

ADAM MCCAULEY

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR, DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL
DEFENCE

DETAILS

ADDRESS

Ottawa
Canada

EMAIL

anmccauley@gmail.com

NATIONALITY

Canadian

LINKS

[Personal Website](#)

[Newsletter: The View From Here](#)

SKILLS

Writing

Research

Leadership

Project Management

Ability to Work in a Team

PROFILE

I study the social, cultural, and political impacts of emerging technologies -- with a focus on Artificial Intelligence. I am an experienced journalist with publications in *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Atlantic*, and currently serve as a senior policy advisor in the Canadian federal government. My academic history (DPhil, Oxford) helped shape my expertise in security studies, international relations and sociology of technology. I am writing a book on Artificial Intelligence, military and political decision-making, and the future of conflict (contracted with McGill-Queens University Press).

PUBLICATIONS

[Book Under Contract] The Price of Certainty: Artificial Intelligence, Decision-making, and the Future of Conflict

McGill-Queens
University Press

Aug 2023

The Price of Certainty offers the first systematic assessment of how AI systems, and the tools they produce, will reshape political and military decision-making. These technologies offer faster-than-human calculations and will perform at speeds beyond human comprehension. As their operational benefits become visible (enabling quicker decisive action), they will definitively reform how we, as humans, think about, understand, and act in the world.

AI Narratives and the New Futurism [Book Manuscript]

Oct 2023

The proposed book explores how the technocratic narratives from Silicon Valley (and public relations offices of major tech companies) dominate and shape mainstream media accounts of emerging technology, notably Artificial Intelligence. This book critically explores how these narratives are produced, reified, and formalised, and highlights how this process structures political action — notably reshaping the balance of power between the public and private sector in ways dangerous to the preservation of representative/democratic practices.

Certainty and Decision-Making [Working Paper]

Nov 2023

This paper explores how human decision-makers address uncertainty amid political crises and adopts a mixed-methodological approach, employing structured interviews, surveys, and archival text and discourse analysis to explore key themes within political crises -- from Suez to the Cuban Missile Crisis. The paper then engages in a prospective thought experiment where actors, using advanced technologies, navigate this same decision-space under conditions of weaponized disinformation. The paper concludes with a discussion about key

challenges/frictions for how human decision-makers will navigate uncertainty in partnership with AI-enabled systems.

The Teleology of AI [Working Paper]

Oct 2023

This paper explores how prominent technology companies describe and promote the AI tools they build. Using both discourse and content analysis, this paper outlines a potential teleology of emerging technology, and identifies how technologists tend to *explain* the purposes of advanced automated/AI tools. I argue that understanding the teleology of AI is critical for addressing the ideological implications of AI in the political and social world, with a specific focus on implications for the balance of power between private and public sector actors, pathways towards technological regulation, and frameworks for understanding the future of the politics of technology.

Media Reform in an Age of Misinformation [Working Paper]

Oct 2023

This working paper (w/ Fergus Linley-Mota) highlights the susceptibility of commercial/profit-based media business models in an age of mis- and disinformation. The empirical strategy features both archival systems analysis -- tracing the role of the media in shaping public opinion (US, 20th century) -- and current survey/quantitative work on Trust in Media (Reuters Institute) to highlight the vulnerability of our current systems, and proposes institutional reforms in support of new public-funded, service-based information model. We argue that these changes are necessary to address a range of contemporary challenges, from regulating technology to improving democratic decision-making in the age of AI.

Organizing Insights in the Age of AI

Aug 2023

International Politics Review (*Under Review*)

This meta review organizes extant and emerging AI scholarship across three conceptual threads: *materialist* (i.e., AI augmentation or improvement of technical or operational capabilities); *strategic* (AI as an operational domain for military and political competition); and *epistemic* (AI as a force of disruption in the information and knowledge ecosystems decision-makers inhabit). I argue that reframing AI scholarship in this way allows researchers to better specify the mechanisms through which AI and emerging technology will exert influence while highlighting critical areas for future research in international relations.

Strategy in the Commons: Open-Source Intelligence and State Competition

Aug 2023

Security Studies (*Under Review*)

How does the rise of open-source intelligence influence how government's learn, analyze, and take action in the world and in competition with other states? Open-source intelligence, or OSINT, is an increasingly prominent intelligence-gathering practice, central to the political, defence, and security operations of the modern state. This paper features structured interviews with OSINT collectors, professional OSINT educators/instructors, commercial aggregators of OSINT, and defence and security representatives of six countries actively cultivating their OSINT capabilities.

A Note on Publications

*Due to my current position (and national security clearance), I have been limited in my ability to publish academic material over the last two years. For previous publications, including work of reportage/journalism, please visit the link [here](#).

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

International Security Fellow (Non-Resident), Hertie School

Berlin

Sep 2024 — Jul 2025

Selected as the 2024/2025 International Security Practice Fellow (Non-Resident) at the Hertie School in Berlin to extend my research on Artificial Intelligence, human decision-making, and conflict. I will present original research, steward a knowledge exchange program (private sector, academia, and government) and host a number of interdisciplinary academic events that explore emerging technology and its impact of strategic stability (deterrence, future conflict, and crisis management).

Senior Policy Advisor, Department of National Defence, Government of Canada

Ottawa

Jan 2022 — Present

I conduct research and analysis on a range of security issues critical to the defence of Canada for the Department of Strategic Analysis (D Strat A), producing written and oral briefs for senior/executive leadership, including the Prime Minister's Office. I currently lead D Strat A's research portfolio on modern deterrence, Canada's relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and emerging technologies (AI/Machine Learning, Quantum). In 2022, I led an analytical team reviewing Canada's Defence policy, conducted extensive evaluation and forecasted future national/international security issues, resulting in the 2023 Defence Policy Update submitted to the Prime Minister (Summer 2023).

Lecturer (Politics/Philosophy), Brasenose College, University of Oxford

Oxford

Apr 2018 — Apr 2021

I taught undergraduates in Oxford's world-renowned Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE) program, including Practice of Politics, Introduction to International Relations, International Security and Conflict, and Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa. I produced public lectures and hosted weekly small-group tutorials. The PPE program requires students write weekly essays (2,500 words), which are marked by lecturers prior to tutorial meetings. In addition, I was an assessor and interviewer for PPE Admissions at Oxford (for Brasenose College).

Senior Lecturer, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

Sandhurst

Aug 2018 — Aug 2019

I served as a senior lecturer in the Department of Defense and International Affairs (DIA) at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. I taught a range of undergraduate and graduate modules delivered to young Officer Cadets, Army officers (senior captains and junior majors), as well as mature corps of thirty to fifty-year old Late Entry Officers. Subject taught included: included the *Contemporary International System*, *Strategic and Security Studies*, *International Law*, *International Organisations and Non-state Actors*, and *Foreign and Defence Policy*, *Emerging Technology and Conflict*. Courses were delivered in 90-minute seminars that blended discussion and debate. Modular courses for British Army officers tend to be more demanding, as student will have professional experience and often academic qualifications, including Masters and Doctoral degrees in International Relations, Law and Security Studies.

Co-Founder, Oxford Policy Dialogue (OxPoD)

Oxford

Jun 2016 — Jul 2018

I co-founded the Oxford Policy Dialogue (OxPoD) in July 2016 to facilitate knowledge exchange between scholars of international security and government agencies. OxPoD generated a global network of security experts to provide relevant geographic and issue-specific research to government policymakers at the UK's Home Office, Foreign & Commonwealth Offices, and Ministry of Defense. This

initiative was funded through an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Grant - £25,000/year -- in the United Kingdom.

Journalist/Writer (Freelance)

London

Jan 2013 — Present

Research, report and write short and long-form articles on a wide variety of topics for print, digital, and multimedia platforms. My work has been published and/or featured in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *TIME Magazine*, and a variety of international and trade publications.

Chief of Staff, The Governance Lab (New York University)

New York City

Jan 2013 — Jul 2013

Managed a staff of four academics, 25 student researchers, and a budget of \$1M (USD). Assisted in drafting the organizational framework and helped design the research framework for the non-profit think tank, [the GovLab](#), which studies the intersection of technology and governance. I also managed GovLab's outreach and liaison program, engaging senior policymakers and officials in the United States, Canada, UK, and Australia. Supervised a team of administrative staff, providing guidance and support to ensure successful completion of tasks

EDUCATION

DPhil (Doctorate) - International Relations, University of Oxford

Oxford

Oct 2017 — Jan 2022

My dissertation, *Survival of the Fittest: Insurgent Leadership, Organizational Design, and Outcomes of Intrastate War* was supervised by Prof Andrea Ruggeri (Oxford). The dissertation was presented in three parts. **AGENTS OF ORDER** illustrates how insurgent groups can routinize, or normalize, violence to generate credibility and ultimately achieve public support. Contrary to previous work that has studied violence as an outcome of insurgent group strategies. I explain how making violence predictable amid the uncertainty of conflict can create credibility and generate public support for the authoring group. **UNDER PRESSURE** demonstrates how changes in the level of external coercion against an insurgent group, paired with a loss of internal cohesion, serves as a catalyst for organizational adaptation. Specifically, these mechanisms drive insurgent leaders to decentralize their authority – reducing the potency of their groups, but also increasingly their ability to survive. **ARCHITECTS OF CONFLICT** offers the first known (and novel) typology of insurgent leadership, exploring how individual leadership styles have measurable effects on the organizations they construct, and how those organizations fare amid crowded intrastate conflict settings. I identify three leadership typologies – crusaders, strategists, and opportunists.

During this period, I also managed the [Adaptability, Ideology, and Rebellion \(AIR\)](#) data project.

MPhil (Masters) - International Relations, University of Oxford

Oxford

Oct 2015 — Jun 2017

Graduated with Distinction. Thesis topic: *Insurgent Group Adaptability*. Area of study: Insurgency and Political Violence in Africa

MSc (Master of Science) - Journalism, Columbia University in the City of New York

New York

Aug 2011 — Jun 2012

Graduated with Honours from the Graduate School of Journalism (Magazine Concentration).

- Winner: Richard T. Baker Award for Magazine Writing.
- Finalist: DuPont/Crichton Documentary Award (Film).

**BA (Bachelor of Arts) - Peace and Conflict Studies,
University of Toronto**

Toronto

Sep 2006 — Jun 2011

Graduated with Highest Distinction.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, & TALKS

**Book Talk: In Praise of Human Inefficiency:
Decision-making in the Age of AI**

University of Oxford

Nov 2023

Presented sections of my book, *The Price of Certainty* to members of the Cyber Strategy and Technology Studies Working Group, Nuffield College, University of Oxford. 8 Nov 2023.

Book Talk: The Price of Certainty

University of Oxford

Nov 2023

Presented sections of my book, *The Price of Certainty* to members of the Emerging Threats Group at the Changing Character of War Programme, University of Oxford. 7 Nov 2023.

**Book Talk - Promise or Peril: Decision-making in the
Age of AI**

University of Oxford

Nov 2023

Presented sections of my book, *The Price of Certainty* to members of the T.E. Lawrence Workshop on the Study of Conflict. All Souls College, University of Oxford. 6 Nov 2023.

International Studies Association

Montréal

Mar 2023

Presented Paper: *Strategy in the Commons: Open-Source Intelligence and State Competition*

How does the rise of open-source intelligence influence how government's learn, analyze, and take action in the world and in competition with other states?

**Democracy, Networks, and Instability @
Hitotsubashi University**

Tokyo, Japan

Jan 2020

Paper presented: *Organizations in Flux: Structure and Authority in Insurgent Groups*

#SISP Annual Conference

Lecce, Italy

Sep 2019

Paper presented: *Persuade and Punish: Ideology and Armed Groups (w/ Matt Zelina & Andrea Ruggeri)*

Conflict Research Society Annual Conference

Essex, United Kingdom

Sep 2019

Papers presented: *Persuade and Punish: Ideology and Armed Groups (w/ Matt Zelina & Andrea Ruggeri)*

International Studies Association

Toronto, Canada

Mar 2019

Papers presented (1) *The End is a New Beginning: Pro-government Militias After Conflict*; (2) *Missing in Action: Mapping Insurgents After Conflict*

Challenges to Global Governance

London, United Kingdom

Feb 2019

Hosted by University College, London. Papers presented: (1) *Introducing Insurgent Group Survival*; (2) *Pro-Government Militias: Insights from the Philippines*

SWAMOS Workshop @ Cornell/Columbia University

Ithaca, New York, USA

Jul 2018 — Jul 2018

SWAMOS explores basic philosophical questions about the relationship between the conduct of war and the objectives of foreign policy; offers comparative historical perspective on net assessment; the linkages among strategy, combat operations, and tactics; command and control of military capabilities and effectiveness; and logistics. The program is highly competitive, selecting 18-20 graduates globally each year.

International Studies Association

San Francisco, CA, USA

Apr 2018

Papers presented: *How Do We Explain Insurgent Group Survival?*

AWARDS

Selected Candidate, Recruitment of Policy Leaders Competition

Ottawa

2020 — 2021

I was one of 20 candidates selected out of 7000+ applicants for the Recruitment of Policy Leaders (RPL) Program, run by the Government of Canada. This fast-track system aims to bring subject-matter experts outside government (and often overseas) into senior-level policy roles.

St Catherine's College Scholarship (Graduate Studies)

2018

Awarded by St Catherine's College, University of Oxford

Finalist - Excellence in Digital News

Society of Publishers in Asia

2015

The Most Dangerous Waters in the World (Published in [TIME Magazine](#))

Finalist - Excellence in Reporting on Trauma

Dart Society

2013

Overexposed: A Photographer's War Against PTSD ([The Atlantic Magazine](#))

Finalist - Mirror Award (Profile) for Reporting on the Media

Newhouse School, Syracuse University

2013

Overexposed: A Photographer's War Against PTSD ([The Atlantic Magazine](#))