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As a Research Assistant Professor at University of Pennsylvania, I have been extremely successful at winning highly competitive research grants from both federal and private donors to support advanced computational and experimental research. However, blanket terminations by the Trump administration cancelled more than $2.5 million in committed federal funding for my projects, including a prestigious Minerva grant to support interdisciplinary work on the impact of climate change on adaptation and political instability. My extensive background in experimental design, including large-scale randomized control trials and sophisticated survey experiments, as well as my demonstrated interest in research that contributes to national security, make me uniquely qualified for this position with the Intelligent Systems Division (ISD).

My academic research has been published in World Politics, Political Science Research and Methods, and International Studies Quarterly, and another article was invited to Revise and Resubmit at International Organization. I have also published 15 commissioned policy reports for the United States Institute of Peace, Agency for International Development, and Department of State. Since moving to Penn in 2022, my has research received $3.5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Defense, Agency for International Development, and Open Society Foundations.

The extensive management and external communication responsibilities associated with these large federal grants has reduced the number of articles I've published in academic journals. However, I have six articles currently under review at academic journals and four articles in the final stages of preparation for submission. I also have three original datasets that will serve as the foundation for new research projects and several ongoing research projects at earlier stages of development. Most recently, I was invited by the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) to submit my proposal for a randomized control trial testing the impact of a digital skills training intervention on economic empowerment and entrepreneurship for women in Uganda. A related proposal is currently under consideration by the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development.

My research portfolio spans comparative politics, international relations, and global development. This broader research agenda is comprised of several independent but highly related streams of work. The first stream uses cutting-edge computational tools to push the frontiers of data and analysis. As a postdoc at Duke University, I co-founded the Machine Learning for Peace project, which pioneered the use of open-source language models in social science research. Managing a team of data scientists and PhD students, I led the construction of a research infrastructure to continually update a large, highly multilingual corpus of high-quality media from 400 outlets across 65 countries and use deep learning translation models and fine-tuned transformers to extract information from text. This project's funding was renewed over seven years and attracted more than $6 million in support and has produced the first systematic data on 20 civic space events, 22 malign foreign influence events, and 16 events related to environmental conflict and adaptation.

Using the data generated by this project, I have co-authored more than a dozen policy reports, developed six public-facing data dashboards averaging 150 hours of monthly active usage time, and attracted 1,200 unique users from 73 countries to our online forecasting system over a 12 month period, with more than 800 policymakers signing up to receive our monthly reports. One manuscript introducing these datasets to the academic community is under review at an academic journal and another will be submitted in the following weeks. Another manuscript combining these datasets with temporal cross-validation to forecast armed conflict and political instability is being prepared for submission.

Another stream of work focuses on how non-governmental organizations (NGOs), characterized by diverse objectives and approaches, reshape the relationship between citizens and states, and how governments and NGOs interact and struggle over the extent of civic space. In Cambodia, I led the first RCT evaluation of an NGO capacity-building intervention, working with more than 100 CSOs over a three year period. Building on results from this project, I fielded four conjoint survey experiments across 400 NGOs in three countries to understand the strategic behavior of non-profits in highly repressive countries. This has resulting in two published policy reports, one published academic article, and another academic article currently under review.

A third stream of work focuses on citizen engagement with politics and civil society. Partnering with an Ethiopian NGO and the University of Addis Ababa, I used insights from behavioral psychology and economics to design and evaluate an intervention to increase civic engagement and social cohesion among youth in highly polarized countries. The project resulted in two manuscripts that are currently under review. The first reports findings from the impact evaluation, which presents new evidence on the importance of friendships and social ties for increasing civic participation. Importantly, this approach was highly effective even in the midst of an ongoing civil war and extreme social tension and repression. The second reports findings from a series of survey experiments that contribute to our understanding of how the distribution of political power interacts with ethnic cleavages to condition support for reforms.

I also have a strong record of teaching and public engagement. At Penn, I teach a course on data science for international development students, which helps students develop valuable experience designing and implementing original research. This course received extremely positive student reviews and provided students with polished final projects that they published to free, personalized github pages website. I also served as the academic lead developing a curriculum to introduce data science tools to USAID implementing partners seeking to graduate from subcontracts to prime award recipients and leading instruction across cohorts in Ghana, Zambia, and Mali. At UC Dublin, I hope to build on this experience to teach courses on data science and research methods, the political economy of democratic backsliding, and international institutions and foreign aid.

I am also an effective representative of university research in international forums. I have given invited talks in five countries for a range of academic audiences, including the Leibniz Center for Informatics at Schloss Dagstuhl, Vasser College, and University of Vienna, policymakers in the US Army Special Forces at Fort Liberty, the US Department of State, multiple units at the US Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and the United Nations Data Strategy Community, civil society groups, including the Paris Peace Forum and the International Center for Civil Society, among many others. My interview with Foris International was recently published in their "Civil Society Manifesto for Ethical AI,'' and in 2023, I was a member of the Advisory Group for the 3ie Civil Society Evidence Gap Map. Most recently, I served on a panel of non-profit and legal experts to advise Amnesty International on ethical issues related to non-profit governance.

As a research professor, my work has extended well beyond academic research to inform policy, build international research networks, generate data for action and research, and introduce students to advanced research tools through the lens of international relations and development. Building on this work, I believe I would be a valuable addition to the vibrant communicate at ISD. I deeply appreciate your time and consideration.