

Ottawa Tai Sanders, Ph.D.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Ph.D., Political Science, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN (2008-2017)

Subfields: International Relations and Public Policy

M.A., Political Science, Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY (2006-2008)

M.A., International Studies, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom (2005-2006) Subfield: Research Methods

B.A., Political Science, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (1999-2004)

Minor: Italian

DISSERTATION

Title: Existential Threats and the Militarization of Minor Powers: Why Leaders Choose to Pursue and Acquire Nuclear Weapons and Why Some Give Them Up Whereas Others Do Not

Abstract

Why do leaders decide to pursue, acquire, and give up nuclear weapons; furthermore, why do some programs take longer to acquire nuclear weapons than others? I argue that minor power nuclearization is more likely to occur when the leadership perceives an existential threat to the security of the state. Drawing from the International Relations (IR) rivalry literature, I argue that the minor power's nuclear-armed rival and its behavior and nuclear strategy are important sources of existential threat. Minor power leaders are more prone to perceive an existential threat when its stronger rival does one or more of the following: intervenes as a third-party participant in a strategic rivalry involving the minor power and a secondary rival, extends a nuclear deterrent to states in close proximity to the minor power, and deploys nuclear weapons on the soil of states close to the minor power. With respect to program duration, I argue that the interaction between technological and economic variables plays a role in determining the length of time (in years) states need to acquire nuclear weapons. Finally, in terms of nuclear forbearance, I posit that a decline in perceived threat levels determines whether or not the leadership decides to dismantle its program and give up the state's nuclear arsenal. To examine my argument, I employ qualitative methods to analyze two cases: North Korea and South Africa.

Committee Members

Professor (Emerita) Karen Rasler (Chair), Professor (Emeritus) William Thompson, Professor Michael McGinnis, Professor Eliot Smith

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

International Relations
Foreign Policy

Technology and Innovation
Artificial Intelligence

Minor Powers
Methodology

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Indiana University, Department of Political Science, Award for Travel Support, 2008

Binghamton University, Clifford D. Clark Graduate Fellowship Program for Diversity, 2006-2010 (accepted 2006-2008)

PUBLICATIONS

“Defense (as a campaign issue).” In *The Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior*, eds. Kenneth F. Warren and Geoffrey J. Golson. 2008. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

“Homeland Security (as a campaign issue).” In *The Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior*, eds. Kenneth F. Warren and Geoffrey J. Golson. 2008. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

“Veterans (as a campaign issue).” In *The Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior*, eds. Kenneth F. Warren and Geoffrey J. Golson. 2008. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Maryland (September 2018-present)

Lecturer, The Politics of Nuclear Weapons Proliferation (Spring 2019)

Lecturer, Introduction to American Government (Fall 2018)

Indiana University (2008-2016)

Instructor, The Culture of College (Spring 2016, Spring 2015, Spring 2014)

Instructor, Critical Thinking and Reasoning (Summer 2012, Summer 2010)

Associate Instructor, Introduction to American Politics (Spring 2013, Spring 2011)

Associate Instructor, Introduction to International Politics (Fall 2012, Fall 2009)

Associate Instructor, Elections 2012 (Spring 2012)

Binghamton University (2006-2008)

Teaching Assistant, Introduction to American Politics (Fall 2007)

University of Michigan (2005)

Assistant, War and the Environment (Spring 2005)

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Worked for Representative Elijah E. Cummings and assisted the legislative director with solving constituent problems.
- Assisted Rep. Cummings in preparing materials for his role as the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.
- Conducted research and analyzed data for the staff of the Congressional Black Caucus.
- Prepared and organized the congressman’s schedule.
- Edited special orders and press releases.
- Worked for Member of Parliament Bev Desjarlais in Ottawa, Canada, and answered her constituents’ concerns.
- Researched for MP Desjarlais policies, legislations, and regulations that impacted her constituents’ situations and livelihoods.

PRESENTATIONS

“Car Bombs and Fishing Disputes: Is Terrorism a Cause of Interstate Conflict?” Poster presented at the Peace Science Conference, Claremont, 2008

“Intergroup Relations in Federal States and Domestic Instability” Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, 2008

“The Correlates of Nuclear Restraint” Paper presented at the Correlates of War Seminar, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2007

WORKING PAPERS

“The Dawn of the Nuclear Age: On the Relationship between Nuclear Weapons Procurement and National Role Conceptions”

“The Onset of Nuclear Weapon Programs: An Examination of Necessary Conditions within the Framework of Neorealism”

“On Failed Nuclear Weapon Programs: Why They are Commenced in Low Threat Environments and Why They Take So Long to End”

MENTORING AND SERVICE

Senator, Graduate Student Organization, Binghamton University, 2007-2008

Mentor, Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP), University of Michigan, 2005

COMPUTER SKILLS

Proficient in MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint; Database searches (JSTOR, LexisNexis, ReadEx)
Experience using statistical packages (STATA, SPSS, and R)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Political Science Association

Society for Personality and Social Psychology