

ALEX BRUENS

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EDUCATION

University of Arizona, School of Government and Public Policy (SGPP) Tucson, AZ
Ph.D. in International Relations *Expected May 2024*
Minor: Quantitative Research Methods
Dissertation: “Repression Dynamics in the Context of Complex Civil War Interventions”
Committee: Jessica Maves Braithwaite (Chair), Daniel Arnon, Susanna Campbell, Kirssa Ryckman

University of Arizona, School of Government and Public Policy (SGPP) May 2021
Master of Arts in Government and Public Policy

Florida Atlantic University, College of Arts and Letters Boca Raton, FL
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science May 2019
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology May 2019
Minor: Arabic
Magna Cum Laude with Honors

Amideast Amman, Jordan
National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) scholarship June—August 2017

Skills: R/RStudio, STATA, HTML, social network analysis, data collection, academic writing, technical writing, team management

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Fellow, Research on International Policy Implementation Lab August 2021—Present
(RIPIL) at American University

Part-time

Project Title: “Networks of Influence and Support in Peace Operations”

Principal Investigators: Dr. Jessica Maves Braithwaite (U. Arizona), Dr. Susanna Campbell (American U.)

- Co-lead a team of 10 Research Assistants (RAs) concurrently between American University and the University of Arizona, including facilitating meetings and trainings.
- Co-trained and managed over 29 RAs over the course of the project.
- Support data collection through writing codebooks and working with RAs.
- Analyze all network data for working papers and conference presentations in R/RStudio and Gephi, working with over a thousand nodes and thousands of edges.
- Collaborate with PIs on three working papers.
- Present working papers and data at three academic conferences.
- Offer technical and theoretical expertise on network data collection and analysis.
- Position funded by National Science Foundation grant number 2049558.

Project Title: “Whose Peace? How Local-Global Networks Shape Multilateral Peacebuilding Outcomes”

Principal Investigators (PIs): Dr. Susanna Campbell, Dr. Yolande Bouka, Dr. Jessica Maves Braithwaite, Dr. Travis Curtice, Dr. Azza Mustafa, Dr. Guillaume Ndayikengurutse, and Dr. Santiago Sosa Noreña

- Assist PIs with planning fieldwork research in Burundi, Colombia, and Sudan – editing and providing feedback on research plans.
- Prepare data for sharing amongst PIs and consult with identifying applications for data.

Research Assistant, University of Arizona
Part-time

August 2021—Present

Project Title: “Networks of Influence and Support in Peace Operations”

Principal Investigators (PIs): Dr. Jessica Maves Braithwaite (U. Arizona), Dr. Susanna Campbell (American U.)

- Co-lead a team of 10 undergraduate and graduate Research Assistants (RAs) with an American University PhD candidate to code large-scale network data.
- Led weekly feedback meetings with two teams of RAs to improve efficiency and respond to issues in the coding process.
- Meet with PIs weekly to provide team updates and plan project-related deliverables, including papers, presentations, and reports.
- Mapped humanitarian aid data sources and wrote codebooks for RAs.
- Conducting social network analysis on networks of peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development organizations; and testing theories about the impact of aid on peace, conflict, and security outcomes using this analysis.

Instructor of Record, University of Arizona
Full-time

Summer 2022

Course: Introduction to International Relations (POL202)

- Led two online sections of the POL202 course, totaling 25 students.
- Graded 100 assignments, facilitated weekly discussion posting, and held online office hours to facilitate working relationships with students and ensure students’ positive progress.
- 7-week condensed course with back-to-back deadlines and increased pressure.

Teaching Assistant, University of Arizona
Part-time

2019—2021

Instructor: Dr. Alex Braithwaite

Course: Introduction to International Relations (POL202)

- Graded over 200 essays, facilitated discussions with students, and held in-person and online office hours for in-person and asynchronous courses of over 200 students in both Fall 2019 and Spring 2020.
- Carried out similar responsibilities online in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 for 100 students each semester.

Teaching Assistant, Florida Atlantic University
Instructor: Dr. Angela Nichols

Fall 2018

Course: Research Methods in Political Science

- Presented original research and assisted student learning about research methods and technical skills. Trained a class of 30 students in SPSS Statistics software.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Workshop Participant, “Bringing Firms into Global Local Networks of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding” at International Studies Association Annual Conference *March 2023*

- Presented data on private firms active in peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian networks in Colombia since 2016.
- Conducted preliminary network analysis on a set of over 600 nodes.
- Discussed participants’ research projects and developed a research agenda on the role of companies in peacebuilding and development in conflict-affected states.
- Generated research questions and connected with academics to pursue those questions.

Workshop Participant, New Era Workshop at Bridging the Gap *October 2022*

- Selected to complete a three-day training program in international affairs policy.
- Assessed, using scenarios, medium-term challenges and opportunities facing the United States, and learned to identify how American foreign policy shapes the world.
- Generated policy-relevant research ideas with facilitators and participants.
- Participated in discussions with non-academic policy analysts and advisors to identify ways my research agenda can fit into American foreign policy goals.
- Received training on non-academic writing and publishing.

Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Florida Atlantic University *Fall 2018–Spring 2019*

Project Title: “Does Civilian Inclusion in Post-Conflict Mediation Impact Quality of Life?”

Advisors: Dr. Angela Nichols, Dr. Dukhong Kim

- Met bi-weekly with advisors and 4 honors thesis students to discuss progress and present iterations of our theses.
- Each meeting required new drafts which were peer-reviewed.
- Learned valuable theory-building and research skills, including in data analysis and academic writing.
- Produced thesis document with a theoretical argument, hypotheses, and regression analyses.

Research Experience for Undergraduates Fellow, University of North Texas *Summer 2018*

Advisor: Dr. John Ishiyama

- Awarded a scholarship as part of a National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates (NSF-REU) in Conflict Management and Peace Science at the University of North Texas (grant no. 1659545).
- Received training on theory-building and research methods to conduct original research with a faculty advisor, Dr. John Ishiyama.
- Produced a paper and academic poster on the impact of civilian involvement in civil war resolutions on civilian well-being.
- Presented this research at the 2019 Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting.
- Learned the basics of using Geographic Information Systems in research, with specific training in ArcGIS.

PUBLICATIONS & INDEPENDENT PROJECTS

Non-Refereed

- “Redefining Post-Conflict Peacekeeping Success in Regional and International Missions.” Alexander Bruens, and Mirella Miranda. 2018. *Florida Political Chronicle*, 26(1): 68—82.

In-Progress

- “Peace Accords and Post-war Civil Society”
- “Civil Society Repression in Post-Civil War States”
- “Who Keeps the Peace? Reconceptualizing Peacebuilding Through Networks of Influence and Support” with Jessica Maves Braithwaite, Susanna Campbell, and Hatem Zayed.
- “Networks of Cooperation and Contestation in Conflict” with Jessica Maves Braithwaite and Susanna Campbell.
- “Concentration Camps Unveiled: A Comparative Analysis of their Roles in Contemporary Conflicts” with Rachel Van Nostrand and Alex Braithwaite.
- “Civil War Interventions and Violent State Repression” (dissertation chapter)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA. September 2023.
“Network Effects of International Actors on Civil Society Dissent.” Alex Bruens.
- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA. September 2023.
- Academic Council on the United Nations System Annual Meeting, Washington, DC. June 2023.
- Political Economy of International Organization Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. May 2023.
- International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada. March 2023.
- Peace Science Society Annual Meeting, Denver, CO. November 2022.
“Who Keeps the Peace? Reconceptualizing Peacebuilding Through Networks of Influence and Support.” Jessica Maves Braithwaite, Alex Bruens, Susanna Campbell, and Hatem Zayed.
- International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada. March 2023.
“Peace Agreements and Post-War Civil Society.” Alex Bruens.
“Civil Society Repression in Post-Civil War States.” Alex Bruens.
- Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. March 2019.
“Does Civilian Inclusion in Post-Conflict Mediation Impact Quality of Life?” Alex Bruens.

RELEVANT AWARDS, HONORS, & DISTINCTIONS

- 2023 Charles E., Jr. Starns Fellowship, University of Arizona
- 2023 Michael P. Sullivan Graduate Research Award in International Relations, University of Arizona
- 2023 Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR) summer participant, Syracuse University, funded by the University of Arizona

- 2023 Summer Dissertation Fellowship, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Arizona
- 2022—2023 School of Government and Public Policy Graduate Student Association President
- 2020, 2021 School of Government and Public Policy Summer Research Grants
- Phi Kappa Phi Academic Honor Society (*inducted 2019*)
- 2018—2019 Undergraduate Researcher of the Year, Florida Atlantic University College of Arts and Letters
- 2018—2019 University Scholar Award, Florida Atlantic University College of Arts and Letters
- 2018 National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates in Conflict Management and Peace Science, University of North Texas
- 2018 Best Undergraduate Paper award, Florida Political Science Association
- 2017 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) Scholarship
- 2017 Florida Atlantic University President's and Dean's List