

Blaine Finstein

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EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles • Ph.D., Political Science Expected 06/2028
Major fields: Comparative Politics and Political Methodology • Academic advisor: Cesi Cruz

University of California, Los Angeles • M.A., Political Science 2025

University of Texas at Austin • B.A., High Honors, International Relations and Plan II Honors 2019

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Political economy of development • Computational methods • Politics of Southeast Asia

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Finstein, B. "Politics Without a Price: External service provision and democratic accountability." Submitted.
Using a randomized community-driven development program in the Philippines and administrative panel data, I study how external service provision shapes public resource allocation.

Finstein, B. and Gloria, J. "Agricultural Production and Elite Network Formation."

Finstein, B. "Reciprocal Rent-seeking: When re-election incentives encourage extraction."

PUBLICATIONS & SELECTED OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Finstein, B., Ash, K., and Carnahan, D. "A comment on 'Extraction, Assimilation, and Accommodation: The Historical Foundations of Indigenous-State Relations in Latin America.'" Forthcoming.

Finstein, B. "Drowning on Dry Land: Rethinking Mexican Migration Policy From a Human Rights Perspective." University of Texas at Austin, May 2019.

"Between Brutality and Impunity: Criminal Atrocities Committed Under the Cover of Military Security Strategy (2006–2018)." Mexican Commission for Defense and Promotion of Human Rights, October 2020.

Finstein, B. "The Flawed SAT Is Wholly Unnecessary." *The Dallas Morning News*, March 13, 2015.

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS & AWARDS

Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship (\$11,000)	2026
Southeast Asia Research Group Pre-Dissertation Fellowship (\$5,000)	2026
Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship (\$30,000)	2025
IIE Martin Kriesberg Fellowship (\$10,000)	2023
Fulbright Research Fellowship, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines (\$12,000)	2022
Plan II Honors Thesis Travel Grant (\$500)	2019
Gilman Scholarship (\$5,000)	2018

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS, TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

<i>Politics Without a Price: External service provision and democratic accountability</i> , Center for Governance and Markets, University of Pittsburgh	2025
Invited introductory R training, Far Eastern University, in partnership with the Philippine Political Science Association	2026
National ID Lab research workshop, World Bank — organizer	2024
Research Transparency and Reproducibility Training (RT2), Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS)	2024

PROFESSIONAL & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

DIGITS Data Lab • Data Methods Lead 2025–Present
Develop data processing workflows and data cleaning scripts; manage a team of four research assistants. Facilitate trainings at partner Philippine universities on quantitative research methodology.

World Bank • Research Consultant	2024–2026
Organized a series of impact evaluations on PhilSys, the Philippines’ foundational national ID system.	
Ateneo de Manila University • Fulbright Scholar	2022–2023
Conducted a comparative case study between the Philippines and Indonesia to evaluate the effect of NGO oversight on disaster recovery outcomes. Created a novel dataset on housing and livelihood recovery following Typhoon Odette (Rai) and the 2018 Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami.	
International Rescue Committee • Afghan Response Caseworker	2021–2022
Supported Afghan resettlement and core-service delivery, including intake, documentation, housing, and case transition.	
University of Texas at Austin • One Stop Coordinator for Enrollment Management Services	2020–2021
Advised students on financial aid, billing, and registration and administered emergency technology-support funding.	
University of Texas at Austin • Research Assistant for Prof. Wendy Hunter	2020–2021
Developed a literature review for a case study in Prof. Hunter’s forthcoming Cambridge University Press book on emerging forms of statelessness.	
Peace Corps Philippines • Learning Program Facilitator	2019–2020
Designed and implemented community development and education projects and coordinated with local communities and government institutions.	
Innovations for Peace and Development • Research Assistant for Prof. Michael Findley	2018–2019
Coded municipal audit reports from Nicaragua to measure corruption and conducted quantitative analysis using linear regression.	
Mexican Commission for Defense and Promotion of Human Rights • Research Assistant	2018
Developed a dataset on the municipal distribution of detention and internal displacement in Mexico from 2006–2016 using Freedom of Information Act requests.	

TEACHING

University of California, Los Angeles • Teaching Assistant, Introduction to American Politics	Fall 2024
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LANGUAGES & SOFTWARE

Languages	English (native), Spanish (fluent), Tagalog (proficient), Hiligaynon (basic)
Software	R, Python, SQL