

Kai M. Thaler

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of California, Santa Barbara

Assistant Professor, Department of Global Studies, 2018 –
Affiliated Faculty, Political Science; Latin American and Iberian Studies

University of Denver, Josef Korbel School of International Studies

Postdoctoral Fellow, Sié Chéou-Kang Center for International Security and Diplomacy, 2018-19

EDUCATION

Harvard University PhD in Government, 2018

Dissertation: “From Insurgents to Incumbents: State Building and Service Provision after Rebel Victory in Civil Wars”

Certificate in Latin American Studies, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies

Harvard University AM in Government, 2015

University of Cape Town MSc in Sociology, 2011 (with distinction)

Yale University BA in Political Science, 2009 (*cum laude*, with distinction in the major)

PUBLICATIONS

Articles

- Forthcoming. “Rebel Mobilization through Pandering: Insincere Leaders and Exploitation of Popular Grievances,” *Security Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/09636412.2022.2086818.
2022. “Taking Responsibility and Tying Hands: The Case for Limiting U.S. Relationships with Armed Groups” *Harvard International Law Journal Online* 63.
2022. “Nicaragua: Doubling Down on Dictatorship,” *Journal of Democracy* 33(2): 133-146 (with Eric Mosinger).
2022. “Delegation, Sponsorship, and Autonomy: An Integrated Framework for Understanding Armed Group-State Relationships,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 7(1): ogab026.
2022. “Civil Resistance in the Shadow of the Revolution: Historical Framing in Nicaraguan’s Sudden Uprising,” *Comparative Politics* 54(2): 253-277 (with Eric Mosinger, Diana Paz García, and Charlotte Fowler).
2021. “Military Integration and Intelligence Capacity: Informational Effects of Incorporating Former Rebels,” *Political Research Exchange* 3(1): 1-21.
2021. “Reflexivity and Temporality in Researching Violent Settings: Problems with the Transparency and Replicability Regime,” *Geopolitics* 26(1): 18-44.
2018. “Has Liberia Turned a Corner?” *Journal of Democracy* 29(3): 156-170 (with Benjamin Spatz).
2017. “Nicaragua: A Return to Caudillismo.” *Journal of Democracy* 28(2): 157-169.
2017. “Mixed Methods Research in the Study of Political and Social Violence and Conflict.” *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 11(1): 59-76.

2016. “Dynamique et diversité des armées africaines: État des connaissances.” *Afrique Contemporaine* 2016/4(260): 27-44 (with Jason Warner).
2014. “Socioeconomic Conditions and Violence in Cape Town, South Africa.” *Economics of Peace and Security* 9(2): 34-42 (with Jeremy Seekings).
2012. “Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars: Theory and Evidence from Mozambique and Angola.” *Civil Wars* 14(4): 546-567.
2012. “Foreshadowing Future Slaughter: From the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66 to Genocide in East Timor.” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 7(2/3): 204-222.
2009. “Avoiding the Abyss: Finding a Way Forward in Guinea-Bissau.” *Portuguese Journal of International Affairs* 1(2): 3-14.

Book Chapters

2022. “Nicaragua: Populist Performance and Authoritarian Practice during Covid-19” in Nils Ringe and Lucio Renno (eds.), *Populists and the Pandemic: How Populists Around the World Responded to COVID-19*, pp.184-195 (New York: Routledge) [with Rachel Schwartz].
2021. “Nicaragua and Covid-19: Authoritarian Indifference” in Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Haeran Lim, and Habibur Khonder (eds.), *Covid-19 and Governance: Crisis Reveals*, pp.229-241 (New York: Routledge).
2019. “Mixed methods in violence studies,” in Walter S. DeKeseredy, Callie Marie Rennison, and Amanda K. Hall-Sanchez (eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Violence Studies*, pp.19-29 (New York: Routledge).
2018. “U.S. Action and Inaction in the Massacre of Communists and Alleged Communists in Indonesia,” in Samuel Totten (ed.), *Dirty Hands and Vicious Deeds: The US Government’s Complicity in Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide*, pp.23-69 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).
2013. “Brazil, Biofuels, and Food Security in Mozambique,” in Renu Modi and Fantu Cheru (eds.), *Agricultural Development and Food Security in Africa: The Impact of Chinese, Indian and Brazilian Investments*, pp.145-158 (London: Zed Books).

Book Reviews, Correspondence, and Institutional Working Papers

2022. “Political Repression, State-Sponsored Violence, and Risks to Government Opponents in Nicaragua under the Ortega-Murillo Regime,” *CeMeCA’s Regional Expert Paper Series*, New York: Columbia University’s Center for Mexico and Central America.
2021. Review of *Political Leadership in Africa: Leaders and Development South of the Sahara* by Giovanni Carbone and Alessandro Pellegata (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 52(2): 296-298.
2021. Review of *Gambling with Violence: State Outsourcing of War in Pakistan and India* by Yelena Biberman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019). *Political Science Quarterly* 136(3):588-89.
2019. “Roundtable 11-3 on *Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa: The Logic of the Coup–Civil War Trap*.” *H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable* 11(3): 12-16.
2018. “Correspondence: Ideological Extremism in Armed Conflict,” *International Security*, 43(1): 186-190 (with Jonathan Leader Maynard).
2016. “How Do Rebels Rule When They Win?” *Centerpiece* 31(1): 10-12 (Weatherhead Center)
2015. Review of Stephen A. Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique: The Frelimo-Renamo Struggle, 1977-1992* (Solihull, England: Helion & Company, 2014), *War in History* 22(4): 571-573.

Report

2012. *Armed Violence: The Untold Story* (with Rashmi Thapa). Brussels: Handicap International, 62pp. (Data manager and analyst for full report and author of Colombia and Haiti chapters).

UNDER REVIEW

- “Framing Police Violence: Repression, Reform, and the Power of History in Chile” (with Lisa Mueller and Eric Mosinger) (*revise and resubmit*)
- “Levels of Analysis and Theories of Violence in Civil Wars: Ideology and Contestation in Nicaragua”
- “State Building and Indigenous Rights Implementation: Political Incentives, Social Movement Pressure, and Autonomy Policy in Central America” (with Giorleny Altamirano Rayo and Eric Mosinger)

WORKING PAPERS

- “Civil Wars as Critical Junctures: Theoretical Grounding and Empirical Applications”
- “Disentangling African Insurgent Ideologies” (with Jason Warner)
- “Ideology, Perception, and Strategic Decision-Making in a Revolutionary State: Mistakes and Adjustment in FSLN Security Policy in Nicaragua”
- “Left-Wing Authoritarianism: The Marxists and the Machiavellians” (with Dan Slater)
- “The Paradox of Revolutions: How Can We Isolate the Causal Effects of Transformative Events?” (with Marika Landau-Wells)
- “Threat Perception, Security Strategy, and Military Effectiveness after Revolutionary Victory”

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- When Rebels Win: Ideology, Statebuilding, and Power after Rebel Victory in Civil Wars* (book manuscript)
- “Authoritarian Regression and Struggles for Democracy in Central America,” special issue of *Democracy and Autocracy* newsletter (co-edited with Luciana Chamorro)
- “Abuses of power and popular protest in contemporary Africa” (with Aubrey Schipper)
- “Populism, personalism or politics as usual? Covid-19 pandemic responses under authoritarianism and democratic erosion in the Americas”
- “Protest, press coverage, and policing in Chile: Media framing and the 2019-20 *Estallido Social*” (with Miguelangel Coria-Cornejo)
- “Protests, repression, and trust: evidence from Nicaragua” (with Sergio Cabrales and Eric Mosinger)
- “Reflexivity, positionality, and personal openness in conducting and presenting research: What should we share with interlocutors and with audiences?” (in preparation for editor-approved proposed forum “Frontiers in Reflexivity” in *International Studies Review*)

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2022 Hellman Family Faculty Fellowship (\$15,094)
- 2022 UCSB Faculty Career Development Award (course release for 2022-23)
- 2021 UCSB Academic Senate Faculty Research Grant (\$11,200)
- 2021 UCSB Carsey-Wolf Center Faculty Research Support Grant (\$5,000)
- 2021 UCSB Social Sciences Deans’ Intersectional Justice Research Grant (\$2,000)
- 2021 UC Humanities Research Institute Junior Faculty Manuscript Workshop Grant (\$1,600)
- 2020 UCSB Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research Social Science Research Grant (\$8,000)
- 2020 UCSB Academic Senate Faculty Research Grant (\$7,254)
- 2017 Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (\$20,000)
- 2017 Samuel P. Huntington Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Harvard University

- 2016 Democracy Doctoral Fellowship, Ash Center for Democratic Governance, Harvard Kennedy School (\$30,000)
- 2015 Frederick Sheldon Traveling Fellowship, Harvard University (\$24,000)
- 2014 National Security Graduate Research Fellowship, The Tobin Project (\$1,500)
- 2013 National Security Graduate Research Fellowship, The Tobin Project (\$1,500)
- 2011 Microcon Mobility Fund Grant
- 2009 DGARQ/FLAD Investigation Fellowship, Portuguese Directorate General of Archives and Luso-American Development Foundation

MAJOR CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- African Studies Association Annual Meeting: 2016-2018
- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting: 2013-2021, 2022 (scheduled)
- European Conference on African Studies: 2017
- European Consortium for Political Research General Conference: 2009, 2011, 2015, 2020
- International Studies Association Annual Convention: 2014-2022
- International Security Studies Section/International Security Annual Conference 2019
- Latin American Studies Association: 2018-2019, 2021-2022
- Network of European Peace Scientists Jan Tinbergen Conference: 2017

TEACHING AND ADVISING

University of California, Santa Barbara

Global 120: Global Ideologies and World Order

Global 124: Peace, Conflict and Violence in Global Perspective

Global 224 (graduate): Research Methods

Global 199 (undergraduate) / *Global 596* (graduate): Directed Reading and Research

PhD Committee: Vitória Moreira, Eugene Riordan, Em Rosner, Annjulie Vester (Political Science)

MA Committee: Taylor Horton (2019), Molly O'Hagan, Majed Altaian (co-chair), Genesis Herrera, Jean-Michel Ricard

Boston University

Lecturer, *International Relations 367/Political Science 360*: Latin American Politics and International Relations, Pardee School of Global Studies (half semester), fall 2017

Harvard University

Teaching Fellow

Government 62: Research Practice in Qualitative Methods, Gwyneth McClendon, spring 2015

Government 20: Foundations of Comparative Politics, Steven Levitsky, fall 2014

Government 1295: Comparative Politics of Latin America, Steven Levitsky, spring 2014

Senior Thesis Adviser: Chloe George (2014-15), Hilary Higgins (2014-15), Jason Kwon (2015-16), Charles Orta (2015-16), Delany Sisiruca (2015-16), Ben Cashin (2017-18)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND SYMPOSIA

- 2022 "Understanding the Rise of Populism" (panelist), Democracy in Peril Globally seminar, Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara
- 2022 "Managing Risks and Ensuring Accountability in US Security Partnerships," Security Partnerships with States and Non-State Armed Groups workshop, Bridging the Gap New Voices in National Security initiative (American University) and University of Pennsylvania Perry World House (Washington, DC)

- 2022 “From Rebel to Ruler” (roundtable), United States Institute of Peace Afghanistan Program
- 2022 “Reflexivity, Positionality, and Personal Openness: What Should We Share with Interlocutors and with Audiences?,” Workshop on Methods for Reflexivity, Positionality, and Power, Uppsala University and Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (Washington, DC – cancelled due to omicron surge)
- 2021 “International Implications of Nicaragua’s 2021 Elections,” ‘Flashpoints: Nicaragua’ panel, Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies, University of Michigan
- 2021 “Nicaragua’s Collapse into Dictatorship” (roundtable), DRCLAS Seminar on Latin American Politics, Harvard University
- 2021 “Populism, personalism or political calculation? Covid-19 pandemic responses under authoritarianism and democratic erosion,” Populism in Latin America and Beyond, King’s College London Brazil Studies Institute and University of London Institute for Latin American Studies
- 2020 “Organización para participar en elecciones fraudulentas: Caso de las Filipinas y Georgia,” United States Institute of Peace
- 2020 “COVID-19 in an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Nicaragua,” Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa
- 2020 “Contextualising Conflict: Comparison, Specificity, and Public Engagement in Conflict & Violence Research,” Department of Methodology, London School of Economics
- 2019 “Levels of Analysis and Theories of Violence in Civil Wars: Ideology and Contestation in Nicaragua,” Conference on Ideology and Political Violence, Texas A&M University
- 2019 “Armed Group-State Relationships in World Politics,” Global Studies Colloquium Series, University of California, Santa Barbara
- 2019 “Rebel Victories and Comparative Perspectives on the Nicaraguan Revolution,” Nicaragua 1979-2019: The Sandinista Revolution After 40 Years, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University
- 2019 “Resistance and Repression: One Year on From Nicaragua’s Civil Uprising,” DRCLAS Seminar on Latin American Politics, Harvard University
- 2019 “Decolonizing Scholarship on Africa” (roundtable), Conference on Sustainable Development in Africa, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver
- 2018 “Civil Wars as Critical Junctures: Theoretical Grounding and Empirical Applications,” Southwest Workshop on Mixed Methods Research, University of California, Santa Cruz
- 2018 “Strategic Pandering and Rebel Mobilization,” Korbel Research Seminar, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver
- 2018 “When the Rebels Win: Power and Interests after Civil Wars,” Symposium: The Micro dynamics of Armed Conflict, Institut Barcelona d’Estudis Internacionals
- 2018 “Nicaragua’s April Uprising: Understanding the Protests and Repression,” Roundtable, DRCLAS Special Event, Harvard University
- 2017 “When the Rebels Win: State Building and Service Provision in Revolutionary Nicaragua,” DRCLAS Seminar on Latin American Politics, Harvard University
- 2017 “When the Rebels Win: Leadership, Preferences, and State Building After Civil Wars,” Yale Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence Speaker Series, Yale University
- 2015 “Daniel Ortega and the Erosion of Democracy in Nicaragua,” DRCLAS Seminar on Latin American Politics, Harvard University
- 2013 “Revolutionary Regimes, Security, and Strategic Myopia: Mistakes in Military Development in Revolutionary Nicaragua and Iran,” Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica, Universidad Centroamericana, Nicaragua (in Spanish)

- 2011 “Foreshadowing Future Slaughter: From the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66 to Genocide in East Timor.” International Workshop ‘Resisting the Path to Genocide: The Case of States and Societies,’ University of Southern California, Los Angeles
- 2011 “What are the strengths and limits of using survey data to examine participation in everyday violence?” Safety and Violence Initiative Colloquium, University of Cape Town
- 2010 “Revolutionary Restraint? Marxism-Leninism and Violence Against Civilians in Mozambique and Angola.” IPRI/LSE IDEAS Working Seminar, Lisbon, Portugal

PUBLIC WRITING

- 2021 “Afghan Insurgents Are a Dead End: Rebuilding U.S. standing requires an end to backing militants abroad.” *Foreign Policy*, 23 November.
- 2021 “Why Nicaragua’s slide toward dictatorship is a concern for the region and the US, too,” *The Conversation*, 9 November. Republished by outlets including *Houston Chronicle*, *New Haven Register*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and *San Antonio Express-News*.
- 2021 “Mozambique’s Islamist insurgents are on the run. Integrating former rebel fighters could help usher in peace,” *Washington Post* Monkey Cage, 27 August.
- 2021 “To replace autocrats of Nicaragua, think beyond this fall’s election,” *Los Angeles Times*, 24 August, print page A11 (with Ryan Berg).
- 2021 “Ortega and Murillo’s Two-Level Game” / “El juego a dos niveles de Ortega y Murillo” / “O jogo a dois niveis de Ortega e Murillo,” *Latinoamérica21*, 28 June. Republished by *La Tercera* (Chile), *El Universal* (Mexico), *El Observador* (Uruguay), *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil).
- 2021 “Statement of Concern About Increasing Political Repression in Nicaragua Ahead of the 2021 Elections / Carta abierta sobre la escalada de represión política en Nicaragua antes de las elecciones de 2021” (June 2021), <https://sites.google.com/view/nicaragua2021letter/>. [drafted and administered open letter signed by over 800 academics and researchers. Republished or covered in *Confidencial* (Nicaragua), *La Prensa* (Nicaragua), *Boston Globe*, and *El País* (Spain)]
- 2021 “The 2021 Elections and Uganda’s Crisis of Continuity,” *Epicenter*, 31 March.
- 2020 “Two years after Nicaragua’s mass uprising started, why is Daniel Ortega still in power?” *Washington Post* Monkey Cage, 1 May (with Mateo Jarquín).
- 2020 “Nicaragua is Stumbling into a Coronavirus Disaster.” *Foreign Policy*, 17 April.
- 2019 “Violence is Sometimes the Answer.” *Foreign Policy*, 5 December.
- 2019 “Repression and Resilience in Nicaragua: How Daniel Ortega Weathered 2018 Storm...and What Comes Next.” *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin American Studies* (Spring/Summer), 28 August (with Eric Mosinger).
- 2019 “Authoritarian Resilience: Why Bouteflika and Bashir Fell, but Ortega Remains,” *Political Violence @ a Glance*, 30 April.
- 2019 “Flying Blind in Crisis Time: The US Strategic and Human Foreign Policy Deficit,” *Duck of Minerva*, 28 February.
- 2019 “Resisting Democratic Erosion in Latin America and Beyond,” *Political Violence @ a Glance*, 15 January. Republished by LAC Perspectivas (Korbel School Latin America Center).
- 2018 “Aid and Diplomacy, Not Tear Gas: How to Address the Central American Migrant Crisis,” *Duck of Minerva*, 27 November. Republished by *The Big Q* (New Zealand)
- 2018 “Peacekeeping’s Perverse Effects: Bolsonaro and Brazil’s Remilitarized Politics,” *Duck of Minerva*, 16 October
- 2018 “Repression, Regime Consolidation, and Latin America’s Authoritarian (Re)Turn,” *Political Violence @ a Glance*, 25 September

- 2018 “In massive street protests, Nicaraguans are using Ortega’s revolutionary symbols against him,” *Washington Post* Monkey Cage, 14 May (with Yerling Aguilera and Eric Mosinger)
- 2018 “A New Nicaraguan Revolution? Understanding This Week’s Popular Protests” *Political Violence @ a Glance*, 3 May (with Eric Mosinger)”
- 2018 “Nicaragua protests threaten an authoritarian regime that looked like it might never fall,” *The Conversation*, 2 May (with Eric Mosinger). Republished by outlets including PRI, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Pacific Standard*, and *San Antonio News-Express*
- 2016 “Hurricane Mary,” *Roads and Kingdoms*, 17 February
- 2015 “Fifty years ago today, American diplomats endorsed mass killings in Indonesia. Here’s what that means for today.” *Washington Post* Monkey Cage, 2 December

MEDIA APPEARANCES AND INTERVIEWS

- 2022 Radio-Canada (14 March)
- 2021 *La Presse* (Canada, 12 June, 7 November), BBC World Service (14 June), Al Jazeera (12 July), Raport o Stanie Świata (Poland, 27 August), Background Briefing (KPFK-Los Angeles nationally syndicated public radio program, 7 September), 95bFM (New Zealand public radio, 12 November)
- 2020 Infobae (Argentina, 19 January), *CQ Researcher* (5 March), *La Presse* (Canada, 21 April), The World Unpacked podcast (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 30 April), Hanoi Philosophy Forum (3 June)
- 2019 Radio-Canada (3 May)
- 2018 BBC (3 June), France24 (17 July), *Gazeta do Povo* (Brazil, 27 July, 5 December)

FURTHER TRAINING

- 2015 Bridging the Gap New Era Foreign Policy Conference, Washington, DC
- 2010 Olympia Summer Seminars/Microcon Summer School, Cycle B–Advanced Research Methods in Conflict-Affected Countries, Olympia, Greece

VISITING AFFILIATIONS

- 2016 Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. January-June
- 2016 Centre for Basic Research, Kampala, Uganda. March-June
- 2011 Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia. June-August
- 2009 Portuguese Directorate-General of Archives (DGARQ), Lisbon, Portugal. June-August

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Article Reviewer

American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, British Journal of Political Science, Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Civil Wars, Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Conflict Management and Peace Science, European Journal of Development Research, European Journal of International Relations, Foreign Policy Analysis, Genocide Studies International, International Security, International Studies Quarterly, International Studies Review, Journal of Global Security Studies, Journal of Modern African Studies, Journal of Mixed Methods Research, Journal of Peace Research, Journal of Politics, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, Public Administration Review, Revista de Ciencia Política (Chile), Security Studies, Third World Quarterly, World Politics

Book and Edited Volume Manuscript Reviewer

Palgrave Macmillan, Princeton University Press, University of Michigan Press

University Service

2020 – Advisory Board member, Program in Latin American and Iberian Studies, UCSB

2020-2021 – Diversity Officer, Program in Latin American and Iberian Studies, UCSB

2019 – Consultative Council, Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, UCSB

2020 Judge, UCSB Library Award for Undergraduate Research

UCSB Global Studies Department Service

2020 – Undergraduate Committee

2019 – Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow Faculty Recruitment coordinator

2019-20 Graduate Committee

2019 Search Committee, Global Race/Ethnicity and Inequality

Conference/Workshop Organization and Discussion

Panel discussion organizer, “Social Movements, Identity, and Resistance in Contemporary Nicaragua,” December 2020, Program on Latin American and Iberian Studies, UCSB

Panel discussion organizer, “Latin America’s Democratic Decline and Possibilities for Resistance,” January 2019, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver

Conference co-organizer, “Research in Conflict Zones: The Untold Practices, Methods, and Ethics of Fieldwork,” February 2017, Harvard Kennedy School

Conference panel organizer, APSA 2016, 2018-2019, 2021; ECAS 2017; ISA 2015 (2x), 2018-2019; LASA 2018, 2021

Conference panel discussant, APSA 2018; ISA 2020-2021

Conference panel chair, ISA 2021; LASA 2021

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Foreign Languages: Fluent Spanish; proficient French and Portuguese

Interviews: South Africa (2010), Nicaragua (2015, 2016, 2017), Liberia (2015), Uganda (2016)

Archival Research: Portugal (2008, 2009), Nicaragua (2013, 2015, 2017), USA (2014), Uganda (2016)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Country conditions expert witness, working on the cases of Nicaraguan asylum seekers, 2018 –

External Institutional Review Board member, Social Impact, 2022 –

Consultant, Freedom House, Africa civil liberties and press freedom analyst, 2013-2018

Consultant, Handicap International, project on impacts of armed violence, 2011-12

Researcher, Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town, 2010-11

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Political Science Association, International Studies Association, African Studies Association, Latin American Studies Association, Households in Conflict Network

References available on request