
Amanda Abigail Licht,
Ph.D.

May 2026

Dept. of Political Science
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
Binghamton University (SUNY)

September 2020

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
Binghamton University (SUNY)

August 2013 – 2020

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,
University of South Carolina.

August 2010 – 2013

EDUCATION

University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Ph.D. in Political Science

July 2010

Major Fields: International Relations and Methodology

Minor Field: Comparative Politics

Dissertation: "Private Incentives, Public Outcomes: The Role of Target Political Incentives in Foreign Policy Success." *Committee:* Brian Lai (Chair), Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, Frederick Boehmke, Cameron Thies, Michaela Hoenicke (History)

University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND

B.A. Political Science and Scholar in Honors

2005

Honors: Summa Cum Laude

Thesis: "Two Paths to Democracy: Exploring the Differences in the Process of Democratization in Cases of Internally-Triggered versus Militarily-Instigated Transitions"

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Greene, Zachary D. and Amanda A. Licht (2023) "Donor Political Preferences and the Allocation of Aid: Patterns in recipient type" *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/07388942231195300>.

Licht, Amanda A. (2022) Introducing Regular Turnover Details, 1960-2015: A dataset on world leaders' legal removal from office. *Journal of Peace Research*, 59(2): 277-285.

Wu, Cathy Xuanxuan, Amanda A. Licht, and Scott Wolford. (2020) Same as the Old Boss? Domestic Politics and the Turnover Trap. *International Studies Quarterly*, advance view. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqaa074>

Braithwaite, Jessica Maves and Amanda A. Licht. (2020) The Effect of Civil Society Organizations and Democratization Aid on Civil War Onset. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(6): 1095-1120.

Licht, Amanda A. and Susan Hannah Allen. (2018) "Repressing for reputation: Leadership transitions, uncertainty, and the repression of domestic populations." *Journal of Peace Research*, 55(5): 582-95. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234331775021>

- Greene, Zachary D. and Amanda A. Licht. (2018) "Domestic Politics and Changes in Foreign Aid Allocation: the role of party preferences." *Political Research Quarterly*, 71(2): 284-301. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917735176>
- Grauvogel, Julia, Licht Amanda A., and Christian von Soest. (2017) "Sanctions and Signals: How International Sanction Threats Trigger Domestic Protest in Targeted Regimes." *International Studies Quarterly*, 61(1): 86-97. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqw044>
- Licht, Amanda A. (2017) "Hazards or Hassles: Modeling the Effect of Economic Sanctions on Leader Survival with Improved Data." *Political Science Research and Methods*, 5(1): 143-161. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2015.25>
- Licht, Amanda A. (2011) "Change Comes with Time: Substantive Interpretation of Nonproportional Hazards". *Political Analysis*, 19(2): 227-43.
- Licht, Amanda A. (2010) "Coming Into Money: the impact of foreign aid on leader tenure." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 54(1): 58-87.

EDITOR-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- Licht, Amanda A. (2026). "Domestic Politics". In *International Political Science Association Companion to Political Science*. Eds. Daniel Stockemer, Stephen Sawyer, Audrey Gagnon. Springer: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-06918-4_154-1.

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Research: foreign policy effectiveness and outcomes; leader survival dynamics and variations in domestic regime type; foreign aid and economic sanctions; repression and protest behavior; interpretation of event history models.

Undergraduate Teaching: introduction to IR; international cooperation theory; leaders in international relations; repression, regime type and IR; America's role in the world.

Graduate Teaching: World Politics Pro Seminar; Domestic Politics and IR; Modeling Leaders; Research Methods and Statistics; International Organization and Cooperation.

WORKING PAPERS

Is Democracy a Passing Fad? Influence through Foreign Aid Democracy Sanctions
With Zoe D. Greene, Strathclyde University and Huei-Jyun Ye, Wabash College. *Prepared for Shambaugh Conference on Democratic Backsliding, Presented in Innovative Round Table Panel at ISA 2016. Being written/revised.*

Abstract: Rich democracies show an interest in supporting fledgling democracies through financial and diplomatic assistance. The connection between aid receipt and democratic stability, however, is difficult to pin down with null, negative, and positive relationships having been uncovered. In this paper, we focus on whether the coercive side of foreign aid can successfully redirect floundering democracies. Under what conditions will such punishment call new democratic leaders into line rather than push them into old tactics? We argue that the confluence of domestic political preferences and electoral threat will condition the incentives of incumbent aid recipients. A viable political opposition can jockey for support from the donor states, promising more friendly policies and shaming the incumbent at the polls. Perversely, this strong democratic element may incentivize democratic backsliding rather than progress unless the opposition is very firmly entrenched. Our results confirm that punishing democracies can only produce good outcomes under a narrow swathe of political conditions: Only if the donor prefers the opposition's economic ideology to that of the incumbent but that opposition poses little electoral threat.

Backing Down or Standing Up? Investigating the consequences of concession to economic coercion. Presented at ISA 2026.

Abstract: Do leaders who back down in the face of international coercion fare differently than those who stand up? The study of economic sanctions in the literature tends to stop when the sanctions do: we know very little about what happens to leaders who give in, relying on our theoretical assumptions to suggest that if they have conceded, it is because they can afford to. In this project, I pair otherwise similar cases across variables of theoretical interest to assess whether leaders seem to manage the concession process to keep themselves insulated from the consequences of policy change, and if so, what facilitates this behavior. Comparing obstinate to compliant leaders allows assessment of the explanatory power of extant models which emphasize uncertainty alleviation and leader turnover as key facilitators of concession, as well as the author's proposition that the salience of sanction demands and domestic opposition strength in the target state interact to determine when leaders can give in without paying a high domestic price. Further insights are developed into hypotheses for future large-N tests.

Aiding or Abating Repression? Democracy Assistance, Civil Society Organizations, and Human Rights Violation, with Jessica Maves Braithwaite, University of Arizona. Presented at ISA 2018, IR/Foreign Policy Faculty Seminar, Dartmouth College. *Being written/ revised.*

Abstract: The impact of foreign aid on the repressive practices of recipient states has been largely understudied, and when examined, the results are quite mixed. We focus on a particular form of aid – democracy assistance – and argue that the relationship between aid and repression is conditioned by trends in the strength of domestic civil society organizations. These groups serve as whistleblowers in society and thus, when increasing in capacity, they can leverage greater aid flows to deter state abuses. Conversely, the government feels compelled (and able) to increase its repressive activity when civil society organizations are in decline but democracy aid is present, which could be used to slow or reverse this backsliding of civil society. OLS and fixed effects regressions of 127 Official Development Assistance-eligible states from 1990-2004 reveal support for our expected interactive effect of changing civil society strength and democracy assistance on levels of repression in recipient states.

Projects in Development

Repressing for Succession, with Jessica Braithwaite (University of Arizona)

Abstract: When new leaders represent a break with the old regime, uncertainty about their willingness to use force against civilian populations creates reputational incentives that produce short-term spikes in repressive tactics. This pattern does not emerge for leaders who enter as the clear successors of a prior regime, as they can trade on the state's existing reputation viz latent sources of domestic dissent. Closed regimes anticipating a succession, we argue, may facilitate these smooth transfers by providing designated heirs with opportunities to demonstrate their grit or by pre-emptively refreshing the population's memory regarding the regime's repressive tendencies. This different strategic dynamic, we argue, means that spikes in repressive tactics should be seen *before* a turnover, not afterwards. We leverage the Regular Turnover Details dataset and events-based measures of repression to investigate the argument.

Concessions and Consequences.

Abstract: Recent literature on economic sanctions asks whether external coercion, in the form of ongoing or new sanction threats and impositions, can harm targeted leaders' ability to hold onto office, spur domestic political protest, or cause spikes in repressive action by the state. Little attention has been paid, however, to the measurable effects of the alternative to remaining under the punishment of outside powers. What political consequences follow when leaders give in to the demands of sanctioning states? This project proposes a set of possible patterns of domestic responses, distinguished by sender-target relationships, issues at stake, initial responses to the sanction threat, and the nature of concessions. Hypotheses derived from this framework will be evaluated using the Threats and Impositions of Economic Sanctions v2, and a variety of data sets on domestic unrest, from protests to coup plots, likely in a series of papers, but possibly in a book manuscript.

Sanctioning Cooperation or Cooperating Under Sanction? With Kanisha Bond (Binghamton University).

Abstract: How do international sanctions shape the politics of militant cooperation within civil wars? Existing research debates whether economic sanctions operate primarily as exogenous shocks that alter the resource environments underlying internal conflict or as informational signals about the international consequences of actors' choices. Similarly, scholarship on inter-rebel relations disagrees over whether alliances are driven mainly

by state-constrained resource endowments or by group-level information about potential partners. Taken together, these debates suggest that rebel alliances and international sanctions are themselves endogenous components of the broader conflict environment: rebel alliances shape the informational environment through which external actors evaluate sanction options, while international pressures influence the resource constraints (and thus the material costs and benefits) from cooperation among militant groups. While prevailing empirical strategies often overlook the resulting endogeneity, this interdependence complicates efforts to derive unified and empirically identifiable expectations. We attempt to remedy this complication by estimating how sanctions affect rebel alliance behavior while also accounting for the ways rebel cooperation shapes the probability and form of sanctioning activity. We rely on a variety of modeling strategies to explicitly account for temporal sequencing and reciprocal causation in a newly-constructed conflict-month panel of civil conflicts that records both the targeting and nature of international sanctions and the presence and evolution of inter-rebel alliance activity.

AWARDS AND INVITED TALKS

- IR/Foreign Policy Faculty Seminar, Dartmouth College, May 2018.
- Conflict, Foreign Aid, and Refugees Workshop, University of Arizona, March 24th-25th, 2017
- Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program, State University of New York, United University Professions, Fall 2016
- Dean's Research Semester, Harpur College, Binghamton University, Spring 2016
- Democratic Backsliding, Shambaugh Conference at University of Iowa. Organizers, Kelly Kadera Mark Crescenzi. April 24-25, 2015
- Research Workshop Series, Department of Political Science, University at Buffalo (SUNY), April 11, 2014
- PolMeth NSF Diversity Travel Grant, 2009 and 2012
- PARISS/Methods Talk, Duke University, Spring 2011
- Paper presentation at Visions in Methodology, Ohio State University 2011
- Presidential Fellowship, tuition, stipend and summer support,25 awarded across the entire Graduate School each year, University of Iowa 2005-2010
- Paper presentation at Journeys in World Politics, University of Iowa 2008
- Phi Beta Kappa 2005

RECENT CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

2026

International Studies Association

Backing Down or Standing Up? Investigating the consequences of concession to economic coercion
 New Research on Leaders, Foreign Policy, and International Relations
 New Data in International Relations
 The domestic politics of foreign policy

Columbus, OH

Paper Presentation
 Chair/Organizer/Discussant
 Discussant
 Chair

2025

International Studies Association

Elites, Audiences, and Foreign Policy
 Advances in Foreign Policy Analysis
 Sanction in Foreign Policy between Morality, Legality, and Unlawfulness

Chicago, IL

Discussant
 Discussant
 Chair/Discussant

American Political Science Association

Graduate Student Research Lightning Round: IR & Comparative

Virtual due to injury

Discussant

2021

Midwest Political Science Association
Economic Sanctions and Domestic Politics

Online
Discussant

2019

American Political Science Association
Donor Political Preferences and the Allocation of Aid: Patterns in
recipient type, with Zachary Greene
Leader-Centric Approaches to Conflict Processes

Washington, D.C.
Paper Presentation

Discussant

International Studies Association
Reputation and Turnover Types, w/Cathy Xuanxuan Wu and Scott
Wolford

Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Paper Presentation

2018

International Studies Association
Aiding or Abating Repression? Democracy Assistance, Civil Society
Organizations, and Human Rights Violation w/Jessica Maves
Braithewaite
Foreign Aid – Effects and Effectiveness, Junior Scholar Symposium

San Francisco, California
Paper Presentation

Discussant

2016

International Studies Association
Punishing Democracies: the coercive capacity of foreign aid sanctions
w/Zachary Greene, Strathclyde University

Atlanta, Georgia
Innovative Round Table
w/Policy Makers

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Editorial Board, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2016-
- Editorial Board, *Political Research Quarterly* 2018
- NSF Panel member, 2015
- ISA Finance Committee Member, March 2014-2016
- APSA Foreign Policy Section board member, 2012-2015
- Awards Committee, Society for Political Methodology Best Graduate Student Poster Award, 2012.
- Awards Committee, Westview Press Award for best graduate student paper delivered at the MPSA 2011.
- Peer Reviewer for: *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Political Science Review*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, *European Journal of Political Economy*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *Global Peace and Change*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Journal of Politics*, *Political Analysis*, *Political Science*, *Research and Politics*.

DEPARTMENT, COLLEGE, and COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Search Committee, Fall 2013
- Hofferbert Best Paper Award, Committee Chair, Spring 2014, Spring 2015
- Deans Speaker Series 2014-2015, “Domestic Politics and International Relations”, (co-chaired with Katja Kleinberg)
- Department of Political Science Grievance Committee member, 2014-2015
- Harpur College Council (HCC), Fall 2018
- Executive Committee, Fall 2019
- Education Policies and Priorities Committee (EPPC), 2021 -

- PLSC Workshop Coordinator, 2021-
- Chair Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Exam Reform, 2024-2025
- Chair, Initiating Personnel Committee 2025
- Graduate Methods Committee member, Spring 2026
- Invited Scholar in International Relations Theory, Hunter College High School, May 29th 2026

DISSERTATION COMMITTEES and GRADUATE ADVISING

- Soonkun Oh, University of South Carolina, Defended May 2012
- Rebecca Reid, University of South Carolina, Defended May 2015
- Kyle Mackey, Binghamton University, Defended July 2016
- Zhiyuan (Sebastian) Wang, Binghamton University Defended June 2016
- Brendan Skip Mark, Binghamton University, Defended May 2018
- Hwei-Jyun Ye, Binghamton University, Defended 2022
- Yusuf Evirgen, Binghamton University, primary advisor, 2022-2023
- Andrew Foote, Binghamton University, Defended April 2026