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Education:

PhD. in Political Science The Ohio State University, Columbus OH	Expected June of 2012
M.A. in Philosophy The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH	2004-2006
B.A. with Honors and Distinction in Philosophy <i>Summa cum Laude</i> The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH	2000-2004

Dissertation:

Moral Knowledge and Public Discourse: The Universal Basis of International Humanitarian Law

Committee: Alexander Wendt (Chair), Jennifer Mitzen, and Michael Neblo

In this dissertation I construct a novel account of moral knowledge and political deliberation that challenges the dominant view of moral discourse in IR theory. Building upon recent work in moral theory, social and evolutionary psychology, generative linguistics, and anthropology, I argue that some moral norms and ideas are rooted in the innate cognitive and emotional structures of the human mind. When people evaluate the moral qualities of individual actions and social institutions or when they deliberate about them in public political discourse, they utilize a finite set of cognitive models—models which constitute the *universal generative grammar* of moral and social life. This view represents a unique challenge to the mainstream account of moral discourse in IR theory. For most IR theorists, moral norms and discursive practices are rooted in the prevailing cultural ideas in each particular society, which is a view that entails an implicit acceptance of cultural relativism. The problem with this view is that it has a difficult time explaining how certain moral ideas emerge in diverse cultural contexts. In order to defend my account of moral knowledge and deliberation and to show how it increases our knowledge of the universal normative basis of international institutions, I show how it allows us to account for the similarities and differences in the norms that regulate killing and the infliction of physical and mental suffering in the context of armed violence in three distinct

cultural schemes: (1) the contemporary international humanitarian regime, (2) the rules of war in the law of Islam, and (3) the ethical code of Confucian-influenced societies. Although I find significant differences between each of these cultural schemes, I argue that they provide robust support for the theory of moral knowledge and discourse that I put forth in this dissertation. In the end, I argue that in order to *fully* account for the normative basis of international institutions and to explain how certain moral ideas emerge in diverse cultural settings, IR theorists need to be more receptive to the idea that some moral norms have their ultimate basis in the universal structure of the mind.

Research and Teaching Interests:

International Relations Theory
Political Theory
International Law and Organizations
International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law
International Ethics

Research & Teaching Experience:

Connecting to Congress Deliberative Experiments

Project Funded by the National Science Foundation Digital Government Program (Award # IIS-0429452)

- Project team member, Autumn 2008
- Individual Coder
- Coding Scheme Development

Courses Taught:

PS 597.01: World Politics: International Law and the Ethics of War

- Autumn 2010
 - Course size: 33

PS 210: Introduction to Political Theory

- Spring 2011
 - Course size: 32
- Winter 2011
 - Course size: 35

PS 145: The Politics of Global Problems

- Spring 2010
 - Course size: 39
- Winter 2010
 - Course size: 36
- Autumn 2009

- Course size: 36
- Summer 2009
 - Course size: 24
- Winter 2009
 - Course size: 34

Honors and Awards:

Mershon Center for International Security, Research Grant	2011
Nominated by OSU Political Science for Morris Abrams Award in International Relations	2011
Graduate Associate, OSU Political Science	2006-2012

Works in Progress:

“Moral Universalism, Social Cognition, and International Deliberation: International Humanitarian Law in Comparative Perspective.”

Conference Presentations:

“Moral Discourse and Moral Cognition: The Cognitive Basis of Civilian Immunity.” To be presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, September 1-4, 2011.

“Moral Discourse and the Cognitive Foundations of Legal Constraints on the Use of Force.” Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, March 31-April 3, 2011.

“Liberty and Rights: A Justification of the More than Minimal State.” Paper Presented at the 22nd Annual Social Philosophy Conference, Troy, NY, July 28-30, 2005.

“A Deontic Conception of Epistemic Justification.” Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Ohio Philosophical Association, Cincinnati, OH, April 9, 2005.

Graduate Assistantships:

Research Assistant:

Sonja Amadae
 Michael Neblo
 Alexander Wendt

Teaching Assistant:

Jennifer Mitzen
Daniel Verdier

Professional Affiliations:

American Political Science Association
International Studies Association
Association for Political Theory
European Consortium for Political Research

References:

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