

Mae MacDonald

CONTACT INFORMATION Department of Political Science
Stanford University maemac@stanford.edu
www.maemacdonald.com

EDUCATION **Stanford University** Stanford, CA 2021–2026 (expected)
Ph.D., Department of Political Science

- Committee: Jeremy Weinstein (co-chair), James D. Fearon (co-chair), Jens Hainmueller, Judith Goldstein
- Knight-Hennessy Scholar

University of Oxford Oxford, UK 2015–2018
B.A., Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (*Double First Class*)

RESEARCH INTERESTS Refugee and immigration policy; political economy of development and foreign aid; civil wars and violence; international law and international organizations; causal inference; public opinion and survey research; Africa; gender.

PUBLICATIONS Lisa Blaydes, James D. Fearon, and **Mae MacDonald**. 2025. “Understanding Intimate Partner Violence.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 28:351–374.

WORKING PAPERS **Mae MacDonald**. “Push, Not Peace: Reconsidering the Drivers of Refugee Return.” *Job market paper*.

Mae MacDonald and Adam Lichtenheld. “Support for Refugee Integration in a Major Refugee-Hosting Country: Evidence from Kenya.” *Under review*.

Sigrid Weber, **Mae MacDonald**, Adam Lichtenheld, Jessica Wolff, Alex Wendo, Annet Adong, Clare Clingain, David Musiime, Andrew Zeitlin, and Jens Hainmueller. “Building Business Networks to Strengthen Refugee Economic and Social Integration.”

Mae MacDonald. “Is Soft Power Zero-Sum? Trump’s Foreign Policy Shocks and Attitudes Towards the US and China.”

Mae MacDonald. “How Hearts and Minds Are Lost: Aid Withdrawal, Attribution, and Public Opinion.”

Mae MacDonald. “Examining the Link between Aid and Support for Refugees: U.S. Aid Cuts and Kakuma Camp, Kenya.”

WORKS IN PROGRESS **Mae MacDonald**. “How Refugee Crises End.” *Book project*.

POLICY AND PUBLIC WRITING **Mae MacDonald**, Adam Lichtenheld, and Tolossa Asrat. 2025. “Kenya Embraces Refugee Integration – and Citizens Are on Board.” *The New Humanitarian*.

Mae MacDonald. 2025. “Rapid Response Evidence: Tracking the Impact of US Aid Cuts in Kakuma Refugee Camp.” Policy Brief for UN Refugee Agency.

Mae MacDonald. 2024. “Tackling Small Boats and Building Global Resilience: A Twofold Policy Plan on Refugees.” Policy Brief commissioned by the UK Cabinet Office, King’s College London Center for Grand Strategy.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- DARE Fellow**, Stanford University 2025
Competitive full-merit graduate fellowship for late-stage students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Ric Weiland Graduate Fellow**, Stanford University 2024
Award to 20 top Ph.D. students across the Humanities & Sciences.
- Carnegie International Policy Fellow**, Johns Hopkins University 2024
Fellowship and network for scholars at the intersection of policy and research.
- EDGE Fellow**, Stanford University 2021
Competitive graduate fellowship for early-stage students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Knight-Hennessy Scholar**, Stanford University 2021
Competitive full-merit graduate fellowship (US Rhodes-equivalent).
- YouGov Fellowship**, University of Oxford 2018
- E.T. Warner Prize for Excellence in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics**, University of Oxford 2018
- Academic Scholar**, University of Oxford 2016
- Crankstart Scholar**, University of Oxford 2015

GRANTS

- J-PAL/IPA Displaced Livelihoods Initiative (\$60,000)** 2024
with Jeremy Weinstein and Adam Lichtenheld
- Stanford Institute for Economics Policy Research (\$5,200)** 2024
- Ric Weiland Graduate Fellowship (\$4,000)** 2024
- King Center on Global Development (\$25,000)** 2023
with Jeremy Weinstein and Adam Lichtenheld
- J-PAL/IPA Displaced Livelihoods Initiative (\$10,000)** 2023
- Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (\$9,000)** 2023
- Stanford Europe Center (\$1,000)** 2023
- King Center on Global Development (\$5,000)** 2023
- Sohaib and Sara Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies (\$3,000)** 2023
- Stanford Impact Labs (\$4,000)** 2022
with Jens Hainmueller
- King Center on Global Development (\$8,000)** 2022
- Stanford Institute for Research in the Social Sciences (\$1,500)** 2022
- Stanford EDGE (\$6,000)** 2021
- YouGov Fellowship (\$12,000)** 2018

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	<p>YouGov, Graduate Researcher (Public Sector) 2018–2019</p> <p>Movement on the Ground, Refugee Camp Volunteer 2021</p> <p>CalAid, Refugee Camp Volunteer 2017</p> <p>The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network, Intern 2017</p> <p>Global Policy Institute, Research Intern 2017</p> <p>UK Political Party, Intern 2015</p> <p>UK House of Commons, Intern 2014</p>
TEACHING	<p>Teaching Assistant, Stanford University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to International Relations (James D. Fearon), Fall 2024 • War and Peace in American Foreign Policy (Kenneth Schultz), Spring 2024 • Introduction to International Relations (James D. Fearon), Fall 2022 <p>Class Co-Coordinator, Stanford University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Displacement, Migration, and Mobility (Chris Field), Spring 2025 <p>Research Assistant (RA) Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Research Internship Supervisor (34 RAs), University of California Washington Program with the Political Violence Lab, 2025–2026 • Undergraduate Research Supervisor (3 RAs), Stanford IRiSS Research Assistant Internship Program, 2023–2025 • Undergraduate Research Supervisor (2 RAs), Stanford University, 2023–present
DATASETS	<p>Global Refugee Return (GRR) Dataset. Original origin–asylum dyad-year dataset (1980–2023) that corrects errors in UNHCR stock and repatriation figures, and introduces new indicators of <i>de facto</i> forced return practices. <i>Forthcoming.</i></p> <p>UNHCR Funding Dataset. Donor-level contributions to the UN Refugee Agency and country-level allocation of expenditures within recipient countries. <i>Forthcoming.</i></p>
TALKS AND CONFERENCES	<p>2026 (scheduled): American Political Science Association (APSA); World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement Research Conference; Berlin Meeting on the Political Economy of Development (MoPED); Yale Research Initiative on Innovation & Scale (Y-RISE); Berkeley-Stanford IPE Colloquium; Online Peace Science Colloquium; Stanford International Affairs Society; Immigration Policy Lab Workshop.</p> <p>2025: American Political Science Association (APSA); World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement Research Conference; Forced Displacement Working Group (FDWG), Penn Development Research Initiative; Immigration Policy Lab Workshop.</p> <p>2024: American Political Science Association (APSA); International Studies Association (ISA); APSA Migration & Citizenship Section Dissertation Workshop; UNHCR-IPA Evidence in Action: Displaced Livelihoods Initiative in Africa; Immigration Policy Lab Workshop.</p>

**PROFESSIONAL
AFFILIATIONS**

Immigration Policy Lab, Stanford University

Forced Displacement Working Group, Penn Development Research Initiative (PDRI-DevLab), University of Pennsylvania

Centre for Grand Strategy, War Studies Department, King's College London

Carnegie International Policy Scholars Consortium and Network (IPSCON), Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs, Johns Hopkins University

Political Violence Lab, University of California Merced

SERVICE

Reviewer

Journal of Conflict Resolution, *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*

Mentorship

- Refugee-Led Research Hub (East Africa), 2023
- Young African Research Network (YARN), 2024
- Stanford Political Science Pathways to PhD, 2023
- Stanford IRiSS Research Assistant Internship Program, 2023-2024
- Stanford First Year Graduate Student Mentor, 2023

**SKILLS AND
FIELDWORK**

Computing: R, \LaTeX , Python, QGIS, Google Earth Engine (GEE)

Fieldwork: Kenya (2022, 2023, 2024, 2025); Uganda (2022, 2023); Thailand (2022); Greece (2016, 2021)

Additional training: Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, Syracuse University (2023)

Archives: UNHCR (2023)

Updated April 2026