

## ARIEL I. AHRAM

Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs  
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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University** *Arlington, Va.*  
Associate Professor, School of Public & International Affairs, 2015 –  
Assistant Professor, 2012-2015

**University of Oklahoma** *Norman, Okla.*  
Assistant Professor, 2008 to 2012

## EDUCATION

**Georgetown University** *Washington, D.C.*  
Department of Government  
Ph.D., Government, 2008 (with distinction)  
• Georgetown University Glassman Dissertation Award for Social Science, 2010

Department of Arab Studies  
M.A., Arab Studies, 2006 (with distinction)

**Brandeis University** *Waltham, Mass.*  
B.A., *summa cum laude*, 2001

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

*War and Conflict in the Middle East and North Africa* (forthcoming in Autumn 2020, Polity Press).

[\*Break All the Borders: Separatism and the Reshaping of the Middle East\*](#) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[\*Comparative Area Studies: Methodological Rationales and Cross-Regional Applications\*](#) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), co-editor with Rudra Sil and Patrick Köllner.

[\*Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias\*](#) (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2011).

## Articles, Book Chapters, and Occasional Papers (Peer-Reviewed)

"Perspectives on the Rebel Social Contract: Exit, Voice, and Loyalty under the Islamic State," *World Development*, co-author with Mara Revkin (revise & resubmit).

["Sexual Violence, Competitive State Building, and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria,"](#) *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 13, no. 2 (2018), pp. 180-196.

["Separatism, the Arab Uprisings, and the Legacies of Lost Territorial Autonomy,"](#) *Territory, Politics, Governance*, October 26, 2018 (available online).

["Hierarchy, Sovereignty, and Adaptation in the Eastern Mediterranean,"](#) co-author with Harris Mylonas, in Spyridon Litsas and Aristotle Tziampiris, eds., *The New Eastern Mediterranean* (New York: Springer, 2019), pp. 31-43.

["On the Making and Unmaking of Arab States,"](#) *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50, no. 2 (2018): 323-327.

["Comparative Area Studies,"](#) co-author with Rudra Sil and Patrick Köllner, in Ariel Ahram, Rudra Sil, and Patrick Köllner, eds., *Comparative Area Studies: Methodological Rationales and Cross-Regional Applications*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 3-28.

["Comparative Area Studies and the Analytical Challenge of Diffusion"](#) in Ariel Ahram, Rudra Sil, and Patrick Köllner, eds., *Comparative Area Studies: Methodological Rationales and Cross-Regional Applications*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 152-167.

["Territory, Sovereignty and the New Statehood in the Middle East,"](#) *Middle East Journal* 71, no. 3 (2017): 335-362.

"Exiles and Political Islam: Contrasting Khomeini's Religious Nationalism with Bin Laden's Violent Globalism," co-author with John Gledhill, in ["Transnational Actors in War and Peace"](#), David Malet and Miriam Anderson, eds., (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017), pp. 105-123.

["Researching Authoritarianism in the Discipline of Democracy,"](#) co-author with J. Paul Goode, *Social Science Quarterly* 97, no. 4 (2016): 834-849.

["The Rise and Fall of Iraq in the Social Sciences,"](#) *Social Science Quarterly* 97, no. 4 (2016): 850-861.

["Ten Years on: Critical Reflections and Stimulating Ideas on an Evolving Scholarship: Learning Since 'Learning to Live with Militias,'"](#) *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10, no. 1 (2016): 3-24.

["The Decline and Fall of the Arab State,"](#) co-author with Ellen Lust, *Survival* 58, no. 2 (2016): 7-34.

[“Pro-Government Militias, Regimes, and the Repertoires of Illicit Violence,”](#) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 39, no. 2 (2016): 207-226.

“Jordan and the United Arab Emirates: Arab Partners in Afghanistan,” co-author with Daniel P. Brown, in Gale Mattox and Stephen Grenier, eds., [Coalition Challenges in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliances](#) (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 2015), pp. 201-214.

[“Sexual Violence and the Making of ISIS,”](#) *Survival* 57, no. 3 (2015): 57-78.

[“Development, Counterinsurgency, and the Destruction of the Iraqi Marshes,”](#) *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, no. 3 (2015): 447-466.

War-Making, State-Making and Non-State Power in Iraq, Yale University, Council on Middle East Studies Program on Governance and Local Development Working Paper No. 1, March 2015, <http://gld.commons.yale.edu/files/2015/03/Ariel-Working-Paper--War-Making-Final--03.14.15.pdf>

[“The Role of State-Sponsored Militias in Genocide,”](#) *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 3 (2014): 488-503.

[“Iraq and the Social Sciences: Testing the Limits of Research,”](#) *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4, no. 3 (2013): 251-266.

[“Concepts and Measurement in Multi-Method Research,”](#) *Political Research Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2013): 280-291.

[“The Warlord as Arbitrageur,”](#) co-author with Charles King, *Theory and Society* 41, no. 2 (2012): 169-186.

[“Origins and Persistence of State-Sponsored Militias: Path Dependent Processes in Third World Military Development,”](#) *Journal of Strategic Studies* 34, no. 3 (2011): 531-556.

Best Graduate Student Paper Prize, Committee for the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy (CAMOS), 2008

[“Learning to Live with Militias: Toward a Critical Policy on State Frailty,”](#) *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 5, no. 2 (2011): 175-192.

[“The Theory and Method of Comparative Area Studies,”](#) *Qualitative Research* 11, no. 1 (2011): 69-90.

[“Symbolic Frames: Identity and Legitimacy in Iraqi Islamist Discourse,”](#) *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2007): 113-132.

"The Frontiers of Loyalty: Do They Really Change?," co-author with Yossi Shain, *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* 47, no. 4 (2003): 661-673.

### Other Writing

"How the United States Can Escape the Middle East's Proxy Wars," co-author with Alexandra Stark, Foreign Policy Research Institute's Geopoliticus, October 22, 2019, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/10/how-the-united-states-can-escape-the-middle-easts-proxy-wars/>

"Armed Non-State Actors and the Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century State Building," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 20 (Fall 2019), 35-41, <http://press.georgetown.edu/book/georgetown/georgetown-journal-international-affairs-17>

"The Future of Borders in the Middle East," Oxford University Press Blog, March 18, 2019, <https://blog.oup.com/2019/03/future-borders-middle-east/>

"Does the United States Need a Civilian Nuclear Industry?" co-author with Patrick Roberts, *The National Interest* (Online), March 13, 2018, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/does-united-states-need-civilian-nuclear-industry-47422>

"The Stockholm Agreement and Yemen's Other Wars," Brookings Institution Lawfare Foreign Policy Essay, February 3, 2019, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/stockholm-agreement-and-yemens-other-wars>

"[Book Review: Laura Robson, \*States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East\*](#)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50, no. 1 (2018), pp. 143-4.

"[Republic of Iraq](#)," in *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, Mark Gasiorowski and Sean Yom, eds. (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, 2016).

"Don't Flood the Swamp: Reviving the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act," *The National Interest* (Online), February 16, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/dont-flood-the-swamp-reviving-the-foreign-corrupt-practices-19468>

"Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Under the Islamic State," co-author with Mara Revkin, Project on Middle East Political Science Studies, *Adaptation Strategies of Islamist Movements*, No. 26 (January 2017), <https://pomeps.org/2017/04/03/pomeps-studies-26/>

"[Book Review: \*Civilian Strategies in Civil War: Insights from Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines\*, written by Shane Joshua Barter](#)," *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 46 no. 1-2 (2017), 205-207.

“Republic of Iraq,” in *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, Mark Gasiorowski and Sean Yom, eds. (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2016).

“Will Iraqi Kurds Go It Alone?” Political Violence at a Glance guest blog, February 24, 2016, <http://wp.me/p2skv7-1Ky>

“Focusing on ISIS’s sexual violence misses the bigger picture,” Political Violence at a Glance guest blog, August 26, 2015, <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2015/08/26/focusing-on-isis-sexual-violence-misses-the-bigger-picture/>

“Lessons from the Destruction of the Iraqi Marshes,” *Washington Post* Monkey Cage blog, August 17, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/17/lessons-from-the-destruction-of-iraqs-marshes/?postshare=1111439824993754>

“De Facto States Unbound,” co-author with Harris Mylonas, PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 374 (2015), [http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/PePM374\\_Mylonas-Ahram\\_August2015.pdf](http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/PePM374_Mylonas-Ahram_August2015.pdf)

“America in the Age of Arab Militias,” co-author with Fredric Wehrey, *The Hill*, June 9, 2015, <http://thehill.com/opinion/op-ed/244363-america-in-the-age-of-arab-militias>

“Foreign Policy Essay: Harnessing Militia Power – Lessons of the Iraqi National Guard,” co-author with Fredric Wehrey, Brookings Institution Lawfare Blog, May 24, 2015, <http://www.lawfareblog.com/2015/05/the-foreign-policy-essay-harnessing-militia-power-lessons-of-the-iraqi-national-guard/>

“Taming the Militias: Building National Guards in Fractured Arab States,” co-author with Fredric Wehrey, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 7, 2015, [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/fractured\\_national\\_guards.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/fractured_national_guards.pdf)

“Are Militias a Menace?” *Washington Post* Monkey Cage blog, January 5, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/01/05/are-militias-a-menace/>

“Book Review: David Malet, *Foreign Fighters* and Dan Miodownik and Oren Barak, eds., *Nonstate Actors in Intrastate Conflicts*,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 4 (2014): 985-987.

“Turkey, Syria, and the Dormant Dilemmas of Sovereignty,” co-author with Gabriel Mitchell, Political Violence at a Glance guest blog, October 23, 2014, <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2014/10/23/turkey-syria-and-the-dormant-dilemmas-of-sovereignty/>

“The Strange Death of Liberal Zionism,” Duck of Minerva guest blog, October 3, 2014, <http://www.whiteoliphaunt.com/duckofminerva/2014/10/the-strange-death-of-liberal-zionism.html>

“The National Guard in Iraq: A Risky Strategy to Combat the Islamic State,” co-author with Fredric Wehrey, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 23, 2014, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/09/23/national-guard-in-iraq-risky-strategy-to-combat-islamic-state/hppn>

“Sexual and Ethnic Violence and the Construction of the Islamic State,” Political Violence at a Glance guest blog, September 18, 2014, <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2014/09/18/sexual-and-ethnic-violence-and-the-construction-of-the-islamic-state/>

“The Dangerous Mixture of Oil and Water in Iraq,” Political Violence at a Glance guest blog, August 18, 2014, <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2014/08/18/the-dangerous-mixture-of-oil-and-water-in-iraq/>

“Can ISIS overcome the insurgency resource curse?” *Washington Post* Monkey Cage Blog, July 2, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/07/02/for-isis-its-oil-and-water/>

“ISIL and the Perils of Quasi-States,” Stanford University Press Blog, June 12, 2014 <http://stanfordpress.typepad.com/blog/2014/06/isil-and-the-perils-of-quasi-statehood.html>

“The Middle East Quasi-State System,” *Washington Post* Monkey Cage Blog, May 27, 2014 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/05/27/the-middle-east-quasi-state-system/>

- Included in Project on Middle East Political Science Briefing No. 24, [Iraq Between Maliki and the Islamic State](#) (July 9, 2014).

“Al Qaeda’s Syria Problem” co-author with Barak Mendelsohn, *Foreign Policy* Middle East Channel, January 23, 2014 [http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/01/23/al\\_qaeda\\_s\\_syria\\_problem](http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/01/23/al_qaeda_s_syria_problem)

“Book Review: Kimberly Marten’s *Warlords: Strong-Arm Brokers in Weak States*,” *Review of Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 1 (2013).

“Concepts and Description in Gerring’s *Social Science Methodology*, 2nd Edition” *Newsletter of the APSA Section on Qualitative and Multi-Method Research*, 10, no. 2 (2012).

“The Crisis of Authoritarianism and the Prospects of State Breaking in the Arab World,” *Moscow State University Bulletin, Series 25, International Relations and World Politics*, no. 1 (2012): 4-24 (In Russian)

"Book Review: Lisa Blaydes' Elections and Redistributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt," *Governance* 25, no. 1 (2012): 156-158.

"Studying Iraq from a Distance," *Newsletter of the APSA Section on Comparative Democratization* 9, no. 2 (2011).

"The Arab Spring After Qaddafi," *Dissent Online*, September 19, 2011, <http://dissentmagazine.org/online.php?id=541>

"Toward Arab Social Democracy," *Dissent Online*, February 11, 2011 <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online.php?id=447>

"The Challenge of Conceptual Stretching in Mixed Methods Research," *Newsletter of the APSA Section on Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 7, no. 2 (2009).

"Book Review: *Catastrophic Consequences* by Stephen David & *Occupational Hazards* by David Edelstein," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 1 (2010): 202-204.

"Baghdad", "Mosul", and "Hilla" in Norman Stillman, ed., *Encyclopedia of Jews of the Islamic World* (Brill, 2009).

"Dealing With State-Sponsored Militias: Policy Recommendations in the Face of Path Dependence," *Democracy & Society* 6, no. 1 (2008).

"Book Review: *Old and New Wars* by Mary Kaldor," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 36, no. 2 (2008): 682-684.

"Trends in Multi-Method Research: Sailing Ahead, Reckoning with Old Risks and New," *Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative Methods* 5, no. 1 (2007), (in collaboration with Scott Siegel, Julia Azari, Ashwini Chatre, Bridget Coggins, Jana Grittersova, Matthew Ingram, Matthew Lieber, Claire Metelits, Tom Pepinsky, Andrew Pieper, Karthika Sasikumar, and Prerna Singh).

"Labor Market Reform, Trade Unions, and the Future of Social Policy in the Middle East and North Africa," Georgetown Univ. Center for Democracy and Civil Society and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Cairo, Special Report, April 4-5, 2007.

The National Iranian Oil Company in Iranian Politics, co-author with Dan Brumberg, Baker Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, 2007, [http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/page/99dcb050/noc\\_nioc\\_brumberg\\_ahram.pdf](http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/page/99dcb050/noc_nioc_brumberg_ahram.pdf)

"Why States Choose Paramilitarism," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2006): 65-74.

"Returning Iraqi Exiles to Politics," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2005).

“Iraq and Syria: The Dilemma of Dynasty,” *Middle East Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (2002): 33-42.

### AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Certificate of Excellence in Scholarship, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, Virginia Tech, 2019.  
PI, Project on Proxy Wars in the Middle East, Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2018-2020, \$400,000  
Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC, 2017  
Project on Middle East Political Science, Travel/Research/Engagement Grant, \$3,000, for travel to Israel, 2014  
Co-PI, Institute for the Society, Culture and Environment, Summer Grant, \$25,000: *Virginia Tech*, 2014  
PI, Global Issues Initiative Project Development Grant, \$20,000: *Virginia Tech*, 2012-13  
Visiting Researcher, German Institute for Global Affairs (GIGA), Hamburg, 2012  
Participant, Philip Merrill Center for Strategic Studies Basin Harbor Workshop: *Johns Hopkins-SAIS*, 2011  
Fellow, Schusterman Institute for Israel Studies: *Brandeis Univ.*, 2010  
Vice President for Research’s Summer Funding Grant, \$6,000: *Univ. of Oklahoma*, 2010  
International Program Center Faculty Grant, \$6,000: *Univ. of Oklahoma*, 2009  
Social Science History Association Rockefeller Travel Grant, 2007  
Fellow, Center for Democracy and Civil Society: *Georgetown Univ.*, 2005-7  
Title VI Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Grant, 2004

### TEACHING

Virginia Tech

**GIA 5534:** Regionalism and Political Development: The Middle East; **GIA 5515:** Research Methods; **GIA 5274:** Comparative Social Movements; **GIA 5514** Global Security; **GIA 5314:** Middle East Geopolitics; **GIA 5646** Qualitative Research; **GIA 6614** Critical Geopolitics

University of Oklahoma

**PSC 2603:** Governments Around the World; **PSC 3423:** Politics & Society in Iraq; **PSC 3663:** Middle East Politics; **PSC 5600:** Graduate Seminar: State Formation & State Failure; **IAS 3003** Special Topics: Politics of the Shi’i World; **IAS 4013:** Undergraduate Capstone: State Formation & State Failure; **IAS 5333:** Masters in International Affairs Capstone

### PUBLIC OUTREACH, MEDIA APPEARANCES, AND TESTIMONY

Invited Lectures, “Rebel Oil Companies and the Arab Civil Wars”



- European University Institute, Florence, Middle East Directions conference on natural resources, October 21-22, 2019.
- Invited Lectures, "Separatists as the New Spoilers in the Middle East"
- Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington DC, July 24, 2019
  - Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis Univ., May 1, 2019.
  - State University of New York at Geneseo, April 23, 2019.
  - Project on Middle East Political Science, George Washington Univ., March 21, 2019.
  - Middle East Forum, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia Univ., March 12, 2019.
  - School of International Service, American Univ., February 12, 2019.
- Invited Lecture, "Pro-government Militias the Repertoires of Illicit Violence," Intelligence Analysis Workshop Series for National Ground Intelligence Center, National Security Policy Center, Univ. of Virginia, November 1, 2018.
- Keynote address, "Comparative Area Studies," Institute for Regional and International Studies, Univ. of Wisconsin, September 28, 2018.
- Keynote address, "The Role of Militias and Paramilitaries in Genocide and Mass Violence," Conference on Paramilitarism and Violence in Global Perspective, NIOD: Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam, December 20, 2017.
- Invited lecture, Human Security and Transitional Justice in a Globalized Post-Arab Spring Era, New York University, November 10, 2017.
- Interview on U.S. role in the Middle East, Voice of America-Urdu Radio, July 3, 2017
- Lecture, "Territory, Sovereignty, and the New Aspirants for Statehood in the Middle East and North Africa," American University in Cairo, March 25, 2017
- Lecture, "Sovereignty, Nationhood, and Regional Disorder in the Arab State System," Princeton University/American University in Beirut joint conference, After the Uprisings: The Arab World in Freefall, Fragmentation or Reconfiguration?, Princeton Univ., March 5, 2016
- Invited Lecture, "Sexual Violence and the Destruction of the Yezidis," Youngstown State Univ., Center for Judaic and Holocaust Studies, Youngstown, Ohio, November 1, 2015
- Interview on the Islamic State, WVMP 101.5 Radio, Roanoke, Va., August 7, 2015
- Testimony, U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, "The Islamic State's War on Women and Girls," July 29, 2015
- Department of Defense Minerva Initiative Lecture, "Pro-Government Militias and the Illicit Repertoires of Violence," June 9, 2015
- Interview on Iraqi civil war, Regional News Network (NY) television, June 26, 2014
- Interview on Iraqi civil war, Canadian Broadcast Corporation television, June 12, 2014
- Invited Lecture, "Development, Counterinsurgency and the Destruction of the Iraqi Marshes," Univ. of Arkansas, Little Rock, February 5, 2014
- Interview on Syrian civil war, BBC World Service Radio, May 26, 2013
- Interview on Syrian civil war, BBC World Service Radio, March 15, 2013
- Interview on World Views, KGOU Radio, on the future of militias, November 7, 2011,
- [http://archive.kgou.org/assets/mp3\\_files/111107\\_WorldViews\\_Ahram.mp3](http://archive.kgou.org/assets/mp3_files/111107_WorldViews_Ahram.mp3)

## SERVICE

Coordinator, Middle East Politics & Society Interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate, Virginia Tech, 2019

Promotion and Tenure Committee, Virginia Tech School of Public & International Affairs, 2016-

Chair, 2019-20

Best Referee, *Territory, Politics, Governance*, Regional Studies Association, 2016

Curriculum Committee, Virginia Tech College of Architecture and Urban Planning, 2016-18

Executive Committee, Virginia Tech School of Public & International Affairs, 2015-16

Outstanding Reviewer Award, *Political Research Quarterly*, Western Political Science Association, 2012

Curriculum Coordinator for Middle East Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2010-12

Selection Panel, Institute for International Education Iraq Scholars Program, 2008

Peer Reviewer

Journals: *Am. J. of Political Science*; *Am. Political Science Review*; *Civil Wars*; *Comparative Political Studies*; *European J. of International Security*; *Governance*; *International J. of Water Resources Development*; *International Interactions*; *International Studies Quarterly*; *J. of Conflict Resolution*; *J. of Global Security Studies*; *J. of the Middle East and Africa*; *J. of Mixed Method Research*; *J. of Peace Research*; *Political & Military Sociology*; *Political Research Quarterly*; *Millennium*; *Review of International Studies*; *Territory, Politics, Governance*; *Terrorism & Political Violence*.

Presses: Oxford University Press (2016); Routledge (2017); University of Pennsylvania Press (2017); Georgetown University Press (2018).

Grants: Wellcome Trust (2017); Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (2016)