



The Organizational Complexity of Civil Wars

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Wednesday, October 15, 2025 | 3:30 PM | Reading Room (third floor), Ortega Hall

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We will begin by discussing how myriad types of organizations in society shape the onset and dynamics of civil war. Drawing on insights from the Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence dataset, I highlight how varying structural and sociopolitical conditions facilitate the rise of rebel groups from different types of pre-existing organizations. We then turn attention to how these organizational roots continue to shape interactions between combatants, as well as civilians, during the course of the conflict. Although the scholarship on civil wars predominantly focuses on rebel groups and the regimes they fight, we will explore the ways in which civil war environments are often much more organizationally complex than initially acknowledged - which has important implications for conflict management and peacebuilding efforts.



JDr. Braithwaite's research addresses how repressive activities and institutional characteristics of governments influence (and are influenced by) violent and nonviolent strategies of domestic opposition groups. She also examines the origins of rebellion as a co-creator of the Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) dataset. Her work has been published or is forthcoming at Journal of Politics, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of Peace Research, Research and Politics, and Conflict Management and Peace Science.



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