

Sean Christopher Rao

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Education:

University of Maryland, College Park, August 2015-August 2024

-Ph.D., Government and Politics, International Relations and Comparative Politics
-GPA 4.0, coursework in intrastate and interstate conflict and cooperation, comparative institutions, political economy, public opinion, field methods, and quantitative methods

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, September 2013-May 2015

-M.A., Political Science
-GPA 4.0, coursework in interstate conflict, authoritarianism, and quantitative methods

University of Wisconsin-Madison, September 2007-May 2011

-Honors B.A., International Studies, Global Security emphasis
-GPA: 3.866, Honors College of Letters and Science: Dean's List, 5 semesters

Dissertation Research:

Supernatural Ties: Religious Beliefs and Practices and Commitment and Cohesion in Politics (Dissertation Project)

-“Praying Together and Staying Together: Faction Survival in Self-Determination Movements” (1st Article), presented at the Midwest Political Science Conference, 2023

Question: Why do some organizations persist in demanding autonomy or independence for decades while others cease after only a short time?

Answer: Organizations encouraging membership practices which demonstrate individual commitment to the organization are more likely to persist.

Evidence: Original cross-national dataset on ideology and membership practices in a random sample of autonomy-seeking political organizations

-“Mechanisms of Religious Rhetoric and Political Mobilization” (2nd Article)

Question: Does religion serve as a commitment signal for electoral candidates, and does such commitment earn votes?

Answer: Religious claims increase perceptions of a candidate's commitment to a goal

Evidence: 2 survey experiments (288 university undergraduates and a balanced US sample of 820)

-“Praying for Peace: Religious Belonging and the Recurrence of Civil War” (3rd Article)

Question: What do many, but not all, religious some civil wars from resume after violence has stopped?

Answer: Recruiting from religious networks makes recurrence likely if members of the network are dissatisfied but not if they are satisfied (like when they enjoy equal access to political power or have voluntarily ceased fire).

Evidence: Survival analysis on existing data on secessionist rebels, 1975 to 2009

**Other Works
in Progress:**

“Exclusive and Inclusive Religious and National Values: The Case of American Views on Israel”, presented at the Midwest Political Science Conference, April 2021

Question: Why do Americans hoping to preserve a traditional definition of national identity sympathize with Israel?

Answer: These Americans favor Israel due to its alliance with the United States and their own anti-Islamic and pro-Jewish sentiments.

Evidence: Nationally representative survey with original questions on American identity and views of Israel

“Rebel Groups Origins and Civilian Victimization”, co-authored with Leo Bauer, Jessica Maves Braithwaite, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and Margaret McWeeney

Question: Which rebels attack and abuse civilians?

Answer: Rebel groups with ties to local communities through nonviolent organizations are less likely to abuse civilians.

Evidence: Cross-national quantitative data on rebel origins and civilian abuse

**Fellowships
and Awards:**

- Fulbright One-Semester Ph.D. Research Award, Summer 2021, Israel
- Interviewed Palestinian citizens of Israel, 29 in English and 5 in Arabic
- Humane Studies Fellowship, Institute for Humane Studies, Spring 2022
- UMD Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference, 3rd Place Presentation, Spring 2022
- UMD Flagship Fellow, 2015
- UWM Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award, 2013

**Teaching
Experience:**

Instructor, Government and Politics, University of Maryland, August 2020-January 2021;
January-June 2023

- Independently taught survey design in political science to undergraduate students
- Guided students to design survey questions including an experiment and analyze results
- Independently taught introduction to international relations for 38 freshmen students
- Applied online tools in the online pandemic environment, balancing recorded lectures with synchronous class discussions and small group activities, a multi-stage written project, and a virtual role-playing simulation

Teaching Assistant, Government and Politics, University of Maryland,
August 2018-June 2020; January-April 2021

- Led discussion sections in both international relations and political theory (ethics)
- Advised students on formulating research questions and arguments, and organizing evidence in written work
- Advised undergraduate students in semester practicum research projects for the College Park Scholars International Studies program (Spring 2019)

**Other
Academic
Employment:**

Program Assistant, Wisconsin Universities United Nations Summer Seminar,
January 2014-July 2015

- Scheduled briefings for students at around 40 New York missions of UN member states
- Advised undergraduates on finding research topics

Teaching Assistant, UW-Milwaukee Department of Political Science,
August 2013-May 2015

- Monitored online course discussion boards
- Assisted with courses on international relations, American politics, and political theory

Research Assistant to Professor Shibley Telhami, August 2017-June 2018

- Analyzed, interpreted, and presented results of biennial, US public opinion polls
- Designed poll questions to identify the sources of US public opinion on foreign policy
- Conducted background research on the ties between the Trump campaign and Evangelical Christians

Research Assistant to Professor Kathleen Cunningham, August 2015-August 2017

- Retrieved facts on rebel group formation in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East for faculty from media and academic databases, including Lexis Nexis and Factiva
- Interpreted regression models and transformed time series datasets using R software

Research Assistant to Professor Ora John Reuter, August 2014-May 2015

- Coded dataset on elections in non-democracies since 1972
- Coded dataset classifying regime transitions in non-democracies since 1972

Professional Associations:

- Midwest Political Science Association, member since 2014
- American Political Science Association, member since 2015
- Society of Catholic Social Scientists, member since 2021

Data Skills:

- Survey design, survival analysis, mediation analysis, multinomial MLE, multilevel modeling, R software

Languages:

- Advanced high Arabic speaking and reading (Modern Standard and Levantine); intermediate writing
- Advanced French reading; intermediate speaking and writing

University Service:

- Government and Politics Graduate Student Association, co-chair, 2016-2017
- Graduate Faculty Mentor Award Committee, student member, Spring 2019