

AUSTIN M. CARSON

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Political Science, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH (expected May 2013)

M.A., Political Science, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH (2009)

Fields: International Relations; Political Psychology (with distinction)

B.A., James Madison College, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI (2003)

Major: International Relations (with honors)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

War & Peace, Political Accountability, Secrecy, International Relations Theory, Blame, Covert Military Interventions, Qualitative Methodology, Archival Research.

DISSERTATION

Secrecy, Acknowledgement, and War Escalation

Committee: Randall Schweller (Chair), Richard Herrmann, Jennifer Mitzen

Abstract: Why do states use secrecy? My dissertation explores this topic through analysis of covert military interventions in ongoing wars. Existing theory views secrecy as a means for military surprise or domestic political insulation. Instead, I argue states intervening covertly do so to manage conflict escalation risks. I develop a general theory of secrecy and political deniability as tools of “impression management” whereby states manipulate politically significant classifications of themselves, other states, and events. In the context of military interventions, the covert form allows states to influence the war without triggering a reclassification of their status as belligerent and the conflict’s definition as a limited conflict. Reclassification from an overt intervention elevates escalation pressures by deepening the reputational stakes of the conflict and emboldening hawkish domestic factions in other states. I test the theory through a set of carefully selected comparative case studies of the Korean War, the Spanish Civil War, and the American covert aid program to rebels in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan. Extensive archival research allows access to decision logics and within-case variation establishes a link between the form of intervention and waxing/waning escalation fears. The project also helps make sense of puzzling cases of open secrecy and adversary collusion while shedding light on a previously under-examined topic.

PUBLICATIONS

“Political Irrelevance, Democracy, and the Limits of Militarized Conflict” (with Bear Braumoeller).
Journal of Conflict Resolution, Volume 55, No. 2, April 2011, 292-320.

PAPERS UNDER REVIEW

“Norm Emergence and the Publicity Dilemma: the Case of Israeli Nuclear Opacity”
Last presented at International Studies Association Annual Meeting (April 2012)

WORKING PROJECTS

“Secrecy, Denial, and Escalation Management in the Korean War”
Last presented at International Studies Association Annual Meeting (April 2012)

“Opacity by Design: Towards a Research Program on Information Control in International Organizations” (with Alexander Thompson)
To be presented at American Political Science Association Annual Meeting (August 2012)

“Heroes, Horse Traders, and Scapegoats: Blame Deflection in World Politics” (with Jonathan Brown).

HONORS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Predocctoral Research Fellow, Institute for Security and Conflict Studies, Elliot School of International Affairs, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 2012-2013.

Visiting Scholar, Institute for Security and Conflict Studies, Elliot School of International Affairs, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 2011-2012.

Harvey Walker R. Research Grant, Department of Political Science, The Ohio State University, 2011.

Commendation for Excellence in Teaching, Chair of the Department of Political Science, The Ohio State University. Terms: Winter 2009, Autumn 2009, Winter 2011, Summer 2011, Autumn 2011.

Graduate Student Early Dissertation Research Grant, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, The Ohio State University, 2008.

University Fellowship, The Ohio State University Graduate School, 2007-2008.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

New Faces in International Security, Triangle Institute for Security Studies, Chapel Hill, NC, September 14-15, 2012.

American Political Science Association Annual Conference: 2012.

International Studies Association Annual Conference: 2010, 2011, 2012.

Peace Science Society International Annual Conference: 2009.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, The Ohio State University. 2009-2012.

Introduction to Global Politics (PSC 145). Introduction to the history, theoretical traditions, and core concepts in the study of International Relations for first and second year undergraduates (60

students per term). Fully online course. Designed course, sole instructor. Taught three times, 2011-2012.

The United States and World Politics (PSC 245). Introduction to post-World War II U.S. foreign policy for first and second year undergraduates (40-50 students per term). Designed course, sole instructor. Taught three times, 2010-2011.

Domestic Politics of International Conflict (PSC 579). The impact of American participation in modern warfare on domestic culture and domestic politics for advanced undergraduates (25-35 students per term). Designed course, sole instructor. Taught twice, 2010.

Teaching Assistant, The Ohio State University. 2008-2009.

The Past, Present, and Future of War (Braumoeller); *The Public Policy Process* (Volden); *Comparative Economic Diplomacy* (Verdier); *Introduction to Global Politics* (Thompson).

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE AND SERVICE TO THE DISCIPLINE

Representative, Political Science Graduate Student Association, The Ohio State University. 2011-2012.

Co-Coordinator, Research in International Politics Workshop, Department of Political Science, The Ohio State University. 2010-2011.

Referee for *International Theory*, *American Journal of Political Science*.

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Analyst, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington D.C., 2003-2005.

Research, analysis, writing, and project management for projects on non-proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons in the International Security Program (Supervisors: Robert Einhorn, Michele Flournoy, Kurt Campbell).

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Political Science Association, International Studies Association, Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

REFERENCES

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