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As an applied researcher with deep experience designing, testing, and deploying evidence-based solutions to complex social problems, I am an ideal candidate to lead the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab. I have expertise managing a social science research lab, including large-scale RCT-evaluations and long-term data collection projects using webscraping and cutting-edge AI, establishing long-term collaborations with civil society organizations, communicating technical material to policy audiences and integrating research and practice, securing funding from federal and private donors, and researching polarization and extremism across diverse and challenging contexts.

Currently, I serve as Research Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of Civic Research for PDRI-DevLab. Since moving to UPenn in 2022, my has research received nearly \$3.5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Defense, Agency for International Development, and Open Society Foundations. I am a PI or co-PI on long-term projects leveraging recent advances in big data and machine learning to forecast repression and social conflict to drive a public-facing [early warning system](#), track foreign influence, model how climate factors affect environmental conflict, and I teach a [course on data science for global development](#).

I have five years of management experience in a social science research lab. On the [Machine Learning for Peace](#) project, I lead a team of three full-time data scientists, five pre-doctoral fellows, multiple affiliated faculty and PhD students, and a large pool of undergraduates. 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.

During this period, I have worked closely with civil society organizations on both digital and field-based projects. This included identifying and recruiting partners in Ethiopian civil society to co-design and rigorously evaluate an intervention to increase civic engagement and social cohesion in highly polarized settings. This resulted in a highly effective [intervention](#) that we are seeking to scale across the country. 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. Finally, I lead efforts under the [Machine Learning for Peace](#) project to design data and forecasting products that guide the response of civil society and donors to political repression.

I would be honored to serve PERIL's mission of reducing extremist violence. I am deeply alarmed by the rise of political extremism in the United States and around the world, and I am eager to employ my comparative background conducting field-based projects in polarized, conflict-affected countries including Serbia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana, and Cambodia. At DevLab, my research has focused on helping policymakers, donors, and NGOs strengthen citizen engagement and civil society to build community resilience. While my research has focused on a range of topics related to civil society, I have significant substantive background on polarization, misinformation, and extremist violence.

This includes a long-term project in Ethiopia to [reduce ethnic tensions among university students](#) and research with the University of Ghana to identify [misinformation and extremist content across](#)

radio and social media. This culminated in a survey of radio station managers representing 200 stations across the country that produced experimental evidence on the threat of misinformation. I am also lead author on a book chapter commissioned by the United States Institute of Peace, which is forthcoming in “A Positive Peace: Towards an Evidence-Based Peacebuilding.”

My past experience lends itself to developing and testing interventions aimed at preventing radicalization and violent extremism. My work conducting online survey experiments can be useful for interventions aimed at online content and my work on field-based interventions in polarized settings can help with offline content. I have worked with international and local NGOs on long-term collaborations to design and test interventions and validate measures of important outcomes. I have also been extremely successful at raising funds for applied research from federal and private donors.

In my role at PDRI-DevLab, I design and implement research to tackle complex measurement and inference challenges and generate actionable insights for policymakers. As Executive Director at Peril, I hope to build-on this background to focus specifically on extremism, which is among the most daunting and urgent challenges of our time.