Shareefa Al-Adwani, Political Science, UC Davis
Dissertation Title: Autocratic and Democratic Cooperation within Regional International Organizations (IOs)

I lived in the Middle East for half of my life and was always aware of the numerous conflicts in the regional neighborhood. Despite all the conflicts, there were even more instances of cooperation in the region, but these instances were much less conspicuous. As a result, I became interested in understanding the conditions under which countries cooperate – and the conditions under which cooperation cannot endure, giving way to conflict.

Konstantin Ash, Political Science, UC San Diego
Dissertation Title: Sub-National Group Allegiance After Civil War Initiation

I spent the first eight years of my life in Russia. From Chechnya to Bosnia and Colombia, I remember civil conflicts across the region and the world flooding the opening segments of news broadcasts. In 1993, an attempted coup in Moscow even interrupted one of these broadcasts. The fear of my conscription into the Russian army and going to Chechnya partly motivated my family's decision to emigrate. While living in the U.S. allowed for a sense of detachment, some college classes kindled an interest in studying political violence that connected to my childhood experiences and has made me seek answers on what motivates violence among individuals and groups within countries.

Cameran Ashraf, Geography, UC Los Angeles
Dissertation Title: International Cybersecurity and the Legal-Territorial Paradox

My work with the Iranian Green Movement placed me in the front lines of state and non-state cyberconflict. Seeing the ways in which both state and non-state actors utilize global computing resources to pursue national political goals was remarkable, demonstrating the potential fragility of international cooperation regimes in the face of sustained cyberconflict.

Arturo Jimenez-Bacardi, Political Science, UC Irvine
Dissertation Title: Speaking Law to War: International Law, Legal Advisers, and Bureaucratic Contestation in Times of War

When I was twelve and living in Mexico, I remember the EZLN uprising and the assassination on presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio. Being shocked by both events, I wanted to make sure to understand the conditions that drove groups and individuals to such actions and to strive for public awareness, dialogue, and solutions to such crises before they fully materialize.
Joonbum Bae, Political Science, UC Irvine
Dissertation Title: Engaging Autocrats - How the Politics within Authoritarian Regimes Matter for Foreign Policy

One of my first political memories is of my Mom wondering out loud whether we should stock up on instant ramen noodles in preparation for a possible war during the height of the first North Korean nuclear crisis. The second nuclear crisis began during my undergraduate years and I have been pulled toward issues of conflict and cooperation ever since.

Benjamin Cox, Anthropology, UC Irvine
Dissertation Title: Building Universal Jurisdiction in Kenya: Securing the High Seas Against Piracy in the Somali Basin

I have always been interested in taking seriously alternative and multiple imaginaries about the world and the place of humans within it. This is reflected in my undergrad background in religious studies, and now in my work in anthropology. The phenomenon of Somali piracy provides a fascinating space to consider issues of conflict and cooperation at multiple scales and across numerous borders. This phenomenon brings together a diverse collection of stakeholders concerned with the management of a vital but often underappreciated global commons, the high seas, and the transgressive potential of the figure of the pirate.

Benjamin Cox is the recipient of the Ben Horne Award.

Ben Horne had a deep interest in peacemaking ideas and conflict resolution. He focused on learning to understand the views of others and bringing parties with conflicting or differing opinions together. He would often visit the same area of the world again and again to try to get a better understanding of the culture and conflict of the area. Ben communicated his belief that the humanity of all of us is the same and his passion for living was driven by his desire to make the world a better place. He sought commonalities rather than differences. He sought the truth. He sought peace.

Ben was a Herb York Dissertation award recipient. He passed away before he was able to receive the award.
Diego Esparaza, Political Science, UC Riverside
Dissertation Title: Police Malfeasance in Latin America

I became interested in conflict when I was exposed at a young age to Spanish language nightly news on Univision. Here I learned about the civil wars in Guatemala and El Salvador, the invasion of Panama, assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio in Mexico, the EZLN uprising, the Shining Path in Peru, and Pinochet Dictatorship in Chile. I became interested in why violence, conflict, and authoritarianism arose and the impact these systems had on individuals. But I also wanted to learn how to address these problems. My specific interest in policing has to do with the shock of basically being robbed by police on numerous occasions in Mexico. I think that Mexico deserves a better police and my goal is to find out how to best change practices and institutions in that country to provide its people with not only an effective police system but one that also upholds the democratic values.

Anthony Fontes, Geography, UC Berkeley
Dissertation Title: Making the Marero: The Evolution of Transnational Gangs

Before becoming a full time researcher I lived and worked in West Africa, Egypt, Switzerland, India, Central America, and the Bay Area with refugees, undocumented immigrants, internally displaced people, and victims of social cleansing and criminal violence. I saw the on-the-ground consequences of human conflict and glimpsed the complex continuums that turn victims into victimizers and create cycles of violence that seem never to end. I also learned how deeply arbitrary and easily manipulated our judgments towards man-made suffering can be. Depending on who you are and where you are standing, a given act of violence will appear heinous or just, excessive or legitimate. My work is dedicated to breaking down these all-too-easily constructed walls that blind us to the pain of certain others.

Joseph Gardner, Political Science, UC Berkeley
Dissertation Title: The Politics of Kidnapping: Explaining Mutual Restraint in Terrorist and Guerilla Conflicts

I have long believed that one of the most important goals of academic research should be to contribute to better-informed policies. This has led to an ongoing interest in conflict and negotiations, where better information can often play a critical role in dispute resolution and strategic planning.
Anita Kellogg, Political Science, UC Los Angeles
**Dissertation Title:** Economic Interdependence and the Kantian Peace: Determining Whether and How Global Linkages Reduce Interstate Conflict

Participating yearly in Model United Nations from age 13 led to a deep fascination with international diplomatic and security affairs. As an undergraduate, I became further interested in economics and development. Afterwards, I spent several years in South Korea and in the Netherlands, where I began to ponder the intersection of economics and security issues.

Freyja Knapp, Environmental Science and Policy, UC Berkeley
**Dissertation Title:** Constructing the Sustainable Mine: Global Electronic Waste Recycling

I have been drawn to issues of socio-environmental conflict and environmental justice studies for a number of years. In particular, I focus on the intersection of environmental toxics, heavy industry, and the political economy of nature. This has led me to my current research in which a complex collection of actors and organizations are struggling over access to natural resources, concerns over human and environmental health, and the politics of international development and cooperation.

Chad Nelson, Political Science, UC Los Angeles
**Dissertation Title:** Revolutionary Waves: The International Effects of Threatened Domestic Order

I was regaled with war stories from my dad growing up, and my travels abroad increased my interest in conflict and cooperation both within and between nations. My investigation into the international effects of revolutions is a way to examine how international and domestic order interacts. As a philosophy student, I was interested in ideas, and as a political science student, I am interested in how ideological movements that have the possibility of spreading have affected international politics.

Weiyi Shi, Political Science, UC San Diego
**Dissertation Title:** Risky Business: Implications of China’s Outward Direct Investments on Global Security

I spent my formative years on both sides of the Pacific and grew up with China’s rapid transformation from a closed nation to an emerging world power. I’m interested in understanding how China’s growing economic interests may or may not translate into engagements in global security.
Beiji Tang, Political Science, UC Irvine  
**Dissertation Title:** Internationalization's Discontents: Domestic Coalitions and the Fate of China's Peaceful Rise

I was born before the end of Chinese Cultural Revolution. As a member of the so-called “post-70s generation,” I spent my adolescence and early adult life experiencing the “growing pains” of a changing nation under Deng Xiaoping’s Reform and Open-door program. My participation in the Shanghai pro-Tiananmen mass protest in 1989 led me to choose political science as a college major after I immigrated to the U.S. in 2004. I had been particularly fascinated by the double movement of globalization, on the one hand, and growing nationalism on the other, a phenomenon in IR with which I had first-hand experiences. My dissertation thus explores the impact of interacting domestic and international variables on inter-state conflict and cooperation.