

Michael F. Harsch

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Academic Positions

National Defense University, Eisenhower School	Associate Professor of National Security Course Director, Nat. Sec. Strategy & Policy	2021-present 2022-2026
Stanford University, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences	Visiting Scholar	Spring 2025
Harvard University, Weatherhead Center	Visiting Scholar, Weatherhead Scholars Program	2020-2021
Boston University, Pardee School of Global Studies	Visiting Assistant Professor of International Relations	2019-2021
New York University - Abu Dhabi	Assistant Professor of Practice Faculty Fellow, Social Science Division	2016-2019 2013-2016

Research Interests

International security; conflict; state capacity; economic development

Education

Freie Universität Berlin, Germany	Ph.D. in Political Science	2011
Freie Universität Berlin, Germany	M.A. (<i>Diplom</i>) in Political Science	2007
Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Lille, France	Graduate studies in Political Science	2004
Universität Potsdam, Germany	B.A. (<i>Vordiplom</i>) in Political Science	2004

Publications

Books

Islands of Stability: Bounded Rule and the Creation of Regional Security and Development in Fragile States. Manuscript under consideration by Cambridge University Press (revise-and-resubmit completed).

The Power of Dependence: NATO-UN Cooperation in Crisis Management. Oxford University Press, 2015.

[Book review](#) in *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*

Academic Articles & Book Chapters

The Power of Information: State Capacity and Government Responses to Shocks (with Alexandra Norris and Julie Weaver). *Revise & Resubmit.*

[Defusing Weaponized Interdependence: A New Approach to Measuring Country Reliability.](#) *Joint Force Quarterly* 117 (2nd Quarter 2025) (with Shaun Lee).

[Bounded Rule and Regional Stability in Fragile States](#). *Journal of Politics* 86(1): 321–336 (January 2024) (with Kevin K. Troy).

[International Courts and Public Opinion](#). *Journal of Common Market Studies* 57(5): 1091–1110 (September 2019) (with Vladislav Maksimov).

[Resource Dependence Theory](#). In Rafael Biermann and Joachim Koops (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook on Inter-Organizational Relations in Global Politics* (2017) (with Rafael Biermann).

Policy-Oriented Work

[From Restraint to Readiness? Germany Considers Conscription](#). *War on the Rocks*, December 30, 2025. Featured on [The Insider](#) podcast, January 29, 2026.

[Germany’s Turning Point: Two Years into Strategic Pivot, Progress Made Bodes Well for the US, NATO and the World](#). *The Conversation*, April 15, 2024.

[How Missing Data Can Make the Global Fragility Strategy Work](#). United States Institute of Peace (May 20, 2021) (with Calin Trenkov-Wermuth).

[Is the Pandemic Decreasing State Capacity?](#) *Epicenter*, Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (May 20, 2021) (with Alexandra Norris).

[Afghans Don’t Need U.S. Troops. They Need Islands of Stability](#). *Foreign Policy* (April 20, 2021) (with Taylor Whitsell).

[Peacekeeping During Pandemics: How the UN Can Be Part of the Solution](#). *IPI Global Observatory* (June 3, 2020) (with Tyler Y. Headley and Alexandra Novosseloff).

[Measuring State Fragility: A New Approach to Identifying and Strengthening Vulnerable Countries](#). *Epicenter*, Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (October 2, 2020).

[Europe Struck Down Its Data Deal with the U.S. Facebook, Other Companies Are in Trouble](#). *Washington Post* (July 17, 2020) (with Vladislav Maksimov and David B. Ramsey).

[As the U.S. Gets More Involved in Somalia, Beware These Three Fallacies](#). *Washington Post* (July 18, 2017) (with Maximilian M. Meduna and Teresa Krug).

[A Better Approach to Statebuilding: Lessons From “Islands of Stability”](#). *Foreign Affairs*, January 2017.

[Life After Genocide: Comparing Bosnia and Rwanda](#). *Foreign Affairs* (July 2015) (with Tyler Y. Headley).

[On the Road to Disengagement? Envisioning a Long-Term Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan](#). Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique / Johns Hopkins University (June 2012) (with Hannes Ebert and Lindsay P. Cohn).

[Making More Out of Less: How NATO States Can Seize the Opportunities of Shrinking Resources in Afghanistan](#). ETH Zürich International Relations and Security Network (July 24, 2012) (with Scott Seward Smith).

[NATO and the UN: Partnership with Potential?](#) *SWP Research Paper*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (January 2012).

[NATO and the UN in Afghanistan: Partners or Competitors?](#) In Brooke A. Smith-Windsor (ed.), *The UN and NATO: Forward from the Joint Declaration*, NATO Defense College (May 2011).

[NATO and the UN](#). *Survival* 51(2): 5–12 (April–May 2009) (with Johannes Varwick).

[NATO-UN Cooperation Revisited: A New Dawn?](#) *Studia Diplomatica* 62(3): 29–36 (2009) (with Johannes Varwick).

[An Inundation of Envoys](#). ETH Zürich International Relations and Security Network (February 24, 2009) (with Thomas Ruttig).

[EU Split on Kosovo Independence](#). ETH Zürich International Relations and Security Network (October 13, 2008).

Affiliations & Fellowships

Faculty Affiliate, Weatherhead Research Cluster on Identity Politics, Harvard University, 2024-2025.

Visiting & Non-Resident Fellow, NYU Center on International Cooperation, 2013-2021.

Affiliate Faculty, Global Development Policy Center (GDP Center), Boston University, 2019-2021.

Visiting Researcher, WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Research Unit “Institutions and Political Inequality” led by Prof. Macartan Humphreys, Berlin, summer 2018 & summer 2019.

Visiting and Non-Resident Fellow, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, 2012-2013.

Visiting Researcher, World Bank Center on Conflict, Security, and Development (CCSD), Nairobi, 2012.

Guest Researcher, Stanford University, on invitation by Prof. Kenneth Schultz, Palo Alto, 2012.

E.ON Ruhrgas Fellow and Associate Researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Oslo, 2011-2012.

Doctoral Fellow, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin, 2009-2011.

Visiting Scholar, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), Berlin, 2009.

Doctoral Fellow, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, 2008-2009.

Grants & Scholarships

Weatherhead Scholars Program, funding for two Harvard undergraduate research assistants (2020-21).

NYU Abu Dhabi research award for the project “Donor Strategies in Conflict and Disaster-Prone Areas”, Co-PI with Muhammet Bas (2018-20).

NYU Abu Dhabi research award for the project “Islands of Stability in Fragile Countries”, PI, in collaboration with Gareth Stansfield (2016-18).

E.ON Ruhrgas grant for post-graduate research in Norway (2011).

Friedrich Ebert Foundation grant for research in the US (2008-09).

Friedrich Ebert Foundation 3-year Ph.D. scholarship (2008-10).

Franco-German Youth Office grant for internship at French Parliament, Vice-president’s office (2005).

ERASMUS scholarship of the European Union (2004).

Selected Invited Presentations

“Islands of Stability in Fragile States”

April 2026: OECD (invited)

Feb 2025: Stanford University, CASBS

Sep 2022: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.

Sep 2021: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.

April 2021: Midwest Political Science Association.

Oct 2020: Harvard University, Weatherhead Scholars Seminar.

Sep 2020: Princeton University, Empirical Studies of Conflict Project (ESOC) Lab.

Sep 2020: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting; panel chair: James Fearon.

Mar 2019: International Studies Association Annual Convention, Toronto.

- Aug 2018: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Boston.
- Jul 2018: WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin.
- Feb 2017: International Studies Association Annual Convention, Baltimore.
- “State Capacity and Government Responses to Shocks”
 - April 2024: Midwest Political Science Association.
 - Sep 2023: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.
 - April 2023: Midwest Political Science Association.
 - Sep 2022: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.
 - April 2022: Midwest Political Science Association.
- “Donor Strategies for Managing Risk in Conflict Zones”
 - April 2021: Midwest Political Science Association.
 - Aug 2019: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.
 - Apr 2018: International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Francisco.
 - Aug 2017: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco.
 - Feb 2017: International Studies Association Annual Convention, Baltimore.
- “Explaining the Commitment of Peacekeeping Troop Contributors”
 - Oct 2020: Harvard University, Political Violence Workshop.
 - Apr 2018: International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Francisco.
- “International Courts and Public Opinion:”
 - Oct 2016: European University Institute, Florence.
 - Sep 2016: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia.
- “The Power of Dependence: NATO-UN Cooperation in Crisis Management” (Book presentations)
 - Jun 2015: Harvard Club, New York.
 - Mar 2015: Johns Hopkins’ School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C.
 - Mar 2015: New York University, New York.
 - Feb 2015: New York University, Abu Dhabi.
 - Sep 2014: American University, Dubai.
- “Rethinking Postwar Statebuilding”
 - May 2013: Stanford University, Palo Alto.
- “Insurgency and Reconciliation in Afghanistan”
 - Dec 2012: School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.
- “Is the World Bank Risk Averse? Evidence from Fragile and Conflict-Affected States”
 - Nov 2012: World Bank Center on Conflict, Security, and Development, Nairobi.
- “UN, NATO, and the Libya Intervention”
 - Dec 2011: Peace Research Institute Oslo.

Teaching

National Defense University, Eisenhower School

Course Director for National Security Strategy & Policy, responsible for curriculum development and overseeing 20 seminars with ~ 280 students.

National Security Strategy & Policy, Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2022.

Military Strategy and Warfighting, Spring 2026.

Industrial Mobilization and Competition, Fall 2023, Fall/Winter 2022.

Industry Studies (Aircraft), Spring 2022.

Boston University

International Security, Spring, 2021; graduate seminar.

Introduction to International Relations, Fall 2020; “hub” course with 300+ students.

North Atlantic and European Security, Spring 2020.

Peacekeeping and State-Building, Fall 2019.

New York University - Abu Dhabi

Global Governance, Spring 2019, Fall 2018, Spring 2018, Spring 2017.

International Organizations, Spring 2019.

Peacebuilding, Fall 2018, Fall 2017, Fall 2016, Spring and Fall 2015.

International Peacekeeping (directed study), Spring 2018.

United Nations, Spring 2017, Spring 2016.

Capstone Seminar, Spring and Fall 2016.

International Organizations and Global Governance, Fall 2014.