

Barry Driscoll

CONTACT INFORMATION

Grinnell College
Department of Political Science
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APPOINTMENTS

Grinnell College, Department of Political Science

Associate Professor, 2021–
Assistant Professor, 2015–2020

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI

Ph.D. in Political Science, 2015

Fields: Comparative Politics (African Politics), International Relations, Development Studies

Dissertation: “The Perverse Effects of Political Competition: Building Capacity for Patronage in Ghana”

Committee: Scott Straus (Chair), Michael Schatzberg, Scott Gehlbach, Melanie Manion, Erica Simmons

M.A. in Political Science, 2009

London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK

MSc in Comparative Politics and Democratization, 2007

Summa Cum Laude/Distinction

Bill Letwin Award for overall best performance in MSc, Democracy

National University of Ireland Galway, Galway, Ireland

BA International in History, Political Science and Sociology, 2004

Summa Cum Laude/Double First-Class Honors

Erasmus Scholar, Leiden University, Netherlands

BOOKS

Power, Patronage, and the Local State in Ghana.

Ohio University Press, 2023

How have the waves of democracy and decentralization that swept the developing world in recent decades affected states—among the most important drivers of poverty and prosperity—at national and local levels in Ghana and beyond? State actors beneath the national level—what I call the local state—have considerable responsibility for carrying out state functions, but they are also forced to compete for these local state offices. How does a local state actually work in poor twentieth-century countries?

This book offers a descriptive account, as well as a causal explanation, of how political competition affects the local state in Ghana. I show how closely fought elections drive local state institutions to provide patronage. The source of these demands for patronage comes not from rent-seeking bureaucrats or landed elites but from the government’s own party volunteers. *Power, Patronage, and the Local State in Ghana* explains how electoral competition affects how local state actors are insulated from such patronage demands.

Moreover, these highly competitive, patronage-providing local governments actually have relatively *better*-qualified senior civil servants at their disposal. I make sense of this paradox by introducing

the logic of building administrative capacity in order to provide patronage. I then abstract from the case of Ghana to generalize about how the effect of political competition is shaped by the locally salient variety of clientelism, which in turn is conditioned by the strength of the party system.

The book draws on fourteen months of fieldwork in six of Ghana's districts, far from the nation's capital city. Ethnographic and interview data come from time spent with market traders, tax collectors, politicians, and other figures in local state offices. Quantitative data come from a survey covering almost all local governments. The result is a detailed account of Ghana's local state power dynamics that has relevant implications for states across the developing world.

"Consistently insightful, clear yet nuanced, thought-provoking from the first page onwards, and engagingly written for a wider audience, this is one of the best books written on political parties in Africa in the last decade." Nic Cheeseman

"Barry Driscoll's close-up, empirically meticulous study of clientelism in Ghana challenges a great deal of widely shared received wisdom on political linkages in electoral democracies . . . The persuasiveness of Driscoll's investigation follows from a research strategy that operates at three levels. It combines, first, thick description of local transactional practices based on personal observation in select administrative districts with, second, quantitative analysis of subnational linkage patterns across all of Ghana and, third, situating the Ghanaian experience of political linkage mechanisms in a broad regional comparative examination. Driscoll's inquiry is thought provoking and should be required reading for any scholar venturing to contribute to the field of democratic linkage studies." Herbert Kitschelt

International Studies: Global Forces, Interactions, and Tensions,

With Scott Straus. SAGE: CQ Press, 2021 ([link](#)). Second edition.

This is my co-authored textbook with Scott Straus (Berkeley). It is an inter-disciplinary introductory textbook written for undergraduate students in globally-oriented classes. I am the main author for chapters on states, inter-governmental organizations, civil society, the global economy, poverty and development, migration, and global food.

"... a superb text on international studies ... a memorable introductory text for international studies courses that should be required reading for anyone engaged with our globalizing, inter-connected, and interdependent world. In particular, it should sit atop the supplementary sources for all introductory liberal arts courses." Tariq Niazi
Reviewed in *Journal of International and Global Studies*. [Sample chapters here](#).

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Comparative political economy of development, sub-Saharan Africa, subnational politics (decentralization and local government service delivery), states (origins, developmental roles, capacity), parties and clientelism, Ghana, and international political economy.

PUBLICATIONS & WORKING PAPERS

2023. *Power, Patronage, and the Local State in Ghana*. Ohio University Press. ([link](#))
2021. *International Studies: Global Forces, Interactions, and Tensions*, with Scott Straus. SAGE: CQ Press ([link](#)). Second edition. Reviewed in *Journal of International and Global Studies*. [Sample chapters here](#).
2021. "Big Man or Boogey Man? The concept of the Big Man in Africanist political science." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 58(4):521-550. ([link](#)).
Write-up at LSE Blogs ([link](#)).
2020. "Democratisation, party systems, and the endogenous roots of Ghanaian clientelism" *Democratization*, 27(1):119-136 ([link](#)).
- 2020– *Dataset on Entrance Exams for Civil Servants*. [Click to read Concept Note](#).

2018. *International Studies: Global Forces, Interactions, and Tensions*, with Scott Straus. SAGE: CQ Press. First edition. (link).

2018. “Why Political Competition Can Increase Patronage.” *Studies in Comparative and International Development*, 53(4):404-27 (link)

Recipient of the *Sage Best Paper Award*, given to the best paper in the field of comparative politics presented at the APSA Annual Meeting.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Recipient of the *Sage Best Paper Award*, given to the best paper in the field of comparative politics presented at the APSA Annual Meeting, 2016

American Political Science Association (APSA) Award for Best Fieldwork, 2015

UW-Madison College of Letters and Science Teaching Fellow Award, 2014

UW-Madison Honored Instructor, Fall 2014

National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant in Political Science, 2011-12

Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, 2011-12

Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship for Akan/Twi language study, 2009-10

UW-Madison WAGE Pre-Dissertation Travel Grant, Summer 2010

UW-Madison Scott Kloeck-Jenson Pre-Dissertation Travel Grant, Summer 2010

Early Excellence in Teaching Award, Faculty of Social Sciences (nominee), 2009

Lewtin Award for MSc in Comparative Politics & Democratization, LSE, 2007

TEACHING

Introduction to Political Science

International Political Economy

African Politics

Political Economy of Development

Chocolate, from Ghana to Grinnell

PROFESSIONAL & CONSULTING

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)

World Bank

PRESENTATIONS

Yale Workshop, “Comparing Patronage Democracies: Clientelistic Vote Mobilization in the Global South,” New Haven CT, 5/29/18

African Studies Association (ASA), Chicago, IL, 11/18/17

American Political Science Association (APSA), Philadelphia, PA, 9/2/16

Recipient of the *Sage Best Paper Award*, given to the best paper in the field of comparative politics presented at the APSA Annual Meeting.

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), 4/26/14

Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), Chicago, IL, 4/5/14

Political Parties Working Group, Northwestern University, IL, 2/4/14

Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), Chicago, IL, 4/13/13

Guest lecture: “Non-state actors and civil society,” UW-Madison, 9/27/12

Guest lecture: “International development industry,” UW-Madison EDGE Project, 9/24/12

Guest lecture: “Problems of developing countries,” UW-Madison, 6/3/09

SOFTWARE

Stata, Tableau, ArcGIS, L^AT_EX