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RESEARCH STATEMENT

My research investigates the causes, conduct, and consequences of political violence, informing practical solutions to reduce the human suffering it generates. The research agenda explores three related themes. The first examines belligerent conduct and civilian agency during intrastate conflict. Under what conditions do rebel groups seize and maintain territorial control, and provide governance, during armed conflict? Under what conditions do states, and statebuilding nonstate actors, expand or consolidate authority in new territory? Under what conditions do dissident groups resort to terrorism, and what are the consequences for conflict resolution and political stability? My research complements existing work by exploring how civilians influence these conflict and statebuilding processes.

While the first theme examines within-conflict dynamics, the second engages with the international forces driving intra-state conflict and explores the role of intra-state conflict in shaping inter-state competition in the 21st Century; in which states have increasingly adopted subversive "gray zone" strategies to prosecute international disputes while minimizing the risk of escalation to full-scale war. Though less headline-grabbing than interstate war, gray zone conflicts have critical international security implications, can be just as or more violent, and are far less well understood. Under what conditions do states employ "gray zone" conflict strategies, and under what conditions do they escalate to direct militarized conflict? The first stage of the project examines one particular gray zone strategy: state sponsorship of dissident groups.

The third theme investigates the role of nonstate actors in world politics. The goal is to explain nonstate actors' behavior in international conflict and cooperation, their role in shaping international political phenomena, and to explore the limits of state-centric models of the international system. I am part of the Welfare Nonstate project, a collaborative effort to integrate insights from across as-yet isolated literatures on governance by a variety of nonstate actors: NGOs, International Institutions, Multi-national Corporations, rebel organizations, militias, and others. At CPASS, I lead the Named Entities for Social Sciences–Political Organizations project. We construct a global dataset of nonstate political organizations relevant to the robust and growing research agenda re-examining the role of nonstate actors in international politics.

My research informs policy-making designed to reduce human suffering related to political violence. In addition to explaining political violence, this research agenda contributes to understanding state-formation and its failures, the nature of extra-institutional political competition between and within states, and the strengths and limitations of state-centric models of the international system. It exposes the local politics foundations of state-making and -building and how domestic political instability influences interstate conflict and cooperation. Below, I provide details on the ongoing research projects and planned work within each theme.

INTRA-STATE CONFLICT AND CIVILIAN AGENCY

Belligerent Territorial Control and Governance

Under what conditions do rebel organizations successfully control territory, and provide governance, during civil war? What explains variation in states' success capturing territory from rebel opponents? If the distribution of territorial control is as crucial to explaining the conduct and outcomes of civil war as the literature suggests,[1] it is equally important to understand its

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[1]See Kalyvas (2006) and related work by Stathis Kalyvas, Ana Arjona, Laia Balcells, and others.

origins. The process by which insurgency expands or contracts determines the context in which subsequent conflict processes occur; the first step for rebels to establish new (quasi-)states or capture the government of an existing state. Therefore, explaining territorial control is essential to understanding the population of states in the international system, and their characteristics.

In my book project, and forthcoming article "Rebel Territorial Control and Civilian Collective Action in Civil War (*JCR*), I argue that communities' *collective action capacity* (CAC)—ability to mobilize collectively to pursue common interests—has countervailing effects on belligerents' incentives to control territory. On the one hand, CAC increases belligerents' incentives to control territory. Higher CAC communities mobilize resources and control the flow of information more efficiently, which makes territory more valuable and strengthens defenses. However, CAC also empowers communities to demand belligerents invest in costly governance, which increases the expected costs to maintaining control. These countervailing effects imply a conditional relationship: I argue that CAC increases rebel control in areas the state cannot, but deters rebel control in areas where the state can, credibly commit to provide the community with protection from violence and access to goods and services. The article tests the theory's local-level implications in evidence from the communist insurgency in the Philippines, collected during fieldwork in 2014-2015. Quantitative analysis investigates the relationship between communist insurgent control, measured using Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) military intelligence assessments from 2011-2014, and collective action capacity, measured from its micro-foundations in kinship networks using household head family names from a government census conducted during 2008-2010. The book extends the project in two main ways. First, I draw upon political geography and philosophy literature to conceptualize territory and territorial control in the context of armed conflict. Second, I extend the empirical work by investigating the theory's mechanisms in interviews with village elders in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao and testing the theory in additional cases—Afghanistan, Nepal, and India.

By endogenizing territorial control, typically assumed exogenous to conflict processes (following Kalyvas, 2006), the project motivates future research to revisit existing explanations for subsequent conflict processes: rebel governance, belligerents' political violence, and civilian collaboration. Work in progress problematizes an assumption in the "control-collaboration" model linking territorial control to civilian collaboration and belligerent violence through *civilian perception*. The fog of war may make it difficult for civilians to accurately assess belligerents' territorial control. The paper explains the conditions under which civilian perception of which belligerent controls territory diverges from military facts on the ground, explores the consequences for the baseline model's predictions, and tests the argument empirically using data on government and Taliban control in Afghanistan. In a collaborative paper with Cyanne Loyle and others, we conceptualize rebel governance and problematize common assumptions. We lay out a research agenda to leverage the insights from the conceptual innovations to advance the rebel governance literature, which I plan to take up over the next few years.

Statebuilding Processes

Under what conditions do statebuilders expand or consolidate their authority and control in the periphery? Scholars have renewed attention to understanding statebuilding and state-formation, motivated in part by U.S. interventions in weak states around the globe. Additionally, weak state governments engage in "internal statebuilding" to fill gaps in their *de facto* authority in sovereign territory, while statebuilding insurgents challenge the incumbent state's sovereignty; as in Kurdish self-determination movements in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. Because

the changes in political order associated with statebuilding have substantial implications for the civilians living in contested territory, civilians have clear incentives to shape statebuilding campaigns, largely under-theorized in the existing literature. In "Civilian Resilience in State-building Campaigns: Evidence from Israel's War for Independence," with Daniel Arnon and Rick McAlexander, we argue social cohesion shapes variation in community responses to state-builders' encroachment by empowering civilians to engage in costly collective action. We draw upon new data extracted from a village-level survey of Arab communities, conducted by the Jewish forces in the early 1940s, assessing the social, political, and economic conditions in each community before the war. We translated the documents, provided by the Haganah Archives, from the original Hebrew and developed a coding scheme to operationalize the information in each village assessment, yielding a dataset of community-level characteristics for each Arab-majority village. The broader project will contribute to the statebuilding and state-formation literature by emphasizing the local contentious politics foundations of states, and comparing across additional case contexts. The project provides new insights into the critical case of Israel's state-formation, and the Israel-Palestinian conflict in general, by systematizing historical and archival resources for use in quantitative analysis.

Terrorism in Armed Conflict

Under what conditions do rebel groups resort to terrorism? To answer these and related questions, Page Fortna, Nick Lotito, and I constructed the Terrorism in Armed Conflict (TAC) dataset. TAC assigns rebel groups in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Database to terrorism incidents in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), filling a crucial gap in the empirical research examining the use of terrorism in civil wars. With a few exceptions, previous datasets include *only* groups that have used terrorism without including similar groups that *may* use terrorism. In "Don't Bite the Hand that Feeds," *ISQ* (2018), we find that because popular discontent associated with targeting civilians does not curtail their access to resources (lower *legitimacy costs*), rebel groups with alternative funding sources beyond civilian support are more likely to use terrorism. "Terrorism and the Varieties of Civil Liberties," (under review) with Rick Morgan (V-Dem Institute), explains how countries' exposure to terrorism varies with distinct government actions on separable civil liberties dimensions. We argue that distinct dimensions civil liberties—political and private civil liberties and physical integrity rights—have counter-vailing effects on states' vulnerability to terrorism. A series of papers in the pipeline leverage TAC to further advance understanding of terrorism in armed conflict. Answering Chenoweth's (2013) call for greater scholarly attention to the relationship between government action and terrorism, work in progress investigates the conditions under which rebel groups respond to government repression by resorting to or escalating terrorism tactics. The next paper seeks to answer the question: does rebel service provision enable terrorism? It tests the group-level empirical implications of explanations for the observed correlation between terrorism and service provision among rebel groups.

INTER-STATE CONFLICT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Under what conditions do states adopt subversive "gray zone" strategies short of full-scale militarization to pressure their adversaries? Under what conditions does gray zone conflict escalate to war? The first stage of the project explains the causes and consequences of one particular "gray zone" conflict strategy: state sponsorship of (violent and nonviolent) dissident

organizations in an adversary's territory. In "Conflict Interdependence and State Sponsorship of Dissident Groups," I argue that a state's incentives to support dissidents against and adversary is shaped by the broader interstate security context. If multiple, non-aligned states are in conflict with a common adversary (conflict interdependence), there exists a competitive market for the adversary's political concessions, and by extension for dissidents' services as proxy agents, thereby increasing the likelihood of sponsorship. Future research will investigate the role of state sponsorship in shaping dissident organizations' use of nonviolent vs. violent strategies and the conditions under which escalation control fails (sponsorship leads to militarized interstate disputes).

States possess a variety of coercive bargaining tools, from diplomacy to full-scale war with multiple gray zone strategies in between. Future work will contribute to the interstate conflict literature by integrating the largely under-exploited substitutable foreign policy theoretical framework,[2] which takes seriously the implication of complementarity and substitutability across states' multiple coercive bargaining strategies, with network analysis methods, which take seriously the dependencies across actors' multiple disputes and conflicts involving common adversaries. This approach will yield critical insights in the burgeoning "gray zone" conflict literature and broader questions of international competition and cooperation.

Nonstate Actors in World Politics

The "Named Entities for Social Sciences" (NESS) project[3] fills gaps in actor-based datasets commonly used in political science. We use weak supervision machine learning tools to extract information from the world's largest open source repository of named entities, Wikidata, to sort entities into categories relevant to social scientists. I lead the NESS–Political Organizations project, which aims to construct a global sample of political organizations engaged in both institutionalized (e.g. political parties, advocacy and lobbying organizations) and (violent and nonviolent) "extra-institutional" politics (e.g. rebel groups, pro-government militias, civil resistance groups, etc.). To explain why some organized political groups pursue objectives through institutionalized channels (*within-system*) while others engage in illicit forms of competition (*anti-system*), scholars must compare political organizations that *may* adopt anti-system and/or within-system strategies, but vary in which strategies they employ. Nevertheless, research on violent anti-system (e.g. rebel groups) and within-system (e.g. political parties) have been studied separately despite the fact that anti-system groups often emerge from within-system political organizations (e.g. political parties turned insurgents), and vice versa (e.g. demobilized insurgents fielding candidates in post-conflict elections). NESS–Political Organizations integrates the variety of political organizations in a common dataset.

The Welfare Non-State Working Group is a collaborative effort to develop a framework bringing together insights across as-yet isolated literatures on governance by NGOs, International Institutions, Multi-national Corporations, rebel organizations, militias, and other non-state actors. The project will yield insights for scholars interested in governance, conflict, state-building and state failure, and the role of non-state actors in governance and development. My specific contribution applies insights from the general framework to understanding rebel organizations' governance.

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[2]See the Feb. 2000 *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Special Issue.
[3]NESS is a Center for Peace and Security Studies (CPASS) research project.