,” *Argumentos* 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.46476/ra.v4i2.175>.

2022. “Guatemala 2021: Reconsolidating Impunity and Reversing Democracy.” *Revista de Ciencia Política* 42(2): 309-322.

<https://doi.org/10.4067/s0718-090x2022005000108>.

2022. "Rewriting the Rules of Land Reform: Counterinsurgency and Agrarian Development in Nicaragua." *Small Wars & Insurgencies*. First View. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2022.2033497>.

- Received an honorable mention for best paper at the 2021 REPAL (*Red para el Estudio de la Economía Política de América Latina*) Meeting

2022. "'To Make Men Believe Their Rebellion Just': Thomas Hobbes and the Study of Civil War" (with Dan Kapust). *Polity*. 54(2): 359-384. <https://doi.org/10.1086/718682>.

2021. "How Predatory Informal Rules Outlast State Reform: Evidence from Post-Authoritarian Guatemala." *Latin American Politics and Society* 63(1): 49-71. <https://doi.org/10.1017/lap.2020.32>.

2021. "Conjuring the Criminal State: Rethinking the 'State-Idea' in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and International Statebuilding." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa031>.

2020. "Civil War, Institutional Change, and the Criminalization of the State: Evidence from Guatemala." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55(3): 381-401. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-020-09312-7>.

2020. "Guatemala: The Military in Politics" (with Anita Isaacs). *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1893>.

2018. "What Drives Violence against Civilians in Civil War? Evidence from Guatemala's Conflict Archives" (with Scott Straus). *Journal of Peace Research* 55(2): 222-235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317749272>.

2018. "Rethinking Comparison in the Social Sciences" (with Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith). *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 16(1): 1-7. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2562143>.

BOOK CHAPTERS

2023. "A Durable but Impoverished Peace: Evaluating Twenty-five Years of Peacebuilding in Guatemala." *State-Society Relations in Guatemala: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Omar Sanchez-Sibony. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 147-172.

2022. "Nicaragua: Populist Performance and Authoritarian Practice during COVID-19" (with Kai M. Thaler). *Populists and the Pandemic: How Populists Around the World Responded to COVID-19*. Eds. Nils Ringe and Lucio Rennó. Routledge Studies in Extremism and Democracy. London: Routledge. 184-195. Available open access: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003197614>.

2018. "From Reconciliation to Rule of Law: The Shifting Landscape of International Transitional Justice Assistance in Guatemala" (with Anita Isaacs). *Transitional Justice, International Assistance, and Civil Society: Missed Connections*. Eds. Paige Arthur and Christalla Yakinthou. New York: Cambridge University Press. 27-51. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316711347>.

BOOK REVIEWS

2023. “Contesting Development Practice and Discourse in Cold War Guatemala.” Review of Sarah Foss’ “On Our Own Terms: Development and Indigeneity in Cold War Guatemala.” *Diplomatic History*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhad093>.

WORKING PAPERS

“When Counterinsurgent Institutions Persist: Unpacking Local Wartime Legacies” (with Reo Matsuzaki), *invited to revise and resubmit*

“International Anti-Corruption Missions in Latin America: Pathways of Emergence”

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

“International Anti-Corruption Commission, Elite Manipulation, and Democratic Backsliding in Central America,” *book project in progress*

“Guatemala 2023: From Authoritarian Deepening to Democratic Resilience,” *invited submission to Revista de Ciencia Política*

“Rethinking the Dynamics of Cumulative Radicalization: The Case of the Guatemalan Genocide”

“Iterative Casing and the Possibilities of External Validity in Small-n Research”

“Rethinking the State-Armed Conflict-Organized Crime Nexus”

“Explaining Community Reconstruction after Violence: The Aftermath of the Tulsa and Rosewood Race Massacres”

COMMENTARY & POLICY ANALYSIS

2024. “Is Central America Doomed?” (with Mateo Jarquín and Kai M. Thaler). *Journal of Democracy*.

2023. “Guatemala’s underdog reformer won the presidency. Can he remake the country’s politics?” *LSE Latin American and Caribbean Blog*, August 24.
- Also published in Spanish: “El candidato sorpresa ganó las elecciones de Guatemala pero, ¿podrá reformar sus políticas?”

2023. “If Election Deniers Succeed, Guatemala Will Have Lost the Battle for Democracy” (with Anita Isaacs and Álvaro Montenegro). *The New York Times*. July 6.

- Also published in Spanish: “¿Es posible resistir el ascenso del autoritarismo? Guatemala será la prueba.”

2023. “Guatemala: Resisting Democratic Backsliding in the Least Likely of Places?” *Democracy Paradox*. June 26.

2021. “The Biden Administration has pledged significant aid to Central America. But where should it go and how should it get there?” *Voces*. The Inter-American Dialogue. April 22.

2019. “Guatemala will elect a new president on Sunday. Here are three things to know.” The Monkey Cage. *The Washington Post*. August 9.

2019. “A Victory for Guatemala’s Pacto de Corruptos.” *NACLA Report on the Americas* (online). June 21.

2019. “Guatemala’s Anti-Corruption Struggle Teeters on the Edge.” *NACLA Report on the Americas* (magazine) 51(2): 200-205.

2018. “Why are so many children coming to the U.S. from Central America in the first place?” The Monkey Cage. *The Washington Post*. June 29.

2018. “Is Russia interfering in Guatemala’s anti-corruption commission? The real story might surprise you.” The Monkey Cage. *The Washington Post*. May 9.

2017. “Guatemala’s president tried to expel the U.N. commissioner who announced he was under investigation.” The Monkey Cage. *The Washington Post*. September 6.

2015. “Confronting Government Corruption in Guatemala and Honduras.” *SSN Basic Facts*. Scholars Strategy Network. December 11.

2013. “Repression, Resistance, and Indigenous Rights in Guatemala” (with Anita Isaacs). *Americas Quarterly* (Winter): 32-7.

2012. “Democracy in Progress: El Salvador’s Unfinished Transition” (with Michael Shifter). *World Politics Review*, Feature Report: *After the Ink Dries: Long-Term Postconflict Reconciliation*.

2012. “El Salvador’s Gang Truce Raises Troubling Questions for the Region.” *World Politics Review*, May 11.

2012. “Central America Moves Toward a Truly Regional Stance on Drugs.” *World Politics Review*. March 23.

2011. “¿Equilibrio en la frontera? México en los medios de comunicación norteamericanos” (with Michael Shifter). *Temas* 68 (Oct.-Dec.): 46-55.

SELECT HONORS & AWARDS

Big Ideas Challenge Grant, “Climate Information and Actionable Timescales for Climate Security in Latin America” (\$135,000), Office of the Vice President for Research and Partnerships, University of Oklahoma, 2024-2026

Junior Faculty Fellowship, College of International Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2023

Presidential International Travel Fellowship, College of International Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2023

New Voices Initiative Teaching Fellow, Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Methods Research (IQMR), Syracuse University, 2023

Civil War Paths Fellow, Centre for the Comparative Study of Civil War, University of York, 2022-2023

New Teacher of the Year, 2021-2022, Otterbein University

Best Paper Award, Honorable Mention, REPAL (*Red para el Estudio de la Economía Política de América Latina*) Annual Meeting, 2021

Gabriel A. Almond Award for the Best Dissertation in Comparative Politics, American Political Science Association (APSA), 2020

Best Dissertation Award, Comparative Politics, UW–Madison Political Science, 2018-19

Mildred Hovland Article Prize, UW–Madison Political Science, 2018

ILS Law and Society Graduate Fellow, UW–Madison Law School, 2018-19

Fulbright US Student Award (Guatemala), 2016-17

United States Institute of Peace Jennings Randolph Peace Scholarship, 2016-17
Graduate Student Fieldwork Award, International Institute, UW–Madison, 2015
Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Portuguese), US Department of
Education, 2014-15
Tinker Nave Field Research Grant, Latin America, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies,
UW–Madison, 2014, 2015
Herman M. Somers Thesis Prize, Haverford College, 2011

**CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS**

American Political Science Association, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2024
(scheduled)
Guatemala Scholars Network Conference, 2017
International Studies Association, 2020 (cancelled due to COVID-19), 2023
International Studies Association-Northeast, 2022
Latin American Studies Association, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024
(scheduled)
Midwest Political Science Association, 2018
Repal (*Red para el Estudio de la Economía Política de América Latina*), 2021, 2023
Southern Political Science Association, 2020, 2024
Western Political Science Association, 2019
World International Studies Committee Conference, 2022

**INVITED TALKS &
WORKSHOPS**

University of Bristol, Peace, Conflict, and Violence Research Group, March 2024
Latin American Studies Association, Political Institutions Section, “Charlemos”
Series, February 2024
Princeton University, Program in Latin American Studies, February 2024
Duke University and University of North Carolina, Duke/UNC Latin America
Working Group (virtual), February 2024 (scheduled)
University of Birmingham and University of Nottingham, Research Centre for the
Study of Parties and Democracy (virtual), “Democratic Resilience in Latin
America,” November 2023
Ohio State University, Department of Political Science (virtual), November 2023
University of California Berkeley, “Radicalization in Comparative Perspective”
Workshop, October 2023
City College of New York, “Rethinking Generalization” Workshop,
October 2023
Universidad de Costa Rica, Escuela de Ciencias Políticas (virtual), October 2023
Harvard University, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Seminar
Series (virtual), September 2023
University of Notre Dame, Kellogg Institute of International Studies Flash
Conversation (virtual), September 2023
Universidad Rafael Landívar (Guatemala), Instituto de Investigación en Ciencias
Socio Humanistas (ICESH), July 2023
University of Oklahoma, Center for the Americas, March 2023
CIDE, Seminario de Política y Gobierno (virtual), November 2022
Southwest Workshop on Mixed Methods Research (SWMMR), University of Notre
Dame, October 2022
University of Oklahoma, Center for the Americas Lecture Series, October 2022
University of Wisconsin–Madison, Populists and the Pandemic Workshop,
September 2022
Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Research, “Rethinking Comparison” Session,
June 2021, 2022, 2023
University of San Diego, Guest Lecture on Archival Research and Process-Tracing

(virtual), Department of Political Science, October 2020
UW–Madison and the University of Brasília, “Populism and the Pandemic” Lecture Series (virtual, with Kai Thaler), September 2020
Miami University, Guest Lecture on Russia-Latin American Relations, Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies Colloquium (virtual), April 2020
Louisiana State University, Department of Political Science, September 2019
Haverford College, Symposium on Archives and Historical Memory in Guatemala, April 2019
Simon Fraser University, School for International Studies, December 2018
University of Texas–Dallas, School of Economic, Political, and Policy Studies, December 2018
UW–Madison, Institute for Legal Studies Law and Society Fellows Workshop, November 2018
UW–Madison, Comparative Politics Colloquium, September 2018
City College of New York, “Rethinking Comparison in the Social Sciences” Workshop, October 2017
United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Peace Scholar Workshop, October 2016

TEACHING

University of Oklahoma

Undergraduate

IAS 3003: International Peacebuilding, Spring 2023, Spring 2024
IAS 3003: Political Violence in Comparative Perspective, Fall 2022, Fall 2023
IAS 3313: Latin American International Relations, Fall 2022, Fall 2023

Graduate

IAS 5902: Global Political Turbulence (online), Spring 2023, Spring 2024

Otterbein University (undergraduate)

POLS 1300: Introduction to Global Politics, Fall 2020, Fall 2021
POLS 2270: Comparative Government, Spring 2021
POLS 2300: Methods of Research and Inquiry in Political Science, Spring 2021, Spring 2022
POLS 3520: Special Topics: Latin American Politics and Society, Fall 2020
POLS 3870: Studies in Political Violence, Spring 2022
POLS 4100: International Law and Institutions, Fall 2021
GEOG 1000: World Regional Geography, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022

Tulane University (undergraduate)

POLI 2500: Introduction to International Relations, Fall 2019

FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

Guatemala: 18 months (May-July 2014; June-August 2015; September-November 2016; April-December 2017; June-July 2023)
Nicaragua: 4 months (December 2016-March 2017)

SERVICE

To the Community

Country Conditions Expert for Guatemalan and Nicaraguan asylum-seekers in the United States (written and/or oral testimony in 16 cases), 2018-present

To the Discipline

Secretary, Central America Section, Latin American Studies Association (LASA), 2023-2025

Co-Coordinator, Central American Politics Consortium (CAPC), 2023-present

Member, Kendra Koivu Paper Award Committee, Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (QMMR) Section, American Political Science Association, 2022

Reviewer, *American Political Science Review*, *Comparative Politics*, *International Security*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Cornell University Press*, *Cambridge University Press*, *International Peacekeeping*, *Journal of Global Security Studies*, *Latin American Research Review*, *Latin American Politics and Society*, *Política y Gobierno*, *Routledge*, *Development and Change*, *Global Studies Quarterly*, *Revista de Ciencia Política*, *The Extractive Industries and Society*, *Alternatives*, *Journal of Aggression*, *Maltreatment and Trauma*

To the University

University of Oklahoma, International and Area Studies, Graduate Studies Committee, 2022-present

University of Oklahoma, Center for the Americas, Advisory Committee, 2023-present

**OTHER
PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE**

Research Affiliate, Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Vanderbilt University, 2023-present

Inter-American Dialogue, Washington, DC, USA, Program Assistant/Associate, Office of the President, 2011-2013

Coordinated programs and publications on citizen security and migration in Central America and Mexico and Congressional outreach.

**PROFESSIONAL
MEMBERSHIPS**

American Political Science Association
Conflict Research Society
Latin American Studies Association
International Studies Association
Guatemala Scholars Network

**ADDITIONAL
TRAINING**

PEN America Workshop, “Campus for All: Fostering Open and Respectful Exchange,” 2021

Teaching Academy Summer Institute, UW–Madison, 2018

Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Methods Research, Syracuse University, 2016

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English (native), Spanish (fluent), Portuguese (intermediate)

REFERENCES

Scott Straus, Professor of Political Science, UC–Berkeley, sstraus@berkeley.edu

Noam Lupu, Associate Professor of Political Science and Associate Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project, Vanderbilt University, noam.lupu@vanderbilt.edu

Erica S. Simmons, Associate Professor of Political Science and International Studies, UW–Madison, essimmons@wisc.edu