

Claas Mertens

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of Oxford, Blavatnik School of Government 09/2025 – present

Leverhulme Early Career Fellow

- Three-year independent research project on geoeconomic power, cooperation, and climate change

University of Oxford, Worcester College 09/2025 – present

Junior Research Fellow in the Social Sciences

Princeton University, Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance 08/2024 – 07/2025

Postdoctoral Fellow

- Independent research on sanctions, economic interdependence, and climate change

University of Oxford, Blavatnik School of Government 01/2024 – 07/2024

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Net Zero Governance Systems (PIs: Thomas Hale, Thom Wetzer)

- Research on the international political economy of climate change

EDUCATION

University of Oxford, University College 10/2020 – 03/2024

Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations

- Thesis: “Three Articles on International Economic Coercion: Aid Suspensions, Retaliation, and Weaponised Interdependence”
- Supervisors: Alexander Kuo, Karolina Milewicz

University of Oxford 10/2016 – 06/2018

Master of Philosophy in Politics: European Politics and Society

University of St. Gallen, Switzerland 09/2011 – 08/2015

Bachelor of Arts in Business

Harvard College, United States 08/2014 – 01/2015

Visiting Undergraduate Student

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

“Carrots as Sticks: How Effective Are Foreign Aid Suspensions and Economic Sanctions?” 2024. *International Studies Quarterly* 68(2).

“The Power of the ‘Weak’ and International Organizations.” 2024. *The Review of International Organizations*. With Duncan Snidal, Thomas Hale, Emily Jones, and Karolina Milewicz.

- Framework article for a special issue, which I co-organised and co-edited

BOOK MANUSCRIPT

Varieties of Chokepoints: A Micro-Perspective on Geoeconomic Power. In progress.

Existing accounts of geoeconomic power cannot explain why closely related economic exchanges generate vastly different capacities for coercion. This book shifts the analysis to the product level, arguing that chokepoints arise from the specific characteristics of bilateral exchanges that generate asymmetric substitution costs. It identifies four varieties of chokepoints (platform, know-how, fixed-capital, and market-access) and traces their lifecycle from emergence through activation to erosion. Book workshops are

planned at the Blavatnik School of Government (May 2026) and Princeton's Niehaus Center (September 2026).

RESEARCH PIPELINE

“Sanctions, Countersanctions, and Power: When and How International Organizations De-Escalate Geoeconomic Conflict.” **Revise & Resubmit**, *International Interactions*.

“A ‘conveyor belt’ from international standards to stronger domestic regulation? Evidence from the international political economy of net zero governance.” With Thomas Hale, Emma Lecavalier, Bhavya Gupta, and Thom Wetzer. **Revise & Resubmit**, *Regulation & Governance*.

“The price of dependence: what partnerships can Europe build?” Close to submission. With Ngaire Woods.

“The Target Strikes Back: When and How China and Russia Adopt Economic (Counter)Sanctions.” With Linda Liu. Close to submission.

“Geoeconomic Power and Vulnerability: A Typology of Chokepoints and When They Arise.” Close to submission.

“Comparative analysis of national export control regimes.” With Christina Davis, Katniss Li, and Yeling Tan. Early stage.

DATASETS

Oxford Climate Policy Monitor (climatepolicymonitor.ox.ac.uk). With Emma Lecavalier, Lucilla Dias, Thomas Hale, and Thom Wetzer.

Dataset on 200+ Cases of Chinese and Russian Economic Sanctions. With Linda Liu. Dataset complete; paper in progress.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship (three years, 2025–2028): independent research project on geoeconomic power
- Carnegie Corporation of New York (\$750,000, 2026–2029): co-developed grant for the Research on Economic Security and Peace (RESP) project, a collaboration between Oxford and Harvard
- Oxford-Radcliffe Graduate Scholarship (2020–2024): full funding for DPhil

TEACHING AND SUPERVISION

Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford Trinity 2026

Co-Convenor, Policy Challenge II (Master of Public Policy)

- Capstone simulation on weaponised interdependence and multilateral economic security for ~60 students

School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford 04/2024 – 09/2024

Supervisor of MSc thesis in Environmental Change and Management

- Guided the student from research design to final submission.

Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford 10/2021 – 07/2024

Tutor for Quantitative Research Methods (Q-Step 1 and Q-Step 2)

- Introductory and advanced statistics for PPE and History & Politics undergraduates (~60 students per year)
- Independently delivered lectures, R coding labs, and assessment

Stanford Undergraduate Exchange Programme, University of Oxford 04/2024 – 07/2024

Tutor for International Relations and Quantitative Methods

- Designed course syllabus from scratch; held weekly tutorials

Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford

09/2021 – 01/2022

Teaching Assistant, Internet Technologies and Regulation

- Core course for MSc Social Science of the Internet; independently ran workshops (~20 students)

SELECTED CONFERENCES AND INVITED PRESENTATIONS

TU Munich	2026
Blavatnik School of Government Research Seminar	2026
PEIO	2022, 2026
EPSA	2025, 2023
University of Pennsylvania	2025
IPES	2024, 2022
Princeton IR Colloquium	2024
International Association on Regulation & Governance	2024
Oxford IR Colloquium	2024
ECPR Joint Session	2021

MENTORING AND OUTREACH

Athletics Fellow , Princeton University	08/2024 – 07/2025
• Supporting rowing team members in balancing academic and athletic commitments	
Graduate Horizons Mentor , Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford	09/2023 – 08/2024
• Supporting a Kenyan refugee with university applications and funding	
IR Tutor, Floreat Programme , Balliol College, Oxford	11/2022 – 06/2023
• Outreach tutorials on International Relations for state school students	
Workshop Convenor , ‘Your Sustainable Future’ summer school, Oxford	07/2022
UNIQ+ Mentor , Graduate Admissions, Oxford	07/2021 – 08/2022
• Mentored two prospective graduate applicants from underrepresented backgrounds	

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Kearney , Berlin	01/2019 – 10/2020
<i>Management Consultant</i>	
KPMG , Frankfurt – Deal Advisory & Strategy	06/2016 – 08/2016
GIZ , Riyadh – International Cooperation	02/2016 – 05/2016
Deutsche Bank , Frankfurt – Investment Banking (ETFs)	09/2013 – 11/2013

SERVICE AND ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

- Guest editing a special issue on geoeconomics for the Oxford Review of Economic Policy (invited by editor, in preparation)
- Student Representative for DPhil in International Relations, DPIR (2022–2023)
- Organised PEIO conference at Oxford (2022), with 100+ international participants

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Competitive Rowing (2006–2018): World Champion (2015), Oxford–Cambridge Boat Race (2018), German national team (2012–2015), ten-time German national champion