

Michael J. Soules

Department of Political Science
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Academic Employment

Assistant Professor (August 2023 – Present)

Department of Political Science, University of Houston

Visiting Scholar (June 2025 – July 2025)

School of Law and Politics, Cardiff University

Donald R. Beall Defense Fellow (2022 – July 2023)

Department of Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School

Education

Ph.D. Political Science, Pennsylvania State University, May 2022

Dissertation: “Persuasion, Coercion, and Force: How Rebel Groups Recruit”

Committee: James A. Piazza (Chair), Douglas Lemke, Bumba Mukherjee, James P. Dillard

Major Field: International Relations

Minor Fields: Comparative Politics, Methodology

M.A. Political Science, Pennsylvania State University, 2018

B.A. Political Science and History, *Summa cum Laude*, Texas A&M University, 2016

Substantive Interests

Terrorism, counterterrorism, insurgency, civil war, women’s participation in political violence, recruitment for political violence, database construction

Research

Peer Reviewed Publications

18) **Michael J. Soules** and Christopher Willis. “Rebel Recruitment and Repertoires of Violence” *Accepted and Forthcoming at Civil Wars*.

17) Nazli Avdan and **Michael J. Soules**. “Magically Powerful Leaders and the Resilience of Rebel Groups.” *Accepted and Forthcoming at Conflict Management and Peace Science*.

16) **Michael J. Soules** and Mark Berlin. “A Call to Arms: How Rebel Groups Choose Their Recruitment Tactics.” *Accepted and Forthcoming at the Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

- 15) **Michael J. Soules**, Nazli Avdan, and Kate Howarth. “Magical Practices and Terrorism in Civil Wars.” *Accepted and Forthcoming at Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*.
- 14) “Magical Practices and the Recruitment of Women into Rebel Groups.” Avdan, Nazli, Shelby Davis, and **Michael J. Soules**. *Accepted and Forthcoming at International Studies Quarterly*.
- 13) “Rebels with Too Many Causes: Diverse Recruitment Appeals and the Intractability of Civil Conflicts.” *Accepted and Forthcoming at Political Research Quarterly*.
- 12) “Rebel Recruitment and Governance: How Mobilization Strategies Shape Rebels’ Provision of Social Services.” *Accepted and Forthcoming at Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*.
- 11) “Is There a Rebel Resource Curse? Reevaluating the Conventional Wisdom.” *Accepted and Forthcoming at the Journal of Global Security Studies*.
- 10) **Michael J. Soules** and Nazli Avdan. “The magical Practices of Rebel Organizations: Introducing the Magical Acts by Groups in Civil Conflicts Dataset” *Accepted and Forthcoming at the Journal of Peace Research*.
- 9) Soules, Michael J. 2023. “Recruiting Rebels: Introducing the Rebel Appeals and Incentives Dataset.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, DOI: 00220027231154813.
- 8) Karstens, Mikaela, **Michael J. Soules**, and Nicholas Dietrich. “A Crack in the Foundation: Event Data, Newspaper Databases, and Threats to Validity and Replicability.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*.
- 7) Soules, Michael J. 2023. “Thinking Outside of the Box: Transnational Terrorism in Civil Wars.” *International Studies Quarterly* 67(2).
- 6) Soules, Michael J. 2022. “The Tradeoffs of Using Female Suicide Bombers.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 39 (1): 3-23.
- 5) Soules, Michael J. 2022 “Martyr or Mystery? Female Suicide Bombers and Information Availability.” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 45 (1): 62-91.
- 4) Palmer, Glenn, Roseanne McManus, Vito D’Orazio, Michael R. Kenwick, Mikaela Karstens, Chase Bloch, Nicholas Dietrich, Kayla Khan, Kellan Ritter, and **Michael J. Soules**. 2022. “The MID 5 Dataset, 2011-2014: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 39 (4): 470-482.
- 3) Avdan, Nazli, James A. Piazza, and **Michael J. Soules**. 2021. “Silver Lining? The Effects of Epidemics on Terrorist Groups.” *Accepted and Forthcoming. Terrorism and Political Violence*.

2) Piazza, James A. and **Michael J. Soules**. 2021. "Terror After the Caliphate: The Effect of ISIS Loss of Control over Population Centers on Patterns of Global Terrorism." *Security Studies* 30 (1): 107-135.

1) Soules, Michael J. 2020. "Women in Uniform: The Opening of Combat Roles to Women in State Militaries." *International Interactions* 46 (6): 847-871.

Under Review

Michael J. Soules, Joseph Phillips, and B. Kal Munis. "Women's Status and the Gender Gap in Support for Political Violence." *Invited to Revise and Resubmit*.

Michael J. Soules, Olayinka Otesanya, Tyson Chatagnier, and Tanya Bagashka. "Rebel Endowments and Mobilization Strategies in Civil Wars." *Under Review*.

Working Papers

Michael J. Soules, Shelby Davis, Olayinka Otesanya, and Brandon Bolte. "Guardians of the State: The recruitment of Women into Pro-Government Militias."

Michael J. Soules, Shelby Davis, Olayinka Otesanya, and Brandon Bolte. "Women in Pro-Government Militias and Sexual Violence."

Avdan, Nazli, Shelby Davis, Abiodun Folorunsho, and **Michael J. Soules**. "Liberation Theology and the Longevity and Success of Armed Groups."

"The Rebel Boys Club: Women in Leadership Roles and Militant Group Splintering."

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

The University of Houston:

Graduate Student Membership Award.

The Pennsylvania State University:

Robert S. Friedman Award for Excellence in Teaching, Fall 2020 – Spring 2021

Outstanding Political Science Graduate Student, Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO) Dissertation Support, \$2,000 – Fall 2020

Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO) Dissertation Support, \$1,000 – Fall 2019

Program for Empirical International Relations (PEIR) Fellowship, Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

Robert W. Graham Endowed Graduate Fellowship, Summer 2017 and Summer 2018

Florence and Angelo Paterno Graduate Fellowship in the Liberal Arts, Fall 2017– Spring 2018

Professional Experience

Research

Research Assistant for James A. Piazza, Summer 2020 and Fall 2021

Research Assistant for Glenn Palmer and Roseanne McManus for the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) 5.0 Dataset, Summer 2018 – Summer 2019

Teaching

Instructor of Record

POLS 3312 – Arguments, Data, and Politics (University of Houston), Spring 2025.

POLS 3335 – Political Terrorism (University of Houston), Fall 2024, Fall 2026.

POLS 6396 – Terrorism (Graduate Class) (University of Houston), Spring 2024, Spring 2026.

PLSC 6313 - Field Seminar in International Relations (Graduate Class) (University of Houston), Fall 2023

PLSC 3313 - Introduction to International Relations (University of Houston), Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Spring 2026, Fall 2026

PLSC 418W- International Relations Theory (Penn State World Campus), Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Spring 2023

GLIS 400 - Seminar in Global and International Studies (Civil Wars) (Penn State), Fall 2020

PLSC 439 - The Politics of Terrorism (Penn State), Summer 2019

Conference Participation

“Guardians of the State: The recruitment of Women into Pro-Government Militias.” Presented at the America Political Science Association Annual Meeting (Vancouver, September 2025).

“Magical Practices and the Recruitment of Women into Rebel Organizations.” Presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention. (March 2025).

“The Magical Practices of Rebel Organizations.” Presented at the IS-ISSS Annual Conference (October 2023).

“Crowded Markets: Violent Rivalry and Rebel Group Recruitment.” Presented at the “Armed Consolidation in Fragmented Conflicts” Workshop (Monterey, CA, August 2023).

“Rebel Recruitment Tactics and Sexual Violence.” Presented at the America Political Science Association Annual Meeting (Montreal, September 2022).

“Thinking Outside of the Box: Transnational Terrorism in Civil Wars.” Presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention. (April 2022).

“Fighting to the Bitter End: Rebel Recruitment Tactics and Civil War Outcomes.” Presented at the Peace Science Society International North American Meeting (November 2021).

“Thinking Outside of the Box: Transnational Terrorism in Civil Wars.” Presented at the International Studies Association Northeast Annual Convention. (November 2021).

“Natural Resource Endowments and Rebel Group Recruitment Strategies.” Poster Presented at the American Political Science Association (October 2021).

“Gender and Conflict” workshop participant at the Peace Science Society International North American Meeting (November 2020).

- “Persuasion, Coercion, and Force: Introducing the Rebel Appeals and Incentives Dataset (RAID)”
Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting (September 2020).
- “The Surviving Victim Problem: Causes and Consequences of Non-Lethal Violence” workshop participant
at the Peace Science Society International North American Meeting (Manhattan, November 2019).
- “Women in Uniform: The Opening of Military Combat Roles to Women” Presented at the American
Political Science Association Annual Meeting (Washington, D.C., August 2019).
- “The Strategic Use of Female Suicide Bombers” Presented at the International Studies
Association Annual Convention. (Toronto, March 2019).
- “The Scientific Study of Gender and Conflict” workshop participant at the Peace Science
Society International North American Meeting (Austin, November 2018).
- “Breaking Through: Female Suicide Bombers and Media Freedom” Presented at the American
Political Science Association Annual Meeting (Boston, September 2018)

Invited Talks

- “Five Things to Know About Rebel Group Recruitment.” Canadian Association for Security and
Intelligence Studies Vancouver. Podcast.
- “Mobilizing for Equality: Why Armed Groups Do (Not) Promote Gender Egalitarianism” Presented at the
Monash Gender, Peace and Security (GPS) Centre. (Melbourne, AU, May 2019).

Media Appearances

- ABC13 Houston – Online streaming interview about political violence in the United States (September
26th, 2025).
- Univision 45 Houston – Newscast about New Orleans terror attack (January 4th, 2025).
- 12News Beaumont – Newscast about New Orleans terror attack (January 2nd, 2025).
- Fox26 Houston – Newscast about New Orleans terror attacks (January 1st, 2025)
- ABC13 Houston – Newscast about political violence in the United States (July 15th, 2025).

Departmental Service

University of Houston:

- International Relations Faculty Hiring Committee (Fall 2025)
- Undergraduate Studies Committee (Fall 2024 – Spring 2025)
- International Relations Faculty Hiring Committee (Fall 2023)

Penn State University:

- Graduate Student Representative on the Graduate Recruitment Committee (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)
- Graduate Association of Political Science (GAPS) Secretary (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)
- Graduate Student Representative on the Department Social Committee (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)

Thesis Committees

Dissertation Committees (University of Houston)

Shelby Davis
John Michael Patterson
David Hilden
Bonhoon Koo
Mahsa Bashardoost

Qualifying Paper Committees (Doctoral Program, University of Houston)

Shelby Davis
John Michael Patterson
David Hilden
Bonhoon Koo
Salomon Huerta
Mahsa Bashardoost
Olayinka Otesanya

General Service to the Discipline

Reviewer for *African Security*; *Civil Wars*; *Conflict Management and Peace Science*; *Global Studies Quarterly*; *International Interactions*; *International Journal of Law, Crime, and Justice*; *International Peacekeeping*; *International Studies Quarterly*; *Journal of Conflict Resolution*; *Journal of Peace Research*; *Journal of Politics*; *National Science Foundation*; *Security Studies*; *Terrorism and Political Violence*

Section Chair for the International Relations Section of 2025 WPSA Annual Conference.

Professional Affiliations

American Political Science Association; International Studies Association; Peace Science Society; Phi Beta Kappa

Miscellaneous

Programming Languages: R, Stata

References

Available Upon Request