GABRIEL LEON-ABLAN

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

King's College London

Professor of Political Economy, Department of Political Economy, Sept. 2024–present
Reader (Associate Professor) in Political Economy, Sept. 2021–Sept. 2024
Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Political Economy, Sept. 2018–Sept. 2021
Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Political Economy, Sept. 2014–Sept. 2018

University of Cambridge

Newton Trust Lecturer, Faculty of Economics, Sept. 2010–Sept. 2014
Lecturer in Economics, St Catharine's College, Sept. 2009–Sept. 2014

London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, 2007–2009

EDUCATION

University of Oxford

D.Phil. in Economics, 2009

Harvard University

A.B. in Applied Mathematics, *magna cum laude*, 2000

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Comparative politics, political economy, historical political economy

PUBLICATIONS

Can Democratic Reforms Promote Political Activism? Evidence from the Great Reform Act of 1832 (with Toke Aidt). ***Comparative Political Studies***, 59(13), 3002-3037, 2026.

Gentrification and Social Unrest: The Blitz, Urban Change and the 2011 London Riots (with Juta Kawalerowicz). ***Journal of Conflict Resolution***, 68, 484–508, 2024.

How Urban Riots Influence Political Behavior: Vote Choices After the 2011 London Riots (with Peter John). ***Political Science Research and Methods***, 12, 176–183, 2024.

The Social Dynamics of Collective Action: Evidence from the Diffusion of the Swing Riots, 1830–31 (with Toke Aidt and Max Satchell). ***Journal of Politics***, 84(1), 209–225, 2022.

The Interaction of Structural Factors and Diffusion in Social Unrest: Evidence from the Swing Riots (with Toke Aidt). ***British Journal of Political Science***, 52(2), 869–885, 2022.

Feudalism, Collaboration and Path Dependence in England's Political Development. ***British Journal of Political Science***, 50(2), 511–533, 2020.

The Democratic Window of Opportunity: Evidence from Riots in sub-Saharan Africa (with Toke Aidt). ***Journal of Conflict Resolution***, 60(4), 694–717, 2016.

Loyalty for Sale? Military Spending and Coups d'Etat. ***Public Choice***, 159, 363–383, 2014.

Soldiers or Politicians? Institutions, Conflict and the Military's Role in Politics. ***Oxford Economic Papers***, 66, 533–556, 2014.

Strategic Redistribution: The Political Economy of Populism in Latin America. ***European Journal of Political Economy***, 34, 39–51, 2014.

Bad Apples: Political Paralysis and the Quality of Politicians. ***Journal of Public Economic Theory***, 15, 433–447, 2013.

Working Papers

Slave Revolts and Emancipation: Evidence from the British Empire **(Revise and Resubmit, *American Political Science Review*)**

- Winner of the Sage Best Paper Prize in Comparative Politics, APSA 2025
- Co-winner of the David Brian Robertson Best Paper Prize in Politics and History, APSA 2025

Geopolitics and Institutional Change: The Napoleonic Wars and the Abolition of the British Slave Trade

Temples and Tablets: The Institutional Foundations of the First Writing Systems (with Giacomo Benati and Federica Carugati)

Book Chapters

The Coup: Competition for Office in Authoritarian Regimes (with Toke Aidt). Chapter in *Oxford Handbook of Public Choice*, edited by Roger Congleton, Bernard Grofman and Stefan Voigt, Oxford University Press, 2019.

Book Project

Bullets and Bondage: How Conflict Shaped Slavery in British America. Book manuscript in preparation.

Work in Progress

Overcoming the Legacies of Extractive Institutions: Evidence from the British Caribbean

The Political Origins of Property Rights: Theory and Evidence from British America

Why Security Agents Follow Orders: Hierarchical Organization and the Repression of Protest

Awards and Honours

Sage Best Paper Prize in Comparative Politics, APSA, 2025

David Brian Robertson Best Paper Prize in Politics and History, APSA, 2025 (co-winner)

Research Grants and Fellowships

Leverhulme Research Fellowship, Feb.–Nov. 2025. Total award: £52,026.

Research Council of Norway, "Securing the Victory?", July 2018–June 2023. Co-investigator (PI: Kristian S. Gleditsch). Total project award: NOK 12,500,000.

British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant, April 2013–Sept. 2014. Co-investigator (PI: Toke Aidt). Total project award: £9,925.

Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) Early Career Fellowship, 2013

ESRC Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship, 2007–2009

Academic Visits

Becker Friedman Institute, University of Chicago, Sept.–Dec. 2025

Economic History Group, Yale University, Feb.–April 2025

STICERD, London School of Economics, July–Sept. 2014

Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University, April 2013

Teaching

King's College London

Undergraduate

Empirical Political Economy (2015–present). Advanced undergraduate course on causal inference and research methods; course designer. Student evaluation: 4.6/5 (2026).

Advanced Topics in Economic History (2016–present). Advanced undergraduate course on institutions and historical political economy; course designer. Student evaluation: 4.6/5 (2026).

Mathematics for Economics (2015–2017). Course designer. Student evaluation: 4.6/5 (2017).

Graduate

Economic History, MA module (2021–present). Course designer. Student evaluation: 4.5/5 (2023).

MA in Economics and Policy, Econometrics pre-sessional (2023–2024). Course designer.

Contributions to courses

Quantitative Methods (2014–present); Advanced Research Methods (2015–2016); Advanced Issues in International Politics (2014–2015); Comparative Public Policy (2014–2015); How to Write a Master's Dissertation (2014–2015).

University of Cambridge

Part I Microeconomics: Consumer and Producer Theory (2010–2014).

Part IIB Public Economics: Quantitative Methods (2011–2013).

Part IIB Microeconomics: Policy Evaluation (2013–2014).

Small-group undergraduate teaching: Part I Microeconomics (2011–2014); Part IIA Macroeconomics (2009–2011); Part IIB Public Economics (2009–2014); undergraduate and master's dissertation supervision.

Doctoral Supervision

Current: James Mowatt, Gwen Jones

Completed (year of completion; first placement):

Luis Soto Tamayo (2025; postdoctoral fellow, University College London)

Dmitry Ismagilov (2024; postdoctoral fellow, University College London)

Sophia Ostler (2021; UK Trade Remedies Authority)

Ria Ivandic (2019; postdoctoral fellow, London School of Economics)

Danilo Freire (2018; postdoctoral fellow, Brown University)

PhD examiner: Abelardo De Anda Casas, University of Oxford (2025); Lei Yu-Hsiang, LSE (2016)

Institution Building

Curriculum development: Designed the department's quantitative curriculum, including a sequence of methods courses.

Faculty recruitment: Led faculty searches.

Research leadership: Co-lead, Historical Political Economy group (2025–present); lead, Political Economy of Peace and Conflict group (2016–2020, 2022–2024).

Research community: Established research clusters and two seminar series.

Mentoring: Mentor four junior colleagues.

University Service

King's College London

Careers and alumni coordinator (2021–2024)

Undergraduate exam board chair (2018–2020)

Alumni coordinator (2016–2018)

Study abroad coordinator (2014–2016)

University of Cambridge

Director of Studies, Part I Economics (2009–2014) and Part IIA Economics (2011–2012)

Professional Service

Editorial Board

Journal of Peace Research (2022–present)

Council Member

APSA Political Economy Organized Section (2026–present)

Prize Committee

Sage Best Paper Prize in Comparative Politics, APSA (2027)

Conferences Organized

Jan Tinbergen European Peace Science Conference, King's College London, 2022

Grant Reviewer

ESRC (UK), Agence Nationale de la Recherche (France)

Referee

Political science: American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, British Journal of Political Science, World Politics, Comparative Political Studies, International Organization, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Journal of Peace Research, Political Science Research and Methods, Research and Politics, Public Choice

Economics: Econometrica, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of the European Economic Association, Economic Journal, European Economic Review, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Public Economic Theory, Oxford Economic Papers, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, Fiscal Studies, European Journal of Political Economy, Economic Development and Cultural Change, Economica

Economic history: Journal of Economic History, European Review of Economic History, Economic History Review

Presentations

Invited Seminars

2026: University of Barcelona; Institute for Historical Research, London.

2025: Brown, PPE; Yale, Economic History; Yale, Leitner Political Economy; New York University, Comparative Politics; Duke, Political Economy; Northwestern, Economic History.

2024: Paris-Saclay, Economics; Sciences Po, CEVIPOF.

2023: University College London, Political Science.

2019: University of Barcelona; Central European University.

2018: University of Essex, Government.

2017: University of York, Economics; University of Leicester, Economics.

2014: University of Konstanz, Economics.

2012: Princeton, Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy.

2011: University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley Center for Political Economy; Department for International Development (DFID), London.

2009: University of Birmingham, Economics; University of Oregon, Economics; Queen Mary University of London, Economics and Finance; Durham University, Economics and Finance; University of Edinburgh, Economics; University of Bristol, Economics.

2008: Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), Washington DC; University of Warwick, Economics.

2007: University of Oxford, Centre for the Analysis of Resource Rich Economies.

Selected Conferences and Workshops

American Political Science Association Conference (2025, 2026); Society for Institutional and Organizational Economics (2023, 2024, 2026); Ridge Historical Development Workshop (2026); Cliometrics Conference (2026); Economic History Association Conference (2026); USC Historical Political Economy Conference (2024, 2025); Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association Conference (2025); Yale-UB Historical Political Economy Workshop (2024); Petralia Workshop in Political Economy (2024); IEB Workshop in Political Economy (2023); European Political Science Association (2015, 2018, 2019, 2022); Jan Tinbergen European Peace Science Conference (2015, 2017, 2018, 2022); Workshop on Civil Resistance and Democratization (2018, 2021); Midwestern Political Science Association (2009, 2018, 2019); LSE Economic History Workshop (2019); Workshop on Political Dissent, University of Essex (2017); University of Glasgow, workshop on "Disadvantage" (2017); LSE Historical Political Economy Conference (2017); PSA Political Methodology Conference (2016, 2017); "From Initial Campaign Success to Consolidated Democracy" workshop, PRIO (2016); Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modelling Conflict, University of Essex (2016); EPEC Workshop in Political Economy, Porto Conte Research Centre (2016); Workshop in Political Economy, University of Sheffield (2016).

PRIOR EMPLOYMENT

Associate Consultant, Bain & Company, 2000–2002

LANGUAGES

Spanish (native), English (fluent), French (proficient)

COMPUTER SKILLS

Stata, R, NetLogo, Python, Matlab, ArcGIS, C, SAS

MEDIA AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Broadcast and Panels

Information war escalates as Venezuela tries to contain uprising. *CNN International*, 1 May 2019.

Why are coups common in Africa? *Al Jazeera*, 18 September 2015.

Monocle 24 radio, discussion of the situation in Venezuela: 26 November 2015; 4 December 2015; 7 December 2015; 8 December 2015; 5 January 2016; 19 May 2016; 12 July 2016; 12 August 2016; 24 October 2016.

Brexit and its consequences. *Arirang TV News (South Korea)*, 28 September 2016.

Panel on Populism, Institute of Advanced Studies (UCL), Policy Network, 16 June 2017.

Op-eds and Commentary

How the long history of leaderless movements helps us understand the "yellow vests" protests. *Monkey Cage, The Washington Post*, 12 December 2018.

Democracy and the threat of revolution: New evidence (with Toke Aidt, Raphael Franck and Peter S. Jensen). *Vox EU*, 8 January 2015.

Venezuela elections: will election results mark a turning point? *The Telegraph*, 7 December 2015.

Maduro has nowhere to go. *Political Violence @ a Glance*, 8 February 2019.

The diffusion of social unrest. *Broadstreet Blog*, 10 November 2021.

Labour's housing pledge. *Left Foot Forward*, 27 April 2015.

Venezuela: Hope lies in both sides working together. *Left Foot Forward*, 16 February 2015.