

**ORA B. SZEKELY**  
**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES PROGRAM**  
**CLARK UNIVERSITY**

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**ACADEMIC POSITIONS**

2017-present Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Clark University  
2011- 2017 Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Clark University

**EDUCATION**

2011 McGill University, PhD, Political Science  
2004 University of Chicago, MA, Social Sciences  
1999 Cornell University, BA, *Cum Laude*, History and Religious Studies

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

Comparative politics of the Middle East; foreign and domestic policy making by non-state military actors; female combatants in civil wars; ideology, propaganda, performative violence, and political mobilization.

**PUBLICATIONS**

***Books***

*Syria Divided: Patterns of Violence in a Complex Civil War*. Forthcoming, Columbia University Press. (July 2023).

*Stories from the Field: A Guide to Navigating Field Research in Political Science*. Editor, with Peter Krause. (Columbia University Press, 2020.)

*Insurgent Women: Female Combatants in Civil Wars*. With Jessica Trisko Darden and Alexis Henshaw. (Georgetown University Press, 2019.)

*The Politics of Militant Group Survival in the Middle East: Resources, Relationships, and Resistance*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.)

***Articles***

"COVID-19 and Fieldwork: Challenges and Solutions." With Peter Krause et al. *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Volume 54 , Issue 2 (2021) 264-269.

"Exceptional Inclusion: Understanding the PKK's Gender Policy." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. (2020) 1-18

"Doing Good While Killing: "Why Some Insurgent Groups Provide Community Services." With Victor Asal and Shawn Flanigan. *Terrorism and Political Violence*. (2020), 1-21.

"Fighting About Women: Gendered Propaganda in the Arab World's Struggle against ISIS." *Journal of Global Security Studies* Vol. 5, Issue 3 (2020), 408-426.

"A Friend in Need: The Impact of the Syrian Civil War on Syria's Clients," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Volume 12, Issue 3 (July 2016), pp. 450-468.

"Doing Well by Doing Good: Charity as Political Advertising in the Palestinian Territories," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (2015), pp. 275-292.

"Proto-State Realignment and the Arab Spring," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1 (Spring 2016), pp. 75-91.

"Gender Ideology and Forms of Contentious Mobilization in the Middle East" (with Victor Asal, Richard Legault and Jonathan Wilkenfeld), *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (July 2013), pp. 305-318.

"Hezbollah's Survival: Resources and Relationships," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIX, No. 4 (Winter 2012), pp. 110-126.

### **Book chapters**

"Military Organizations in the Middle East." Project on Middle East Political Science 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary volume. (With Holger Albrecht, Kevin Koehler and Devorah Manekin, editor Marc Lynch.) (Oxford University Press, 2022)

"Female Combatants in the Marvel Cinematic Universe," *Politics in the MCU*. (Nicholas Carnes and Lily Goren, editors.) (University Press of Kansas, 2022)

"Comparative analysis" in *Key Concepts in Research Methods*, with Celine Cocq. J.-F. Morin, C. Olsson and E.O. Atikcan eds. (Oxford University Press, 2021)

"Lessons from Lebanon: The Costs of Avoiding Transitional Justice," in *Transitional Justice and the Arab Spring*. Robert Stewart and Kirsten Fisher, eds., (Routledge, 2013), pp. 94-111.

### **Book reviews**

Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza*, in *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol. 11, No. 4 (2013), pp. 983-985.

Naim Stifan Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, in *Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2010), pp. 100-103.

Cheryl Rubenberg, *The Palestinians: In Search of a Just Peace*, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 38 (2006), p. 499.

### **Podcast**

*The Stories from the Field Podcast*. Co-hosted with Peter Krause. 13 episodes, 2021.

## **WORK IN PROGRESS**

“The Enemy of My Enemy: Syrian Perceptions of American Foreign Policy” (Working paper).

“The Privatization of Sponsorship in the Syrian Civil War” (Working paper.)

“Women in the Syrian Uprising” (Working paper.)

“Monopolies vs. Markets: Bureaucratic Politics and the Dismantling of the Iraqi Military.” (With Steve Saideman and Philip Jones.)

## **WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

“The Privatization of Sponsorship in the Syrian Civil War”. Global Tensions, Local Wars? The Changing International Politics of Civil Conflict. Centre d'études sur la paix et la sécurité internationale. Université de Montréal, March 13<sup>th</sup> 2023.

“No Good Choices: American Foreign Policy in Syria.” International Studies Association annual meeting, Montreal, Canada. March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

“Damned if You Do, Damned if You Don't: Syrian Perceptions of US Foreign Policy.” American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, September 17<sup>th</sup> 2022.

“The YouTube War”. International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Nashville TN. (remote). March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

“Joining the Opposition: Women in the Syrian Uprising”. International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Nashville TN. (remote) March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

“Unlikely Allies: Women, Privilege, and Participation in the Syrian Uprising” Protracted Arab Civil Wars: Causes and Challenges. Arab Institute for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar. (remote) September 11-14, 2021.

“Women in the Syrian Uprising”. Workshop, Gender and Politics in the Middle East and North Africa: A Decade After the Arab Uprisings. Hosted by the University of Gothenburg. (remote). May 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

“Typologizing Nonstate Actors in the MENA”. International Studies Association Annual Meeting, April 5<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

“States, Protostates, and Nonstate Actors in the MENA: Contesting Categories”. International Studies Association Annual Meeting, April 5<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

“Teaching Field Research in Complicated Times”. Roundtable, International Studies Association Annual Meeting, April 5<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

“Designing and Conducting Field Research”. APSA Short Course, with Ben Read and Naunihal Singh. APSA Annual Meeting, September 8<sup>th</sup> 2020.

“The MCU By the Numbers”. Online workshop on Politics in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

“Naming Names: Balancing ethics and agency in qualitative field research.” Workshop on Ethical Engagement, Harvard Kennedy School. July 9-10, 2019.

“Militaries in the Middle East”. Project on Middle East Political Science annual meeting, Washington DC, June 23-24, 2019.

“Insurgent Women: Female Combatants in Civil Wars”. Book panel. Association for the Study of Nationalities. Columbia University, May 3-4, 2019.

“Syria Divided: Competing Narratives of the Syrian Civil War.” International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, CA, March 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

“Monopolies vs. Markets: Bureaucratic Politics and the Dismantling of the Iraqi Military.” (With Steve Saideman and Philip Jones.) International Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, April 4-7, 2018.

“Doing Good While Killing: Why Some Insurgent Groups Provide Social Services.” (With Victor Asal and Shawn Flanigan.) American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, September 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2017

“When Nature Causes Violence: Political Mechanisms That Link Climatic Extremes with Nonstate Violence” (With Casey Stevens) International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD February 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

“Fighting Over Women: Gendered Propaganda in the Arab World’s Struggle Against ISIS.” ISA Annual Meeting, Atlanta GA, March 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

“Exceptional Inclusion: Understanding the PKK’s Gender Policy.” ISA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, February 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

“Why support violent nonstate actors (VNSAs)? Exploring the reasons why states support some violent nonstate actors but not others.” (With Victor Asal). ISA Annual Meeting, Toronto, Ontario, March 26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

“The Politics of the Memorial in South Lebanon.” ISA Annual Meeting, Toronto, Ontario, March 26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

“States without a State: Protostate Actor Realignment and the Arab Spring.” Workshop on the Origins and Effects of the (Post-) Arab Spring on The Middle East and North Africa. Istanbul Sehir University, Istanbul, Turkey. January 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

"Civil-military Relations and the Timing of Israeli Military Campaigns: From Lebanon to Gaza (and back again?)." Peace Science Society-International Studies Association Joint Meeting, Corvinus University, Budapest, Hungary. June 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> 2013.

"From Moscow To Jerusalem: Comparing the choice of protest as a strategy by ethnopolitical organizations in Eastern Europe and the Middle East." (With Victor Asal, Richard Legault and Jonathan Wilkenfeld.) ISA Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, April 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

"Social Services as Advertising for Nonstate Military Actors: The Case of Hamas." ISA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, April 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

"The Impact of Syrian Sponsorship on its Nonstate Clients: A principal-agent approach." ISA Annual Meeting, Montreal, QC, March 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

"Resources, Relationships and Militia Survival in the Modern Middle East". ISA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, February 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

"Send Lawyers, Guns and Money: Resources, Relationships and Relative Militia Effectiveness." Workshop on Understanding Order, Cooperation and Variance among Non-State Armed Groups." Queens University. September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Kingston, Ontario.

"Critical Minorities: The impact of non-dominant ethnic groups on foreign policy." ISA Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, February, 2008.

"Blogging, Civil Society and Political Mobilization in the Arab Middle East." Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting, Montreal, QC, November 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

"Tilting at Windmills: Counterinsurgency in Historical Perspective." (With Virginia DiGaetano) ISSS/ISAC Annual Meeting, October 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Montreal, QC.

## **PUBLIC-FACING SCHOLARSHIP:**

### *PODCASTS AND INTERVIEWS*

"Stories from the Field, Political Budget Cycles in Autocracies, Yemen Ceasefire (S. 11, Ep. 26)" *POMEPS Middle East Political Science Podcast*. With Peter Krause, interview by Marc Lynch. April 8<sup>th</sup> 2022.

"Stories from the Field." *New Books Network, New Books in Political Science*. Podcast. With Peter Krause, interview by Lamis Abdelaaty. January 24<sup>th</sup> 2022.

"Insurgent Women" *New Books Network, Kurdish Studies Channel*. Podcast. Interview by Dilan Okcuoglu. May 7<sup>th</sup> 2021.

"Insurgent Women" *New Books Network, National Security Channel*. Podcast. Interview by Beth Windisch, on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

"Female Guerilla Warfare" *Popular Front* Podcast. Interview by Jake Hanrahan. September 18, 2018. <https://www.jakehanrahan.com/popularfront>

"The Politics of Militant Group Survival: A Conversation with Ora Szekely". Podcast, Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS.) Interview by Marc Lynch. <http://pomeps.org/2017/04/03/the-politics-of-militant-group-survival-a-conversation-with-ora-szekely/>

#### *BLOG POSTS, OP-EDS, AND OTHER WRITING*

"Syria's earthquake survivors struggle in a disaster made far worse by civil war, bombed-out hospitals and currency collapse" *The Conversation*, March 8<sup>th</sup> 2023.

"Two reasons – and one disease – that make peace in Syria so difficult". *The Conversation*. March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

"The Cracks in the Islamic State's Business Plan are Starting to Show." *Reuters*. 2/20/2015 <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2015/02/20/the-cracks-in-islamic-states-business-plan-are-starting-to-show/>

"Warfare isn't just a man's game anymore." (With Jessica Trisko Darden) *The Monkey Cage*. 2/9/2015 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/02/09/warfare-isnt-just-a-mans-game-anymore/>

"Choosing From the Contentious Politics Buffet." (With Victor Asal) *Lawfare*. 11/23/14. <http://www.lawfareblog.com/2014/11/the-foreign-policy-essay-choosing-from-the-contentious-politics-buffet/>

"What's next for the Asad Regime's nonstate clients." *The Monkey Cage*. 9/10/2014 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/09/10/whats-next-for-the-syrian-regimes-non-state-allies/>

"Thinking seriously about Syria." *Political Violence at a Glance*. 9/3/2013 <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2013/09/03/seriously-thinking-about-syria/>

#### **INVITED TALKS, TRAININGS, AND PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)**

"Syria Divided" Boston University, April 18<sup>th</sup> 2023.

"Female Fighters in the Syrian War". Columbia University, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

"The Syrian Civil War: One conflict, many narratives." ARS Norian Youth Connect program, Yale University, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019.

"The Syrian War: An Overview". Clark University, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

"Violence, Identity and Belonging in the Syrian Civil War". University of Massachusetts Amherst, October 21<sup>st</sup> 2019.

"The Syrian Civil War: What it means for Syria, the United States, and the future of the Middle East." Louisville Committee on Foreign Relations, Louisville, KY. May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

"Syria Divided". Invited talk, Universite de Montreal, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.

"The Politics of Militant Group Survival in the Middle East." Book talk, George Washington University, October 30<sup>th</sup> 2017.

"Five Things You Should Know About Syria". Keynote address, undergraduate honors program, Roger Williams University, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017

"Turkish Security Challenges in the Aftermath of the 2016 Coup". (Panel discussion). Providence College, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

"What's Next for the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?" University of Connecticut, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Discussant for screening of Red Lines (a documentary on the Syrian civil war), Brattle Theater, Cambridge MA. March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

"What you should know about Syria", The University Club, Providence. November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

"The Arab-Israeli Conflict". Worcester State University, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

"The Arab Spring". Workshop on Teaching Nonviolence, Worcester MA, October 2013.

"The Arab Spring". Global Education Workshop (for Massachusetts high school teachers, Worcester MA. February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012.)

## **MEDIA (SELECTED)**

### ***Print:***

*US News and World Report.* "After Paris and Planned Parenthood, a Fear of the Unknown." December 2nd, 2015.

*Telegram and Gazette* "Clark Professor Tries to Untangle Threads in Syria's Civil War"  
11/8/2015

*New York Times*, "ISIS tactics questioned as hostages dwindle" 2/1/2015

*Arizona Republic* "ISIS takes hostages to get cash, instill fear" 2/11/2015

*New York Times*, "Tradition Saves Camels' Spot in Desert Forces" 11/29/2014

***Video and television:***

*HuffPost Live* Interview on aftermath of execution of Jordanian pilot. 2/4/2015

*HuffPost Live* Interview on new most wanted list for ISIS members. 5/7/2015

*HuffPost Live* Panel discussion on ISIS' prospects for the future. 7/5/2015

*HuffPost Live* Panel on potential sale of radiological material to terror groups. 10/8/15

*HuffPost Live* Panel on use of term "Islamic Terrorism." 11/30/15

***Radio:***

CBS radio, KNX (Los Angeles). Interview on execution of Jordanian pilot by ISIS 2/3/2015

NPR/BBC, *The World*. Interview on Palestinian, Syrian, and Iraqi refugees in Jordan.

Interviewed on 12/28/16.

WPKZ (Fitchburg). Interview on first 60 days of the Trump administration, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

**TEACHING AND ADVISING**

*COURSES TAUGHT*

Clark University:

Comic Books and Politics  
Introduction to Comparative Politics  
The Politics of the Middle East  
The Arab-Israeli Conflict  
Capstone seminar: Civil War  
Capstone seminar: Refugees, Migrants and the Politics of  
Displacement  
The Politics of Ethnicity and Identity  
Art and Empathy: Humanizing the Israeli-Palestinian  
Conflict

McGill University:

Introduction to International Relations  
Peacebuilding

*DISSERTATION COMMITTEES*

Vieralina Fernandez, Florida International University

Defended prospectus Fall 2020

Sam Biasi, Boston College

Defended prospectus Spring 2022



Maggie Cambell Obaid, Clark University  
Defended dissertation Spring 2015

### **FIELD RESEARCH**

2020 Interviews (remote) with former George W. Bush administration officials.  
2018-2019 Field research in Jordan (Amman, Zarqa)  
2018 Field research in Germany (Syrian community in Berlin)  
2016 Field research in Turkey (Istanbul) and Germany (Hamburg).  
2014 Preliminary site evaluation, Diyarbakir, Turkey.  
2012 Field research in Lebanon, the West Bank, and Egypt.  
2009 Field research in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and the West Bank.  
2006 IDRC internship, United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Beirut, Lebanon.

### **FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND AWARDS**

2021 Plischke Award, Clark University  
2018 Hodgkins Junior Faculty Award, Clark University  
2015 Faculty Development Research Grant, Clark University  
2013 Project on Middle East Political Science, Junior Scholars Book Development Workshop, November 2013, Yale University  
2011 START Conference, "Catastrophe and Catalyst: 10 Years Since 9/11." Poster competition, runner up  
2010-2011 START Terrorism Research Award, University of Maryland  
2009-2010 TA of the Year, McGill Political Science Student Association  
2008-2010 Nathan Steinberg Fellowship in Political Science, McGill University  
2007-2008 Max E. Binz Fellowship, McGill University  
2005-2006 McGill University Graduate Recruitment Fellowship

### **CLARK UNIVERSITY SERVICE (SELECTED)**

2022-2023 Co-chair, Strategic Framework Taskforce on Undergraduate Opportunities in the Focus Areas  
2022-2023 Chair, Undergraduate Academic Board  
2019-2023 Director, Peace and Conflict Studies Program  
2021 Member, Dean of Students search committee  
2020-2023 Member, Undergraduate Academic Board  
2018 Co-chair, Committee on Speech Rights and Community Values  
2018 Co-chair, Institutional Review Board, Clark University  
2016-2018 Member, President's Diversity Advisory Council  
2016-2017 Member, capstone exemplar group  
2013-present Core faculty, Peace Studies Program  
2013-2022 Center for Gender, Race and Area Studies Steering Committee  
2012-2018 Member, Institutional Review Board, Clark University  
2011-2012 Race and Ethnic Studies Program Steering Committee

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

2022-present Planning committee, ISA Pedagogy Conference

2019-2020 Team lead, POMEPS 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary volume, militaries chapter

Reviewer for:

Journals:

*British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Politics, Conflict Management and Peace Science, Contemporary Politics, European Journal of International Relations, , Foreign Policy Analysis, International Feminist Journal of Politics, International Security, International Studies Quarterly, International Studies Review, Journal of Global Security Studies, Journal of Conflict Research, Journal of Peace Research, Journal of Politics, Middle East Journal, Security Studies, and others.*

Books:

- Oxford University Press
- Columbia University Press
- UC Press
- NYU Press

## **LANGUAGES**

*Arabic:* Colloquial fluency (Levantine Arabic)

*German:* Intermediate comprehension

*French:* Basic comprehension

## **OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (SELECTED)**

2005 Lead instructional designer, ESL curriculum. Rubicon (multimedia software company), Amman, Jordan.

2004–2005 Program Coordinator for Jordan and Palestine programs, Relief International-Schools Online, Middle East Headquarters, Amman, Jordan.

1999-2001 Peace Corps Volunteer, Secondary Education. 'Allan Secondary School for Girls, Balqa Governorate, Jordan.