

The 2022-23 Peace Scholar Cohort (in alphabetical order)



Muhammad Omar Afzaal (Omar) (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar)
Ph.D. Candidate | Brown University

“Picking Your Battles: A Story of Pakistan’s Perceptions.”

Dissertation Summary

Omar’s dissertation asks: What explains the variation in a state’s choice to escalate against adversarial attacks? This is motivated by the puzzle of why enduring rivals experience violent conflict occasionally but not consistently. Focusing on Pakistan and shadow cases of India, and Israel, Omar hypothesizes that the choice to escalate in conflict is biased by how specific elites and institutions perceive adversarial attacks as threatening

to their interests. In turn, this perception creates organizational bias when interpreting those attacks. The resulting dataset will help identify when rival states choose peacebuilding over retaliation and escalation. The project seeks to bridge the gap between civil-military policymakers and academic-policy practitioners in understanding the risks of violent interstate conflict in the backdrop of an increasingly aggressive China and a resurging Russia in the Middle East and South Asia.

Biography

Muhammad Omar Afzaal is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Brown University. Omar studies escalation and civil-military signaling in Pakistan and India. He also researches Arab-Israel and India-Pakistan security decision-making. Omar is an affiliate of the Watson Institute for International Affairs and the Center for Contemporary South Asia at Brown.

Omar studied civil-military diplomacy and nuclear strategy from Harvard University via the Brown-Harvard program. He has conducted research for Oxford University, Harvard University and United Nations University. Previously he was a project associate for a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation project Financial Access of Non-Profit Organizations: Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism – A Charity and Security where he researched nuclear proliferation financing and sanctions for the US Nonprofits. The 2017 report launched at the World Bank. Omar holds a B.A. in Economics from Grinnell College, an M.A. in Political Science and an M.P.A. from Brown University.



Bernard Atieme (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate |
George Mason University

“Politics of the Belly: Why People Engage in Election Violence.”

Dissertation Summary

Bernard’s dissertation investigates when and why the rank and file of party members participate in election violence. What do they stand to gain from election violence? Building on the model of clientelism, he argues that a combination of youth party activism and unemployment in a winner-takes-all political system increases the likelihood of election violence occurring in some democracies and not in others. Bernard

examines the interactions of these variables in Ghana, where the unemployment rate is high, party youth activism is intense, and the government has excessive discretionary powers in determining the

distribution of state resources. Broadly, the dissertation speaks to critical election security challenges in emerging democracies undermining democratic consolidation.

Biography

Bernard Atieme is a Ph.D. candidate in the Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University, Virginia. His research interests lie in the intersection of democratization, elections, politics, power, patronage, party vigilantism, and violence in emerging democracies. Bernard earned an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Colorado, Denver, a B.Ed. in Social Sciences from the University of Education, Winneba, and a Teaching Certificate from St. John Bosco's College of Education. He is currently working on a journal article that examines the confluence of conflict, poverty, and migration politics. His future project includes building Africa's comprehensive political and election violence database for research.



Brandon Bolte (USIP Peace Scholar, non-stipendiary) | Penn State University

“Organizing Inter-Insurgent Cooperation in Multiparty Civil Conflicts.”

Dissertation Summary

In his dissertation, “Organizing Inter-Insurgent Cooperation in Multiparty Civil Conflicts,” Brandon examines how rebel leaders design different types of cooperative arrangements with other rebels. Using a combination of game theory, case studies, and statistical analyses of an original, global dataset of rebel alliance features, he shows how organizational constraints on rebel leaders affect their ability to commit to some alliance provisions and not others. He then demonstrates why the content of rebel alliances affects civil conflict outcomes and peace processes. The dissertation highlights how the internal politics of rebel groups influence “inter-rebel” relations as well as the importance of understanding these dynamics when trying to resolve the most complex conflicts in the world.

Biography

Brandon Bolte is a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at Penn State University, where he recently received his Ph.D. in Political Science. His research examines variation in cooperative relationships between armed organizations, including rebels, militias, and the state, and how these relationships affect civil conflict and peacemaking processes. His other ongoing work employs quantitative tools and experiments to better understand the ideological underpinnings of militant internationalism as well as civilian behaviors under contested governance. His research has been published in *International Studies Quarterly*, the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and *The R Journal*. Brandon earned an M.A. from Penn State University and a B.A. from Truman State University, both in Political Science.



Tara Chandra (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. | University of California, Berkeley

“Untangling Dynamics in Civil Conflict: Explaining Insurgent Behavior Toward Civilians.”

Dissertation Summary

What explains when and why insurgents target women? This project examines the puzzle of inconsistency in insurgent targeting of women during rebel operations. The project presents a theory of targeting of women that argues that the dynamics between insurgents and counterinsurgent can create strategic incentives for insurgents to begin

targeting women as part of a signaling mechanism. The project leverages between-case and within-case variation using process tracing and comparative case analysis to study (1) Nigeria (Boko Haram), (2) Iraq (al-Qaeda in Iraq), and (3) Somalia (al-Shabaab). This dissertation argues that in cases where the counterinsurgent can be punished by a domestic audience for failing to protect "vulnerable" civilians like women, insurgent targeting of women may increase.

Biography

Tara Chandra is a Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science at UC Berkeley. Her research focuses on gender and international security. Her dissertation project explains variation in insurgent targeting of women, both within and between conflicts. Tara's research also addresses broader theories of insurgency/counterinsurgency, and the causes and consequences of political violence more generally. She is also interested in other dimensions of gender and politics, including how women mobilize to advocate for particular political outcomes. Tara earned an M.A. in Global Affairs at Yale University's Jackson School of Global Affairs, and a B.A. with Honors from the University of Chicago.



Kaitlyn Chriswell (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | Harvard University

“Do Criminal Groups Make or Break Citizens?: The Effect of Criminal Organization Presence on Citizen-state Interactions.”

Dissertation Summary

What explains whether and how citizens organize to contest criminal group presence? In her dissertation, Kaitlyn develops a theory of mobilization to explain citizens' varied reactions to the presence of organized crime. She conducts a subnational analysis of Mexico, where despite similar levels of criminal activity, local responses have diverged.

Combining in-depth municipal case studies with an original survey of civil society members, the project demonstrates that, under some conditions, criminal group presence can actually strengthen citizen-state relations. This project contributes to our understanding of citizen-state relations amidst protracted insecurity and adds nuance to our understanding of how crime and democracy intersect.

Biography

Kaitlyn Chriswell is a Ph.D. candidate in the Government department at Harvard University. Her research focuses on questions of political violence and civil society, particularly in democracies. In her dissertation, she examines how the presence of criminal groups affects whether and how citizens interact with the state. In addition to the U.S. Institute of Peace, her research has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, and the Institute for Quantitative Social Science. Kaitlyn earned her M.A. in Government from Harvard University and a B.A. in Political Science and Spanish from Northwestern University, where she graduated summa cum laude and received the Kenneth Janda Prize for best undergraduate honors thesis.



Alex Diamond (USIP Peace Scholar Fellow) Ph.D. Candidate | University of Texas at Austin

“An Uncomfortable Peace: Everyday State Formation in Rural Colombia.”

Dissertation Summary

Alex’s dissertation describes how state power is achieved, experienced and contested through the everyday lives of a community undergoing state formation through Colombia’s landmark peace process. His research, based on three years of ethnographic fieldwork in the rural Colombian village of Briceño, follows the implementation of Colombia’s landmark peace process from the perspective of a community that has

experienced decades of armed group control but is now host to a pilot coca substitution program and Colombia’s largest hydroelectric dam. His dissertation describes how peace, state power, and rural development play out in everyday life.

Biography

Alex Diamond is a documentary filmmaker, photographer, and Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin. His writing has been published in *Social Problems*, *Qualitative Sociology*, and *Revista Maguaré*, among others, and he is co-director of the in-production feature-length documentary “An Uncomfortable Peace.” He is the recipient of a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship and the Lewis and Clark Fund for Exploration and Field Research Grant. Alex earned his M.A. from The University of Texas at Austin, and his B.A. from Wesleyan University, both in Sociology.



Tonya Dodez (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | Indiana University, Bloomington

“Fight or Flight? Explaining Citizen Reactions to Violence in African Elections.”

Dissertation Summary

Governments choosing to use violence prior to elections do so with the intent of improving their advantage over the opposition. Yet the expected electoral gains are not always guaranteed. Tonya’s dissertation explains why violence sometimes helps incumbents win elections and other times

backfires by (a) demonstrating how various tactics of electoral violence can provoke different responses from citizens and (b) understanding what actions taken by civil society lessen the negative impact of government violence by enhancing the political efficacy of voters to hold repressive leaders accountable. Examining the electoral consequences of violence across several African countries, she also provides a detailed study of Senegalese elections using evidence from both virtual and in-person fieldwork.

Biography

Tonya Kenny Dodez is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Indiana University, Bloomington and a 2021-22 predoctoral fellow at the Ostrom Workshop. Her research examines the electoral consequences of political violence for voting behavior, protest mobilization and democratic backsliding. Aside from a regional focus on sub-Saharan Africa, much of her work has focused on electoral violence, civic engagement, and authoritarian trends in Senegal. She was the recipient of a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS) for the study of Wolof in Dakar, Senegal during the summer of 2018, which she also received the following year to continue her language studies. Tonya earned her B.A. and M.A. in Political Science from Louisiana State University.



Thalia Gerzso (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | Cornell University

“Judicial Resistance: The Role of Courts in Electoral Disputes.”

Dissertation Summary

This dissertation asks: when – and to what effect - does the judiciary side with the opposition, and why? By drawing on the cases of the Kenyan and Senegalese judiciaries and including a cross-national dataset on African judiciaries, the project will examine how both Kenyan and Senegalese courts can serve as a tool or roadblock to the practice of fair and peaceful elections. If the literature on electoral contention in electoral autocracies

has typically viewed the judiciary as a mere window dressing tool or an instrument used by the incumbent to crush the opposition, empirical evidence from sub-Saharan Africa challenges this assumption. Hence, when – and to what effect - does the judiciary side with the opposition, and why? Thalia argues that specific institutional reforms can pressure the judiciary to nullify elections. Under intense scrutiny, courts have an incentive to rule against incumbents if they want to survive. To test her theory, she adopts a mixed-method approach that combines a panel analysis of micro-level data and qualitative evidence gathered from archival work and semi-structured interviews conducted in Kenya and Senegal.

Biography

Thalia Gerzso is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Government Department at Cornell University. Her research focuses on regime change, political institutions, and electoral contention. Her work has appeared in Comparative Political Studies and has been broadly supported by the American Political Science Association, the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, the CCSS Qualitative and Interpretive Research Institute, and the Cornell Graduate School.

Thalia holds a Bachelor of Law and Master of International Law from the University Panthéon Assas and an LL.M from Cornell Law School. After passing the New York Bar in 2017, Thalia worked as a trainee lawyer in international litigation and white-collar cases at Navacelle Law and as a program and administrative assistant for the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.



Daniel Hirschel-Burns (Danny) (USIP Peace Scholar Fellow) Ph.D. Candidate | Yale University

“The Ideological Socialization of Civilians During Civil War.”

Dissertation Summary

What are the long-term effects of rebel group ideological socialization of civilians on civilian beliefs? This dissertation focuses on how non-state armed organizations, specifically the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) socialize civilians into their world view, and the conditions under which they are successful. The project hopes to deepen understanding of the varied interaction between civilians and rebels

during war, as well as its social and political legacies. By drawing on historical sources pertaining to Afghanistan’s Taliban, India’s Naxalites, and Peru’s Shining Path, the Burns aims to compare the conditions that allow civilian support for rebel organizations in a variety of contexts. Burns engages with the literature on ideological domination and idea change to provide a theory of rebel group socialization and civilian belief change. Methodologically, Burns employs ethnographic research in two municipalities,

interviews with FARC ex-combatants, and quantitative analysis of the relationship between FARC territorial control and civilian political beliefs, measured through a large-scale survey.

Biography

Danny Hirschel-Burns is a Ph.D. candidate in Yale's political science department. His research focus on violence, state-building, and ideas in politics. His first book project, *The Ideological Socialization of Civilians During Civil War*, examines how the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia's political education and mobilization of civilians changed political beliefs, drawing on ethnographic, interview, and survey evidence. He is primarily interested in ethnographic and historical methods. Danny earned an M.A. from Yale University, and a B.A. in Political Conflict from Swarthmore College.



Geoffrey Hoffman (Geoff) (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | University of California, San Diego

"China's Internet Firms and Global Internet Freedom"

Dissertation Summary

How does the global expansion of Chinese technology companies impact domestic institutions? Geoff Hoffman approaches this broad research question through the proxy variables of Chinese internet firms (CIFs) and internet freedom. His hypothesis is that CIFs reduce internet freedoms in the countries in which they operate, which leads to cascading effects on other freedoms. Using a text as data approach on a corpus of hundreds of thousands of CIF financial disclosures, he finds evidence that governments that lack the technical means to reach their ideal level of internet control on their own engage with CIFs to build that capacity—which, in turn, leads to further deleterious effects on their broader democratic institutions.

Biography

Geoff Hoffman is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science and International Affairs at the University of California San Diego. He studies internet freedom and cybersecurity with a focus on China, and he is a researcher at the 21st Century China Center and the UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation. His dissertation explores the relationship between Chinese internet firms and governments. Geoff received a B.A. from St. John's College and an M.A. in Political Science from Columbia University. He has an LLM in International Relations from Tsinghua University where he also completed the ir Chinese Language Program.



Christine Kindler (USIP Peace Scholar Fellow) Ph.D. Candidate | Howard University

"Peace Conversation Circles: Promoting Agonistic Historical Dialogue in Post-Genocide Rwanda."

Dissertation Summary

Local conversations about the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda are often avoided or minimized, despite the emergence of national programming that promotes peace and reconciliation. Silence or misinformation about the genocide opens the door for genocide denial narratives to emerge, particularly among Rwandan youth. Christine's dissertation project focuses on the development and efficacy of "Peace Conversation Circles," a program that consists of locally led, semi-structured dialogues between older adults who experienced the genocide and subsequent generations

of youth. Utilizing a participatory action research approach, the project is being conducted in partnership with a local grassroots organization, the Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance (CARSA).

Biography

Christine Kindler is a Ph.D. candidate in the Clinical Psychology program at Howard University, where she is a member of the Global Community Health Lab. Her overarching research interests include the development and evaluation of culturally-responsive, evidence-based interventions aimed at addressing psychosocial needs that emerge in conflict and post-conflict settings. Christine is particularly focused on utilizing participatory action research methods to contextualize and implement mental health interventions with community partners. Before beginning her doctoral studies, Christine worked in the field of peace education, both in the U.S. and Afghanistan. She holds a B.A. in History from the University of Kentucky and a M.A. in Conflict Transformation from Eastern Mennonite University.



Michael Kriner (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | Cornell University

“Authoritarians Keeping the Peace? An Analysis of the Impact of Authoritarian Regimes' Participation in Peace Operations.”

Dissertation Summary

Mike's dissertation explores how the changing composition of United Nations peace operations has impacted mission outcomes like the protection of civilians, administration of elections, and, more broadly, keeping peace. The project utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand how the ways in which security forces are utilized domestically translates to performance in mission. Qualitatively, Mike's dissertation utilizes two case studies on peace operations in Central African Republic and South Sudan. Mike's research also includes a cross-mission analysis of mission composition to understand the broader impacts. In addition, Mike intends to conduct surveys of security personnel to explore the impact of receiving training from different foreign providers.

Biography

Mike Kriner is a Ph.D. candidate in the Government Department at Cornell University. His dissertation explores the impacts of increased participation of authoritarian regimes in United Nations peace operations. Mike was a Graduate Fellow in the Gender and Security Sector Lab and a Summer Associate at the RAND Corporation. In addition to his dissertation research, he is also involved in multiple research projects focused on the socialization effects of peacekeeping, institutional differences between military and police, and international security assistance. Mike received a B.A. in Global Studies from Providence College, summa cum laude, and an M.S. in Global Affairs from New York University.



Gabriella Levy (USIP Peace Scholar Fellow) Ph.D. Candidate | Duke University

“Variation in Public Responses to Violence Against Civilians.”

Dissertation Summary

Why do people sometimes support armed actors that target civilians? Gabriella argues that public support for armed groups is shaped by the interplay between violence, governance, and ideology. Civilians do not see all violence against civilians as equivalently unethical; they are more willing to support perpetrators who violate less strict norms, have less agency, or have less clear causal ties to the victims. Further, individuals’ reactions to

violence against civilians are moderated by their prior attitudes toward the perpetrator. To justify the violence committed by a preferred armed group, people evaluate abuse as more militarily necessary, less harmful, or less organized. The dissertation focuses on Colombia and uses surveys, interviews, and archival research.

Biography

Gabriella Levy is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Duke University. Her research explores the ways in which people interpret, evaluate, and respond to various forms of political violence in countries affected by civil war or other large-scale forms of instability. She draws on research from psychology concerning moral judgement and motivated reasoning to argue that public support for armed groups is shaped by the complex interplay between armed group violence, governance, and ideology. Gabriella is also involved in projects concerning vigilantism, rebel governance, and violence against migrants. She earned a B.A. from Columbia University and an M.A. from Duke University, both in Political Science.



Manuel Melendez-Sanchez (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | Harvard University

“Criminal Electioneering: How and Why Criminal Groups Influence Elections.”

Dissertation Summary

Manuel’s dissertation examines what he calls criminal electioneering: deliberate attempts by criminal organizations to influence elections. When and why do criminal groups choose to engage in electoral politics? Why do different criminal groups use different electioneering tactics? And what are the consequences of different criminal electioneering strategies for

democracy, development, and the rule of law? As a Peace and Security Scholar, Manuel will explore these questions through fieldwork in Central America and Mexico.

Biography

Manuel Meléndez-Sánchez is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Harvard University. His dissertation examines criminal electioneering—deliberate attempts by criminal organizations to influence elections—in Central America and Mexico. More broadly, Manuel’s research explores new challenges to contemporary democracy, with a focus on Latin America. His writing has appeared in the *Journal of Democracy*, *Lawfare*, *Slate*, and the *Washington Post*’s *Monkey Cage*. He was born and raised in El Salvador, and the Salvadoran case informs much of his research and writing. Manuel has an A.B. in Government from Harvard and an M.Sc. in Politics Research from Oxford, where he was a Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholar.



Scott Ross (USIP Peace Scholar Fellow) Ph.D. Candidate | George Washington University

“Networks of Protection in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.”

Dissertation Summary

Scott's dissertation asks how humanitarians operating a two-way radio early warning network mediate understandings of connection and insecurity as they alert rural Congolese communities of armed group activity. Drawing on ethnographic and archival research, the dissertation moves along radio networks and between two NGOs, tracing the infrastructures of humanitarian intervention to rethink concepts of remoteness, connection, threat, and security by asking what it means to be connected and protected. Using observations and interviews, Scott highlights how the medium of radio reshapes communicative practice and community ties, how radio posts become sites of contestation as well as connection, and how armed actors of varying legitimacy can be both sources of security and threats of violence.

Biography

Scott Ross is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at George Washington University, where his work centers on humanitarian intervention amid conflict in east-central Africa. He earned his B.A. in Global Studies from Arizona State University and an M.A. in African Studies from Yale University. His work has been published or is forthcoming in *Anthropological Quarterly*, the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *African Studies Review*, *Fieldsights*, *Warscapes*, *African Arguments*, and *Justice in Conflict*, among others, and he is currently a contributing editor at the *Society for Cultural Anthropology*.



Sehar Sarah Sikander Shah (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | The Graduate Center, City University of New York

“The Politics of Post-Counterinsurgency Statebuilding in Northwestern Pakistan.”

Dissertation Summary

Sarah Shah compares how the differences in the local political orders and uneven state sovereignty are used to reconfigure political arrangements during and after an internal war. Using the case studies of two regions in Pakistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sarah examines the Pakistani Taliban's insurgency and the ensuing counterinsurgency by Pakistan's military in the aftermath of the Taliban's Pakistan insurgency in the 2000s. The project will develop a theory about insurgency and counterinsurgency campaigns and the pathways to peace and statebuilding.

Biography

Sarah Shah is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at The Graduate Center, City University of New York. She studies areas of uneven state sovereignty and peacebuilding-as-statebuilding to understand how the state-society relations are renegotiated in conflict-affected territories, under what conditions different actors negotiate, and what issues they bargain over. Her dissertation examines these questions in light of the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan in the 2000s. In 2021, she was awarded the World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship by The Smith Richardson Foundation to support her doctoral research. Sarah has B.Sc. in Economics from Lahore University of Management Sciences, an M.A. in Poverty and

Development from the University of Sussex, and an M.A. in Politics from New York University, where she studied as a Fulbright Scholar.



Drew Stommes (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | Yale University

“Armed Political Parties and Their Violence.”

Dissertation Summary

Political parties directly perpetrate violence against partisan opponents and voters in myriad contexts across the globe. However, prior research does not conceptually distinguish these armed political parties from other categories of electoral violence, nor does existing research examine why neighboring localities within the same electoral context experience drastically different levels of armed party violence. Stommes' dissertation

conceptualizes these parties and examines their micro-level patterns of violence, leveraging a mixed methods research design. He uses quantitative methods, new data on party violence in West Bengal, India, and qualitative information based on historical sources and the researcher's extensive interviews with political party functionaries in West Bengal.

Biography

Drew Stommes is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science at Yale University, where he researches democracy and conflict. He has a regional specialization in South Asia (the region that includes India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka), and during the 2018-19 academic year, he completed an advanced Bangla language training program at the American Institute of Indian Studies in Kolkata, India. Drew earned his B.A. in Political Science from Saint John's university (Minnesota) and his M.A. in International Relations from the University of Chicago. He is a graduate student affiliate of the Yale South Asian Studies Council, and his research has been published or is forthcoming in peer-reviewed journals including the Journal of Peace Research and India Review.



Leyla Tiglay (USIP Peace Scholar Fellow, non-stipendiary) Ph.D. Candidate | Ohio State University

“Nuclear Policy in the Age of Decolonization: French Nuclear Tests in the Sahara, African Peace Mobilization, and the Advent of the Global Nuclear Order 1957-1967.”

Dissertation Summary

French nuclear testing in colonial Algeria elicited strong responses from Afro-Asian states committed to independent policies of disarmament. These states not only protested diplomatically but built regional and transnational alliances that linked anti-colonial politics with the growing

international peace movement. Leyla Tiglay's research examines how French nuclear tests in the Sahara intersected with decolonization, the emergence of an international nuclear regime, and the advent of multilateral science diplomacy. Leyla aims to answer the question, How did international and transnational anti-colonial alliances across the African continent influence nuclear diplomacy and ongoing test ban negotiations for the global nuclear order? Additionally, by examining the top-down nuclear histories and bottom-up peace mobilization efforts in Africa and the Middle East, Leyla hopes to illuminate the significance of civic engagement in the nuclear nonproliferation movement. Organized around three perspectives mirroring respectively French, African, and Great Power experiences of decolonization, the project consists of six chapters that flow periodically.

Biography

Leyla Tiglay is a Ph.D. candidate studying the international history of the Cold War and decolonization. Her dissertation examines the nexus of nuclear history and decolonization, exploring how major crises of decolonization affected nuclear decision-making during the Cold War. This project looks more specifically at decolonization in Africa, anti-nuclear movements, and France's nuclear tests in the Sahara. Leyla received her B.A. (with top honors) from Istanbul University. She received M.A.s from the University of London and Boston University. Currently, Leyla is an Ernest May fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center. She is a former predoctoral fellow at the Center for Grand Strategy at the Bush School of Government. She also held fellowships from the Mershon Center and the Bradley Foundation. Previously, she worked and studied in various countries including Belgium, Cameroon, and the U.K.



Priscilla Torres (USIP Peace Scholar Fellow) Ph.D. Candidate | Duke University

“Community Dispute Resolution and International Peacebuilding: Competitors or Complementary Actors? Evidence from Liberia and Central Asia.”

Dissertation Summary

In many countries throughout the world, communities develop processes to address local disputes and larger issues that they face. There are a multitude of different characteristics that these community dispute resolution processes have, yet these critical processes are often overlooked when taking into account the extent to which internationally led peacebuilding initiatives are able to help establish local peace. Priscilla's dissertation asks under what conditions do community dispute resolution and international peacebuilding initiatives compliment or undermine each other. Using survey data from Central Asia and Liberia, she explores these dynamics as applied to United Nations Peacekeeping and a Community-Driven Development Project.

Biography

Priscilla Torres is a PhD candidate in political science at Duke University. Her dissertation explores the conditions under which community dispute resolution and international peacebuilding compliment or undermine one another. Her research interests include peacebuilding, peacekeeping, gender and conflict and gender and international relations. Priscilla received her B.A. in Political Science from Loyola Marymount University, and her M.A. in Political Science from Duke University. She Priscilla previously received support for her dissertation work from the International Studies Association's Dissertation Fellowship and the Alona Evans Research Grant. Between 2021 and spring 2022, Priscilla was a pre-doctoral research fellow at the Gender and Security Sector Lab at Cornell University. She has also worked with DevLab at Duke University and is an alumnus of the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute.



Sam Winter-Levy (Minerva Peace and Security Scholar) Ph.D. Candidate | Princeton University

“War by Other Means: The Politics of Proxy Warfare.”

Dissertation Summary

His dissertation focuses on proxy wars—and, in particular, on how states exercise control and influence over nonstate actors in overseas conflicts. He examines the strategies that states use to select and incentivize proxies to do their bidding and assesses how the choice of those strategies is shaped and constrained by domestic politics and legal oversight within the sponsor states. His dissertation seeks to shed light

on how states try to control and supervise the actions of local proxy forces to prevent escalation or other undesired political outcomes, on the one hand, while trying to maintain secrecy and plausible deniability, on the other.

Biography

Sam Winter-Levy is a Ph.D. candidate in politics at Princeton. His research focuses on international security issues including proxy wars, how democracies conduct foreign policy, and war termination. He also serves as the editorial director of the Irregular Warfare Initiative at the Modern War Institute at West Point. Before Princeton, he was a staff editor at Foreign Affairs. He has published academic work in the *Journal of Politics*, received Princeton’s George Kateb Preceptor Award for teaching, and written for publications including the *Economist*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Lawfare*, the *New Yorker*, *War on the Rocks*, *The New Republic*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Boston Globe*. He received his B.A. in English Language Literature from Oxford University and his M.A. from the Politics Department at Princeton university. Sam was the Michael Von Clemm Fellow at Harvard in 2014-15.

