

Dr. Scott Bledsoe

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Education

George Mason University, Schar School of Policy and Government, Arlington, VA

Ph.D. Political Science, June 2022

Dissertation Committee: Dr. Jeremy Mayer (chair), Dr. Matthew Scherer, Dr. Mark Rozell, Dr. Laurie Schintler

New York University, Wilf Department of Politics, New York, NY

MA in Political Science, focus on comparative politics, May 2016

Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN

BA in History and Political Science, May 2014

Research Interests

The relationship between religious identity, religiosity and behavioral polarization in the United States, international religious freedom issues, how religious dynamics influence political institutions and outcomes, and how mixed methods research designs can understand the complex relationship between religion and politics

Doctoral Dissertation

“Belief or Belonging? Evangelical Religiosity and Its Impact on Affective Polarization”

My doctoral dissertation untangles and unpacks distinct aspects of evangelical religiosity and if these specific forms affect the high levels of affective polarization among American evangelicals. Identifying who evangelicals are through simple self-identification schemes obscures who this increasingly powerful group is in American politics. While recent work has done a better job in classifying them, work remains to be done not only to determine what comprises evangelical religiosity, but how these patterns of belonging and specific beliefs influence higher than normal feelings of antipathy towards the outgroup. By disaggregating religiosity into both belief and belonging, this research shows how these discrete aspects of evangelical religiosity influence the way American evangelicals behave and operate in the political sphere. Through a systematic historical analysis and novel survey data, I find evidence that evangelical belonging produces high levels of “bonding” forms of social capital, which in

turn leads to high levels of in-group trust and solidarity as well as mistrust and dislike towards the out-group, or in other words, affective polarization.

Publications

Klocek, Jason and Bledsoe, A. Scott. "Global Trends and Challenges to Protecting and Promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief" Special Report published by the United States Institute of Peace, June 2022

Klocek, Jason and Bledsoe, A. Scott. "Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Foreign Policy and International Negotiations," Book Chapter in *Negociación Internacional en América Latina* (International Negotiation in Latin America), FLACSO: 2022.

Bledsoe, A. Scott and Mayer, Jeremy D. "The National Economic Council" *White House Transition Project 1997-2021*. Fall 2020.

Commissioned through the White House Transition Project, this paper serves as both a scholarly summary of the history and purpose of the National Economic Council and a series of recommendations for the incoming presidential administration to smooth the transition to power. <https://whitehousetransitionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WHTP2021-35-National-Economic-Council.pdf>

Mayer, Jeremy D., Schintler, Laurie, and Bledsoe, A. Scott. "Culture, Freedom, and the Spread of Covid-19: Do Some Societies and Political Systems Have National Anti-Bodies?" *World Medical and Health Policy*. Vol. 12, No. 4 (December 2020): 498-511

Through the creation of an original dataset, we test whether levels of freedom and political culture matter with regards to the spread and effects of Covid-19, finding that political culture matters more than levels of political freedom and government response in controlling the coronavirus outbreak.

"Three Things you Thought you Knew About Freedom of Religion or Belief" - Jason Klocek and Scott Bledsoe, United States Institute of Peace, November 12, 2020:

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/11/three-things-you-thought-you-knew-about-freedom-religion-or-belief>

Presentations

Should the Virginia General Assembly Vote to Amend the Constitution and Pass Redistricting Reform? **Arlington Committee of 100 Meeting**, Arlington, VA December 2019

In Defense of Religious Liberty? Religious Elites, Identity, and the 2016 Presidential Election, **Midwest Political Science Association Conference**, Chicago, IL April 2019

Beyond Butchery: Islamic State Propaganda and the Creation of Political Legitimacy, **Southern Political Science Association**, New Orleans, LA January 2017

Beyond Butchery: Islamic State Propaganda and the Creation of Political Legitimacy,
Northeast Political Science Association, Boston, MA, November 2016

Teaching Experience

PhD: George Mason University

Spring 2021: GOVT 308: The American Presidency, teaching my own upper-level class on the origins, functions, and role of the American Presidency

Fall 2020: GOVT 300: Undergraduate Research Methods, teaching assistant for Professor Delton Daigle, ran two labs a week covering social science research methods and basic and intermediate SPSS functions and commands

Spring 2020: GOVT 300: Undergraduate Research Methods, teaching assistant for Professor Delton Daigle, ran two labs a week covering social science research methods and basic and intermediate SPSS functions and commands

Fall 2019: GOVT 101: Democratic Theory, teaching assistant for Professor Matthew Scherer, ran four recitations a week summarizing the week's content and facilitated discussion over relevant course readings and topics

Spring 2019: GOVT 300: Undergraduate Research Methods, teaching assistant for Professor Rob McGrath, ran two labs a week covering social science research methods and basic and intermediate R functions and commands

Fall 2018: GOVT 132: Introduction to International Politics, teaching assistant for Professor Eric Shiraev, conducted review sessions, graded, and lectured multiple times over the course of the semester

Spring 2018: GOVT 103: Introduction to American Politics, teaching assistant for Professor Jeremy D. Mayer, designed and administered test questions, graded, and lectured multiple times over the course of the semester

Fall 2017: GOVT 342: Diplomacy, teaching assistant for Professor Joseph F. Becelia, conducted review sessions, graded, and lectured multiple times over the course of the semester

MA: New York University

Spring 2016: Public Opinion and Pressure Groups, teaching assistant for Professor Raymond Smith, conducted review sessions, graded, and lectured multiple times over the course of the semester.

Fall 2015: Socialist Theory, teaching assistant for Professor Bertell Ollman, conducted review sessions, graded, and lectured multiple times over the course of the semester

Professional Experience

United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., April 2020 – June 2021

Research Assistant, Closing the Gap Project

Funded by USAID, the “Closing the Gap” project seeks to address the connection and relationship between international religious freedom and socioeconomic development. The research design of the project is a mixed methods, nested analysis, where large, cross-national quantitative data and country case studies are utilized to fully understand the nexus between religious freedom and development issues. Primary responsibilities include creating and managing a large dataset, running statistical analyses, and conducting background research on countries and regions for the case studies.

Oxford University Press, New York, NY, September 2016 – August 2017

Editorial Assistant, History and Politics Division

Worked extensively on dozens of history and politics titles for the Press, including editing and design responsibilities. Other responsibilities included author and content management, market reviews, drafting and executing contracts, and managing digital platforms.

Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, New York, NY, May 2015 – December 2015

Development Associate

Conducted significant fundraising activities, including prospect research, and database management for potential donors to the Institute. Coordinated and planned events for the Institute’s Young Leaders Circle, a monthly gathering of young professionals in New York City. Daily tasks included data entry, preparing issue briefs, and maintaining correspondence with the members of the Young Leaders Circle

Fellowships, Awards, and Memberships

- Recipient of George Mason University’s 2021 Summer Research Fellowship Award
- Recipient of George Mason University’s 2021 Frances Harbour Award for Political Science Community Leadership
- President of George Mason University’s Schar PhD Student Association 2020-2022

Skills

- Proficient in Stata, SPSS, and a working knowledge of R
- Experience creating, managing, and maintaining large quantitative databases

- Extensive familiarity with public speaking