Indiana Jones & the Institutional Review Board: Disciplinary Incentives, Researcher Archetypes & the Pathologies of Knowledge Production

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This essay analyzes the institutional management of field-intensive social science research in U.S.-based universities. I argue that administration and mentorship of field-intensive projects at the department and university level encompass well-known perverse incentives, pedagogical pitfalls, risks, and concurrent consequences for knowledge production. I outline three common ideal-typical models: the Indiana Jones model, the legal-securitization model, and the Procrustean design model. Specifically, I elucidate the underlying priorities, the nature of mentorship, the relationship to rules and norms, the approach to ethics, and the systems of administrative power embedded in each. Further, I discuss the consequences that result from the dominance of these three models of scholarship, including the pathologization of particular regions, the sensationalization of particular research topics, and the channeling of knowledge production by external priorities rather than intellectual merit.

Academia is characterized by perverse incentives. Universities increasingly employ contingent labor and eliminate tenure-track faculty jobs.[1] The mounting push for faculty to obtain external grants that generate overhead for institutions encourages scholars to pitch projects by adhering to specific methodological approaches, to adopt readily accessible, of-the-moment research questions, and to grant agency to narratives surrounding topics such as violent extremism or forced migration.[2] Scholars at underresourced institutions, especially those in the Global South, experience this pressure in particularly acute ways, as a lack of institutional resources pushes many faculty to tailor their scholarship to the requirements of external funding sources and grants disbursed in foreign currencies. Faculty in many North American and European doctoral political science departments train students to compete in contracting academic job markets by claiming they can do it all: surveys, experiments, machine-learning, even "two

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weeks of ethnography." At least some fieldwork has become a marker of topical and regional expertise, even as fewer and fewer fellowships and departments provide graduate students with the resources, training, and advising support necessary to spend extended periods of time away from their home institution conducting fieldwork.[3]

There exists an extensive literature on research ethics in political science and the social sciences more broadly, with specific attention being paid to appropriate practices for, for example, conflict- and violence-affected settings, vulnerable populations, authoritarian states, and archival, remote/digital, and desk research.[4] Researchers have critically considered the limits of institutional review boards (IRBs), underscoring their role in protecting universities rather than acting as an arbiter of what is and is not ethical research.[5] Scholars have increasingly emphasized the on-the-ground power differentials between researchers from the Global North and Global South as the complex and oft-obscured relationships between researchers and research facilitators.[6] Journals have increasingly requested evidence of ethical consideration and/or review before accepting submissions, though many articles that do mention ethics do so in what international relations scholar Johanna Rodehau-Noack and political scientists Stephanie Schwartz and M. P. Broache have termed a "procedural" way, focusing on IRB demands and skirting a broader consideration of ethical engagement with the field.[7]

Ethical and responsible frameworks for robust data generation, honest analysis, fair recognition of labor, and responsible publication must be promoted and rewarded by academic institutions, starting with mentorship.[8] Mentorship, both by formal advisors and by more-senior figures and collective actors within a discipline (such as editorial boards and organized conference sections), transmits the norms, practices, and attitudes that shape research via teaching, informal discussions, feedback, and promotion. Yet Schwartz and political scientist Kate Cronin-Furman have shown, for example, that graduate students in political science receive very little if any education in fieldwork methods and ethics, even in top-ranked programs.[9]

The results are disturbing. In this essay, I identify three archetypes of researcher that have emerged in the current social science and particularly the political science disciplinary environment. Each is a product of various incentives that individual senior scholars, journals, book editors, professional organizations, grant makers, and the policy world contribute to and reinforce. The essay centers on these three archetypes due to their relationship to knowledge production, the negative effects such research approaches have on research participants and facilitators, and the ripple effects their behavior has on academic communities, including by "ruining the field."

Why focus on scholar archetypes and how they interact with mentorship practices and disciplinary structures, rather than on individual scholars' ethics, be-

havior, methodological choices, and professional responsibilities? Archetypes provide a lens through which to recognize and evaluate individual-level behaviors while acknowledging their relationality and collective disciplinary responsibility for substandard norms and practices. Scholars do not exist in a vacuum; rather, disciplinary structures shape the opportunities they receive and the career pathways they pursue. Mentorship incorporates training, provides ethical guidance, conveys incentives, transmits priorities, and acts as a socializing, gatekeeping, and disciplining mechanism. Mentors, particularly graduate mentors, must actively sign off on research documents such as a prospectus, ethical clearance, grant documents, and, eventually, a dissertation. The choice to validate behavior, or not, to push for justification, or not, and to say "no" when necessary are all part of mentorship, in addition to reviewing, editing, and hiring.

Based on over a decade of experiences as part of the Advancing Research on Conflict Consortium, the SAFEResearch Initiative, the Qualitative Transparency Deliberations, and the Research Ethics in the Middle East and North Africa project, as well as several roundtables and panels at conferences such as the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting and the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, this essay identifies three archetypal scholars and provides defining traits of each: the Indiana Jones model, the legal-securitization model, and the Procrustean design model.[10] For each archetype, I also highlight an associated practice – such as dual-hatting, ethical box-checking, and amputating history and context – and note how they further complicate research practice and knowledge production. Finally, I identify key practices and guidelines for academic mentors on committees, in departments, and in broader research communities to informally incentivize safer, more respectful, and more methodologically robust research practice.

The Indiana Jones archetype has become a ubiquitous reference in field-oriented social science conversations.[11] In anthropology, references to the fictional Professor Jones are often used pejoratively, which is perhaps unsurprising given anthropology's ongoing disciplinary introspection following debates surrounding the 1960s Camelot program, the 1980s reflexive turn, and conversations regarding scholars' participation in the U.S. government's now-discontinued Human Terrain Systems (HTS) program.[12]

Anecdotally, political science seems to have a more complicated relationship with Indiana Jones. In nearly twenty years of working in violence-affected and fragile spaces, I have heard uses of the moniker that span from complimentary to critical. In conversations surrounding fieldwork and ethics, it might be deployed to convey admiration for brave or daring work; reserve regarding seemingly rogue or reckless behavior; and critique of dated, dangerous (neo)Orientalist and (neo)colonialist practices. The comparison might be used in all three ways to refer

to the same project or scholar. In general, I argue that structures that promote the Indiana Jones model (IJM) convey the following tenets:

1. Dangerous fieldwork is inherently valuable.[13]
2. Rules are meant to be broken.
3. Data are there for the taking.

The IJM is fundamentally competitive rather than collaborative.

Though the model may be adopted by people of all genders and backgrounds, the IJM is facilitated in its risk-taking, rule-breaking, and extractive practice by intersections of white, Global North, class, and frequently male privilege. In other words, the IJM is based on the advantages provided by the privileges of gender, whiteness, professional affiliation, access to financial resources, and citizenship. These factors, in turn, exacerbate power disparities between researchers, on one hand, and facilitators and participants on the ground, on the other. IJM graduate students often actively resist responsible mentorship. For example, one colleague noted that within their department, students who were told that their work was too dangerous or unethical by specialized conflict scholars often then went to a specific, nonexpert faculty member who would approve it.

The IJM often focuses on style over substance. It is more concerned with what the researcher does and where, rather than the utility of that positionality or the validity of the data it generates. Researchers may talk about military embeds without discussing why said position was necessary to knowledge generation, the ethics of undertaking it, or the risks that position posed to the researcher and those around them, despite the fact that all these dynamics affect the quality of the data gathered.[14] Researchers may conceal their funding sources from participants, fundamentally compromising those participants' ability to consent to involvement in research.[15] Researchers may even skip ethics review processes, labeling them as "too cumbersome" or "just there to protect the university."[16] This occurs despite the fact that home university IRB approval or formal subvention to another university's IRB is a legal requirement for most nonexempt international human participants research conducted by scholars at U.S. institutions. However, IJM researchers may deliberately dodge these requirements, wagering on a lack of oversight from their home institution and/or light accountability demands from journal editors during the publication process.[17]

The IJM's inherent valuation of dangerous research for its own sake, and the concurrent labeling of the researcher as "brave" for having pursued it, places research participants, facilitators, and other researchers at risk. Political scientist Milli Lake and I have referred to the resulting competition over which scholar can do the riskiest fieldwork as "outdangering."[18] Disciplinary structures reward such behavior, rather than questioning its intellectual payoff. Among respondents to a survey conducted by Schwartz and Cronin-Furman, 76 percent of faculty "agreed

or strongly agreed that fieldwork in 'dangerous' contexts earns credibility."[19] This orientation, as well as the broader incentive structure, encourages scholars to put themselves, research brokers such as fixers and enumerators, and research participants in unnecessarily risky situations for the sake of being able to claim "dangerous" research.[20] These issues are not hypothetical; during interviews with journalists in Iraq in 2019, one informed me that a researcher well known for risk-taking had recently "nearly got her fixer killed."[21] Such behaviors also devalue the role of developing solid research questions, creative research designs, and robust data. Research projects in this model can often be addressed via different approaches, but are not due to the disciplinary value placed on risk-taking and the replication of sensationalist narratives.

Like the fictional Indiana Jones, researchers in the IJM might be encouraged to work as consultants with governments or think tanks, as full-time employees for international nongovernmental organizations, or as journalists. There may not be anything inherently problematic about these relationships, depending on the project at hand and the transparency with which the researcher presents themselves and their partnerships.[22] Indeed, some projects necessarily rely on research collaborations with civil society organizations or humanitarian actors, with mutual benefit and advantages for knowledge production.[23] Yet extant disciplinary structures and incentives may encourage graduate students and young scholars to uncritically build these secondary affiliations without considering the potential ethical pitfalls, safety concerns, conflicts of interest, and effects on the robustness of their data.

Dual-hatting, or taking on two or more roles, can thus bring researchers' motivations, ethical commitments, priorities, and protected status into tension. For example, it may produce what political scientists Michael G. Findley, Faten Ghosn, and Sara Lowe call "nested incompatibilities," which comprise distinctions "between a researcher's ethical obligations and that of a partnered research entity, whether that is an NGO, IGO, or government."[24] These commitments can surface due to previous work experience, or become available during the researcher's graduate career. Political scientists Kristine Eck and Dara Kay Cohen note, for example:

> While some students may have relevant work experience that enables them to be sensitive, skilled researchers, students with professional or activist backgrounds may struggle to distinguish between their past work values and their current role as student researchers. Having worked for institutions like governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), advocacy groups, or news media, students may still subscribe to the professional imperatives of those institutions. This can bias their research and undermine the scientific process, and unwittingly makes student research less ethical.[25]

Here, Eck and Cohen are most productively understood as emphasizing the inevitable and necessary distinctions between the goals, processes, and ethical commitments involved with robust academic knowledge production and those involved with, say, journalistic reporting, rapid provision of life-saving aid, community advocacy, or the pursuit of a political platform (even if some methodologies might *partially* combine them, like participant action research). Additionally, dual-hatting surfaces questions about when the scholar and any assistants, translators, or fixers are bound by academic ethics, such as those surrounding consent and confidentiality, and when they are subject to rules governing, for example, U.S. government employees' conduct (like in the case of active duty military) or journalistic norms. Moreover, dual-hatting can place scholars and those assisting them at increased suspicion of working for intelligence agencies.[26]

While plenty of scholars have dual-hatted in transparent, ethical, and intellectually productive ways, dual-hatting has had tragic consequences. For example, Johns Hopkins University political science student Nicole Suveges was killed in an insurgent attack while working as a civilian U.S. Army contractor for BAE (British Aerospace) systems under the HTS program, a U.S. government program that hired scholars with regional and cultural expertise to work on the ground alongside U.S. troops. She was simultaneously conducting dissertation research in Iraq, including by collecting public opinion data.[27]

It is worth asking whether Suveges would have been in the setting where she was killed without the access that dual-hatting provided and the professional incentives for "policy-relevant" work on U.S.-occupied Iraq at the time. A second, extremely relevant question is how her job with BAE systems and the U.S. military affected her positionality with relation to the field and the Iraqi population, as well as her ethical commitments. Third, it is worth contemplating how Suveges's approach, should she have lived, might have incentivized other scholars to undertake similar behaviors.

This example does not mean that dual-hatting should be universally prohibited or disincentivized. Rather, it encourages faculty mentors, departments, and others in the discipline as well as the policy world to pose critical questions about these relationships and their products. How does a dual-hat role shift the researcher's positionality and vulnerability, as well as those of their participants, facilitators, and others around them (for instance, if a government targets a researcher for applied human rights work or critical journalism)? How might research participants react to and modulate their interactions with a scholar who is simultaneously consulting with a European or North American government agency, the United Nations, or an aid-providing NGO? Which institutional entity is responsible for a researcher's safety if they are working as both a graduate student and a think tank consultant? What does it mean for nonuniversity entities to piggyback scholars' access on research visas and support from grant funding or, conversely,

for graduate programs to rely on students supporting themselves financially via dual-hatting due to a lack of sufficient resources?

The legal-securitization model (LSM) centers on research bureaucracy: risk assessments, university permissions, research visas, and formal ethics approvals. Some of this bureaucracy (such as IRB approval in the United States) is legally mandated, though its permissiveness and enforcement can vary from university to university. Therefore, some researchers may gain permission to engage in data generation activities such as interviewing Rwandan prisoners while others are denied.[28] One of the key tenets of the LSM is that risks and ethical considerations can be known and mitigated in advance. A second is that as long as scholars check the appropriate boxes, the research is deemed appropriate and ethical. A third is that scholars are equal and interchangeable, rather than embodying distinct positionalities and possessing individual skill sets. The rules and risks apply to all researchers and all projects, regardless of, for example, gender or citizenship. I argue that the LSM is problematic because it encourages box-checking, the exotification and securitization of "the field," and a view of "the field" as a space that can be contained and managed. Mentors who operate through this model teach mentees that as long as they can gain ethical approval and demonstrate to a university risk assessment committee (and, sometimes, a contracted insurance provider) that a location is sufficiently "safe," it is ripe for research. At the level of university administration, the LSM focuses on both intensive preplanning and devolving accountability solely to the researcher or mentor when things go wrong.

This is not to say that safety is not a serious issue for researchers. Among graduate students who conducted international fieldwork, 58 percent of women and 47 percent of men reported experiencing safety issues while conducting their research.[29] Yet approaches to negotiating researcher safety tend to be procedural rather than holistic. At the university level, there is at least some recognition of potential risks to scholars, though this is often liability-oriented rather than cognizant of the broader politics of academic freedom and repression.[30] However, Schwartz and Cronin-Furman underscore that, at the department level, "nearly three-quarters (72.6%) of our graduate student respondents who had conducted fieldwork reported that their advisor had not asked them what kind of health and safety measures they had put in place."[31]

Of top-ten programs in political science, anthropology, and public health – disciplines that are among those most likely to have international fieldwork embedded in doctoral tracks – most have at least some restrictions on fieldwork travel.[32] These are usually institutional approvals for locations deemed "risky" or the sign-off of a regional expert. Princeton University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Vanderbilt University, Indiana University, and the University of No-

tre Dame ban student research in specific countries. By contrast, Stanford University has almost no restrictions on graduate student or faculty travel, though the university, in its words,

> strongly recommends against, but does not prohibit, travel to countries where the International SOS risk rating (either the medical risk or travel risk) is "High" or "Extreme," or where there is other reliable information of significant health or safety risks for either the country destination, or for the particular region or location of intended travel within the country destination, or where there is other reliable information of significant health or safety risks.…The University reserves the right to require the execution of an appropriate release or waiver before permitting such travel.[33]

This recommendation begs the question: What is the source of such risk ratings? Universities generally obtain them from government agencies or private companies (such as International SOS). Harvard University, Princeton University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Chicago, for example, all cite the U.S. Department of State as a source for risk assessments. Several questions arise: For whom are these risk ratings generated? What is their goal?

Safety for both researchers and participants is contingent, relational, and intersectional, despite institutions' attempts to quantify and rank risk.[34] A country might be deemed "safe" for research, with no attention to *what* research is planned and *who* is conducting it. Because some institutions rely upon U.S. Department of State or UK Foreign Office country risk assessments, situations have consequently arisen in which a student of Middle Eastern heritage who normally resides in a Middle Eastern or North African country is informed that said country is "too dangerous" to visit based on Department of State threat coding, rather than an evaluation of relevant on-the-ground dynamics and the proposed research.[35] It bears saying that there is likely a substantial difference in risk between a project that examines youth participation in recreational activities versus one focused on the clandestine dynamics of illicit markets. There is also a difference between a scholar who speaks a local language, is familiar with the spaces in which they will be working, and has considerable social resources on the ground, versus one who has never lived in that country. And as political scientist Jillian Schwedler's work argues, assumptions about gender-based vulnerabilities often do not hold on the ground, where researchers are interpolated through local understandings of their presentation and role.[36]

The LSM privileges rule-following and adherence to the letter of the law regardless of context specificity. Perversely, this commitment can bring it into tension with ethical considerations. For example, when conducting team research in the Great Lakes region of Africa, my home ethics board required our team to obtain local ethical approval for interviews with journalists. The

country in question is known for persecuting journalists. However, the flagship public university would not permit the research team to use oral consent (despite the home university approving it), instead requiring signed, identifiable consent forms from all journalists who were to be interviewed. The research thus could not ethically be conducted in country, given the small interview sample, the university's ability to review the documentation, and political interest in the research population. For other studies, however, signed consent forms might have been entirely appropriate given, for example, histories of exploitative medical research in the region.[37]

In contrast, in a particularly poignant set of examples of the pitfalls of the LSM, colleagues, research assistants, and translators have written any number of pieces regarding the ethical violations their colleagues or employers from the Global North have committed, often while inhabiting a direct mentorship role.[38] For example, Moe Ali Nayel, a Lebanese researcher and journalist, published an account of a Harvard researcher who was conducting research on Syrian refugees in the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon with two students in tow. Nayel writes about the research team arriving to interview a woman who had recently fled Syria, relating how the local research assistant emphasized to the team that the woman's son had been wounded and added "I hope you'll be able to help the poor woman."[39] Nayel relays how the faculty member, upon reaching the refugee's house, emphasized to her students: "We are not here to talk about her son." When people in the house lit cigarettes, "the Harvard team coughed and complained [and] the cigarettes were politely put out."

Nayel presents the continuing set of interactions as a case study of researcher callousness and lack of contextual awareness. He writes of one of the students:

> Her human rights kit was out: a long list of questions laid out, voice recorder turned on and set on the coffee table, different color markers deployed, a bundle of papers next to us on the couch. The student organized her tools, gave a nod to the professor and the round of human rights questioning started. Her quick-fire questions started with the basics: name, age, marital status, number of children and place of residency in Syria. Human rights documentation training was now in action.

Nayel continues, emphasizing first how the student demanded the interviewee put out her cigarette:

> The persistent human rights student, here only to conduct her by-the-book interview in the presence of her evaluating professor, continued with her tiring and condescending questioning.

Despite the dehumanizing and insensitive way in which this interview was conducted, it may not have "technically" violated ethical protocols. There is evidence of coercive dynamics, as several people involved in the interaction seem

to expect that the research team would be able to help the woman and her son, a long-recognized challenge for researchers operating in crisis-affected spaces.[40] But despite the lack of respect for persons embodied in the interaction, it is entirely possible that the professor and her students did nothing that an IRB would consider to be grave violations of the tenets of their ethical review unless the interviewees reported it as such. Indeed, the direct, no-tangents-allowed questioning style Nayel describes closely hews toward common approaches to interviewing/deposing in the legal world.

IRBs and other ethics approval processes often do not address the framing of the study, whether the proposed site or population experiences overresearch, or the ethical nature of the project's questions; they are predominantly concerned with whether the research team itself might do harm via the application of the research protocol. As Findley, Ghosn, and Lowe note, IRBs regularly approve research on questions regarding the efficacy of regimes deploying fear or lethal violence, without passing judgment on whether those are questions that *ought to be asked in the first place*.[41] In a different vein, political scientists Daniel Masterson and Lama Mourad note that some populations' vulnerability make them more easily accessible than others, meaning that their very "research-ability" is derived from characteristics that should engender particular care as well as commitments to beneficence that go beyond "do no harm."[42] However, the LSM and scholars in this practice may present this extra care or attention to context as optional (or "too political") rather than as an inherent responsibility.

The Procrustean design model (PDM) deliberately excises history and context as an expedient way to make populations, groups, or cases "fit" a specific research design.[43] PDM projects do the following:

1. Ignore, omit, exclude, or gloss basic aspects of history and context in design, coding, and/or analysis;
2. Treat history and context as inconveniences to be neutralized by research design or written off as random error, rather than as opportunities to be negotiated with innovative research design and acknowledged in the write-up;
3. Approach research sites as sterile, enclosed laboratories where each research intervention is discrete, independent, and unaffected by others and isolated from ongoing politics, rather than as complex, living communities and political spaces.

To be clear, there are vibrant and necessary disputes about infinite aspects of historical record and differences in how people experience and understand on-the-ground context. There are also different ways to incorporate the historical record, context, and researcher positionality into diverse epistemological and methodological traditions.[44] PDM scholarship is not, however, engaged with or

in them. By contrast, the PDM is detached and even dismissive of history and context. At best, it suffers from myriad issues including bias, data truncation, misinformation, and invalid findings. For example, PDM scholarship might look like a field experiment that researchers claim to have carried out with an incentive that the recipient population would not want or that would obviously endanger said population (for example, via easy de-anonymization or overwhelming risk). Or it might take the form of a survey that uses languages, categories, or questions that do not translate smoothly or accurately into local context or language, inducing nonresponses or preference falsification.[45]

PDM scholarship in the form of historical natural experiments as well as other forms of design-based inference has generated increasing critique, especially because it often relies on "thin or sometimes inaccurate historical evidence."[46] Following a proliferation of articles claiming that social/historical processes generated an "as-if-random" treatment appropriate for estimation, responses emphasized that said processes were demonstrably not random.[47] Indeed, some work in this vein is ahistorical to the point of absurdity. Political scientist Ajay Verghese argues that the results of such studies often produced inaccurate history, violated design assumptions, omitted variable bias, and demonstrated other measurement issues.[48] These works might generate productive discussion regarding the nature of causal inference.[49] However, conclusions based on ahistorical and biased data contribute to low-quality future hypotheses, theorization, and conceptualization, which ripple through future work, lowering its overall quality and producing flawed conclusions as well as reflecting poor historiography.[50]

PDM projects' problematic nature has particularly acute effects on the validity of research on identity and ideology. A PDM project might involve grouping populations by ethnic, racial, religious, or sectarian labels that they would not themselves choose (such as "Christian" and "Muslim") in ways that paper over historically relevant and analytically salient identities (like "Assyrian" or "Shabak"), that misrepresent doctrinal traditions (for instance, incorrectly labeling Yazidis as "Muslim" or confusing Zaydis with Twelver Shiʿas), or that conflate members' individual religious identities with an organization's stated ideology. Scholarship on topics such as religion and sectarianism in the Middle East and North Africa routinely ignore longstanding political traditions of leftist, secular, and antisectarian identification and organizing (for example, by not incorporating a nonreligious ideological treatment or survey answer alongside doctrinally inflected prompts or identity categories).[51]

These practices can result in, for example, questionable sampling protocols, omitted variable bias, conceptual stretching, and misaggregation of data, all of which affect data quality and analysis while potentially perpetrating epistemic violence. The aggregate effect in some research is an ecological inference prob-

lem, where a glossing or omission of the historical record brings the validity of individual observations and aggregate trend analysis into question. The Minorities at Risk Organizational Behavior (MAROB) Middle East 1980–2004 dataset, for instance, codes the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) as representing "Shi'is" since its founding in 1934.[52] However, historian Hanna Batatu, a foundational source on Iraqi politics and society, extensively documents the party's cross-sectarian and multiethnic leadership, which included noteworthy percentages of Christians, Jews, and Kurds in addition to Sunni and Shiʿa Arabs.[53] Political scientist Shamiran Mako describes the ICP as "the most ethnically cross-cutting oppositional coalition force with the highest mobilization capacity among Shiʿa-Arabs, Assyrians, Kurds, and Jews," and emphasizes that "the egalitarian principles of the ICP enabled working class Iraqis to join anti-government opposition and uprisings in response to increasing cost of living in the 1940s and 1950s."[54] Ahistorical coding choices that erase the diversity of membership and ideological foundations of parties like the ICP promulgate the false notion that Iraqi political organizations are inherently and exclusively sectarian, consequently masking key empirical questions about, for example, the sectarianization of Iraqi politics.

Elsewhere, assumptions of the primacy of ethnicity, religiosity, and sectarianism in group behavior, as well as a practice of confusing organizational forms in counting armed groups, are problematic for empirical analyses of armed group behavior. Two immediate issues are manifest: 1) ontological confusion is cemented in coding strategies and practices (and even further through publication and dissemination) and 2) a disproportionate number of leftist organizations, even with comparable attributes, are omitted from analysis (a missing data issue). Though some work on militant group alliances has made clear the need to distinguish between single organizations and the fruits of intergroup cooperation, other work continues to conflate the two.[55] The Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) dataset provides one example: the authors describe the project as coding attributes of "rebel group organizations," yet include in their final accounting highly institutionalized proto–state apparatuses such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) along with its constituent member organizations (like Fatah or the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which are nonstate armed groups), intergroup alliances such as the Palestinian Rejectionist Front, as well as the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the same dataset.[56] This "counting" issue is compounded by the well-documented problem of systematically missing data on smaller organizations. Excluding smaller leftist and Ba`thist parties from datasets, especially when Islamist organizations such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad are included, forwards (neo)Orientalist assumptions regarding the salience of religious identities and ideologies in the Middle East, erases the historical role of leftist and nonsectarian organizations in regional politics, and contributes to myriad inference issues.[57]

The existence of these three archetypes and the recognizability of their constituent practices imply both immediate and long-term actions that scholars can take in response. In line with Rodehau-Noack, Schwartz, and Broache's findings, reviewers should regularly push for more detailed, holistic descriptions of projects' ethical orientation and practice rather than fly-by mentions of an ethical certification.[58] This approach would also provide space for scholars working in university systems without such reviews to demonstrate their own commitment to ethical procedures. Scholars' treatment of history and context should be evaluated as a culmination of expressly methodological choices that affect the validity of data and analysis. For any historically oriented manuscript or dataset, reviewers, editorial assistants, and editors should check for relevant historical citations and closely evaluate coding decisions, with attention to whether relevant non-English languages and sources have been employed. For such projects, editors should assign at least one reviewer with substantial background in relevant regional or national history. Journals' editorial boards should directly ask submitting authors about their employment of nonauthor research assistants, translators, and fixers, and require disclosure of their roles. Reviewers should also critically note the existence of sensationalist and other problematic language in articles.

There are also more substantial changes that scholars can make to their own practice and to encourage positive evolution of others'. Scholars, particularly those in mentorship or hiring positions, should actively seek to disincentivize dangerous fieldwork for its own sake. When presented with scholarship (at any stage) that incorporates fieldwork in fragile and violence-affected contexts, scholars should pose constructive questions about its motivation, ethics, and expected payoff (especially to affected populations). Doctoral programs should invest in more comprehensive fieldwork training.[59] Mentors should deliberately talk through early-career researchers' positionality, safety and health plans, and ethical commitments; they can benefit from extant resources such as the mentoring checklist produced by the Research Ethics in the Middle East and North Africa Project, as well as collections such as the Advancing Research on Conflict bibliography. Scholars who plan to engage in dual-hatting should complete comprehensive ethics evaluations that account for their dual-hat positionality and how their nonacademic roles might interact with their academic ones, especially when it comes to effects on research participants and facilitators. When dual-hatting could affect participant consent or well-being, researchers should either disclose or rethink their approach. This is an extension of practices already encouraged by programs such as Bridging the Gap, which include scholars developing peer-consulting networks for ethical practice.

These recommendations could conceivably slow research processes and publication timelines, which is one of the primary critiques their advocates have

previously faced. Yet much of the research discussed here would not have been published if the expectations and support for researchers, editors, and reviewers were of an appropriate caliber. If the options are high-quality, valid, ethical, safe research versus fast, invalid, and unethical research, the choice should be obvious: incentives must change. Pursuing such a tack would require an express embrace of shifting priorities and an active reorientation of standards within departments, within journals, and across disciplinary institutions. This challenge presents a clear collective action problem within our professional community, but one that needs to be confronted if social science research is to be taken seriously both within academia and beyond it.

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ENDNOTES

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Methodological Pluralism in Political Science, ed. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Dino P. Christenson, and Valeria Sinclair-Chapman (Oxford University Press, 2024).

[4] Elisabeth Jean Wood, "The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones," *Qualitative Sociology* 29 (2006): 373–386, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-006-9027-8; Lee Ann Fujii, "Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45 (3) (2012): 717–723, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096512000819; Susanna P. Campbell, "Ethics of Research in Conflict Environments," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 2 (1) (2017): 89–101, https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogw024; Jannis J. Grimm, Kevin Koehler, Ellen M. Lust, Ilyas Saliba, and Isabell Schierenbeck, *Safer Field Research in the Social Sciences: A Guide to Human and Digital Security in Hostile Environments* (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2020); Michael G. Findley, Faten Ghosn, and Sara Lowe, "Vulnerability in Research Ethics: A Call for Assessing Vulnerability and Implementing Protections," *PNAS* 121 (34) (2024): e2322821121, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2322821121; Teresa Macías, "Between Violence and Its Representation: Ethics, Archival Research, and the Politics of Knowledge Production in the Telling of Torture Stories," *Intersectionalities: A Global Journal of Social Work Analysis, Research, Polity, and Practice* 5 (1) (2016): 20, https://doi.org/10.48336/IJNKRS1029; Jelena Subotić, "Ethics of Archival Research on Political Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 58 (3) (2020): 342–354, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319898735; Aliza Luft, "How Do You Repair a Broken World? Conflict(ing) Archives after the Holocaust," *Qualitative Sociology* 43 (2020): 317–343, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-020-09458-9; Casey Fiesler and Nicholas Proferes, "'Participant' Perceptions of Twitter Research Ethics," *Social Media + Society* 4 (1) (2018), https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118763366; Jannis J. Grimm, "The Mixed Blessing of Digital Fieldwork: Digital Security and Ethical Dilemmas of Remote Research During and After the Pandemic," *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 20 (2) (2022): 21–25; and Amelia Hoover Green and Dara Kay Cohen, "Centering Human Subjects: The Ethics of 'Desk Research' on Political Violence," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 29 (2) (2021), https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa029.

[5] Kathleen M. Blee and Ashley Currier, "Ethics Beyond the IRB: An Introductory Essay," *Qualitative Sociology* 34 (3) (2011): 401–413, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-011-9195-z; Jihad Makhoul, Leila El-Alti, Yara Qutteina, et al., "'Protecting' or 'Policing': Academic Researchers' View of IRBs in an Arab Context," *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics* 9 (5) (2014): 25–35, https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264614553170; Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, "Reforming Institutional Review Board Policy: Issues in Implementation and Field Research," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 41 (3) (2008): 483–494, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096508080864; Melissa R. Michelson, "The Risk of Over-Reliance on the Institutional Review Board: An Approved Project Is Not Always an Ethical Project," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49 (2) (2016): 299–303, https://doi.org/10.1017/S104909651600024X (accessed April 1, 2016); and Charles L. Bosk and Raymond G. De Vries, "Bureaucracies of Mass Deception: Institutional Review Boards and the Ethics of Ethnographic Research," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 595 (1) (2004): 249–263, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716204266913.

[6] Yolande Bouka, "Collaborative Research as Structural Violence," Political Violence at a Glance, July 12, 2018, https://worldpece.org/sites/default/files/artifacts/media/pdf/collaborative_research_as_structural_violence_-_political_violence_at_a_glance.pdf; Yolande Bouka, "Considering Power Imbalances in Collaborative Research," Rift Valley Institute, May 15, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20190519075424/https://riftvalley.net/news/considering-power-imbalances-collaborative-research#.Xi4b6RNKgb3;

Aymar Nyenyezi Bisoka, "Disturbing the Aesthetics of Power: Why COVID-19 Is Not an 'Event' for Fieldwork-Based Social Scientists," *Items*, May 28, 2020, https://items.ssrc.org/covid-19-and-the-social-sciences/social-research-and-insecurity/disturbing-the-aesthetics-of-power-why-covid-19-is-not-an-event-for-fieldwork-based-social-scientists; David Mwambari, "Africa's Next Decolonisation Battle Should Be about Knowledge," Al Jazeera, September 6, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/africa-decolonisation-battle-knowledge-190906074211760.html; David Mwambari, "Local Positionality in the Production of Knowledge in Northern Uganda," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919864845; Kate Cronin-Furman and Milli Lake, "Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in Fragile and Violent Contexts," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51 (3) (2018): 1–8, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518000379; Mayssoun Sukarieh and Stuart Tannock, "Subcontracting Academia: Alienation, Exploitation and Disillusionment in the UK Overseas Syrian Refugee Research Industry," *Antipode* 51 (2) (2019): 664–680, https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12502; Swati Parashar, "Research Brokers, Researcher Identities and Affective Performances: The Insider/Outsider Conundrum," *Civil Wars* 21 (2) (2019): 249–270, https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2019.1634304; Maria Eriksson Baaz and Mats Utas, "Exploring the Backstage: Methodological and Ethical Issues Surrounding the Role of Research Brokers in Insecure Zones," *Civil Wars* 21 (2) (2019): 157–178, https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2019.1656357; and Schwedler and Chomiak, "Seeing Like a Fixer."

[7] Johanna Rodehau-Noack, Stephanie Schwartz, and M. P. Broache, "Do Ethics Matter to Researchers? Introducing the Ethics References in Conflict Studies (ERICS) Dataset," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 9 (3) (2024), https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogae027.

[8] Findley, Ghosn, and Lowe, "Vulnerability in Research Ethics"; Alan M. Jacobs, Tim Buthe, Ana M. Arjona, et al., "The Qualitative Transparency Deliberations: Insights and Implications," *Perspectives on Politics* 19 (1) (2021): 171–208; and Sarah E. Parkinson and Dina Zayed, "Reflexive Advising: Engaged Mentorship for Safe and Ethical Research Practice," *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 20 (2) (2022): 38–42.

[9] Schwartz and Cronin-Furman, "Ill-Prepared."

[10] Grimm, Koehler, Lust, et al., *Safer Field Research in the Social Sciences*; and Alan M. Jacobs, Tim Büthe, Ana Arjona, et al., "The Qualitative Transparency Deliberations: Insights and Implications," *Perspectives on Politics* 19 (1) (2021): 171–208.

[11] Indiana Jones is the fictional protagonist of a series of films that follows a rogue archaeology professor from University of Chicago on his global exploits, focusing on the Middle East and South Asia and originally set in the 1930s and 1940s. Proficient with weaponry such as a pistol and a bullwhip, Jones contracts for public and private entities including the U.S. government, Chinese crime syndicates, and private art collectors. Jones is portrayed as brash, daring, and sexually desirable.

[12] Maximilian C. Forte, "The Human Terrain System and Anthropology: A Review of Ongoing Public Debates," *American Anthropologist* 113 (1) (2011): 149–153, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2010.01315.x.

[13] A finding noted by Rachel Douglas-Jones et al. as well as Schwartz and Cronin-Furman. See Rachel Douglas-Jones, Nayanika Mathur, Catherine Trundle, and Tarapuhi Vaeau, "Trial by Fire: Trauma, Vulnerability and the Heroics of Fieldwork," *Commoning Ethnography* 3 (1) (2020): 91–116, https://doi.org/10.26686/ce.v3i1.6650; and Schwartz and Cronin-Furman, "Ill-Prepared," 5.

[14] Rebecca V. Bell-Martin and Jerome F. Marston Jr., "Confronting Selection Bias: The Normative and Empirical Risks of Data Collection in Violent Contexts," *Geopolitics* 26 (1) (2021): 159–192, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2019.1659780; Romain Malejacq and Dipali Mukhopadhyay, "The 'Tribal Politics' of Field Research: A Reflection on Power and Partiality in 21st-Century Warzones," *Perspectives on Politics* 14 (4) (2016): 1011–1028, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002899; and Sarah E. Parkinson, "(Dis)courtesy Bias: 'Methodological Cognates,' Data Validity, and Ethics in Violence-Adjacent Research," *Comparative Political Studies* 55 (3) (2022): 420–450, https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140211024309.

[15] For example, many scholars do not apply for or accept U.S. government funding via programs such as Minerva (U.S. Department of Defense) or Fulbright (U.S. Department of Education), given the ways research participants or governments might view them and the subsequent effects on data generation and safety. Suspicions surrounding U.S. government-provided research funding have been amplified by scandals such as a 2008 incident in which a U.S. embassy official in Bolivia asked a Fulbright scholar to engage in intelligence collection. See Monica Campbell, "Fulbright Scholar Says He Was Asked to Spy While in Bolivia," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 22, 2008, https://www.chronicle.com/article/fulbright-scholar-says-he-was-asked-to-spy-while-in-bolivia. The Bolivian government subsequently refused visas to scholars associated with the Fulbright program. Author correspondence with affected scholar, June 2024. See also "The Minerva Controversy" collection, *Items*, October 9, 2008, https://items.ssrc.org/category/the-minerva-controversy.

[16] Political scientist Ronay Bakan has noted that some scholars have weaponized critiques of the IRB to avoid completing ethics reviews entirely.

[17] Some researchers have dodged strict home university ethical standards by relying on coauthors at institutions with less stringent processes to provide IRB documentation. Not all reviewers or journal editors are necessarily familiar with the intricacies of IRB procedures or the requirements for different types of projects. They consequently may count the provision of any IRB approval, even an insufficient one, as satisfying a journal's documentation requirements and checking a box. Verification that submitting authors pursued correct approval processes would require increased expertise and more labor by journal editors and assistants, who often serve on a voluntary basis.

[18] Milli Lake and Sarah E. Parkinson, "The Ethics of Fieldwork Preparedness," *Political Violence @ a Glance*, June 5, 2017, http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2017/06/05/the-ethics-of-fieldwork-preparedness.

[19] Schwartz and Cronin-Furman, "Ill-Prepared," 2; Cronin-Furman and Lake, "Ethics Abroad"; and Mwambari, "Local Positionality in the Production of Knowledge in Northern Uganda."

[20] Lake and Parkinson, "The Ethics of Fieldwork Preparedness."

[21] Interview with Nadia, May 2019.

[22] Scholars associated with the Bridging the Gap Program at the University of Denver have spearheaded efforts to platform what they term "responsible engagement."

[23] Programs such as the Responsible Public Engagement effort at the University of Denver's Sié Center, the Institute for Civically-Engaged Research (run through the American Political Science Association), and Advancing Research on Conflict all work to spotlight and facilitate ethical approaches to engagement via dual-hatting.

[24] Findley, Ghosn, and Lowe, "Vulnerability in Research Ethics," 6.

[25] Kristine Eck and Dara Kay Cohen, "Time for a Change: The Ethics of Student-Led Human Subjects Research on Political Violence," *Third World Quarterly* 42 (4) (2020): 855–866, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1864215.

[26] Jesse Driscoll and Caroline Schuster, "Spies like Us," *Ethnography* 19 (3) (2017): 411–430, https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138117711717.

[27] Joe Sterling, "American Grad Student Dies in Iraq," CNN, June 26, 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20150531042858/http://edition.cnn.com/2008/world/meast/06/26/iraq.american.death. See also Office of News and Information, "Johns Hopkins Graduate Student Killed in Iraq," Headlines@Hopkins, June 26, 2008, https://pages.jh.edu/news_info/news/home08/jun08/nicole.html.

[28] Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Cornell University Press, 2009). See also Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Cornell University Press, 2005).

[29] Schwartz and Cronin-Furman, "Ill-Prepared," 4. Such an approach to risk also stigmatizes the non-North American and non-European countries. Safety issues are also pervasive on campuses. For example, researchers have found that 61.7 percent of female graduate students and 38.3 percent of male graduate students have experienced sexual harassment. See Marina N. Rosenthal, Alec M. Smidt, and Jennifer J. Freyd, "Still Second Class: Sexual Harassment of Graduate Students," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 40 (3) (2016): 364–377, https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684316644838.

[30] Jannis J. Grimm and Ilyas Saliba, "Free Research in Fearful Times: Conceptualizing an Index to Monitor Academic Freedom," *Interdisciplinary Political Studies* 3 (1) (2017): 41–75, http://siba-ese.unisalento.it/index.php/idps/article/view/17312.

[31] Schwartz and Cronin-Furman, "Ill-Prepared," 5.

[32] Original data collected from university websites in spring 2024.

[33] "Update to International Travel Policy," Stanford Report, February 11, 2022, https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2022/02/update-international-travel-policy.

[34] Grimm, Lust, Koehler, et al., "Back to Field"; Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay, "The 'Tribal Politics' of Field Research"; and Eleanor Knott, "Beyond the Field: Ethics after Fieldwork in Politically Dynamic Contexts," *Perspectives on Politics* 17 (1) (2019): 140–153, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592718002116.

[35] Example is from the author's personal experience.

[36] Jillian Schwedler, "The Third Gender: Western Female Researchers in the Middle East," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39 (3) (2006): 425–428, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ps-political-science-and-politics/article/abs/third-gender-western-female-researchers-in-the-middle-east/99FCD978B7E75C02D27F245BC00A6793.

[37] Joseph Ochieng, Erisa Mwaka, Betty Kwagala, and Nelson Sewankambo, "Evolution of Research Ethics in a Low Resource Setting: A Case for Uganda," *Developing World Bioethics* 20 (1) (2020): 50–60, https://doi.org/10.1111/dewb.12198.

[38] Mwambari, "Local Positionality in the Production of Knowledge in Northern Uganda"; and Karen M. Devries, Jennifer C. Child, Diana Elbourne, et al., "'I Never Expected That It Would Happen, Coming to Ask Me Such Questions': Ethical Aspects of Asking

Children about Violence in Resource Poor Settings," *Trials* 16 (1) (2016), https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-015-1004-7.

[39] Moe Ali Nayel, "Palestinian Refugees Are Not at Your Service," *The Electronic Intifada*, May 19, 2013, http://electronicintifada.net/content/palestinian-refugees-are-not-your-service/12464.

[40] Chloé Lewis, Alfred Banga, Ghislain Cimanuka, et al., "Walking the Line: Brokering Humanitarian Identities in Conflict Research," *Civil Wars* 21 (2) (2019): 200–227, https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2019.1619154; and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Ethnographic Research in the Shadow of Civil War," *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 31–50.

[41] Findley, Ghosn, and Lowe, "Vulnerability in Research Ethics," 2.

[42] Masterson and Mourad, "The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in the Syrian Refugee Crisis."

[43] I thank Lisa Anderson for suggesting this wording.

[44] For example, see Kai Thaler's and Kanisha Bond's writings on reflexivity in positivist research. Kai M. Thaler, "Reflexivity and Temporality in Researching Violent Settings: Problems with the Replicability and Transparency Regime," *Geopolitics* 26 (1) (2019): 1–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2019.1643721; and Kanisha D. Bond, "Reflexivity and Revelation," *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 16 (1) (2018): 45–47, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2562284. For an example of incorporating ongoing events into positivist research by shifting research design in the field, see Laia Balcells and Gerard Torrats-Espinosa, "Using a Natural Experiment to Estimate the Electoral Consequences of Terrorist Attacks," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115 (42) (2018): 10624–10629, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1800302115.

[45] Hakeem Jefferson, "The Curious Case of Black Conservatives: Assessing the Validity of the Liberal-Conservative Scale among Black Americans," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 88 (3) (2024): 909–932; Ammar Shamaileh, "The Elephant in Our Analyses: Sensitivity Bias and Survey Research in the Middle East and North Africa," *APSA MENA Politics Newsletter* 4 (2) (2021); and Ammar Shamaileh, "On the Measurement of Preference Falsification Using Nonresponse Rates," *Political Science Research and Methods* (2024): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2024.29. For Schwedler and Chomiak's discussion of the (mis) application of the terms *wasta, samsara, piston,* and *ktif* in Tunisia, see Schwedler and Chomiak, "Seeing Like a Fixer."

[46] David A. Bateman and Dawn Langan Teele, "A Developmental Approach to Historical Causal Inference," *Public Choice* 185 (3) (2020): 253–279, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-019-00713-4. For "thin or sometimes inaccurate historical evidence," see Ajay Verghese, "Randomized Controlled History?" SSRN (2024), 3, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4696790.

[47] Two studies that claim that social/historical processes generated an "as-if-random" treatment: Jeremy Ferwerda and Nicholas L. Miller, "Political Devolution and Resistance to Foreign Rule: A Natural Experiment," *American Political Science Review* 108 (3) (2014): 642–660, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000240; and Jason Lyall, "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53 (3) (2009): 331–362, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708330881. Two studies that extensively critiqued the as-if-random claim and related conclusions: Matthew A. Kocher and Nuno P. Monteiro, "Lines of Demarcation: Causation, Design-Based Inference, and Historical Research," *Perspectives on Politics* 14 (4) (2016):

952–975, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002863; and Emil Aslan Souleimanov and David S. Siroky, "Random or Retributive?: Indiscriminate Violence in the Chechen Wars," *World Politics* 68 (4) (2016): 677–712, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887116000101.

[48] Verghese, "Randomized Controlled History?" 3.

[49] Ibid.

[50] On the subject of lowered quality and flawed conclusions, see Sherry Zaks, "Do We Know It When We See It? (Re)-Conceptualizing Rebel-to-Party Transition," *Journal of Peace Research* 61 (2) (2024): 246–262, https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221123358. On responsible historiography, see Ian S. Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *The American Political Science Review* 90 (3) (1996): 605–618, https://doi.org/10.2307/2082612.

[51] For a discussion of the epistemic violence and historiographic issues associated with terming Assyrians as "Iraqi Christians," see Sargon Donabed, "Rethinking Nationalism and an Appellative Conundrum: Historiography and Politics in Iraq," *National Identities* 14 (2) (2012): 115–138, https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2011.646973; and Sargon Donabed, "The Existential Threat of Academic Bias: The Institutionalization of Anti-Assyrian Rhetoric," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 54 (3) (2022): 547–553, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743822000770. For a discussion of how intersectionality is improperly treated in quantitative work on identity, see Kanisha Bond, "Intersectionality Is Not an Error Term," unpublished manuscript, 2024. For a discussion of the problematic and politicized conflation of Zaydis with Twelver Shiʿas, see Anna Gordon and Sarah E. Parkinson, "How the Houthis became 'Shiʿa,'" *Middle East Research and Information Project* 27 (2018). Notably, a "positive" antisectarian affiliation is ideologically and politically distinct from a "no sectarian affiliation" response in these contexts. For extensive discussion of overlapping modes of sectarian affiliation and on antisectarian politics in Lebanon, see Maya Mikdashi, *Sextarianism: Sovereignty, Secularism, and the State in Lebanon* (Stanford University Press, 2022); and Rima Majed, "For a Sociology of Sectarianism: Bridging the Disciplinary Gaps beyond the 'Deeply Divided Societies' Paradigm," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of the Middle East*, ed. Armando Salvatore, Sari Hanafi, and Kieko Obuse (Oxford University Press, 2020).

[52] Jonathan Wilkenfeld, Victor Asal, and Amy Pate, "Minorities at Risk Organizational Behavior (MAROB) Middle East, 1980–2004," https://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/15973 (accessed August 20, 2018).

[53] For membership summary statistics see Hanna Batatu, "Appendix 2," in *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers* (Princeton University Press, 1978), 1178, 1190–1192.

[54] Shamiran Mako, *Structuring Exclusion: Institutions, Grievances and Ethnic State Capture in Iraq* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming), chap. 4.

[55] Navin A. Bapat and Kanisha Bond, "Alliances Between Militant Groups," *British Journal of Political Science* 42 (4) (2012): 793–824.

[56] Jessica Maves Braithwaite and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, "When Organizations Rebel: Introducing the Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) Dataset," *International Studies Quarterly* 64 (1) (2020): 183–193, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz085. The PLO was founded in 1969 in Jerusalem as an umbrella organization of which guerrilla organizations such as Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

(PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) were among the constituent members. However, the PLO also incorporated the Palestinian National Council and popular organizations such as the General Union of Palestinian Women. A party such as Fatah is thus not conceptually the same as the PLO. The Rejectionist Front consisted of the PFLP, the DFLP, the Arab Liberation Front, the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, al-Sai`qa, Fatah-Revolutionary Council, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). Of the groups that were members of the PLO or the Rejectionist Front, only Fatah, the PFLP, and the PFLP-GC are represented independently in FORGE. The Palestinian Authority (PA) is a civil governing authority for the Palestinian Territories that was formed following the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO. It has a police force but no military or armed wing; it is not conceptually the same as a rebel group. The Arab Nationalist Movement, from which the PFLP, DFLP, and PFLP-GC evolved, is not included in the dataset.

[57] Janet I. Lewis, "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?" *Comparative Political Studies* 50 (10) (2017): 1420–1450, https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414016672235; and Janet I. Lewis, *How Insurgency Begins: Rebel Group Formation in Uganda and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[58] Rodehau-Noack, Schwartz, and Broache, "Do Ethics Matter to Researchers?"

[59] Schwartz and Cronin-Furman, "Ill-Prepared."