

Dr. Mikael Hiberg Naghizadeh – International Security Program Postdoctoral Fellow, Belfer Center for Science & International Affairs. Harvard Kennedy School.

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Education

September 2019 – January 2023 *University of Oxford* - DPhil in International Relations (PHD)

- Thesis: *The Origins of Islamist Insurgencies: The Social-Institutional Foundations of an Ideological Shift*. The thesis develops an original theory of ideological choice to explain the micro-institutional basis for the macro-historical rise of Islamist ideology among rebel groups. The theory is substantiated through the comparative tracing of groups and regions in Somalia, Russia, Ethiopia, and Pakistan.
- *Viva Voce* successfully completed on 10. December 2022 with prof. Paul Staniland and prof. Neil Ketchley as the examiners.

September 2017 – July 2019 *University of Oxford* - MPhil in International Relations (*Distinction*).

- Thesis title: “Governance, Disorder, and the Islamic Courts: Explaining the Rise of Militant Islamism Among the Somali.”
- *Winner of the Deirdre and Paul Malone Thesis Prize in International Relations*, awarded by the International Studies Graduate Committee at the Oxford Department of Politics and IR.

September 2015 – September 2016 *London School of Economics and Political Science* - MSc International Relations (*Distinction*).

- Thesis title: “The Balance of Communities and the Shia Revival: An Eclectic Study of the Significance of the Sunni-Shi’ite Divide to the Rekindling of the Iran-Saudi Rivalry.”

January 2013 – June 2015 *University of Oslo* - Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science with Courses in History (Grade avg. A)

- Thesis: “Iran, Sanctions, and the Joint Plan of Action: A Study on the Efficacy of the 2010-2013 U.S. Sanctions Against Iran.” Recognised by faculty to be an exemplary undergraduate thesis and used as example for later students.

August 2011 – December 2012 *Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)* - Courses in Political Science (Grade avg. A) Transferred to the University of Oslo.

August 2008 – June 2011 *Levanger Videregående Skole (High School)* – Grade avg. 5.3

Employment and Other Relevant Experience

August 2024 – Present International Security Program Postdoctoral Fellow, Belfer Center for Science & International Affairs. Harvard Kennedy School.

- Research project on the Tigray War, focusing on satellite-based data collection methods, and logics of violence against civilians.

January 2024 – July 2024. Lecturer at the University of Liverpool

- Responsible for teaching the graduate-level course “The International System and Conflict,” as well as organising seminars, and designing and grading final assessments.

April 2023 – January 2024 Postdoctoral Fellow with the Minerva GSP project at the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford

- Responsible for collecting, systematizing, and analysing data on illicit global supply chains.

January 2023 – March 2023 Seminar Leader at the Blavatnik School of Government

- Taught students reading for a Masters-degree in Public Policymaking at the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford. Experience designing seminars and grading essays and exams.

May 2020 – May 2022 Analyst for DX Open/ Vigil Monitor (Part time during my DPhil-studies)

- Vigil Monitor was a non-profit Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) organisation. Tasks included predicting and anticipating new theatres of conflict, and to detect and document crimes against humanity in conflict contexts.
- January 2021- February 2021 – Certificate from the Humanitarian Geospatial Technologies Workshop at the Humanitarian Academy at Harvard.

April 2020 – December 2021 Tutor (University of Oxford)

- Tutored undergraduate students in the courses *International Security and Conflict* and *Politics of the Middle East*. This entailed organising small group seminars and supervising and giving continuous feedback and advice on students' performance in discussions and in essays.

2018 – Present Member of T.E. Lawrence Program on the Study of Conflict.

- Participant in weekly meetings and frequent presenter. Discussant for presentations by Judith Werveijen on 5. Nov. 2019, for Luis Medina on 18. February 2020, Paul Staniland 9. Dec 2022., Jerome Drevon on 17. Jan 2023, and Nelly Lahoud on 30. May 2023.

June 2018 - December 2019 Research Assistant

- Assisted Prof. Stathis Kalyvas in writing an ethics clearance application, an application to the ESRC, and preparing a monograph. Helped design reading list in a graduate level course called *Collective Political Violence*.
- Assisted Prof. Spyros Kosmidis in collecting data on European political parties.

January 2017 – July 2017 Intern at Norway's Permanent Mission to the WTO and EFTA

- Attended meetings at the WTO and to write reports which were distributed internally in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.

Awards:

- Winner of the *Deirdre and Paul Malone Thesis Prize in International Relations*, awarded by the International Studies Graduate Committee at the Oxford Department of Politics and International Relations.
- [Aker Scholarship](#), Norwegian top-talent program. Full funding for my two-year MPhil at Oxford.

Publications

- Kalyvas, Stathis, and Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg. 2025. "Islamism and Armed Conflict," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 28, 21.1-21.19.
- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg. 2025. "Why Islamism? A Micro-Institutional Approach to Explaining Ideological Choice," *Civil Wars*, 0 (0), 1-29.
- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg. 2025. "[What We Don't See: Documenting Intercommunal Violence Through Fire Data](#)," *Political Geography*, 116 (2025), 1-13.

- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg. 2024. "[The Uses for Fire Data and Satellite Images in Monitoring, Detecting, and Documenting Collective Political Violence](#)," *Research & Politics*, 11(3), 1-10.
- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg. 2022. [The Origins of Islamist Insurgencies: The Social-Institutional Foundations of an Ideological Shift](#). DPhil Dissertation.
- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg. 2019. "[Rivalry Through Proxies: How Iran and Saudi Arabia Compete for Regional Influence](#)," *St Antony's International Review* 14 (2), 137-153.
- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg. 2016. "[Sanksjoner og Irans Atomprogram](#)." [Sanctions and Iran's Nuclear Programme], *Babylon* 2 (2016): 16-28. (In Norwegian).

Ongoing Research

- Postdoctoral Project on the Logic of Violence against Civilians During the Tigray War.
- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg. *Book Manuscript*. Islamist Civil Wars: The Perils of Modernity. Proposal submitted to Cornell University Press.
- Project on violence and displacement duration in South Sudan with Andreas Tollefsen
- Overview article on remote sensing led by Valerie Sticher and Corinne Bara.

Other Written Work and Commentary

- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg and Eirik Kvindesland. 2022. "A Wavering Regime," *NRK.no* <https://www.nrk.no/ytring/et-vaklende-regime-1.16118177> (In Norwegian).
- Natasja Rupesinghe, Mikael Hiberg Naghizadeh, and Corentin Cohen. 2021. "Reviewing Jihadist Governance in the Sahel," Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), <https://nupi.brage.unit.no/nupi-xmlui/handle/11250/2758436>.
- Rupesinghe, Natasja, and Mikael Hiberg Naghizadeh. 2021. "The Sahel's jihadists don't all govern alike: context matters." *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/the-sahels-jihadists-dont-all-govern-alike-context-matters-166998>
- Naghizadeh, Mikael Hiberg, Andreas Øverlie Svella, and Henrik Schou Røising. 2019. «Quantum Technology is Security Politics --Will Norway Partake?» *Aftenposten* <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/i/jdMJ7n/kvanteteknologi-er-sikkerhetspolitikk-skal-norge-henge-med-naghizadeh-svella-og-roeising> (In Norwegian).

Presentations

- Part of the panel "Ethiopia's War in Tigray: Learning from the Past, Seeking Peace," on 30. April 2025 for the The Harvard University Center for African Studies Director's Lunch series. <https://www.youtube.com/live/7Si4S1E-umw>.
- Organized a panel at the 2025 ISA Conference in Chicago along with prof. Andreas Tollefsen. Presented a project on displacement in South Sudan with prof. Tollefsen at the Peace Research Institute Oslo on 18th December 2024. Part of panel at the 2025 APSA conference. Presented on the use of remote sensing in tracking intercommunal violence at the 2024 International Studies Association (ISA) Conference in San Francisco 4-6. April.
- Held presentation titled "Unravelling a Conflict from Afar: Violence Against Civilians During the Tigray War" at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center on 10. October 2024. <https://www.belfercenter.org/event/unravelling-conflict-afar-violence-against-civilians-during-tigray-war>.
- Presented my DPhil-project at the European University Institute (EUI) 13. December 2019, the Oxford Conflict, Peace, and Security Hub on 4th March 2022, several times in the T.E. Lawrence Seminar Series at All Souls College at Oxford University, and at the Peace Research Institute Oslo on 26th April 2022 where I was the keynote speaker for the MidEast Breakfast Seminar Series <https://www.prio.org/events/8933>.

Languages

Norwegian (Mother Tongue), English (Fluent), Farsi (Advanced), Arabic MSA (Intermediate), Spanish (Beginner).

IT

R (Advanced), ARCGIS (Advanced), STATA (Intermediate), Excel (Advanced), LATEX (Advanced). Python (Beginner).

References

Prof. Stathis Kalyvas – Professor at All Souls College, University of Oxford.

- Relation: DPhil- and MPhil supervisor.
- Stathis.kalyvas@politics.ox.ac.uk
- +44 1865 281408

Prof. Andreas Tollefsen Associate Professor, Human Geography at the University of Oslo & Senior Researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).

- Relation: Collaborator on research article and project grant applications
- a.f.tollefsen@sosgeo.uio.no
- +47 930 83 003

Prof. Steven E. Miller – Belfer Center at the Harvard Kennedy School.

- Relation: Director of the International Security Program and intimately familiar with my postdoctoral research at the Harvard Kennedy School.
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