

# Michael Robbins

Department of Politics  
Princeton University  
Princeton, NJ 08544

Email: [mdr7@princeton.edu](mailto:mdr7@princeton.edu)  
Homepage: [www.mdhrobbins.net](http://www.mdhrobbins.net)

## Education

Ph.D. Political Science, University of Michigan, 2012.

*Dissertation:* Bound by Brand: Opposition Party Support Under Electoral Authoritarianism.

- Recipient of the Aaron Wildavsky Award for Best Dissertation in Religion and Politics, American Political Science Association, 2013.

*Major:* Comparative Politics

*First Minor:* Methodology

*Second Minor:* MENA studies

B.S. Foreign Service, Georgetown University, 2003.

## Employment

Co-Principal Investigator, Arab Barometer, Princeton University, 2021-present.

Project Director, Arab Barometer, Princeton University, 2014-present.

Sponsored Affiliate, Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, 2018-2019.

Research Fellow, Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, 2014-2017.

Research Associate, Pew Research Center, 2012-2014.

Project Manager, Arab Barometer, 2012.

Research Assistant, Arab Barometer, 2005-2011.

Consultant, Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI), Qatar University, 2008-2009.

Consultant, World Bank, Middle East and North Africa Division, February-April 2005.

Research Assistant, World Bank, Office of the Chief Economist for the Middle East and North Africa, 2003-4.

## Awards and Grants

National Endowment for Democracy (NED), 2020-2022; 2023-2024; 2024-2026.

Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), U.S. Department of State, 2017-2024.

Middle East Bureau, USAID, 2021-2022.

BBC Arabic, 2021-2022

Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), U.S. Department of State, 2017-2021.

Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2018-2020.

Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), 2016-2020.

USAID Grant #OAA-A-15-00075, 2015-2018.

Research Fellow, Dubai Initiative, Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School, February 2009-June 2010.

National Science Foundation (NSF) Three-Year Graduate Fellowship, 2006-8; 2009-10.

## Academic Publications

“Democratization in the Middle East and North Africa.” *Sage Handbook on Democratization*, forthcoming.

“Measuring disability in multi-topic household surveys in the Middle East and North Africa.” *Field Methods*, forthcoming (with Kathrin Thomas).

“Data Collection.” In *United Nations Handbooks on Household Surveys*, 2026 (with Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Elena Cezza, Gabriella Fazzi, Muhardi Kahar, & Johannes W. S. Kappelhof).

“Violent and non-violent death tolls for the Gaza conflict: New primary evidence from a population-representative field survey.” *Lancet Global Health*, 2026 (with Michael Spagat, Jon Pedersen, Khalil Shikaki, Eran Bendavid, Håvard Hegre, & Debarati Guha-Sapir).

“What Syrians Want.” *Foreign Affairs*, December 5, 2025 (with Salma Al-Shami).

“A Hidden Force in the Middle East: How Arab Public Opinion Constrains Normalization With Israel.” *Foreign Affairs*, June 12, 2025 (with Amaney Jamal).

“What the Lebanese People Really Think of Hezbollah.” *Foreign Affairs*, July 11, 2024 (with MaryClare Roche).

“America Is Losing the Arab World.” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 2024 (with Amaney Jamal & Mark Tesler).

“How the Israel-Hamas War in Gaza Is Changing Arab Views.” *Foreign Affairs*, December 13, 2023 (with MaryClare Roche, Amaney Jamal, Salma Al-Shami, & Mark Tessler).

“What Palestinians Really Think of Hamas.” *Foreign Affairs*, October 24, 2023 (with Amaney Jamal).

“Trends in Arab Public Opinion Amid Regional and Global Disruptions.” In *Disruptions and Dynamism in the Arab World*, Frederic Wehrey (ed.), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (with Amaney Jamal).

“Political Parties and Citizens in the MENA Region.” In *Politics without Parties*, Thomas Volk (ed.), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

“Women’s Rights and Roles during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” In *A Regional Perspective on Women’s Rights and Roles During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, Rita Stephan (ed.), University of Texas Press (with Salma Al-Shami and Zach Bampton).

“Public Opinion.” *The Political Science of the Middle East*, Marc Lynch, Jillian Schwedler, & Sean Yom (eds.), Oxford University Press, 206-231, 2022 (with Lindsay Benstead & Justin Gengler).

“Why Democracy Stalled in the Middle East.” *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2022 (with Amaney Jamal).

“Devotion at Sub-national Level: Ramadan, Night-time Lights, and Religiosity in Egyptian Governorates.” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* December 3, 2020 (with Sabri Ciftci & Sofya Zaytseva).

“Mapping and Explaining Arab Attitudes toward the Islamic State: Findings from an Arab Barometer Survey and Embedded Experiment.” *The Oxford Handbook of Politics in Muslim Societies*, 2020 (with Mark Tessler and Amaney Jamal).

“Improving Data Quality in Face-to-Face Survey Research.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 53(1), 2020 (with Carolyn Logan, Pablo Parás, & Elizabeth J. Zechmeister).

“New Frontiers in Detecting Data Fabrication.” *Advances in Comparative Survey Methods: Multi-national, Multiregional, and Multicultural Contexts (3MC)*, Timothy Johnson, Beth-Ellen Pennell, Ineke Stoop, & Brita Dorer (eds.), Wiley, 771-804, 2018.

“The Ascendance of Official Islams.” *Democracy & Security* 13(4): 363-391, 2017 (with Lawrence Rubin).

“Youth, Religion and Democracy after the Arab Uprisings.” *The Muslim World* 107(1): 100-126, 2017.

“Don’t Get Duped: Fraud through Duplication in Public Opinion Surveys.” *Statistical Journal of the IAOS* 32(3): 283-291, 2016 (with Noble Kuriakose).

“The State of Social Justice in the Arab World: The Arab Uprisings of 2011 and Beyond.” *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 8(1): 127-157, 2016 (with Amaney Jamal).

“After the Arab Spring: People Still Want Democracy.” *Journal of Democracy*, 26(3): 80-89 (October), 2015.

“Political System Preferences of Arab Publics.” In *The Arab Uprisings Explained* edited by Marc Lynch. Columbia University Press, 2014 (with Mark Tessler).

"The Rise of Official Islam in Jordan." *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 14(1): 59-74 (March), 2013 (with Lawrence Rubin).

"Arab Attitudes toward Democracy and Governance: Findings from the 2010-2011 Arab Barometer". *Journal of Democracy* 23(4): 89-103 (October), 2012 (with Mark Tessler and Amaney Jamal). Reprinted in *Democratization and Authoritarianism in the Arab World* edited by Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014.

"The Effect of Elections on Public Opinion toward Democracy: Evidence from Longitudinal Survey Research in Algeria." *Comparative Political Studies* 45(10): 1255-76 (October), 2012 (with Mark Tessler).

"What Leads Some Ordinary Men and Women in Arab Countries to Approve of Terrorist Acts Against the United States?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51(2): 305-28 (April), 2007 (with Mark Tessler). Reprinted in *Public Opinion in the Middle East: Survey Research and the Political Orientations of Ordinary Citizens* by Mark Tessler. Indiana University Press, 2011.

## Additional Publications

"AAPOR/WAPOR Task Force Report on Quality in Comparative Surveys", American Association for Public Opinion Research and World Association for Public Opinion Research, 2021 (contributing author).

"Political System Preferences after the Arab Spring." Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) Research Memo. November 3, 2014 (with Mark Tessler).

"Searching for Stability: The Arab Barometer surveys a divided Libya." Arab Reform Initiative. September 2014 (with Fathi Ali).

"Skipping the Arab Spring? The Arab Barometer surveys a changing Algeria." Arab Reform Initiative. April 2014.

*The World's Muslims: Politics, Religion and Society*. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. April 2013 (contributing author).

*The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity*. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. August 2012 (contributing author).

"Strengthening Democracy Promotion: Understanding conceptions of democracy and their effects among Arab publics." Dubai Initiative Policy Brief, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, 2010.

"What Accounts for the Success of Islamist Parties in the Arab World?" Dubai Initiative Working Paper, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, 2009. (Also published as Dubai Initiative Policy Brief 10-01, 2010).

"What Accounts for the Success of Islamist Parties in the Arab World?" Dubai Initiative Policy Brief, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, 2009.

“Women in Local Economic Development—Aden,” Report Prepared for Port Cities Development Program. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006.

“Building Capacity for Public Opinion and Social Research: A Resource Booklet for Academic Institutions in the Arab World and Elsewhere.” Internal Document. University of Michigan and US Department of State, 2005 (with Lindsay Benstead).

*Unlocking the Employment Potential: Toward a New Social Contract.* Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004 (contributing author).

“Yemen Gender Note,” Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004 (contributing author).

## Media Publications

“Arab citizens know democracy’s not perfect. They want it anyway.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, July 22, 2022.

“Protests continue in Algeria. Why?” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, September 19, 2019.

“How states can wield ‘official Islam’ to limit radical extremism.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, November 3, 2017 (with Lawrence Rubin).

“Talk of rigged elections undermines democracy.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, October 21, 2016 (with Mark Tessler).

“What do ordinary citizens in the Arab world really think about the Islamic State?” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, July 27, 2016 (with Mark Tessler and Amaney Jamal).

“Five years after the revolution, more and more Tunisians support democracy.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, May 20, 2016.

“Yes, you can trust international surveys. Mostly.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, March 26, 2016.

“When it comes to democracy, Egyptians hate the player but Tunisians hate the game.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, October 16, 2015.

“What the Arab street thinks of Iran—and of US policy toward Iran” *The Conversation*, July 14, 2015.

“How Jordan uses Islam against the Islamic State.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, November 19, 2014 (with Lawrence Rubin).

“Arab views on governance after the uprisings.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, October 29, 2014 (with Mark Tessler).

“Is Israel’s blockade worth fighting for?” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, August 4, 2014 (with Amaney Jamal).

“Algerians vote for stability.” Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog, April 17, 2014.

"Tunisians voted for jobs, not Islam." ForeignPolicy.com (with Mark Tessler), December 7, 2011.

"What Egyptians mean by democracy." ForeignPolicy.com (with Mark Tessler), September 20, 2011.

## **Book Reviews**

"Political Succession in the Arab World: Constitutions, family loyalties and Islam." International Journal of Middle East Studies 43:2, 347-9, 2011.

## **Working Papers and Current Projects**

"The Effect of the Arab Spring on Support for Democracy: Evidence from an Unplanned Quasi-Experiment."

"Comparative Understandings of Sharia in MENA." (with Christine Fair, Rebecca Littman, & Elizabeth Nugent).

## **Teaching Experience**

Michigan in Washington/University of California in DC (UCDC) program

PS 497: Middle East Politics after the Arab Spring, Fall 2014

PS 497: Middle East Politics and the Arab Spring, Spring 2012

## **Languages and Fieldwork**

Modern Standard Arabic, Levantine Arabic Dialect, Spanish

Eight months of fieldwork in Jordan and the West Bank

Semi-structured interviews with party and civil society elites

Conducted election survey in Jordan

## **Skills**

Statistical languages: R, Stata, and SPSS

## Professional Activities

Lifetime member, Council on Foreign Relations.

Vice Chair, RC17 (Comparative Public Opinion), International Political Science Association, 2025-2029.

AAPOR/WAPOR Task Force Report on Quality in Comparative Surveys Committee Member, 2018-2021.

Editorial Advisory Board, *International Relations and Security Studies*.

Advisory Board, Comparative Survey Design and Implementation.

Advisory Board, ArabTrans.

Janet A. Harkness Student Paper Award Committee, AAPOR & WAPOR, 2019-21.

Country Expert, Varieties of Democracy, 2014 & 2017.

Assistant Editor, *Statistical Journal of the IAOS*, 2016.

Country Expert, The Electoral Integrity Project, 2014.

Aaron Wildavsky Award for Best Dissertation in Religion and Politics Committee Member, 2013-14.

Reviewer: *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Political Science Review*, *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Chinese Political Science Review*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*, *European Journal of International Relations*, *Global Media Journal*, *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *International Political Science Review*, *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Social Sciences*, *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence*, *New Middle Eastern Studies*, *Party Politics*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *Political Analysis*, *Political Behavior*, *Political Psychology*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Politics and Governance*, *Politics & Religion*, *PS*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Scientific Study of Religion*, *Social Problems*, *Sociological Perspectives*, *Sociology & Criminology*, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *Third World Quarterly*, *World Politics*.