

Chad Levinson

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Current Employment

Virginia Tech

Assistant Professor

Government and International Affairs
School of Public and International Affairs
College of Architecture and Urban Studies

2018 – Present

Education

University of Chicago

Ph.D. — Political Science

June, 2017

Dissertation — *Moral Subsidy: The Origins of Influential Interest Groups in US National Security Politics*
Committee — John Mark Hansen (chair), William G. Howell, John J. Mearsheimer

Abstract: How do interest groups gain influence in US national security politics? I argue that ambitious presidential administrations recruit extra-governmental organizations that agree with the proposed policy and possess independent credibility, to act as collaborators in propaganda campaigns aimed at overcoming public resistance and congressional opposition. Such groups provide a “moral subsidy” — legitimating third-party support — to administrations running deficits in their ability to persuade, and enable them to circumvent laws that prohibit the domestic distribution of government propaganda. Collaborating groups gain access to professional, political, and informational resources that increase their influence. This dissertation uses large-n observational, experimental, and analytic-historical analysis to explain the emergence and development of a network of influential extra-governmental organizations that has taken a central role in US national security politics, which I call the “credibility cartel.”

University of Chicago

A.M. — Social Science

Columbia University

B.A. — English, Columbia College

Research Interests

National Security Politics, the US Presidency, Civil Society, American Political Development, Information Warfare, Information Technology & Politics, Propaganda

Academic Employment History

Williams College <i>Stanley Kaplan Postdoctoral Fellow</i> Department of Political Science and Leadership Studies Program	2017 – 2018
University of Chicago <i>Preceptor</i> Committee on International Relations	2014 – 2017
Harvard University <i>Research Fellow, International Security Program</i> Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Kennedy School of Government	2013 – 2014

Publications & Research

Journal Articles

- “Partners in Persuasion: Extra-Governmental Organizations in the Vietnam War,” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 17:3 (July, 2021).
- “Gilt by Associations: Executive Appointments to National Security Federal Advisory Committees,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 49:1 (March, 2019).

Book Chapters

- Cutting the Fuse**, Robert A. Pape and James K. Feldman, University of Chicago Press, 2010.
– *Chapter 3: Iraq*
– *Chapter 6: Al Qaeda*

Commentary

- “Think Tanks and American Interventionism,” *War on the Rocks*, November 24, 2021.
- “A (Mostly) Rationalist Critique of the Gaza Blockade,” *Cicero Magazine*, August 16, 2014.

Reports

- Report to the Office of Naval Research on MVEOs**, 2008
– *Iraq Sub-report*
– *Al Qaeda Sub-report*

In Progress

- The Credibility Cartel** (book)
Extra-Governmental Organizations in US National Security Politics
- Surrogate Credibility**
Source-Frame Congruence in National Security Appeals

Soft Power Politics

Information Warfare, Civil Society, and Social Media

At the (dis)Pleasure of the President*with George Greanias, Margaret Appleby, & Brooke Guenther**Datasets and Databases***FAC Check**

Author and Programmer

Measuring American Legislatures — Nolan McCarty and Boris Shor

Programmer

Suicide Attack Database — Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism

Programmer and Designer

Grants

Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment, Virginia Tech Scholars Program Grant (Principal Investigator)	\$30,000
LBJ Foundation Moody Research Grant	\$1,480
Truman Library Institute Inaugural John K. Hulston Scholarship	\$2,600
The Roosevelt Institute Grant-in-aid	\$750
The Eisenhower Presidential Library Abilene Travel Grant	\$875
University of Chicago Research Travel Grant	\$2,500

Awards

American Political Science Association Leonard D. White Award for best doctoral dissertation on public administration	2019
University of Chicago Grodzins Prize Lectureship	2015–2016

Teaching*Virginia Tech***Introduction to US Government & Politics**

Undergraduate Lecture

Research Methods I

Graduate Seminar

International Politics

Graduate Seminar

Contemporary American Foreign Policy

Graduate Seminar

Power and Policy in the US

Graduate Seminar

Cyber Leaders

Undergraduate Capstone Program

Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

Undergraduate Seminar

Williams College

Interest Groups and US Foreign Policy

Undergraduate seminar

International Security

Undergraduate lecture

Introduction to International Relations

Undergraduate lecture, with James McAllister

University of Chicago

The US Presidency

Undergraduate seminar

Perspectives on International Relations

Graduate lecture (with Milena Ang, Dina Rashed, and Kevin Weng)

Presentations

Conferences & Workshops

International Relations and America's Rise: Institutions, Ideas, and Individuals 2020

Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society

Contributor — Cornering the Credibility Market

Emerging Trends: New Tools, Threats, and Thinking 2019

Intelligence and National Security Alliance

Panelist — Social Computing and Its Impact on Intelligence

National Security Education Program Colloquium 2019

Hume Center for National Security and Technology

Panelist — Technical and Policy Considerations of Cyber Influence Operations

Cutting the Fuse: Moving Beyond the War on Terror 2010
 Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism
Rapporteur — Strategy in the Middle East

Professional Association Annual Meetings

American Political Science Association

Panelist — New Perspectives on the Study of Information Technology and Politics 2019
Organizer, Discussant, & Panelist — Information Warfare Past and Present 2018
Panelist — Leaders and Executive Institutions in Foreign Policy Making 2016

International Studies Association

Panelist — Foreign Policy Attitudes: Experimental Approaches 2019
Discussant — Diasporas and the Formation of Foreign Policy 2019
Panelist — Experimental Research on Information and Emotions in International Relations 2017
Panelist — Presidential Foreign Policy: Constraints Versus Opportunities 2013

Midwest Political Science Association

Discussant — Executives and Foreign Policy Making 2018
Panelist — Diasporas, Foreign NGOs, and Policy Outcomes 2012
Co-Panelist — Connecting Behavioral Economics and Political Psychology 2011

Southern Political Science Association

Chair & Discussant — Political Networks and International Conflict 2016
Panelist — Presidents, Personnel, and Public Management 2016

Social Science History Association

Panelist — Civil Society, Deliberation, & Policymaking 2015

Guest Lectures

War and the Nation-State — John Mearsheimer

World War II on the Eastern Front 2016
The Causes of World War II in Asia 2013

Professional Development

National Security Executive Leadership Program

Virginia Tech, School of International and Public Affairs
 sponsored by The Ridenour Faculty Fellowship

Summer Workshop on the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy

Columbia University's Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies
 hosted by Cornell University

Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Methods Research

Consortium on Qualitative Research Methods, Syracuse University

Service

Academic Journals

American Political Science Review

Reviewer

International Security

Reviewer

Political Geography

Reviewer

International Theory

Reviewer

Committees

Honorifics Committee

Virginia Tech, College of Architecture and Urban Studies

International Relations Hiring Committee

Graduate Student Liaison

University of Chicago, Political Science Department

Political Science Association

University of Chicago, Political Science Department

Memberships

American Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association, International Studies Association, Southern Political Science Association, Social Science History Association