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RPPR Final Report

as of 12-Oct-2022

Agency Code: 21XD

Proposal Number: 70568HCMRI
INVESTIGATOR(S):

Agreement Number: W911NF-17-1-0044

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Report Date: 02-Oct-2020

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Final Report for Period Beginning 03-Jan-2017 and Ending 02-Oct-2020

Title: Armed Conflict Beyond Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Comparative Evidence from Latin America and South Asia

Begin Performance Period: 03-Jan-2017

End Performance Period: 02-Oct-2020

Report Term: 0-Other

Submitted By: Paul Staniland

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Distribution Statement: 1-Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

STEM Degrees:

STEM Participants:

Major Goals: Violent conflicts in the 21st century involve an increasingly diverse array of armed groups, from drug cartels and prison gangs to warlords, militias, and armed political parties. Conflicts, whether in Mexico, Iraq, or northwestern Pakistan, have not followed the standard dynamics of insurgency and counterinsurgency; instead, non-state groups both clash and cooperate with governments. Some groups pose dire threats to state-building, democratic stability, and rule of law; others act as useful local partners in areas of unrest; still others slowly corrupt state institutions from within.

This has direct implications for national defense and that of our allies, because policies that neutralize or co-opt one type of armed actor may empower others; indeed, classic militarized interventions have often proved tragically counterproductive. Yet there is remarkably little research that compares how different types of armed groups form, fund themselves, and interact with state power. Does a reliance on criminal activities and systematic police corruption have similar implications for fighting the Haqqani network in Pakistan as it does for Mexico's drug cartels? Could the spread of prison-based criminal networks in Brazil be a harbinger of prison-based radicalization in South Asia? There is simply no systematic basis for answering questions such as these. This leaves decision-makers, protecting U.S. strategic interests against novel threats, with weak theory and scant comparative evidence to inform government strategy and develop effective policy.

Our project is a 3-year program of basic research, bringing a rigorous, empirically intensive, cross-regional perspective to these questions. The project has two components: first, we will conduct field and archival research on a wide range of armed groups in Latin America and South Asia, producing a series of narrative case studies of over two hundred groups. Second, we will use the accumulated qualitative material to produce quantitative datasets of armed groups' key characteristics and their interactions with states. This mix of evidence will allow us to systematically categorize, compare, and develop predictive theories of how different types of armed groups react to and interact with states. Both our qualitative and quantitative data will go beyond extant datasets that focus on conflict as a dichotomous variable by measuring a much broader and richer range of armed-group relationships to states. As these novel armed groups propagate, often below the radar of policy analysts focused on today's immediate crises, our project will provide a scientific basis for defense analysts to address new threats that decision-makers are likely to face in the years to come.

The same factors that make Latin America and South Asia strategically important regions make them especially apt for this study: both feature an astonishing range of armed-group types, from ideological to purely criminal, many financed by drug-trafficking and other illicit activities, and many engaged in electoral politics.

These groups and their varied relationship to state forces—from corruption and collusion to outright combat—pose new threats to allied governments and new challenges for policymakers and advisors, but also an opportunity for generating new knowledge through systematic study. Our project leverages each investigator's distinct regional

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expertise and experience in the field to create innovative data for basic research on contemporary armed conflict: extensive historical narratives on armed groups and their interactions with governments, and a cross-regional quantitative data set of armed-group state relations. Both sources of data will become a public resource for future researchers and policymakers. At the same time, the project brings the investigators' long-standing engagement with non-traditional forms of armed conflict to bear, producing novel analytic categories that improve our predictions about the dynamics of contemporary conflicts—from drug wars to militarized elections to paramilitary politics—in which the state-vs.-rebel framework is inadequate. In sum, the project will yield peer-reviewed research, publicly available data, and policy briefings, providing important new resources for policy and scholarly communities.

Accomplishments: Violent conflicts in the 21st century involve an increasingly diverse array of armed groups, from drug cartels and prison gangs to warlords, militias, and armed political parties. Conflicts, whether in Mexico, Iraq, or northwestern Pakistan, have not followed the standard dynamics of insurgency and counterinsurgency; instead, non-state groups both clash and cooperate with governments. Some groups pose dire threats to state-building, democratic stability, and rule of law; others act as useful local partners in areas of unrest; still others slowly corrupt state institutions from within.

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Training Opportunities: The project has placed an emphasis on training student researchers from the undergraduate to the post-graduate level in both the method and substance of the project. Uniquely, our students have received invaluable training in both building and analyzing databases in addition to the research questions in both regions. Under the mentorship of the Chicago Project on Security and Threat's (CPOST) data manager, the team has built a stable and secure database integrating both professors' datasets. After their time in AOSA, Bryan Popoola entered the graduate program at Johns Hopkins-SAIS and RA Erik Mueller began work at the RAND Corporation. Since leaving AOSA, 2019-2020 RA Basil Bastaki has entered the PhD program at Yale. The team's emphasis on training student researchers continued to bear positive results. PI Lessing and Senior RA Douglas Block presented research at the Latin American Studies Association International Congress (May 2020) and their co-authored paper has received an R/R at Journal of Politics in Latin America. Former team member Elayne Stecher, now a PhD student at UCLA, continues to work with our team on the criminal governance estimate project

Results Dissemination: Paul Staniland published his article "Leftist Insurgency in Democracies" in Comparative Political Studies in 2020 (FirstView; formally published in 2021), which explores when and how leftist insurgencies emerge in electoral democracies. His book Ordering Violence: Explaining Armed-Group State Relations from Conflict to Cooperation (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021) was accepted at Cornell during 2020. Though after the grant period in question, it is worth noting that Ordering Violence has won two awards: the Giovanni Sartori Book Award from the American Political Science Association and the Book of the Year Award from the Conflict Research Society; it is also currently shortlisted for the best book award of the International Security Studies Section of the International Studies Association. He has presented on this book in the last year at Penn, Amsterdam, and UC-Santa Barbara. Staniland wrote an article for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace entitled "Political Violence in South Asia: The Triumph of the State?" that explored the dynamics of conflict and political violence in the region. Ben Lessing's second book project, Criminal Leviathans received an advanced contract at Cambridge University Press. In 2019 he received a Carengie Fellowship to complete his book. Lessing also published "Conceptualizing Criminal Governance" in Perspective on Politics, and has received an R/R for an article manuscript on criminal electioneering at Journal of Politics in Latin America. Lessing has presented project research at invited talks at Oxford University, the University of Leicester, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, the Barcelona School of Economics, CIDE (Mexico City), and the United Nations University in Helsinki.

Honors and Awards: Nothing to Report

Protocol Activity Status:

Technology Transfer: Nothing to Report

PARTICIPANTS:

Participant Type: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Participant: Basil Bastaki

Person Months Worked: 9.00

Funding Support:

Project Contribution:

National Academy Member: N

Participant Type: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Participant: Nandhana Sanjeev

Person Months Worked: 9.00

Funding Support:

Project Contribution:

National Academy Member: N

Participant Type: PD/PI

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Participant: Paul Staniland

Person Months Worked: 12.00

Project Contribution:

National Academy Member: N

Funding Support:

Participant Type: Co PD/PI

Participant: Benjamin Lessing

Person Months Worked: 12.00

Project Contribution:

National Academy Member: N

Funding Support:

Participant Type: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Participant: Silvia Moreno

Person Months Worked: 12.00

Project Contribution:

National Academy Member: N

Funding Support:

Participant Type: Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)

Participant: Douglas Block

Person Months Worked: 12.00

Project Contribution:

National Academy Member: N

Funding Support:

ARTICLES:

Publication Type: Journal Article

Peer Reviewed: Y **Publication Status:** 1-Published

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Publication Identifier: 1557-3036

Volume: Issue:

First Page #:

Date Submitted: 8/26/19 12:00AM

Date Published: 7/8/19 10:00AM

Publication Location:

Article Title: New Data on Indian Security Force Fatalities and Demographics

Authors: Paul Staniland, Drew Stommes

Keywords: INDIA, SECURITY

Abstract: National and state-level security forces across India operate against insurgents, criminals, and external threats. These operations are politically consequential, yet these forces tend to be quite opaque. This paper provides new data on the fatalities that these forces have suffered in order to explore the location and nature of political violence in India. We create several new datasets of security force fatalities extracted from commemorative security force “martyrs” documents and online databases published by Indian state-level police organizations, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), and the Ministry of Defence, as well as semi-official sources. The data vary wildly in quality and detail, and there are serious limits to their use. Nevertheless, they allow us to – with caveats – measure the location and incidence of violence, as well as the demographic underpinnings of the Indian Army, the two largest MHA paramilitaries, and several state police forces. Caveats aside, we anticipate

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Journal: Comparative Political Studies

Publication Identifier Type:

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Volume:

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Date Submitted: 10/12/22 12:00AM

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Publication Location:

Article Title: Leftist Insurgency in Democracies

Authors: Paul Staniland

Keywords: insurgency

Abstract: Leftist insurgency has been one of the major forms of civil war since 1945. Existing research on revolution has linked leftist rebellion to authoritarian regimes and blocked democratization. This research, however, overlooks the onset and endurance of important leftist insurgencies in a number of democracies. While these revolts have not overthrown regimes, they have often persisted for decades and had major political consequences. This paper theorizes the roots of this distinctive form of civil war, arguing that democracy shapes how these insurgencies begin, acting as a double-edged sword that simultaneously blocks the emergence of a revolutionary coalition and triggers bitter intra-left splits that breed radical splinters. This leads to leftist revolts against left and center-left elected governments during "incorporation windows" where leftists need to choose whether to embrace parliamentary politics. Empirically, the paper studies all cases of leftist insurgency in southern Asia si

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Publication Type: Journal Article Peer Reviewed: Y **Publication Status:** 1-Published

Journal: Perspectives on Politics

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Date Submitted: 10/12/22 12:00AM

Date Published:

Publication Location:

Article Title: Conceptualizing Criminal Governance

Authors: Benjamin, Lessing

Keywords: criminal governance,

Abstract: In informal urban areas throughout the developing world, and even in some U.S. and U.K. neighborhoods, tens if not hundreds of millions of people live under some form of criminal governance. For them, states' claims of a monopoly on the use of force ring hollow; for many issues, a local criminal organization is the relevant authority. Yet the state is far from absent: residents may pay taxes, vote, and even inform on gangs as punishment for abusive behavior. Criminal governance flourishes in pockets of low state presence, but ones states can generally enter at will, if not always without violence. It thus differs from state, corporate, and rebel governance because it is embedded within larger domains of state power. I develop a conceptual framework centered around the who, what, and how of criminal governance, organizing extant research and proposing a novel dimension: charismatic vs. rational-bureaucratic forms of criminal authority. I then delineate the logics that may drive criminal

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Publication Type: Journal Article Peer Reviewed: Y **Publication Status:** 1-Published

Journal: American Political Science Review

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First Page #: 584

Date Submitted: 10/12/22 12:00AM

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Publication Location:

Article Title: Legitimacy in Criminal Governance: Managing a Drug Empire from Behind Bars

Authors: BENJAMIN LESSING, GRAHAM DENYER WILLIS

Keywords: Crime

Abstract: National and state-level security forces across India operate against insurgents, criminals, and external threats. These operations are politically consequential, yet these forces tend to be quite opaque. This article provides new data on the fatalities that these forces have suffered in order to explore the location and nature of political violence in India. We create several new datasets of security force fatalities extracted from commemorative security force “martyrs” documents and online databases published by Indian state-level police organizations, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), and the Ministry of Defence, as well as semi-official sources. The data vary wildly in quality and detail, and there are serious limits to their use. Nevertheless, they allow us to – with caveats – measure the location and incidence of violence, as well as the demographic underpinnings of the Indian Army, the two largest MHA paramilitaries, and several state police forces.

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Acknowledged Federal Support: Y

Publication Type: Journal Article Peer Reviewed: Y **Publication Status:** 4-Under Review

Journal: International Security

Publication Identifier Type:

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Date Published:

Publication Location:

Article Title: Finessing the Hobbesian Dilemma: Ending and Stabilizing Internal Conflicts in South Asia

Authors: Paul Staniland, Basil Bastaki, Bryan Popoola

Keywords: Civil war

Abstract: Abstract: Peacekeeping and other forms of international involvement are important for managing the end of civil wars and in maintaining post-conflict peace. Scholars have identified an array of international policies that constitute a “gold standard” for facilitating conflict termination. Otherwise severe problems of commitment, trust, and poor information confront states and armed groups – the Hobbesian problematique of internal war presents itself. But what happens when international involvement is simply not an option? This paper explores how internal wars evolve in “internationally insulated” contexts that lack the prospect of external peace-building intervention. It shows that there are more diverse options for conflict stabilization than are highlighted in existing literature. We argue that there is substantial space for state-group cooperation without demobilization, as long as insurgent groups are mobilizing relatively “tolerable” political cleavages.

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Acknowledged Federal Support: Y

BOOKS:

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Publication Identifier:

Book Edition:

Volume:

Publication Year: 2021

Date Received: 12-Oct-2022

Publication Location:

Publisher: Cornell University Press

Book Title: Ordering Violence Explaining Armed Group-State Relations from Conflict to Cooperation

Authors: Paul, Staniland

Editor:

Acknowledged Federal Support: Y

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as of 12-Oct-2022

CONFERENCE PAPERS:

Publication Type: Conference Paper or Presentation **Publication Status:** 0-Other
Conference Name: Criminal Governance in the Americas Conference
Date Received: 12-Oct-2022 Conference Date: 22-Oct-2018 Date Published:
Conference Location: University of Chicago
Paper Title: CRIMINAL GOVERNANCE IN LATIN AMERICA: AN EMPIRICAL APPROXIMATION
Authors: Benjamin Lessing; Douglas Block; Elayne Stecher
Acknowledged Federal Support: **Y**

Publication Type: Conference Paper or Presentation **Publication Status:** 1-Published
Conference Name: American Political Science Association
Date Received: 12-Oct-2022 Conference Date: 29-Aug-2019 Date Published:
Conference Location: Washington DC
Paper Title: Finessing the Hobbesian Dilemma: Ending and Stabilizing Internal Conflicts in South Asia
Authors: Paul Staniland; Bryan Popoola
Acknowledged Federal Support: **Y**

Partners

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I certify that the information in the report is complete and accurate:

Signature: Paul Staniland

Signature Date: 10/12/22 4:31PM

Contract Number: W911NF1710044

Title: Armed Conflict Beyond Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Comparative Evidence from Latin America and South Asia

Major Goals:

Violent conflicts in the 21st century involve an increasingly diverse array of armed groups, from drug cartels and prison gangs to warlords, militias, and armed political parties. Conflicts, whether in Mexico, Iraq, or northwestern Pakistan, have not followed the standard dynamics of insurgency and counterinsurgency; instead, non-state groups both clash and cooperate with governments. Some groups pose dire threats to state-building, democratic stability, and rule of law; others act as useful local partners in areas of unrest; still others slowly corrupt state institutions from within.

This has direct implications for national defense and that of our allies, because policies that neutralize or co-opt one type of armed actor may empower others; indeed, classic militarized interventions have often proved tragically counterproductive. Yet there is remarkably little research that compares how different types of armed groups form, fund themselves, and interact with state power. Does a reliance on criminal activities and systematic police corruption have similar implications for fighting the Haqqani network in Pakistan as it does for Mexico's drug cartels? Could the spread of prison-based criminal networks in Brazil be a harbinger of prison-based radicalization in South Asia? There is simply no systematic basis for answering questions such as these. This leaves decision-makers, protecting U.S. strategic interests against novel threats, with weak theory and scant comparative evidence to inform government strategy and develop effective policy.

Our project is a 3-year program of basic research, bringing a rigorous, empirically intensive, cross-regional perspective to these questions. The project has two components: first, we will conduct field and archival research on a wide range of armed groups in Latin America and South Asia, producing a series of narrative case studies of over two hundred groups. Second, we will use the accumulated qualitative material to produce quantitative datasets of armed groups' key characteristics and their interactions with states. This mix of evidence will allow us to systematically categorize, compare, and develop predictive theories of how different types of armed groups react to and interact with states. Both our qualitative and quantitative data will go beyond extant datasets that focus on conflict as a dichotomous variable by measuring a much broader and richer range of armed-group relationships to states. As these novel armed groups propagate, often below the radar of policy analysts focused on today's immediate crises, our project will provide a scientific basis for defense analysts to address new threats that decision-makers are likely to face in the years to come.

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These groups and their varied relationship to state forces—from corruption and collusion to outright combat—pose new threats to allied governments and new challenges for policymakers and advisors, but also an opportunity for generating new knowledge through systematic study. Our project leverages each investigator's distinct regional expertise and experience in the field to create innovative data for basic

research on contemporary armed conflict: extensive historical narratives on armed groups and their interactions with governments, and a cross-regional quantitative data set of armed-group state relations. Both sources of data will become a public resource for future researchers and policymakers. At the same time, the project brings the investigators' long-standing engagement with non-traditional forms of armed conflict to bear, producing novel analytic categories that improve our predictions about the dynamics of contemporary conflicts—from drug wars to militarized elections to paramilitary politics—in which the state-vs.-rebel framework is inadequate. In sum, the project will yield peer-reviewed research, publicly available data, and policy briefings, providing important new resources for policy and scholarly communities.

Accomplishments Under Goals:

Since the previous report was written in August of 2019, the Armed Orders in South Asia (AOSA) component of the project has experienced various personnel changes and made significant progress towards its goals.

In the summer of 2019, new personnel came on board with the departure of Bryan Popoola. Basil Bastaki and Nandhana Sanjeev were the research assistants focused on AOSA. With the data architecture in place and following the creation of a codebook that clearly defines each variable and reduces ambiguity, the researchers continued to create qualitative narratives and their respective quantitative codings for armed groups across the project's nations of interest.

By the end of the term, the AOSA team wrote over 200 qualitative narratives that discuss the dyadic armed group-government relationships of 225 groups in Bangladesh, Burma, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, resulting in more than 3,600 dyad-years of quality-controlled data. While continuing to add new armed group-government relationships to our growing database and collection of qualitative narratives, the project made a commitment to hold all of our past work to high academic and professional standards. To this end, the members of the research team have conducted rigorous quality checks and continue to update quantitative codings for groups that were researched in the project's early stages to ensure that they are consistent with any changes in formatting guidelines or coding criteria that may have arisen in the later stages of the project's life. This is also where a set of expanded narratives came from.

Since the last iteration of this progress report, the AOSA project completed its core dataset and accompanying narratives. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Burma/Myanmar's core codings were finished, and we engaged in quality control on these cases. The team also made forays into more limited coding of Nepal and Bangladesh, where challenges of sourcing and the simple fact of armed group diffusion and splintering led to much more tentative codings. This work was used in Staniland's 2021 book *Ordering Violence: Explaining Armed-Group State Relations from Conflict to Cooperation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021) and his co-authored paper with Basil Bastaki and Bryan Popoola entitled "Finessing the Hobbesian Dilemma: Ending and Stabilizing Internal Conflicts in South Asia," which is now Revise & Resubmit at *International Security*. The data are publicly available on Staniland's website.

For the Latin American component of the program, the team hired and trained new RAs to replace those who had left due to graduation and conflicting class schedules. The revamped team continued to code events in the Prison-Orchestrated Attacks Database that documents violence inside and outside prisons by prison-based gangs in Brazil. The database now contains more than 300 waves of coordinated attacks and 5700 individual events between 2003 and 2021. These events have had a variety of effects including

the killing or injury of some 1000 law enforcement officers, 2700 bus burnings, 180 attacks against private business, 190 attacks against police stations, and the destruction of more than 500 government and private vehicles. The team also continued a quality control review of the database to identify any double-coded events and correct any coding errors.

The team has also vastly refined and improved the estimate of the number of people living under criminal governance in the Americas, using an expansive research strategy that included expert interviews, ethnographic research, and large-scale data collection as well as the results of the 2020 Latinbarometer survey conducted in 18 countries. While the initial estimate suggested that as many as 26 million people in the region might be subject to some form of criminal governance, our new estimate is almost 3 times as high, about 79 million. We believe the initial underestimate was due to an unfounded assumption in our estimation approach: our new data reveals that criminal governance is not only found in very poor neighborhoods but in low and even middle income neighborhoods above the poverty line. A paper reporting these new estimates is currently being prepared for submission.

We also followed up our October 2018 Criminal Governances in the Americas Conference at the University of Chicago with a second in person conference held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The conference brought together experts from across Latin America who discussed the growth and spread of criminal governance. PI Lessing co-organized a special edition of the Brazilian academic journal *Dilemas* dedicated to the issue of criminal governance in Latin America, featuring 11 team-written articles from over 25 authors from countries throughout the region. The special issue was launched at distributed at the conference.

Co-PI Benjamin Lessing has conducted significant field research since the previous interim report, in which we reported overseeing assessments of gang governance in nine slum communities across two cities in northeastern Brazil. Although his plans to expand his assessment of criminal governance to at least 12 more communities in six new cities during 2020 was scuttled by the Coronavirus pandemic, Lessing managed to interview residents, officials and gang leaders in Rio de Janeiro, as well as scholars and community activists via Zoom. Outside of Brazil, he made several trips to Medellín, Colombia where he continues to work with Harris School of Public Policy professor Chris Blattman on a multi-year project examining criminal governance in the city's slum communities. Three papers, currently under review, have come out of this project.

To this point, the project has met and even surpassed its previously stated goals for both the South Asian and Latin American regions. The project has grown significantly since our last report, both in output quantity and quality as well as organizational structure. Findings have been published in the academic and popular press, the project's databases are on the verge of becoming the most complete and comprehensive resources for their areas of interest.

Training Opportunities:

The project has placed an emphasis on training student researchers from the undergraduate to the post-graduate level in both the method and substance of the project. Uniquely, our students have received invaluable training in both building and analyzing databases in addition to the research questions in both regions. Under the mentorship of the Chicago Project on Security and Threat's (CPOST) data manager, the team has built a stable and secure database integrating both professors' datasets.

After their time in AOSA, Bryan Popoola entered the graduate program at Johns Hopkins-SAIS and RA Erik Mueller began work at the RAND Corporation. Since leaving AOSA, 2019-2020 RA Basil Bastaki has entered the PhD program at Yale.

The team's emphasis on training student researchers continued to bear positive results. PI Lessing and Senior RA Douglas Block presented research at the Latin American Studies Association International Congress (May 2020) and their co-authored paper has received an R/R at *Journal of Politics in Latin America*.

Former team member Elayne Stecher, now a PhD student at UCLA, continues to work with our team on the criminal governance estimate project

Results Dissemination

Paul Staniland published his article "Leftist Insurgency in Democracies" in *Comparative Political Studies* in 2020 (FirstView; formally published in 2021), which explores when and how leftist insurgencies emerge in electoral democracies. His book *Ordering Violence: Explaining Armed-Group State Relations from Conflict to Cooperation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021) was accepted at Cornell during 2020. Though after the grant period in question, it is worth noting that *Ordering Violence* has won two awards: the Giovanni Sartori Book Award from the American Political Science Association and the Book of the Year Award from the Conflict Research Society; it is also currently shortlisted for the best book award of the International Security Studies Section of the International Studies Association. He has presented on this book in the last year at Penn, Amsterdam, and UC-Santa Barbara. Staniland wrote an article for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace entitled "Political Violence in South Asia: The Triumph of the State?" that explored the dynamics of conflict and political violence in the region.

Ben Lessing's second book project, *Criminal Leviathans* received an advanced contract at Cambridge University Press. In 2019 he received a Carnegie Fellowship to complete his book. Lessing also published "Conceptualizing Criminal Governance" in *Perspective on Politics*, and has received an R/R for an article manuscript on criminal electioneering at *Journal of Politics in Latin America*.

Lessing has presented project research at invited talks at Oxford University, the University of Leicester, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, the Barcelona School of Economics, CIDE (Mexico City), and the United Nations University in Helsinki.