

Three Essays on the Mobilization and Transformation of Social Ties During Civil War

by

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Defense Date: May 22, 2024

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the role of civilians' social ties in transforming wartime and postwar local order. Leveraging advanced methodological tools for causal inference and original sub-national, cross-national, and qualitative data, the project improves our understanding of the relationship between local social landscapes and conflict processes.

The first essay in this dissertation develops and tests a theory of the conditions under which insurgent conscription—a distinct type of forced recruitment whereby rebels use their administrative capacity to mandate military service in areas under their control—can ensure community compliance by forging social ties between civilians and insurgents. I argue that when state violence against armed groups' civilian constituencies isolates civilians from the state, armed groups can use insurgent conscription to forge direct social ties between every civilian and the rebellion. I test the argument using a matching approach for time series, cross-sectional data and a novel data set documenting the use of insurgent conscription across 1,415 armed group-year observations between 1946 and 2008.

The second essay explores the influence of gendered societal norms and women's networks on the governance of armed groups. Through process tracing and qualitative analysis of more than 50 interviews with high-ranking rebel leaders, local officials, and civilians in Nepal who experienced rebel rule, I illustrate that when armed groups mobilize women into rebel governing structures, women insurgent governors can use their roles within their families and communities to provide and build trust in direct armed group social services.

The final essay shines an empirical and theoretical spotlight on the conditions under which women's networks are resilient to conflict and armed group incursions. I argue that investments in local women service providers improve service providers' ability perform three functions critical to collective action: gathering information about the needs of women in their communities, deepening interpersonal ties between women in their communities, and building the institutional knowledge necessary to assert and advocate for collective demands. Moreover, I argue that the effects of resource allocation to women service providers on collective action are likely to be resilient to shocks because, due to the private, intimate

nature of their work, women service providers are practiced in cooperating under difficult conditions and build particularly durable social ties. Utilizing newly gathered data on over 13,500 wards in Nepal, and both difference-in-differences and regression discontinuity designs, I illustrate how state allocation of resources to women service providers before the war contributed to the formation of channels for women's collective action through a nearly 20 year period, including active conflict and immediate post-conflict years.

Dedication

To my mom and dad, thank you for everything.

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1. Introduction

Civil war can reshape the social fabric of communities. Social processes—“the transformation of social actors, structures, norms, and practices at the local level” (E. J. Wood, 2008, p. 540) occur alongside the political and military processes of conflict between non-state armed groups and state governments. Variation in the type and extent of social transformation has profound impacts for local order during and after war.

War can alter and upend local social hierarchies through shifting gender norms, reshaping class structure, and subverting racial or ethnic power dynamics (Stewart, 2021; Viterna, 2013a; E. J. Wood, 2008). Conflict can destroy community organizations, but it can also catalyze the formation of new organizations, both in support of or in resistance to armed actors (Schubiger, 2021a). Conflict often transforms community structures to support armed groups (Petersen, 2001; Staniland, 2014b), militarizing local institutions and community structures in the process (E. J. Wood, 2008).

The effects of these wartime social transformations can endure long after war ends. Following conflict, rebel authorities may retain power and influence over communities, acting as local strongmen that can disrupt statebuilding and peace processes (Martin, 2021). In some cases, wartime social transformations can encourage cooperation and civic participation after conflict (Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Blattman, 2009; Gilligan et al., 2014; Koos, 2018). In others, social shifts during war can harden divides between identity groups and stifle participation and cooperation (Conzo & Salustri, 2019; De Luca & Verpoorten, 2015; Grossman et al., 2015; Hall & Kahn, 2020).

Understanding how, why, and to what extent conflict shapes social transformation during war is thus critical not only to our understanding of civil war, but also to our understanding of its legacies. This dissertation engages broadly with the causes and consequences of variation in social transformation during war. It seeks to explain how conflict dynamics, armed group strategies, and existing social landscapes interact to impact the social processes of war. The three complimentary essays each explore a distinct cause or consequence of social dynamics during war: the extent of rebel reach into communities; the role of gen-

dered dynamics and expectations in shaping armed group governance; and the way that pre-existing social ties between women can impact women's collective action during and after conflict.

The first essay conceptualizes, introduces original data on, and studies the enabling conditions for insurgent conscription. Insurgent conscription is a form of forced recruitment whereby rebels use their administrative capacity to mandate military service in areas under their control. It is distinct from other forms of forced recruitment, which rely solely on violence or the threat of violence and are not confined to rebel-administered areas. I theorize and show that when state violence against rebel constituents isolates civilians from the state, armed groups can use insurgent conscription to ensure that every civilian has direct social ties to rebellion, thereby ensuring greater civilian compliance.

The second essay sheds new light on how gendered social expectations and women's networks can shape armed group governance. Using process tracing and qualitative data from over 50 interviews with top-level rebel leaders, local rebel officials, and civilians who lived under rebel rule in Nepal, I demonstrate that where armed groups mobilize women into rebel governing institutions, women insurgent governors can leverage their positions in their families and communities to deliver and build trust in armed group social services.

The final essay examines the conditions under which women's social networks withstand conflict and fosters collective action by women after war. I investigate whether pre-war investments in women service providers, who mobilize to offer community-based services primarily within households and without direct economic or political aims, can initiate women's collective action even after conflict. I focus on the case of Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs)—local women who provide door-to-door maternal and child health services—in Nepal. Using newly compiled data on 13,500 wards in Nepal and a difference-in-differences design, I show that receiving additional FCHVs increased the likelihood that communities establish local women's services NGOs and that this effect withstood Nepal's ten-year conflict.

In concert, the papers in this dissertation provide new insights into wartime and postwar

social transformation. In doing so, this project deepens our understanding of the social dynamics of war and their legacies.

2. Insurgent Conscription for Capacity and Control: State Violence and Coerced Recruitment in Civil War

While some armed groups use violence to forcibly recruit new combatants, other armed groups compel civilians to fight without force. For example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) wielded bureaucracy to make civilians join its insurgency against the Sri Lankan state. A woman from Kilinochchi, the de facto capital of the LTTE from 1990 to 2009, recounted, “Every home received a letter. They underlined my name and told me that I would be recruited to the LTTE” (quoted in Buerk, 2007). The LTTE instituted a ‘one child per family’ policy, which required each household have at least one LTTE member (Buerk, 2007). This policy was one element of an architecture of LTTE compulsory recruitment. The LTTE mandated military training for residents between the ages of fifteen and fifty in rebel-held villages (CSI, 2008) and used institutions under its control to conscript fighters (HRW, 2004). Strikingly, the Tigers conscripted recruits even as the Sri Lankan state massacred Tamil civilians.

The Sri Lankan case presents several puzzles unanswered by existing civil war literature. During the civil war, the Sri Lankan state committed mass violence against civilians. Severe state repression has been shown to push civilians into insurgent ranks, presumably eliminating the need for forced recruitment. Further, the Tigers belie the distinction existing scholarship draws between insurgencies that forcibly recruit and those that value civilian support. In the same areas from which it wrested recruits, the LTTE oversaw healthcare clinics, schools, and local justice systems in order to garner civilian support (Kamelen-dran, 2004; Mampilly, 2011a; Terpstra & Frerks, 2017). While scholars distinguish between forced and voluntary recruitment and acknowledge a spectrum of coercion in rebel recruitment (D. K. Cohen, 2016; Eck, 2014; Gates, 2017), the catalysts of distinct patterns of coerced insurgent recruitment remain poorly understood.

The Tigers illustrate a system of rebel recruitment undertheorized in existing literature, which I call *insurgent conscription*. Insurgent conscription is a form of coerced recruitment whereby rebels use their administrative capacity to impel civilians to become insurgents.

Insurgent conscription can be a stand-alone policy, like the LTTE's 'one child per family' system. It may also occur through obligatory military training or the use of rebel-controlled institutions, like schools or community centers, to identify and forcibly enlist individuals. Insurgent conscription is not a rare phenomenon. According to my coding, of the 136 distinct armed groups engaged in dyadic conflict from 1946-2008 that controlled territory, 48 armed groups employed insurgent conscription at some point.

The prevalence of insurgent conscription raises the question: when do rebels opt to employ insurgent conscription? I contend that to understand this type of rebel recruitment, it is important to examine not only rebel group characteristics, but also how the state treats rebel groups' civilian constituents. Building on scholarship that shows how state targeting of civilians reshapes rebel-civilian relationships and rebel recruitment, I examine effect of state violence on insurgent conscription. I show that when rebel constituents are the victims of state violence, rebel groups are more likely to employ insurgent conscription. These findings bear not only on the relationship between violence and mobilization in civil war, but also on our understanding of rebel governance and civilian victimization during conflict.

2.1 Puzzles in the Existing Literature

Coercion in rebel recruitment can take several forms. Coercion might entail psychological pressure and manipulation or explicit threats and use of violence (D. K. Cohen, 2016; Eck, 2014; Gates, 2017). Where rebels can limit civilians movement and choices, they may be able to use non-violent, methods of 'passive coercion' to secure community support, including recruits (Lilja, 2009). Though scholars have recognized this spectrum of coercion, most examinations of forced recruitment have not probed the determinants of different types of coercion, nor have they specified how strategies along this spectrum are distinct. Work probing the drivers of forced recruitment largely does not differentiate between the range of strategies armed groups employ to compel civilians to fight.

To date, explanations of forced recruitment—rebels forcibly recruit when external sources

of economic and social capital render civilian support insignificant (Faulkner, 2016; Haer et al., 2020; Weinstein, 2007), after economic and military shocks shorten their time horizons (Eck, 2014; Gates, 2017), or when death and migration diminish the pool of potential combatants (Cederman et al., 2020)—are difficult to reconcile with empirical realities. They do not account for why groups with popular legitimacy coerce recruits. They also fail to explain why armed groups oversee governing institutions designed, at least in part, to secure support from communities and force civilians to take up arms.

Existing theory further suggests that armed groups will not employ coercion when they have sufficient pools of voluntary recruits. Yet, some armed groups, like the LTTE (Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, p. 288) and the CPN-M (Eck, 2014), continued, adopted, or intensified coerced recruitment following campaigns of state violence against their constituents. This type of state targeting can mobilize new pools of recruits in opposition to the state (Cederman et al., 2013, 2020; Goodwin, 2001; S. N. Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007; Mason & Krane, 1989; Schubiger, 2023; Viterna, 2013a; E. J. Wood, 2003), seemingly rendering forced recruitment unnecessary.

This paper conceptualizes *insurgent conscription* as a specific form of rebel forced recruitment and unpacks its logic. In doing so, it prompts a reconsideration of what types of rebel groups might employ forced recruitment and of the relationship between state violence and forced recruitment. I posit that sustained state violence against a rebel group’s civilian constituency incentivizes rebels to employ insurgent conscription. I test the argument using original data that covers the 136 distinct armed groups that controlled territory and fought a dyadic conflict between 1946 and 2008. This paper thus provides insights into puzzles that existing literature leaves unaddressed: the use of forced recruitment by rebels with strong authority over civilians and the use of forced recruitment following state violence. I show that state violence against rebels’ civilian constituencies can incentivize armed groups with strong links to civilians to adopt a specific form of forced recruitment: insurgent conscription.

This paper builds on scholarship highlighting more ‘passive’ forms of rebel coercion (e.g.,

D. K. Cohen, 2016; Lilja, 2009) by presenting a typology of coercive rebel recruitment and providing a novel theory of how state behavior shapes rebel coercion. It contributes to work examining the relationship between state violence and rebel behavior and work interrogating rebel-civilian relationships more broadly.

2.2 A Logic of Insurgent Conscription

2.2.1 Key Concepts

I differentiate one particular form of rebel forced recruitment: *insurgent conscription*. Two main criteria distinguish *insurgent conscription* from other forms of rebel forced recruitment. First, insurgent conscription occurs in communities rebels control. Second, conscription cannot occur without the use of rebel governing authority. While other forms of forced recruitment may occur in areas of rebel authority, they are not bound to these areas. Further, armed groups using other forms forced recruitment may have administrative capacity, but the forced recruitment itself does not depend upon this capacity. These forms of forced recruitment can be encouraged, sanctioned, or ordered by rebel leadership, but they are not channeled through other elements of rebel administration. They require only violence or the threat of violence.

The recruitment strategies of the the Nicaraguan Contras and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the armed wing of the Karen National Union (KNU) and the Nicaraguan Contras illustrate the distinction insurgent conscription and other types of rebel forced recruitment.

The Contras frequently abducted civilians from coffee plantations, busses, and other areas outside of their authority (Beamish, 1987):

The rebel unit flagged down the local bus in northern Nicaragua and summarily ordered the male passengers to get out. Then, without further explanation, the guerrillas gave the order: the men would follow the rebels to a contra camp. The women were told to get on their way, according to several witnesses and human-rights officials. The mass kidnapping two months ago near the town

of Siuna is one of several reports of forced recruitment of civilians (Lemoine, 1987).

On the other hand, the KNLA—a clear case of insurgent conscription—relied on its governing power, not merely its armed capacity, to compel civilians to fight. Further, the KNLA forcibly recruited only civilians living under its influence. It did not recruit refugees or randomly abduct non-combatants.

None of the KNLA porters interviewed had been arbitrarily seized at gunpoint and Amnesty International spoke to no refugees who were conscripted either to porter or to act as soldiers... Rather, the KNLA appear to conscript soldiers and porters according to a quota system by village in their areas of control, in a similar fashion to how the Tatmadaw conscripts soldiers (AI, 1995, p. 35).

Insurgent conscription is a *system* of forced recruitment targeted only at communities living under rebel control: rebels use their governing authority to order civilians to fight for them. Conscription might be a stand-alone policy or be tied to other rebel institutions like taxation systems, schools, or control over community spaces. Importantly, territorial control and administrative capacity are necessary, but not sufficient conditions for insurgent conscription. Indeed, armed groups might control territory and have governing authority, but rely on other forms of forced recruitment. However, these other forms of forced recruitment do not *require* other policies or institutions and its victims do not always live under rebel authority.

I investigate the impact of state violence against rebel constituencies on insurgent conscription. In particular, this article studies sustained, lethal, *collective* state violence—the targeting of a population based on shared attributes—against an armed group’s civilian support base.¹ *Collective* targeting (Gutiérrez-Sanín & Wood, 2017) is distinct from *selective* targeting (S. Kalyvas, 2006)—which victimizes specific individuals—and from *indiscriminate* targeting—which is arbitrary (Lyall, 2009). State forces frequently unleash collective

¹ Throughout the text ‘state violence’ and ‘state targeting’ refer to this form of violence

or “group-selective” (Straus, 2015) violence against civilians who share group-attributes with rebels (Gutiérrez-Sanín & Wood, 2017; Schubiger, 2021b; Steele, 2009; R. M. Wood, 2010). State forces in Peru, for example, primarily killed indigenous civilians, presuming that the Shining Path chiefly recruited from indigenous communities (Schubiger, 2021b). Sustained, collective state violence against a rebel group’s civilian constituency diminishes rebel military capacity and enhances the urgency of civilian compliance, while at the same time isolating civilians from the state.² It is these effects that encourage rebel groups to adopt insurgent conscription.³

2.2.2 State Violence and Rebel Recruitment

Recruitment methods impact an armed group’s ability to mobilize and retain a sufficiently large and qualified fighting force and shore up non-combatant support. Both of these objectives are imperative to insurgency’s success.

How does state violence impact the benefits and drawbacks of recruitment strategies? I theorize that state violence makes insurgent conscription—either as a stand-alone method or in combination with other recruitment strategies—more attractive than alternatives. This is surprising given that state violence can mobilize new pools of willing fighters. I identify two mechanisms through which state violence against rebel constituencies encourages rebels to employ insurgent conscription. First, it simultaneously depletes rebel forces and exerts immense pressure on rebel groups to demonstrate military strength. Dedicating resources to conscription becomes worthwhile, given that conscription eases indoctrination and aids in policing defection. Second, state violence lowers armed groups’ estimations of the likelihood of organized civilian backlash to conscription, thereby reducing obstacles to

² I assume that a large portion of sustained, collective state violence against a rebel group’s civilian constituency is unleashed in areas where armed groups assert territorial control. While such violence can be targeted at civilians who share other identifiers with armed groups, like language or ethnicity, it is often targeted at groups who share a geographic location with armed groups (Schubiger, 2023).

³ I do not expect selective or indiscriminate state violence to encourage insurgent conscription. Absent incredible state intelligence capacity, selective targeting does not place the same military strain on rebel groups as collective targeting because it does not victimize as many people. Since selective violence typically targets visible collaborators and members, it is also less likely to threaten a rebel group’s quotidian connections to civilians. Given its arbitrary nature, the brunt of indiscriminate violence is unlikely to be bore entirely, or even mostly, by the support base of any particular rebel group.

its implementation. Table 2.1 summarizes this theoretical logic.

Table 2.1: Summary of Theoretical Logic

	↑ Military pressure	
State violence →	↓ Indoctrination and monitoring capacity	→ ↑ Rebel demand for insurgent conscription
	↑ Urgency of civilian support	
	↑ Divisions between civilians and state	→ ↓ Armed group estimation of civilian backlash to insurgent conscription

Moreover, I posit that insurgent conscription is likely to endure as an institution. State violence prompts a longer-term shift toward insurgent conscription. I elaborate on these mechanisms and arguments below.

Insurgent Conscription for Military Capacity

Rebel groups need a large and effective fighting force to mount a response to state violence (Cederman et al., 2020). Yet, state violence impedes armed groups ability to do so. I make two assumptions about how state violence impacts rebel personnel and recruitment institutions. First, state violence depletes rebel ranks alongside its civilian support base, increasing the need for new recruits (Schubiger, 2023). Second, the state can sow discord within a rebel group by targeting its civilian constituency. State violence hampers the tools—indoctrination and socialization mechanisms—armed groups require to manage surges of volunteer recruits and ensure their loyalty (Schubiger, 2023).

In the presence of immense military pressure and the absence of full screening, indoctrination, and monitoring capacity, insurgent conscription becomes more attractive. It allows rebel groups to forgo the costly individual screening required by voluntary recruitment and the uncertainty of other forms of forced recruitment because armed groups have knowledge of the communities they conscript from. They can therefore target individuals that may be easier to indoctrinate, or, where indoctrination fails, use their knowledge and control over the population to better prevent defection.

When met with a military setback, insurgents need to prove to the state and to civilians

that they can contest state power (Cederman et al., 2020). During the Ugandan Bush War, Milton Obote and the United National Liberation Army (UNLA) unleashed a scorched earth campaign in the National Resistance Army (NRA)-held Luwero Triangle between 1982 and 1983. In 1984, the NRA responded by storming an army base in Masindi, an area where it was not previously active, to demonstrate its resilience and strength in the face of a massive government offensive (Schubert, 2006). Following the 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre in Northern Ireland, there was a widespread sense among many Catholics that no peaceful solution to the Troubles existed. As a result, violence by the IRA surged (Hamill, 1985). Large-scale violence against an insurgency’s civilian base actuates a violent response from rebels, as the desire for retaliation and vengeance (Arjona, 2016a; E. J. Wood, 2003) and the need to signal strength (Cederman et al., 2020; Eck, 2014) swell.

State violence disjoints insurgent groups and requires them to shift strategy, reducing armed group capacity to screen new members, indoctrinate them through political education and socialization (Schubiger, 2023), and to monitor their behavior. Screening and indoctrination are fundamental to battlefield efficacy (Hanson, 2021; Hoover Green, 2016b; Kenny, 2010; Mironova, 2019). Monitoring recruits’ behavior is important to prevent desertion and ensure recruits are working for the goals of the group. Indoctrination and monitoring are particularly critical for other types of forced recruits who might otherwise defect at the first opportunity (Eck, 2014; Gates, 2017; Haer et al., 2013). State violence creates conditions where indoctrinating volunteer recruits is crucial to the integrity of the group. It drives an influx of new recruits committed to the battle against the state, but not necessarily to the ideology of the armed group they join, which can cause splintering (Schubiger, 2023). Extremely strong rebel organizations may be able to preserve screening and indoctrination capabilities following state violence. These organizations can better rely on volunteer recruits of other types of forced recruits the wake of state violence.

However, for the large majority of rebel groups, insurgent conscription solves a core problem. It reduces the necessity of indoctrination and eases the screening of recruits because rebel groups conduct insurgent conscription in communities they assert authority

over, and thereby, have working knowledge of. They can target segments of the population that are easier to socialize (e.g., members of families known to be sympathetic to the group's cause, individuals who share group identities with existing members, or children who have been exposed to rebel ideology through schools or cultural performances and may be more vulnerable to indoctrination). The preexisting relationship between armed groups enables armed groups to expediently screen potential recruits and helps socialize new fighters (Staniland, 2014a).⁴

Where conscripts prove resistant to indoctrination, insurgent conscription affords rebels a powerful mechanism to police non-compliance: reprisal against conscripts' families. Rebels wield influence over conscripts' home communities. They can deter defection by punishing the family members and close connections of recruits who attempt to flee. A young man conscripted into the KNLA described how the group fined his parents after he attempted to flee. The threat of additional fines drove his decision to remain in the group (HRW, 2002b, p. 122). Witnessing rebels threaten and punish defectors' families deters future defection. The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) required each family in its strongholds throughout the midwestern and western hills of Nepal to forfeit one of their children to the rebellion (HRW, 2007). A teenage girl conscripted by the CPN-M told Human Rights Watch, "It was very hard to flee, because they were watching new people very closely. Some of my friends tried to flee, but the Maoists then locked their houses and beat their family members—I was afraid the same would happen to my family if I attempted to escape" (HRW, 2007, pp. 47-48).

While conscription solves an acute need for military capacity in the aftermath of state violence, it does not lose its value when state targeting campaigns end. Rather, it prompts a long-term shift in recruitment strategy. Reduced reliance on indoctrination and higher screening ability are desirable to rebels even once the need for large numbers of effective

⁴ Preexisting connections between armed group leaders and conscripts and among conscripts also limit rebel group reliance on methods of socialization with negative consequences for armed group legitimacy and long-run cohesion, like sexual violence, as these methods are used to bond together fighters with weak links to one other (D. K. Cohen, 2016).

recruits dissipates.

Insurgent Conscription for Community Control

I argue that state violence increases both the incentives and the capacity of rebels to use insurgent conscription as a means of community control. Maintaining civilian support is fundamental to armed group survival following state violence. Insurgent conscription has the potential to extend rebel control over civilians but can also incite civilian resistance to rebel rule. State violence diminishes rebels' estimation of the possibility of civilian retaliation against insurgent conscription and provides rebels with tools to incentivize compliance with conscription.

Conscription can extend rebel reach into the lives of non-combatants and foster direct ties between communities and the rebel group. Community control can determine group survival in the wake of state violence. State targeting can diminish insurgent strength by shrinking the group's civilian base, encouraging civilians to withdraw support (Lyall, 2009), or even driving mobilization against the group (Schubiger, 2021b). State violence also disrupts the flow of critical resources—including food, material goods, and arms—into rebel coffers (Balcells, 2010; Fjelde & Hultman, 2014; B. Valentino et al., 2004; B. A. Valentino et al., 2006). Non-combatant supporters are integral to delivering these resources to armed groups. In September 1982, Israeli Defense Force (IDF)-allied Christian militias massacred thousands of civilians in camps in South Beirut. (Parkinson, 2013b). The PLO withstood the shock of this targeting because of continued support from their non-combatant constituency, especially women, who the IDF and Christian militias were less likely to demobilize (Parkinson, 2013b).

Despite its abusive nature, insurgent conscription forges 'vertical ties' between the organizers of rebellion and communities, engendering civilian cooperation (Staniland, 2014a). Rebel governance is often framed as encompassing the non-violent aspects of rebel organization (C. Loyle, 2020), yet violence, or the threat of violence, can be central to rebel governing institutions (S. Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 114, 117). The 'one child per family' pol-

icy implemented by the LTTE generated fear among the population in LTTE-territory (Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, p. 1018), and subsequently, ensured compliance. Insurgent conscription can aid rebels in compelling support from civilians in rebel-controlled areas because it demonstrates rebels' coercive capacity. Insurgent conscription can also enhance rebel control over communities by bringing large numbers of non-combatants into the fold. Conscription guarantees most families living in rebel-controlled areas have direct connections to the insurgency. This might lead non-combatants to identify with the rebellion and have a stake in its success.

Scholarship on state conscription posits that drafting a mass army is a strategy for cementing national loyalty (Krebs, 2004) and can foment nationalist commitments (Posen, 1993). Further, state conscription extends the reach of the state and increases state control over the lives of its citizens (Levi, 1996). While insurgent conscription is distinct from state conscription in its reach and implementation and insurgents are distinct from the state in their organization and control, there are parallels between the motivation and effects of state and insurgent conscription. Governing rebel groups aim, to varying degrees, to construct parallel state institutions and overtake the functions of the state.⁵ Like state conscription, insurgent conscription forces a great number of individuals to bear the burden of military service. In doing so, it makes certain most community members in rebel strongholds have personal and familial ties to the insurgency and exhibits the extent of insurgent reach into community affairs. Both dynamics enhance insurgent control over non-combatant populations.

Yet, conscription can also anger and alienate civilians and mitigating the consequences of backlash to conscription can have high costs.⁶ State violence decreases rebel perceptions

⁵ Secessionist rebel groups may be particularly concerned with constructing parallel state institutions (Stewart, 2018a) and building national identity. The constituencies of secessionist rebels might also share a stronger sense of national identity *a priori*. Insurgent conscription could then be both easier and more attractive to secessionist rebels. To probe this possibility, I replicate my analysis with rebel group aim (secessionist or non-secessionist) as an additional covariate. The results are reported in Appendix A.2.2. My results hold. The covariate balance diagnostics for the matching models are reported in Figure A.2b of Appendix A.5

⁶ For example, *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) reliance on insurgent conscription during Peru's civil war (1982-1999) invoked defiance from its civilian constituency that imperiled the resources it needed to survive

of the likelihood of civilian backlash to insurgent conscription and affords rebel groups tools to justify the practice. State brutality deepens chasms between targeted populations and state forces, decreasing the likelihood civilians will defect to the state. Rebel groups are then able to frame conscription as necessary and pose compliance with conscription as a communal duty. Moreover, rebels can leverage the order and benefits of their administration to extract civilian compliance and to differentiate themselves from the state. The isolating and mobilizing impacts of state targeting and the ability of rebels to control civilians and attract their support through more beneficial governing institutions together increase rebels' estimation that conscription is a tool for civilian compliance, rather than a source of civilian revolt.

Rebel groups feel more leeway to exploit civilians after state violence because they perceive civilians' have limited willingness and ability to defect to the state. The LTTE in Sri Lanka employed forced recruitment throughout its existence, but the practice grew more prominent and systematic as state targeting of Tamil civilians became more vicious (Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, p. 288). State abuses allowed the LTTE to maintain the support, or at least the compliance, of a vast network of civilians despite its use of forced conscription and other abuses (Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, p. 296). Rebels' perceived costs to civilian compliance for insurgent conscription are partially shaped by whether the government can provide an outlet for civilian security concerns (Eck, 2014, p. 384), which is unlikely following severe state repression.⁷

State violence does not inoculate rebel groups against civilian resistance (Arjona, 2016a; Schubiger, 2021b; E. J. Wood, 2003). However, it provides armed groups tools to justify insurgent conscription and encourage compliance with the practice. Rebels can frame in-

(del Pino, 1998, p. 166). The group continued conscription and retained the civilian compliance it needed only through extensive civilian control mechanisms and ruthless repression of dissent (del Pino, 1998).

⁷ It is possible that individuals might flee the region or the country to avoid conscription, but out-migration is complicated, potentially dangerous, and requires people to leave their communities and land behind. As such, several scholars have found that civilians are not likely to flee in response to low-level violence during civil war (Alvarado & Massey, 2010; Bohra-Mishra & Massey, 2011; Morrison, 1993). I posit the same is likely true in response to insurgent conscription.

insurgent conscription as a necessary form of governance in the wake of state abuse and sell compliance with conscription as fulfilling one's duty to fight against the unjust state. Though the Pathet Laos instituted military drafts in the areas it controlled as early as 1959 (Zasloff 1973, 78), compulsory military service became even more systematized in 1962 when the Royal Laotian Army (RLA)—buttressed by support from the United States—ramped up its targeting of suspected civilian supporters of the Pathet Laos (Conboy, 2009; Zasloff, 1973, p. 81). Appeals to national duty were used to exert pressure on identified recruits and further entrench insurgent conscription. The Pathet Laos invoked United States imperialism and the Laotian government's cooperation with the United States to compel recruits (Zasloff, 1973, p. 78). In some instances, state violence not only grants rebel groups greater impunity for coercion, but also allow rebels to frame the coercive practice of conscription as an honor.

Rebel groups can also tie benefits derived from their authority like healthcare and protection, which may be especially important following state violence, to compliance with insurgent conscription. Compliance with the LTTE's one child per family system exempted individuals from rebel taxes and improved access to healthcare and other services (Hogg, 2006). During the civil war in Angola, UNITA constituents had to fulfill labor obligations in exchange for the right to receive services like health, education, and food (Pearce, 2012, p. 459).

State violence diminishes rebel groups' assessment of the probability of civilian resistance to conscription in three ways. First, it creates a perception among rebel groups that civilians, feeling aggrieved and alienated by the state, are less likely to defect to the government. Second state abuse provides rebels with a rhetorical tool, allowing them to justify their conscription policies as necessary measures to combat state oppression. Third, when faced with resistance, rebel groups can leverage access to governing benefits that are critical in the wake of state violence, like healthcare and protection, to incentivize civilian support and enforce compliance with conscription. Where rebels perceive a lower threat of collective resistance, insurgent conscription offers a benefit that other forms of recruitment do not:

the ability to use recruitment to demonstrate coercive capacity and tie entire communities to one's movement.

Though these impacts are likely to be strongest in the immediate aftermath of state violence, the legacies of civilian targeting are long-lasting. State repression can reduce trust in government for decades (Osorio et al., 2018; Wang, 2019). The isolating impacts of state violence which allow for the introduction of insurgent conscription are unlikely to dissipate quickly. Additionally, while civilian compliance is an acute need for armed groups after state violence, it is still important once state violence ends. Rebels have reason to maintain systems of conscription.

2.2.3 Observable Implications

My theory leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Following state violence against their civilian constituencies, rebels are more likely to employ insurgent conscription.

2.3 Data, Measures, and Empirical Strategy

2.3.1 Data and Measures

Scope and Coverage

The unit of analysis is the dyad-year of state-based intrastate conflict. The coverage of the data is limited by the theoretical scope conditions for insurgent conscription: rebel groups with capacity to control territory. Because territorial control is endogenous to conflict dynamics and it is empirically difficult to capture changes to control over short periods of time, I only include groups that controlled territory in the first two years of dyadic conflict. In other words, I treat control over territory at the outset of conflict as evidence that rebel groups have the capacity to establish the control conscription requires. I therefore restrict the set of all dyadic conflicts from 1946-2008 (UCDP dyadic conflict dataset, Version 18.1) to dyads where rebels controlled territory in the first two years of conflict. To identify this subset, I use data from D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009.

Following Schubiger, 2023, I include up to five dyad-years following the termination of

conflict and between active years, if the armed group remains active. This is because the dynamics of interest—state violence and insurgent conscription—may occur even when a conflict does not reach the annual 25-battle death threshold that determines inclusion in UCDP. These selection criteria yield 1,415 dyad-year observations across 136 dyads. Table 2.2 reports the frequency of insurgent conscription among territory-controlling rebels across armed groups, armed group-years, countries, and years.

Table 2.2: Frequency of Insurgent Conscription

	Frequency	Percent
Across Armed Groups		
IC employed	48	35.2
IC not employed	88	64.8
Total	136	100
Across Armed Group-Years		
IC employed	493	34.8
IC not employed	922	65.2
Total	1415	100
Across Countries		
IC employed	25	49.0
IC not employed	26	51.0
Total	51	100
Across Years (1946-2008)		
IC employed	61	96.8
IC not employed	2	3.2
Total	63	100

The data also provides insight into how the use of insurgent conscription varies within groups. Among groups that adopt insurgent conscription, the average number of consecutive years armed groups employ the strategy is 9.875. It is very rare that armed groups abandon the strategy once they adopt it: only two of the forty eight groups that employed insurgent conscription abandoned the strategy entirely. These descriptive statistics conform to my theoretical expectation that insurgent conscription is a ‘sticky’ institution.

Insurgent Conscription

I collect original data on *insurgent conscription*. The coding is based on numerous sources, including the U.S. State Department’s annual Country Reports on Human Rights

Practices, academic articles, books, reports from independent human rights organizations, and news sources.

I code that a rebel group employed insurgent conscription in a given dyad-year if sources provide evidence that conscripts were drawn from populations living under rebel administration and relied upon other formal rebel institutions to conduct forced recruitment. Fulfillment of the first criterion includes references to forced recruitment occurring in rebel-controlled territory. Fulfillment of the second criterion includes descriptions of forced recruitment being conducted through rebel-controlled schools, forced recruitment as a form of rebel taxation, forced recruitment as a stand-alone policy, or forced recruitment being conducted through rebel control of local institutions or leaders. Both of these criteria must be fulfilled for a insurgent conscription to be coded 1.

Determining whether the criteria for insurgent conscription were fulfilled in a given dyad-year from secondary sources proved difficult at times. For example, data was less robust for armed groups that only operated for a short period of time or were active in the earlier years of my dataset. In these cases, scholarly works on particular rebel groups and civil wars were useful in determining the recruitment strategy employed in a given dyad-year. These sources tended to provide more detail on armed group strategy—including recruitment—over time than human rights reports or news stories. For more recent dyad-years, documentation of forced recruitment was often easily accessible from human rights organizations. Descriptions of forced recruitment in these reports nearly always specified where forced recruitment was occurring and the methods used to conduct forced recruitment. Of course, there is likely to be some level of bias in the source materials and in the availability of information across time and space. To mitigate these biases, I rely on numerous sources to code each dyad-year. Moreover, as I describe in section 4.2, the matching method I employ helps ameliorate concerns about measurement error across time because it only makes comparisons within the same periods of time.

Existing data on forced recruitment provide rich information on the proportion of forced (child) recruits in a given armed group (Beber & Blattman, 2013; Haer & Böhmelt, 2016;

Haer et al., 2020)), how often groups used forced recruitment in a given year (Walsh et al., 2023), forced recruitment of children (Beber & Blattman, 2013; Haer et al., 2020), and the degree of violence used in forced recruitment (D. K. Cohen, 2016). My dataset indicates whether forced recruitment relied on other formal armed group institutions or solely violence or threats of violence. It therefore provides unique information on the methods of forced recruitment beyond distinguishing between explicitly violent and non-explicitly violent forced recruitment. Moreover, my dataset includes information on whether forced recruitment occurred inside or outside areas of rebel control.

Appendix ?? provides coding examples. Appendix A.3 includes a more detailed comparison of my data with existing datasets on rebel forced recruitment. Moreover, Appendix A.3 provides a test of the relationship between state violence and the measure of forced recruitment in the Rebel Human Rights Violations (RHRV) dataset (Walsh et al., 2023). This the most appropriate existing data on forced recruitment to compare my data on insurgent conscription to as it has global coverage, is coded at the dyad-year level, and covers forced recruitment of children and adults. I do not find a positive, significant relationship between state violence and forced recruitment writ large.

State Violence

My independent variable, *state violence*, records whether an armed group’s constituency was among the targets of a state violence campaign in at least two consecutive years. It takes a value of 1 for each year in which state violence targeted the dyad of interest in at least two years and 0 otherwise. An armed group enters ‘treatment’ in the third year its constituency is targeted by state violence and remains ‘treated’ until its constituency ceases to be targeted or until the state violence campaign ends.

The data on state violence is drawn from Schubiger, 2023, a recoded version of Ulfelder and Valentino, 2008. Ulfelder and Valentino, 2008 examine state-led mass killings, defined as events where “actions of state agents result in the intentional death of at least 1,000 non-combatants from a discrete group in a period of sustained violence” (Ulfelder & Valentino,

2008, p. 2). A state-led mass killing episode starts in the first year that at least 100 civilian deaths are recorded and ends after fewer than 100 civilian deaths are recorded for three consecutive years. Schubiger, 2023's data records state-led collective violence: whether or not a state-led mass killing in any particular year of dyadic conflict was targeted at the non-combatant constituency of the armed group involved in that dyad. Critically, because numerous armed groups and constituencies can be simultaneously affected by an episode of mass killing, there is no fixed fatality threshold for an episode of state-led collective violence. The coding does not reflect whether 100 individuals from a particular constituency were killed during an episode of state violence, but rather whether a constituency was affected by collective state violence during a state-led mass killing. The coding does, however, reflect the collective nature of targeting. There must be evidence that members of a rebel constituency were targeted because of group-level characteristics that associated them with the armed group. It thus distinguishes between indiscriminate violence that happens to include members of a certain group and collective violence that targets victims precisely because they belong (or are assumed to belong) to a particular group.

I create a threshold based on the duration of targeting—targeting occurring in at least two consecutive years—to determine whether a group is ‘treated’. This is theoretically motivated: the deleterious effects of state violence on insurgent military capacity and community support which necessitate the employment of insurgent conscription depend on the intensity of that targeting. A brief episode of targeting, especially when its human toll is unknown, does not exert the same degree of pressure on armed groups as sustained targeting. My results are robust to different duration thresholds, as reported in Appendix A.2.3.

Confounders

I include several variables that could impact both state violence against civilians and rebel recruitment strategy. Where feasible, I measure covariates annually.

The binary variable *excluded* records whether a rebel group recruits from a politically

excluded ethnic group, measured at the onset of the dyad Vogt et al., 2015. Existing ties between rebel groups and ethnic groups can shape recruitment patterns (Gates, 2002). The state is also more likely to victimize politically excluded groups (Ulfelder & Valentino, 2008). Additionally, I control for the scale of political exclusion with the variable *excluded population* which reports the percentage of the population without access to the levers of state power Vogt et al., 2015.

I include control variables that measure rebel capacity and its sources, since these shape rebel recruitment and the state's perception of rebel threat. I control for the *relative fighting capacity* of rebels vis-à-vis the state D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009. I also control for the presence of external *rebel support* at the onset of conflict D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009 and a binary indicator of whether armed groups earn income from natural resources (Walsh et al., 2018), as these funding sources may encourage forced recruitment (Haer et al., 2020; Weinstein, 2007). Because the level of inter-group competition impacts state behavior and patterns of rebel violence (Findley & Young, 2012) and recruitment, I include the *number of dyads* involved in the first year of armed conflict D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009.

I control for *communist ideology*, which takes a value of 1 if the rebel group expressed a communist ideology and 0 otherwise (J. M. Braithwaite & Cunningham, 2019). Communist ideology is strongly correlated with rebel governance (Hoover Green, 2016b; S. N. Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010b), which requires rebels develop governing institutions and is itself an element of governance. Communist armed groups also tend to fight irregular wars, which features more state violence against civilians than conventional wars (Balcells & Kalyvas, 2014; S. N. Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010b; B. Valentino et al., 2004).

I include *conflict intensity* an ordinal variable that takes a value of 0 if annual battle deaths number between 0-25, 1 if they number 25-999, and 2 if they number above 1,000 as a covariate. Battle deaths can be accompanied by civilian targeting and also shape rebel recruitment needs and strategies. I expand upon the relationship between state-led collective violence, conflict intensity, and insurgent conscription in section 5.1.

In the matching models, I control for *pre-treatment outcome*, that is, whether or not

armed groups employed insurgent conscription before treatment. I omit this control from the linear probability models, given that it can upward bias the estimate of the pre-treatment outcome, leading to overfitting, and downward bias other covariates (Achen, 2001; Bellemare et al., 2017; Keele & Kelly, 2006). Since my ‘treatment’—state violence—can reverse, it might also introduce post-treatment bias. To further probe the temporal dynamics of insurgent conscription, I code alternate versions of my dependent variable that takes a value of 1 only in the first year armed groups employ insurgent conscription. In Appendix A.2.4, I report the results of matching models and linear probability models with this alternate outcome. In the linear probability models, I include a binary indicator for pre-1980 dyad-years. Likely in part because of a lack of information on armed group recruitment before 1980, Insurgent conscription is observed in my data set more frequently from 1980 onward. The matching method for time-series cross-sectional data helps ameliorate concerns about measurement error across time, because it only makes comparisons within the same periods of time. So, I only include the pre-1980 control in linear probability models.

2.3.2 Empirical Strategy

To examine the effect of state violence on the likelihood of insurgent conscription I use the matching approach for time-series cross-sectional data proposed by Imai et al., 2018. I also present results from linear probability models with standard errors clustered by dyad and country to address potential spill-over effects.

In the matching approach, I match each treated observation—dyad-years where a rebel group’s civilian constituency experienced state violence—with control observations from other dyads in the same time period with identical treatment histories up to pre-determined time lags.⁸ Then, I apply covariate balancing propensity score (CBPS) weighting to ensure these matched sets are similar on relevant covariates. I select CBPS weighting because it reduces imbalance across my covariates more than other matching methods. Covariate

⁸ I allow for ‘treatment reversal’ meaning that a treated unit may enter into the control state if the treatment ceases before the outcome is measured.

balance diagnostics are reported in Figure A.2a in Appendix A.5. Lastly, I use the non-parametric generalization of the difference-in-differences estimator to calculate the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT). In other words, treatment and control observations from different dyads with identical treatment histories up to pre-specified time periods and similar covariate values are compared to one another with a difference-in-differences estimator that adjusts for a potential time trend.

In my analysis, all covariates are measured before the onset of ‘treatment’—exposure to state violence—and treatment status is observed before the presence or absence of insurgent conscription is observed.

In order to define the causal quantity of interest—the ATT—the matching approach used here first requires the specification of two key parameters: the number of time periods after treatment at which the outcome of interest will be measured—or the number of years for which the treatment is expected to exert an effect on the outcome of interest—and the number of lags adjusted for—or the number of years back for which the outcome depends on the treatment history. I estimate the ATT for 1 to 3 years after exposure to state violence and use both 1 and 2 year pre-treatment periods to select control units.⁹ In other words, for each treated observation, a matched set of control units with identical treatment history from time $t - 1$ and $t - 2$ are selected, where t is the onset of treatment. Treated observations that do not share an identical treatment history with any control units within these time periods are discarded.¹⁰ I further refine matched sets to ensure balance on covariate values using CBPS weighting. I conduct analyses where I match on missing values and analyses where I do not. I then estimate the ATT of exposure to state violence, where the counterfactual outcome is the weighted average of the control units in the refined matched set. Lastly, I compute the difference-in-differences estimate of the ATT

⁹ This causal estimator assumes that there is no spill-over effect between units, but does allow for carryover effects within the specified pre-treatment periods.

¹⁰ Insurgent conscription is observed in my data set more frequently from 1980 onward. This is likely correlated with the lack of information on armed group recruitment before 1980. This method helps to ameliorate concerns about measurement error across time, because it only makes comparisons within the same periods of time.

for each treated observation and average it across all treated observations, as proposed by Imai et al., 2018.

This method offers several advantages over alternatives for time-series cross-sectional data. Imai et al., 2018 demonstrate that this method is preferable to linear regression with two-way fixed effects, a common inference strategy for time-series cross-sectional data for several reasons. It does not rely on a linearity assumption and enables a more intuitive interpretation of how counter-factual outcomes are estimated. The non-parametric generalization of the difference-in-differences estimator proposed by Imai et al., 2018 replaces the ‘sequential ignorability’ assumption— or the assumption that no unobserved confounders exist— with the parallel trends assumption after conditioning on treatment, outcome, and covariate histories. Therefore, the method is more robust to model-misspecification than alternatives (Imai et al., 2018). Additionally, the method allows for matching on missing values, which is useful where missingness might convey important information. This is especially valuable in my analysis, as I follow Schubiger, 2023 and include up to five dyad-years after the UCDP-determined end of conflict. Control data for these years are often missing.

One downside of this method is that it assumes there is no spill-over effect between units. Since multiple dyadic conflicts might be simultaneously active in a given country and rebel groups within a country might ally with or fight one another, spill-over is a possibility. There is also a trade-off between accuracy of matches and number of matches. Because the method only matches treatment units to control units from the same time period and with identical treatment histories, and further refines matches through weighting, the analysis is based on a relatively low number of matches. I therefore complement the matching approach with linear probability models with standard errors clustered on dyad and country. For these linear probability models, I present results with no covariates, with a subset of covariates for which there are none or very few missing values, and with the full set of covariates. This is because controlling for the full set of covariates significantly decreases the number of observations due to missingness, since my data includes non-active dyad-years for up to five years following the end of the dyad.

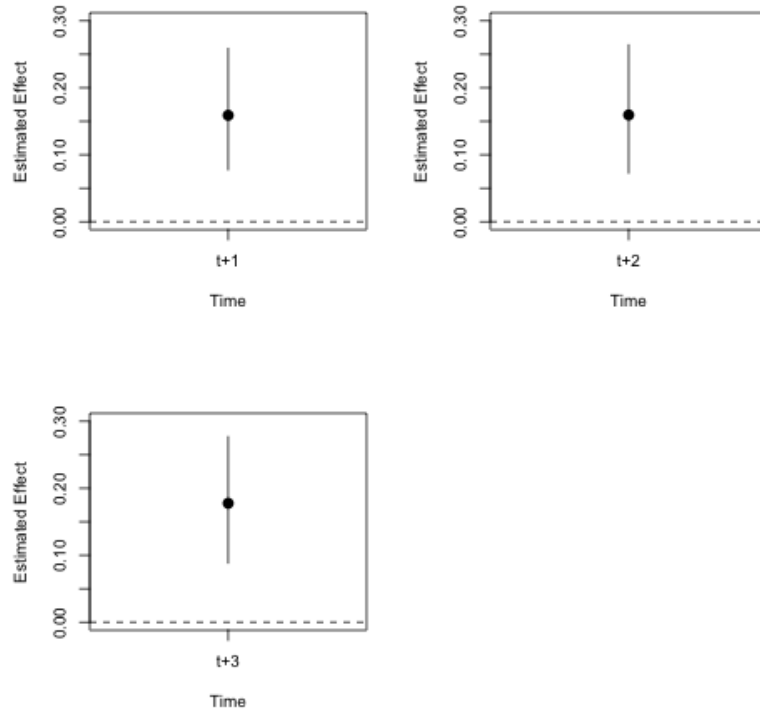


FIGURE 2.1: Estimated Effect of State Violence on Insurgent Conscription over Time

2.4 Analysis and Results

The results of my analysis support my theoretical expectations. Figure 2.1 depicts the estimated effect of state violence on the likelihood of insurgent conscription for the first three years after exposure to such violence. In these estimates, 1 pre-treatment year is used to identify matches and matching on missing values is permitted.¹¹ The results demonstrate that rebels are 16.0% more likely to adopt insurgent conscription one year after exposure to sustained state targeting, 16.4% more likely to do so two years after exposure, and 18.4% more likely to do so three years after exposure. All of these estimates are statistically significant.

Table 2.3 reports the estimated effect of state violence on the likelihood of insurgent

¹¹ Matching on missing values is important because it allows for the inclusion of dyad-years where the armed group is active, but battle-deaths do not reach the threshold required for inclusion in the UCDP dyadic armed conflict dataset. In these dyad-years, information on several conflict specific covariates is missing.

scription using several different specifications. Control units are selected based on treatment history for 1 and 2 years before the onset of treatment. Matched pairs are further refined to ensure similarity on theoretically relevant covariates using CBPS weighting. The Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT) is then estimated using the non-parametric generalization of the difference-in-differences estimator. With the 1 year pre-treatment period, up to 15 control units are matched to each treatment unit, as the number of possible control units is larger. For the 2 year pre-treatment period, up to 10 control units are matched to each treatment unit, as the pool of potential control units is smaller.

Panel 1 of Table 2.3 reports the estimated effects depicted in Figure 2.1. Panel 2 of Table 2.3 demonstrates that the estimated effect remains essentially identical without matching on missing values. Panel 3 of Table 2.3 reports the results when 2 pre-treatment years are used to select control units. I only report the results when matching on missing values is permitted because prohibiting matching on missing severely reduces the number of matches. The results again indicate that state violence exerts a substantively positive effect on the likelihood governing rebels employ insurgent conscription. Governing rebels are 16% more likely to conduct insurgent conscription one year after exposure to state violence and 18.6% more likely to do so two years after exposure and 20.7% more likely to do so three years after exposure. These estimates are statistically significant. Though this paper investigates the link between state violence and insurgent conscription, I explore if this relationship extends to other forms of forced recruitment in Appendix A.3. The findings suggest that state violence doesn't significantly affect other types of forced recruitment.¹²

Figure A.2a in Appendix A.5 plots covariate balance before and after CBPS weighting for all matching models presented in the main text. CBPS weighting significantly improved balance of the vast majority of covariates.

To address potential spill-over effects and assess the relationship in a wider sample of cases, I run linear probability models with standard errors clustered at the dyad and country

¹² In Appendix A.4, I examine the relationship between state violence and other forms of rebel coercion and violence and I do not find any significant relationship, with the exception of a positive and significant effect on rebel civilian killings two years after exposure to sustained state violence.

Table 2.3: ATT of State Violence on Insurgent Conscription by Period

Outcome Period	Estimate	Standard Error	2.5%	97.5%
1 pre-treatment year, with missing values				
t + 1	0.159	0.047	0.077	0.259
t + 2	0.159	0.049	0.073	0.264
t + 3	0.178	0.050	0.088	0.277
1 pre-treatment year, without missing values				
t + 1	0.159	0.047	0.077	0.259
t + 2	0.159	0.049	0.073	0.264
t + 3	0.178	0.050	0.088	0.277
2 pre-treatment years, with missing values				
t + 1	0.162	0.047	0.079	0.262
t + 2	0.186	0.051	0.095	0.296
t + 3	0.207	0.053	0.111	0.316

CBPS weighting on treatment and covariate history. Standard errors computed with 1000 weighted bootstrap samples.
 58 (minimum)-61 (maximum) treated units matched to 2 (minimum)-15 (maximum) control units.

level. These results—reported in Table 2.4—are consistent with the results of the matching approach. In the models with no controls and with the minimal set of controls, insurgent conscription is around 22 percent more likely where sustained state violence occurs. This result is statistically significant at the .05 level. In the models with the full set of controls, this jumps up to 44 percent and retains its significance.¹³

2.4.1 Alternative Explanation: Conflict Intensity

While the empirical strategy I employ allows for a more transparent estimate of the counterfactual than alternative approaches, I cannot claim that my results identify a conclusive causal effect. To bolster the causal story I present, I interrogate the chief competing explanation—conflict intensity—theoretically.

Conflict intensity is the main competing explanation for insurgent conscription for two, interrelated reasons. First, battlefield losses frequently accompany state violence. It is

¹³ The drop in observations in the models with full controls because there is missing control data for years where conflict is ‘inactive’ but the armed group is active. Additionally, the variable “natural resource funding” from the Rebel Contraband Dataset begins coverage in 1990. This is also why there is no estimate for the pre-1980 variable in this model; all observations occurred after 1990.

Table 2.4: Linear Probability Models

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	IC clustered on dyad			IC clustered on country		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Sustained state targeting	0.222*** (0.071)	0.231*** (0.071)	0.442*** (0.119)	0.222*** (0.069)	0.231*** (0.064)	0.442*** (0.123)
Excluded			-0.102 (0.124)			-0.102 (0.121)
Excluded population			0.110 (0.242)			0.110 (0.267)
Dyads first year		-0.040 (0.027)	0.177 (0.122)		-0.040 (0.031)	0.177 (0.119)
Fighting capacity			-0.374 (0.531)			-0.374 (0.473)
Rebel support			0.252* (0.139)			0.252* (0.142)
Intensity		0.117*** (0.037)	0.114* (0.067)		0.117*** (0.031)	0.114 (0.082)
Pre-1980		-0.220*** (0.080)			-0.220*** (0.081)	
Natural resource funding			0.155 (0.185)			0.155 (0.182)
Irregular		-0.057 (0.100)	-0.113 (0.121)		-0.057 (0.093)	-0.113 (0.133)
Communist ideology		-0.003 (0.090)	-0.070 (0.166)		-0.003 (0.082)	-0.070 (0.174)
Constant	0.220*** (0.049)	0.054 (0.143)	-0.360 (0.279)	0.220*** (0.051)	0.054 (0.144)	-0.360 (0.304)
Observations	1413	1379	165	1413	1379	165

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

possible that diminished troop strength, and not civilian targeting, drives armed groups to employ insurgent conscription. Second, one might argue that the consequences of state violence that motivate insurgent conscription—military pressure and the urgency of civilian cooperation—also follow from surges in conflict intensity. In this section, I present theoretical arguments and quantitative evidence that state violence, not conflict intensity, catalyzes insurgent conscription.

Battlefield losses and state violence are distinct phenomena. While mass-killing campaigns that target non-combatants also frequently wipe out large numbers of rebels, not all upticks in conflict intensity feature group-selective targeting of civilians and such targeting occurs at varying levels of conflict intensity. Table 2.5 illustrates this point, showing the number and percentage of dyad-years featuring collective state violence across each level of conflict intensity: 0-25 annual battle deaths, 25-999 annual battle deaths, and over 1000 annual battle deaths. While state violence was the most common in very high intensity dyad-years, it also frequently occurred in low and middle intensity dyad-years.

Table 2.5: State Violence Across Levels of Intensity

Annual Battle Deaths	0-25	25-999	1000+
# of Observations Featuring State Violence	207	647	225
% of Observations Featuring State Violence	46.10%	59.2%	70.54%

The fact that state violence collectively targets *civilians* is critical to rebel incentives to adopt insurgent conscription. Rebel groups are driven to adopt insurgent conscription when there is pressure to demonstrate military strength, civilian cooperation is urgent, and the likelihood of community resistance is low. Though high battlefield losses put military pressure on rebel groups and arguably enhance the need for civilian cooperation, they do not create the same permissive conditions for insurgent conscription as state violence because non-combatants do not bear the brunt of state abuse. Moreover, civilian cooperation is more urgent following state violence than following battlefield losses because state violence literally shrinks the number of supporters and instills fear in civilians, potentially mak-

ing survivors less likely to lend support. The particular exigency of civilian collaboration following collective state targeting incentivizes insurgent conscription.

These theoretical arguments bear out in my analysis: I match on conflict intensity in the results presented section 5.

State violence against a rebel group’s civilian supporters is not the only driver of insurgent conscription. However, the evidence presented in this paper makes a strong case that while battlefield losses, like state targeting, place armed groups under strain, these losses do not catalyze insurgent conscription in the same way state violence does. It is following state violence—when civilian support and military capability are crucial and resources are strained—that governing rebels are especially likely to adopt insurgent conscription to expediently build military capacity and assert control over the population in their territory.

2.5 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper makes three major contributions to our understanding of civil war processes and rebel group organization. First, I conceptualize a specific form of coercive rebel recruitment—*insurgent conscription*—that has been empirically observed, but undertheorized and grouped together with other forms of forced recruitment. Second, I collect original data on insurgent conscription. This constitutes the most fine-grained data on patterns of armed group coerced recruitment to date. Third, I present and test the theory that state violence against rebels’ civilian support bases, can, counter-intuitively, foment insurgent conscription. I argue that insurgent conscription aids rebels in meeting the challenges of state targeting: it helps rebel groups build their military capacities and aids their consolidation of control over communities.

While existing literature largely argues that targeting drives recruitment windfalls, supposedly ameliorating any need for forced recruitment, I find that exposure to state violence exerts a substantively meaningful and statistically significant positive effect on the likelihood of insurgent conscription. These findings not only complicate our understanding of how state violence shapes rebel recruitment, but also provides insight into rebel governance

strategies and patterns of civilian victimization. My paper suggests that not all forms of forced recruitment break ties between rebel groups and the communities they seek to govern. It points to how rebel groups can use their recruitment strategies to create and remake local institutions to further the goals of their rebellion, adding to the rich body of scholarship on rebel governance. The theory and evidence presented in this paper also shed light on the way that state violence against civilians conditions rebel victimization of civilians.

Insurgent conscription, like social entrapments (Lilja, 2009), does not rely on outright violence or explicit threats of violence. I argue that absent state violence, this form of coercion is too costly for rebels to employ because of potential civilian backlash. Where the state has heavily abused civilians, however, armed groups perceive that civilians have limited ways to resist insurgent conscription in an organized way or otherwise withdraw support from rebels. This indicates that state violence might encourage rebels to employ coercive practices that do not require outright violence, but still leave civilians no choice but to comply. Indeed, armed groups may think that state violence can so aggrieve and isolate civilians that they are more tolerant of bad behavior by rebels.

The study has three main limitations, which open avenues for future research. First, I examine collective state violence and insurgent conscription at the dyad-year level, without accounting for subnational variation in these phenomena. Yet, both collective state violence and rebel recruitment tactics can and do vary subnationally. Future research can build on this work by examining this relationship at a more granular, geographic level. Relatedly, existing data on collective state violence does not provide a measure of the intensity of state violence. Variation in the severity of state violence could condition its relationship to insurgent conscription, which future research could explore. Finally, though I provide numerous examples to motivate my theoretical mechanisms and to examine plausible alternative explanations, I was not able to test the proposed mechanisms. Future work could more directly examine whether desire for military capacity and community control underpin the relationship between state violence and insurgent conscription. By empirically testing

these mechanisms, researchers can deepen our understanding of the causal pathways linking state violence to insurgent recruitment strategies.

Despite these limitations, this paper highlights the value of distinguishing between forms of coercive insurgent recruitment and enables a more precise interrogation of when, where, and by which types of rebel groups forced recruitment strategies are employed. It opens new avenues for future scholarship on insurgent mobilization. For example, while some forms of forced recruitment may result from the absence or extraneity of links to non-combatants—in line with existing theories of forced recruitment—insurgent conscription depends upon an insurgency’s effort to embed itself in the population through governance. Further, insurgent conscription may influence insurgent strength vis-à-vis the state, and subsequently, civil war outcomes differently than other forms of forced recruitment. It may also have distinct political and social legacies in the postwar period. To illustrate, insurgent conscription might foster more durable connections between communities and ex-rebels than other forms of forced recruitment. In specifying not only whether rebel groups employ voluntary or forcible recruitment, but also *how* rebel groups conduct forced recruitment, this work lays the groundwork for new theory and empirical investigation of the drivers, patterns, and legacies of rebel recruitment.

Disentangling rebel forced recruitment tactics is not only a valuable scholarly contribution, but also serves a practical, humanitarian purpose. Understanding patterns of insurgent conscription, preventing it, and aiding reintegration of ex-conscripts where prevention fails may require a different set of policy tools than those designed to address other forms of forced recruitment. Moreover, understanding insurgent conscription sheds light on another way in which wartime order influences postwar order. Systems of insurgent conscription are likely to shape civil war dynamics and outcomes and alter political and social landscapes long after the cessation of war.

3. Gendered Governance: How Women in Insurgent Government Shape Rebel Rule

During civil war, rebel groups frequently seek not only to confront the state militarily, but also to challenge the states' political authority by governing civilians (Asal et al., 2022; Grynkewich, 2008). Armed groups employ a range of governing institutions, from taxation, to justice systems, to security provision, to public goods (Arjona, 2016b; Kasfir, 2015; Mampilly, 2011b; Stewart, 2021). In many armed groups, women are instrumental to rebel efforts to manage civilian affairs. Indeed, women were at the helm of the governing structures of the EPLF in Eritrea (Selassie, 1992), the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) (Darden et al., 2019; Haner et al., 2020), the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) in Nepal (Gautum et al., 2001), and numerous other armed groups. Yet, women's inclusion in governing positions is not universal within or across armed groups. We lack an understanding of how this variation impacts rebel order. This paper asks: How do women who secure positions in insurgent governments influence the way that rebel groups govern civilians? In particular, it probes how women's mobilization into insurgent government influences one important element of rebel governance: the landscape of services rebels provide to civilians. Variation in rebel social services across rebel held-territory shapes civilian experiences during conflict and post-war institutions (Huang, 2016; Kasfir, 2005; Mampilly, 2011b; Staniland, 2012; Stewart, 2018b).

I develop a theory of how women in insurgent government increase rebel provision of direct social services. Direct social services are social services that demand personal interaction with their recipients and often focus on more 'intimate', social issues, like health problems, family disputes, or children's education. I posit that women insurgent governors will prioritize direct social services more than their male counterparts because this labor resembles traditional 'women's work'. Focusing on these services allows women to respond to gendered pressures from rebel leadership and from community members, thereby safeguarding their political and social positions.

To test this argument, I conduct a quantitative, cross-national analysis of the relation-

ship between women's leadership in armed groups and rebel service provision during conflict from 1945-2009. Drawing on 57 in-depth qualitative interviews I conducted in Nepal, I use process tracing to test the proposed causal mechanisms in the context of Nepal's civil war (1996-2006). Theory-testing process tracing is a qualitative research tool that allows researchers to assess evidence for causal mechanisms within a single case study (Beach & Pedersen, 2019; Bennett & Checkel, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2012; Brady & Collier, 2010; Zaks, 2017).

This paper makes several contributions to scholarship on civil war and rebel governance. It deepens our understanding of women's participation in armed groups. Though scholars have begun to explore women's non-combat mobilization and contributions (Gilbert, 2021; Loken, 2018, 2022; Parkinson, 2013a; Viterna, 2013b), scholarship on frontline fighters (Alison, 2009; A. Braithwaite & Ruiz, 2018; A. L. Henshaw, 2016a, 2016b, 2020; Israelsen, 2020; Thomas & Bond, 2015; Thomas & Wood, 2018; R. M. Wood, 2019; R. M. Wood & Thomas, 2017) largely shapes our understanding of women's participation in armed groups. I show that women insurgent governors face different expectations than women combatants and uniquely influence rebel strategies and policies. While female militants often gain respect in armed groups by adopting masculinized traits (Bernal, 2001; Riley, 2019),¹ women rebel administrators face distinct pressures because they are charged with regulating an armed group's relationship to communities and ordering civilian life. They respond to these pressures by prioritizing traditionally feminized labor: the provision of direct social services. This finding matters for our understanding of conflict and its legacies. Differences in the forms and degree of rebel service provision impact conflict dynamics and post-conflict governance (Huang, 2016; Kasfir, 2005; Mampilly, 2011b; Staniland, 2012; Stewart, 2018b).

This study also contributes to research that shows the ways women's political and social positions distinguish their non-combat contributions to rebellion and provide advantages to

¹ This is not true in all armed groups. In some armed groups, women are commonly constrained to more 'feminine' positions and prevented from demonstrating their 'masculinity' (see, for example, Viterna, 2013b on women in the FMLN).

armed groups (Hedström, 2022; Loken, 2018, 2020, 2022; Matfess, 2020; Parkinson, 2013a; Viterna, 2013b). My findings suggest that gender norms can be a tool to strengthen armed group governance, even as women insurgent governors exert agency in the face of these norms. Service provision can be a boon for civilian support (Flanigan, 2008; Grynkewich, 2008; Heger & Jung, 2017; Mampilly, 2011b; Stewart, 2018b), but not all rebel services equally increase rebel authority (Arjona, 2016b; S. N. Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010a; Stewart, 2021). Where armed groups mobilize women insurgent governors, the perception of women as community and family caretakers and women’s ability to build community trust in rebel direct social services helps legitimize rebel governing authority in the eyes of the community. This paper shows that women’s participation in insurgent government has meaningful implications for rebel service delivery and for how we understand rebel governance. It lays the groundwork for future research exploring how gender contours the strategies and outcomes of rebel governance.

The paper proceeds as follows. The first section defines key theoretical concepts. The second section develops a theory of how women insurgent governors increase rebel provision of direct social services. The third section details my empirical approach. I outline the data sources and modeling approach for the quantitative analysis. I provide background on the empirical context, data collection, and analysis methods for my qualitative approach. The fourth section presents the quantitative and qualitative evidence for my theory. The final section discusses the results and concludes.

3.1 Key Concepts

This paper studies how women insurgent governors shape armed groups’ provision of social services. I distinguish between women insurgent governors and women combatants. By women insurgent governors, I refer to women who hold positions in rebel governing institutions—for example, rebel-run local councils, courts, schools, or mass organizations—and/or perform rebel governance: the “set of actions insurgents engage in to regulate the social, political, and economic life of non-combatants” (Arjona, 2016b, p.3). The defining

characteristic of women insurgent governors is that they interact with the civilians rebels seek to draw support from and assert authority over. They have ‘external facing’ non-combat roles (Loken, 2022) that entail building and regulating armed groups’ relationships with communities.² For example, women insurgent governors in the EPLF included women working directly in the administrative structures of the armed group, women performing outreach to the community through teaching and broadcasting, and women working as rebel health workers (Pool, 1980). In Fretilin—an armed group that fought for the independence of East Timor—women contributed to rebel governance by running cultural campaigns to serve armed group goals, supporting rebel-run agricultural cooperatives, and teaching literacy classes to rebel constituents (Cristalis et al., 2005). These positions and responsibilities are distinct from those of women combatants and from women who hold military auxiliary roles—like carrying weapons or cooking for the armed group.³

I examine how women insurgent governors influence the services armed groups provide to civilians. The provision of public goods and services is among the central elements of rebel governance (Mampilly, 2011b). Armed groups can provide numerous types of goods and services, including building infrastructure, like roads and bridges, providing healthcare and education, and resolving disputes (Albert, 2022; De Bruin et al., 2023). These services vary in both the category of services—economic, structural, social, etc.—and the degree of interpersonal interaction they require with community members. Providing healthcare, for example, is a social service that necessitates a high degree of personal interaction compared to constructing roads. This paper focuses on *direct social services*, which require personal interaction with community members and focus on social issues. The precise services that fall into these categories will vary from rebel group to rebel group, but in general include the provision of healthcare and education services, mobilizing and managing community groups, and resolving familial disputes.

² See Loken, 2022 for a gendered typology of non-combat labor.

³ For work on the auxiliary work women perform for armed organizations, see, for example, the work of Carina Uchida.

3.2 A Theory of Women Insurgent Governors & Direct Social Services

I argue that women insurgent governors face interconnected pressures from rebel leadership—*top down pressure*—and community members—*bottom up pressure*—to conform to gendered expectations in their capacity as governors for the rebellion. In the face of these pressures, women insurgent governors make choices about how they will perform their roles to build and retain legitimacy in their positions. I posit that women governors respond to and negotiate gendered expectations by focusing on direct social services, which conform more to feminized roles. Focusing on direct social services allows women to build community trust in their leadership and prove their value to the rebellion.

This section proceeds as follows. First, I outline the relationship between rebel governance, particularly rebel service provision, and civilian support. Second, I explain how and why both armed group leadership and community members place pressure on women insurgent governors to conform to gendered expectations. Third, I turn to the strategic choice women insurgent governors make to prioritize direct social services in response to this pressure. Finally, I outline the empirical implications of my argument as well as the implications for alternative explanations.

3.2.1 Rebel Governance and Civilian Support

Rebel governance—the set of actions and strategies armed groups use to manage civilian affairs (Kasfir, 2015, p.2)—has three central components: rule setting, rule enforcement, and public goods and service provision (Mampilly, 2011b). The extent and strength of armed group governance, along with the particular governing institutions armed groups put in place, can depend on armed group goals (Stewart, 2018b, 2021), preexisting community dynamics (Arjona, 2016b; Mampilly, 2011b; Rubin, 2020), and the quality of state governance (Revkin, 2021). Rebel governance, though time and resource intensive, can yield numerous reputational and material benefits for armed groups (Arjona, 2016b; K. G. Cunningham et al., 2021; De Bruin et al., 2023; C. E. Loyle, 2021). Civilian support, and the resources base it provides, can be one of the chief benefits of armed group governance

(Arjona, 2016b; C. E. Loyle, 2021).

Rebel service provision in particular can help generate and sustain civilian support for armed groups, which is critical for armed group viability. Civilian support helps rebel groups secure and control resources and gather and protect information (Downes, 2007; S. Kalyvas, 2006; Parkinson, 2013a). Strong links between communities and armed groups can transform individual acts of resistance into community-based opposition that sustains insurgency (Petersen, 2001) and makes for more durable armed organizations (Parkinson, 2013a; Staniland, 2014b). Rebel service provision is an important strategy for generating this foundational support. Service provision can enhance the legitimacy of rebel groups the communities they seek to govern (Flanigan, 2008; Grynkewich, 2008; Heger & Jung, 2017; Mampilly, 2011b; Stewart, 2018b). Perceived or actual monopoly over social services endows rebels with significant influence over civilians, weakening civilian power to resist rebel demands (Flanigan, 2008; Hasenfeld, 1987).

Yet, service provision is not a panacea for civilian support. Civilians may resist rebel governance reforms that radically change pre-existing norms and institutions (Arjona, 2016b; S. N. Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010a; Stewart, 2021) or that are less beneficial to civilians (Martin, 2021; Stewart, 2018b). Rebel groups cannot unilaterally claim a constituency; community members accede to membership (Arjona, 2016b; Gowrinathan & Mampilly, 2019; Revkin, 2021; Rubin, 2020). Opting into or out of rebel services can be one way civilians accept or reject membership in a rebel group's constituency. For example, during the civil war in Nepal, one of the primary ways civilians resisted CPN-M rule was by refusing to use rebel social institutions like Maoist-run court systems and schools (A. Adhikari, 2014, pp.144-147). Governance and service provision does not inherently compel civilian support. Armed groups must provide governance and services that civilians trust and view as legitimate.

3.2.2 Top-Down and Bottom-Up Gendered Expectations

I argue that women insurgent governors face both top-down pressure from armed groups and bottom-up pressure from civilians to conform to gendered expectations. Though armed groups that mobilize women tend to champion gender equality and advocate for fewer restrictions on women's behavior (Thomas & Bond, 2015; Thomas & Wood, 2018; R. M. Wood & Thomas, 2017), they do not eschew all existing gender norms. Rather, they rely on gender stereotypes to harness the power of women as political agents.

When competing with the state (and sometimes other armed groups) for governing authority, rebel leadership mobilizes women into governing positions in part because the perception of women as caretakers makes them effective agents of political control.⁴

Involving the 'caretakers' of the community in governance can enhance community trust in rebel administration. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista rebellion encouraged women to participate in its governing programs to distinguish itself from the state. Campaigns to mobilize women 'played a critical, if not always planned, role in the challenge to traditional authority that was the revolution' (Kampwirth, 2004, p.26). The National Resistance Army in Uganda employed the women in its armed wings and civilian administration as 'community managers' (Mugambe, 1997, p.10).

In Nepal, the CPN-M expressed strong ideological commitments to gender equality. It recruited large numbers of women into its military and political cadre and formed a women's organization: the All Nepal Women's Association—Revolutionary (ANWAR). ANWAR played a critical role in creating and implementing Maoist policies punishing domestic violence and alcohol consumption (Gautum et al., 2001, p.88). Yet, "for the movement [ANWAR] to be successful, the need for women to transgress gender roles was as important as the need for them to perform traditional ones. Although women were told to pick up arms and shed their dependence, the agency they exhibited was also paradoxical, since

⁴ Women's agency in mobilizing for armed groups and securing governing positions is important. However, armed group openness to women members is critical to determining whether women can mobilize for armed groups (Thomas & Wood, 2018).

many continued to do what they always had: carry loads, cook, clean, and maintain relationships” (Lohani-Chase, 2014, p.31). The CPN-M’s mobilization of women reflects “both a patriarchal revolutionary model, in which women are called upon to demonstrate their cultural and nationalist affinity, and an emancipation revolutionary model, in which they are encouraged to evolve as free, individual citizen-subjects” (Lohani-Chase, 2014, p. 31). The co-existence of patriarchal and emancipation revolutionary models (Moghadam, 1995) in the Maoists reveal how armed groups can both offer women pathways to greater gender equality and perpetrate gender inequality by maintaining status-quo gender norms.

Similarly, women in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were expected to ensure the armed group retained its links to the community (Parkinson, 2013a, p.425). A member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a political subdivision of the PLO, told Sarah Parkinson “For women, there was a social role and a military role” (Parkinson, 2013a, p.425). The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador relied on its female members to use their community connections recruit new members and build resilient, beneficial relationships between the insurgency and non-combatants (Viterna, 2013b). The influence of women in CPN-M People’s Committees and ANWAR and of women in the PLO and the FMLN hinged on women’s conformity to existing gender norms.

The expectations of community members feed into and compound gendered expectations from rebel leadership. The presence of even the most egalitarian armed group does not reflect the eradication of gender bias in the communities in which it operates (R. M. Wood, 2019). Women who hold positions in insurgent government must regulate armed group’s relationship to civilians. They must respond to community demands and to the demands of armed group leadership.

3.2.3 Women’s Strategic Responses

The top-down and bottom-up pressures on women insurgent governors do not prescribe a course of action. Women insurgent governors make decisions about if and how they

will respond to these pressures. I argue that when women secure positions in insurgent government, they prioritize historically feminized policy areas—the provision of healthcare, education, and other direct social services—to protect and legitimize their power.

It is not obvious that women in insurgent government will prioritize direct social services is the face of this pressure. Indeed, women militants in non-state armed groups sometimes take on masculinized traits to gain respect (Bernal, 2001; Riley, 2019). Similarly, some scholars have found women politicians tend to adopt more hawkish foreign policy positions than their male counterparts, increasing both military spending and conflict, precisely because they want to combat perceptions that they are ‘soft’ and exclusively focused on social issues (Caprioli & Boyer, 2001; Koch & Fulton, 2011; Post & Sen, 2020; Schramm & Stark, 2020).⁵

I argue that women insurgent governors are in a distinct position from women militants and from women in ‘ordinary’, state governing positions. Unlike women militants, women insurgent governors are responsible for managing the armed groups’ relationship to communities, and therefore face different expectations from rebel leadership and from the community about how they should behave. For a woman militant, flouting gender expectations helps prove to their peers and commanders that they can lead on the battlefield. For a woman insurgent governor, flouting gender expectations might upset community members and jeopardize their legitimacy. Moreover, while women in state governing structures are deciding how to respond to external threats, women insurgent governors are making decisions about how to police and govern their own communities.

As a result, women in insurgent government have a strategic interest in conforming to gendered expectations, rather than attempting to distance themselves from these expectations. Oppressed groups may use ‘strategic essentialisms’ to avoid posing too obvious of a threat to status-quo powers (Berry, 2018; Spivak, 1993). For example, ‘mothers’ movements

⁵ The empirical record on the relationship between women leaders and foreign policy is mixed, with numerous scholars finding women do prioritize social spending over military spending (Bolzendahl & Brooks, 2007; Caroll, 2001; Clayton & Zetterberg, 2018; Kittilson, 2008; Shair-Rosenfield & Wood, 2017; Swiss et al., 2012) and still others finding women do not behave significantly differently from their male counterparts (Horowitz et al., 2015; Imamverdiyeva & Shea, 2022).

typically do not attempt to upend patriarchal hierarchies or even criticize women's role in society, they establish motherhood as a basis of legitimacy and thereby implicitly challenge conventional gender norms" (Berry, 2018, p.4). Evidence from conflict contexts suggests that appeals to tradition help women insurgent governors retain political agency and sustain momentum toward their goals. In Syria, women were better able to participate in insurgent government when they formed 'non-political' organizations (Gilbert, 2021, p.6).

Providing direct social services conforms to community expectations about appropriate 'women's work' and has high value to the rebellion. In conflict, the prevailing expectation from community members is that women who mobilize as political or violent actors do so to protect their communities, not to pursue political goals or to accrue power and resources (D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009; Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Sjoberg, 2018; R. M. Wood, 2019). Direct service provision plays a critical role in generating civilian support. Feminist scholarship emphasizes that rebel reach into the 'private', 'domestic' lives of civilians garners civilian support and buttresses rebellion (Hedström, 2016; Ketola, 2023; Loken, 2022; Matfess, 2020; Parkinson, 2013a; Viterna, 2013b). Direct social services like health and education have been shown to effectively legitimize rebel rule (Martin, 2021; Stewart, 2018b).

Women are well placed to provide and build trust in direct social services. The labor performed in the non-combat roles that sustain rebellion is often 'gendered in ways that make women's experiences and opportunities unique and, often, uniquely advantageous for rebel organizations' (Loken, 2022, p.139). Women in the rebel political cadre can convince the individuals responsible for making family decisions about social services that rebel services are trustworthy. Most often, it is women who make decisions about services like schooling and healthcare, even if they lack autonomy over other household decisions (Acharya et al., 2010; Budu et al., 2020). This is more likely during civil war when men are frequently absent from the home. Because of women's social position and gendered divisions of labor, women insurgent governors' recommendations for which social services to use have more credibility. Women insurgent governors use their prescribed position as 'caretakers'

to expand and build trust in rebel direct social services, legitimizing their leadership in the eyes of the community and proving their value to the rebellion.

3.2.4 Empirical Implications

My theory results in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Rebel governments with higher proportions of women will provide more extensive direct social services.

I theorize that women insurgent governors' responses to top-down and bottom-up pressure underpins this relationship. However, there are several alternative explanations for why women insurgent governors might increase the provision of direct social services. I outline these below.

Alternative Explanation 1: Rebel Strength

Rebel groups could recruit women to govern in the areas where they are strongest and service provision is easier. Though recruiting women may expand a rebel group's base and legitimize its revolutionary and transformative agenda (A. Braithwaite & Ruiz, 2018; A. L. Henshaw, 2020; Israelsen, 2020; R. M. Wood, 2019), disrupting established gender norms can cost rebel groups community support, especially support from traditional leaders and power brokers (A. L. Henshaw, 2020; Riley, 2019; R. M. Wood, 2019). The presence of women insurgent governors might indicate that a community was predisposed to supporting the rebel group's agenda or otherwise more amenable to rebel group governance, easing rebels' ability to build social service infrastructure.

Alternative Explanation 2: Women's Advocacy

Women insurgent governors might push rebel leadership to focus more on direct social services. Kurdish women who joined the PKK in large numbers in the 1980s pushed the group to adopt more equitable gender policies (Szekely, 2020). In Myanmar, the Burmese Women's Union (BWU)—an independent women's group linked to the All Burma Student's

Democratic Front (ABSDF)—pushed the ABSDF to address and fund solutions to women’s issues (Hedström, 2016). It may be women’s advocacy that drives any observed relationship between higher numbers of women in rebel administration and greater care service provision.

Alternative Explanation 3: Ideology

Higher levels of women’s inclusion in rebel governing structures and more extensive service provision could both be the result of rebel ideology. Rebel group ideology is a major determinant of gender diversity within the armed group cadre: leftist groups who espouse gender equality among their goals are more likely to have high female membership (Gilbert, 2021; A. L. Henshaw, 2020; Thomas & Bond, 2015; Thomas & Wood, 2018; R. M. Wood, 2019; R. M. Wood & Thomas, 2017). Leftist armed groups—especially communist armed groups—are also more likely to build robust governing structures and invest resources in social regulation and services (Hoover Green, 2016a; Huang & Sullivan, 2020; S. N. Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010a; Stewart, 2021).

Table 3.1 outlines what we should observe qualitatively along the causal path from recruiting women insurgent governors to the delivery of more direct social services for my proposed theoretical mechanism and alternatives.

Table 3.1: Theoretical Predictions

Mechanism	Empirical Implications: Recruitment	Empirical Implications: Governing Experiences	Empirical Implications: Governing Priorities
Gendered expectations	-Rebel leadership mobilized women because of their social position and traditional domestic responsibilities	-Gendered differences in governing responsibilities -Greater community resistance to women insurgent governors	-Gendered differences in governors' strategies for gaining community support
Rebel strength	-Mobilization of women systematically higher in areas with high pre-existing support	-Less community resistance to women's leadership in areas with high pre-existing support	-Few gendered differences in strategies for gaining community trust and support
Women's advocacy	-Gendered differences in motivation for seeking out or accepting position in rebel administration	-Women pushed rebel leadership to focus more on social services	-Women more invested in providing direct social services
Ideology	-Rebel leadership mobilized women because of ideology	-Few gendered differences in governing responsibilities	-Few gendered differences in strategies for gaining community trust and support

3.3 Empirical Approach and Analysis

3.3.1 Quantitative Approach

To test Hypothesis 1, I run linear probability models with two independent variables: women's leadership in armed groups (A. Henshaw et al., 2019) and the inclusion of women in non-combat outreach roles (Loken & Matfess, 2022a). The dependent variables are various direct rebel social services (health, education, and community aid) and non-direct rebel social services (infrastructure, policing, and transportation) (Albert, 2022). The unit of analysis is the armed group.

Comprehensive cross-national data on women's inclusion in rebel governments is, to my knowledge, not available. I employ two proxy measures. First, I use a measure of women's leadership in armed groups created by A. Henshaw et al., 2019 which takes a value of 1 if a reliable source documented that women held leadership positions, defined as 'any position in which women exercise direct control over other participants, strategy, policies, and/or ideology within the organization' (A. Henshaw et al., 2019, p. 1095), in a given armed

group. While this is an imperfect proxy of women’s inclusion in insurgent administration, as it focuses only on women in high-level positions in armed groups who could be responsible for range of different armed group activities and policies, beyond governance, it nonetheless includes women leaders who influence over rebel governance. Second, I use the measure of women’s inclusion in non-combat outreach positions created by Loken and Matfess, 2022a. This variable is a binary indicator that takes a value of 1 if ”Women are working in outreach roles including as recruiters, involvement in service provision, fundraising, serving as representatives of the rebels to the international or domestic community, and mobilization of community members” [p. 10](Loken & Matfess, 2022b). While still not an exact measure of women’s inclusion in rebel governance, this variable captures women who interact with civilians on behalf of the armed group.

For the models with women’s leadership as the independent variable, my sample includes the 146 armed groups active in dyadic conflict between 1945 and 2009 that were included in both Albert, 2022 and A. Henshaw et al., 2019. For the models with women in noncombat outreach positions as the independent variable, the sample includes the 88 armed groups active in dyadic conflict between 1945 and 2009 that were included in both Albert, 2022 and Loken and Matfess, 2022a.

I use the Rebel Quasi-State Institutions Dataset (Albert, 2022) to measure the provision of six rebel services: healthcare, education, and community aid (direct social services) and policing, infrastructure, and transportation (non-direct social services). The Rebel Quasi-State Institutions Dataset includes armed group-year observations. As the data from A. Henshaw et al., 2019 is cross-sectional, my analysis is also cross-sectional, and the unit of analysis is the armed group. I therefore adapt the Rebel Quasi-State Institutions Dataset so that for a given armed group observation, each service is coded 1 if the armed group ever provided it while engaged in conflict and 0 otherwise.

I include covariates that could impact both women’s inclusion in rebel government and the provision of services. I control for whether an armed group has a *leftist ideology* (R. M. Wood & Thomas, 2017). Leftist groups are more likely to recruit women (A. L. Henshaw,

2020; Thomas & Bond, 2015; Thomas & Wood, 2018; R. M. Wood, 2019; R. M. Wood & Thomas, 2017) and to provide more extensive services (Hoover Green, 2016a; Huang & Sullivan, 2020; S. N. Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010a; Stewart, 2021). I include a measure of *territorial control* (D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009). Control over territory eases the provision of services and the establishment of a rebel government. I control for two measures of rebel strength—*fighting capacity* (D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009), which takes a value of 1 if armed groups have a high fighting capacity relative to the state and *mobilization capacity* (D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009), which takes a value of 1 if armed groups have a strong ability to mobilize personnel, relative to the state. Stronger rebel groups might be better able to mobilize women and to provide services. Rebel funding could shape whether rebels provide services to civilians, either by increasing resources for service provision (Huang & Sullivan, 2020) or reducing incentives for service provision (Weinstein, 2006). I therefore control for *external support* from a foreign government (D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009).

Though I control for factors that are most likely to influence both whether women serve as insurgent governors and the types of services armed groups provide, the nature of this analysis means that I am assessing the relationship between women’s leadership and direct social services in armed groups operating in different contexts across many years. Of course, gender roles and expectations are different in distinct locations and time periods. However, the gendered division of labor whereby women take on the majority of domestic, social labor, is remarkably consistent across time and space (Sullivan, 2018; Treas & Drobnič, 2010).

Table 3.2 provides the mean and mode of each of these variables in both the dataset where the outcome is women’s leadership (WL data) and where the outcome is women’s non-combat outreach roles (NC data).

3.3.2 Quantitative Evidence

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 report the results of linear probability models with robust standard errors clustered by country with women leaders and women’s non-combat outreach

Table 3.2: Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean, NC Data	Mode, NC Data	Mean, WL Data	Mode, WL Data
Health	0.274	0	0.285	0
Education	0.304	0	0.303	0
Aid	0.152	0	0.174	0
Infrastructure	0.189	0	0.188	0
Policing	0.277	0	0.305	0
Transportation	0.0622	0	0.0616	0
Women leaders			0.486	0
Noncombat Outreach	0.592	1		
Leftist ideology	0.193	0	0.193	0
External support	0.622	1	0.660	1
Fighting capacity	0.0104	0	0.0138	0
Mobilization capacity	0.052	0	0.055	0
Territorial control	0.435	0	0.438	0

participation as the independent variables, respectively.⁶

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, the effect of women’s leadership on direct social services is both positive and statistically significant. Since these are linear probability models and both the independent and dependent variables are binary, the coefficients can be interpreted in terms of the change in probability. Women leaders increase the probability of rebel health service provision by 26.3 percent, education service provision by 22.9 percent, and community aid provision by 30.1 percent. These results are significant at the .01 level. The effect of women’s leadership on other rebel services is also positive, but substantively smaller. It is statistically insignificant for infrastructure and transportation and significant at the 0.05 level for policing.

Women’s non-combat outreach participation similarly influence rebel service provision. Women in non-combat outreach roles increase the probability of rebel health service provision by 22 percent, education service provision by 28 percent, and community aid provision by 26 percent. The impact on transportation is both small and insignificant. In these models, women’s non-combat outreach participation also has a positive and significant impact on policing and infrastructure. The substantive effect of the impact on infrastructure

⁶ The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in Harvard Dataverse at <http://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/O35OX4>, at <https://www.alexishenshaw.com/data>, at <https://www.prio.org/journals/jpr/replicationdata>, at <https://www.waarproject.com/dataset>, and in the supplementary materials of D. E. Cunningham et al., 2009.

Table 3.3: Women Leaders and Rebel Services, LPM Models

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Health (1)	Education (2)	Aid (3)	Infrastructure (4)	Policing (5)	Transportation (6)
Women leaders	0.285*** (0.078)	0.282*** (0.079)	0.254*** (0.080)	0.060 (0.072)	0.165** (0.081)	0.074 (0.046)
Leftist ideology	0.096 (0.111)	0.035 (0.110)	-0.099 (0.101)	0.210** (0.105)	0.058 (0.104)	-0.029 (0.056)
External support	0.011 (0.074)	-0.005 (0.079)	0.087 (0.067)	-0.054 (0.069)	-0.056 (0.081)	0.034 (0.029)
Fighting capacity	-0.311*** (0.082)	-0.327*** (0.082)	-0.327*** (0.092)	-0.079 (0.070)	-0.229*** (0.077)	-0.084* (0.045)
Mobilization capacity	0.192 (0.170)	0.202 (0.169)	-0.135 (0.168)	0.084 (0.139)	0.093 (0.150)	0.032 (0.113)
Territorial control	0.235*** (0.077)	0.237*** (0.077)	0.091 (0.069)	0.185*** (0.069)	0.294*** (0.078)	0.075* (0.041)
Constant	0.014 (0.050)	0.050 (0.064)	-0.014 (0.047)	0.072 (0.057)	0.120* (0.073)	-0.024 (0.037)
Observations	140	141	140	140	140	142

Note:

Robust SEs clustered by country, * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

is smaller than the impact on health, education, and aid, but the effect on policing is comparable to the effect on health, education, and aid.

Taken together, these findings suggest that having women rebel leaders and women in non-combat outreach roles is correlated with more extensive direct social service provision. The evidence that including women in these positions increases the extensiveness of rebel service provision in general is mixed. Having women in these positions appears to be associated with a greater likelihood of policing, but the relationship between women rebel governors and the provision of infrastructure and transportation services is more mixed. While not providing evidence of a causal relationship, these results show that there is a strong correlation between women's leadership in armed groups and direct social services.

Table 3.4: Women’s Non-Combat Outreach Participation and Rebel Services, LPM Models

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Health (1)	Education (2)	Aid (3)	Infrastructure (4)	Policing (5)	Transportation (6)
Women non-combat	0.220*** (0.073)	0.280*** (0.076)	0.260*** (0.063)	0.166*** (0.064)	0.258*** (0.083)	0.016 (0.044)
Leftist ideology	0.115 (0.116)	0.024 (0.116)	−0.091 (0.097)	0.171 (0.105)	0.034 (0.112)	−0.002 (0.056)
External support	0.048 (0.074)	0.021 (0.077)	0.080 (0.071)	−0.091 (0.072)	−0.072 (0.080)	0.038 (0.031)
Fighting capacity	−0.251*** (0.076)	−0.296*** (0.077)	−0.296*** (0.077)	−0.113* (0.065)	−0.252*** (0.078)	−0.048 (0.038)
Mobilization capacity	0.243 (0.174)	0.258 (0.173)	−0.094 (0.134)	0.096 (0.131)	0.123 (0.161)	0.037 (0.112)
Territorial control	0.214*** (0.082)	0.210*** (0.081)	0.071 (0.072)	0.177** (0.072)	0.262*** (0.082)	0.079* (0.044)
Constant	−0.016 (0.054)	−0.005 (0.057)	−0.044 (0.038)	0.038 (0.054)	0.066 (0.060)	−0.006 (0.041)
Observations	134	135	134	134	134	136

Note:

Robust SEs clustered by country, *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

3.3.3 Qualitative Approach: Evidence from Nepal’s Civil War

To test my proposed theoretical mechanism—women insurgent governors’ strategic responses to gendered expectations—I draw on interview data from three months of fieldwork in Nepal alongside other sources. This section provides information about Nepal’s civil war and outlines the data collection and analysis methods.

Case Selection and Contextual Background

On February 13, 1996, the Communist Party of Nepal- Maoists (CPN-M) launched simultaneous attacks on police posts and other local state institutions in six districts across Nepal’s midwestern. These attacks incited the “People’s War”, which claimed the lives of over 13,000 people and lasted ten years. The conflict came to an end in 2006 when, following a power grab by King Gyanendra, the seven main political parties, known as the Seven Party Alliance (SPA), joined with the Maoists to oppose monarchic power and

call for elections. In April 2006, under pressure from the SPA, the Maoists, and popular demonstrations, Gyanendra abdicated. In November 2006, the SPA and the Maoists signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The civil war in Nepal is a useful case on which to test my theory for several reasons. First, my theory requires a case where an armed group has a distinct rebel governance institutions and personnel. To secure influence over communities in the countryside, the Maoists emphasized governing institutions. They attacked police posts and other local state institutions to eradicate the Nepali state's already tenuous reach into the periphery, and once the state was absent, constructed a parallel state apparatus that they wielded to control and mobilize civilians. The Maoists had clear distinctions between their governing and military apparatuses. While some cadre served in both the PLA and Maoist governing structures during their tenure as Maoists, this was not the norm. At the village level, members of the People's Government were usually local Maoist party members or sympathizers who were appointed by party leaders or, in later. Second, it is necessary that there is subnational variation in both the degree to which rebels mobilized women into insurgent government and the types of services and governance provided by the rebels. The strength and characteristics of Maoist governance varied significantly across localities. By the end of the war, the Maoists were in control of nearly 80% of Nepal's territory, and there was significant heterogeneity in the way they governed this territory. The Maoists also emphasized gender equality and were committed to mobilizing women into their governing institutions and military wings, however, the degree to which these stated policies and commitments were matched by action varied from place to place. Finally, because of the Maoists' heavy emphasis on gender equality and shifting the gender status quo, Nepal serves as a "hard case" for my theorized mechanism of top-down and bottom-up pressure. The Maoists were, to a greater extent than many other armed groups, willing to make changes to long-standing community gender norms in order to realize their revolutionary agenda (Dahal, 2015; Stewart, 2021). If top-down and bottom-up pressure drove women insurgent governors to prioritize direct social services even in this armed group, which quite

radically subverted gender norms compared to other armed groups,⁷ the mechanism is likely to operate in other groups.

Data Collection

My analysis draws on original data collection alongside other sources. I conducted 57 semi-structured interviews with people from four categories: 1. Former CPN-M political leaders, defined as individuals who held leadership positions in CPN-M governing structures at the district, regional, or central level; 2. Women and men who served on village-level People’s Governments; 3. Community members who lived under the authority of village People’s Governments; and 4. Civil society members and government officials with expertise on Nepal’s civil war. These interviews were conducted in Nepali with the assistance of an interpreter. I used snowball sampling to recruit Maoist political leaders, village-level People’s Government representatives, and civil society and government experts. To identify community members, I conducted a random walk through villages where the CPN-M established a People’s Government.

Table 3.5 provides an overview of interview respondents by category and gender.

Table 3.5: Overview of Respondents

Category	Total	Women	Men
Former Maoist Political Leaders	13	6	7
Members of Village People’s Governments	16	6	10
Community Members	14	7	7
Civil Society Experts & Government Officials	9	5	4
Other	5	3	2
Total	57	27	30

Four of the interviews took place over Zoom in January 2021 and the remaining 53 interviews took place during a trip to Nepal from March-May 2022. In-person interviews occurred in four districts: Bardiya, Dhading, Kathmandu, and Rolpa. I selected these districts out of the range of choices partly because I aimed to select districts where the

⁷ See the work of Apekshya Prasai, for example.

CPN-M's strength varied⁸ and partly due to logistical reasons and connections. I used snowball sampling to recruit Maoist political leaders, village-level People's Government representatives, and civil society and government experts. To identify community members, I conducted a random walk through villages where the CPN-M established a People's Government. Interviews with former CPN-M political leaders and civil society experts and government officials largely took place in Kathmandu, though some occurred in district headquarters of Bardiya, Dhading, and Rolpa. Interviews with people who served on a village or ward-level *jana sarkar* and community members who lived under the rule of a *jana sarkar* took place in respondents' own communities. I also conducted interviews with several people outside of these categories at the suggestion of local contacts. These individuals included people victimized by the Maoists and ex-People's Liberation Army (PLA)—the armed wing of the CPN-M—combatants. The interview questions addressed Maoist mobilization of women into People's Governments, the structure, activities, and services of People's Governments, the responsibilities of individuals holding positions on district and village People's Governments, community members' use of People's Government services and institutions, and the relationship between People's Governments and community members.

This data collection approach has limitations. People who were willing to talk to me or who were identified by snowball sampling may have different perspectives than those who were not identified or were not willing to talk. The retrospective nature of this research also presents challenges. Respondents were asked questions about events and experiences that occurred 16-26 years in the past; critical details were likely left out or misremembered. Moreover, because the interviews were conducted in Nepali with the help of an interpreter, some of the nuances of respondents' answers may have been lost in translation. To mitigate these biases, I tried to corroborate respondents' responses with other interviews and, where possible, contemporaneous accounts from local organizations and news outlets. I also sought

⁸ Rolpa was a stronghold of the rebellion and one of the districts where the insurgency began. The CPN-M wielded moderate influence over Bardiya and Dhading during the war and very little influence in Kathmandu.

to interview people who might have competing perspectives. In each village I visited, I tried to interview multiple former members of the *jana sarkar* and community members with different attitudes towards the Maoists.⁹ I also interviewed some local government officials in villages. Additionally, I interviewed several civil society experts who traveled around Nepal documenting human rights abuses and conflict events at the time of conflict.

The institutional review board (IRB) at Duke University approved both the remote and in-person interviews in November 2021. Unless interview respondents preferred to be identified, I anonymize all respondents' names and villages.

Methods

I use theory-testing process tracing to probe the theorized causal mechanisms. Theory-testing process tracing is a qualitative research tool for studying causal mechanisms within a single case study (Beach & Pedersen, 2019; Bennett & Checkel, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2012; Brady & Collier, 2010; Zaks, 2017). The goal of this method is to “reveal the various steps that lead to an outcome”, showing that the hypothesized causal mechanisms were present in the case and functioned as theorized (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p.106).

In my case, I start from women's recruitment into governing positions and trace the evidence of theorized mechanisms through their mobilization into and experience in these positions, and finally to the work women prioritized in their capacity as governors. Considering and assessing the evidence for alternative mechanisms is key to process tracing (Beach & Pedersen, 2019; Bennett & Checkel, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2012; Brady & Collier, 2010). I evaluate the evidence for my theorized mechanisms against three alternative explanations: rebel strength, women's advocacy, and ideology.

3.3.4 Qualitative Evidence from Nepal's Civil War

This section assess evidence for the causal mechanism proposed by Hypothesis 1a. I trace the evidence for the *gendered expectations* mechanism from women's recruitment through

⁹ This goal was not always possible, but I achieved it for six of the nine villages I visited. I never interviewed only one person from a given village.

women's governing priorities. I then turn to alternative explanations.

Recruitment of Women Insurgent Governors

Respondents from former rebel leadership consistently noted that gendered norms and expectations motivated the Maoists to mobilize women into governing positions. Respondents emphasized how they anticipated women's traditional roles in the domestic sphere would translate into their role as rebel governors. A former PLA commander and district-in-charge (head of a district *Jana Sarkar*) stated, "The first school, the first teacher, and the first principle in this whole world is a mother. That is why we prioritized putting women into the *jana sarkar*. None other than them can do what they actually do. A child grows as per the learning mothers provide to their child, the culture they provide. A shape of a community is determined by how children are raised in that community by the mothers."¹⁰

Mumaram Khanal, former Regional Bureau Member (a high-level governing body of the Maoists) said that the party decided to implement quotas for women's participation during the conflict because of women's aptitude for solving social problems in the community: "Women were dedicated and could solve community problems. This is why the party introduced the female policy.¹¹ [The Party] would ensure participation of women in every committee, whether they understood the core values or not."¹²

Hisila Yami, former Central Committee Member—the third highest governing body of the Maoists—and former President of ANWAR told me, "The policy¹³ had an immediate effect on the people and then they started joining on the war. That's why the policy was that way. As our enrollment of women increased, so was the contact with the general mass increased."¹⁴ When I asked her why, she emphasized the connection between women's traditional domestic roles and their method of governing: "See what Maoists used was

¹⁰ Interview with author in Kathmandu (March 30, 2022).

¹¹ Referring to quotas for women's participation in People's Governments and Party Committees

¹² Interview with author in Kathmandu (March 28, 2022).

¹³ Referring to quotas for women's participation.

¹⁴ Interview with author in Kathmandu (March 17, 2022).

personal mobilization. Personalized household management, personalized motivations. We transformed personal mobilization into institutional mobilization. Women had that skill and they used it. They were trying to use the personal and domestic to develop the public sector of the movement. They did that skillfully and that's how the whole movement took off.”¹⁵

The assumed link between their traditional domestic roles and governance abilities was not only reflected in my interviews, but also in primary source material from the CPN-M. The CPN-M journal ‘The Worker’—a key channel for disseminating CPN-M propaganda and for articulating developments in Maoist strategy—emphasized the link between women’s social positions and assigned roles in the family and their contributions to People’s Committees,

In order to expand the base of women’s organisation a policy of one unit of women’s organisation against one ward, one member against one family have been adopted and popularised... Women’s organisation has been successful in politicising family members by turning every family unit to political unit by engaging children to children’s organisation, youth to youth organisation, peasants to peasant organisation CPN-M, 2000.

There is clear evidence that rebel leadership mobilized women into local governing bodies because of gendered expectations that women’s prescribed role as caretakers would serve the rebellion.

Women’s Experiences as Governors

Once women secured positions in insurgent government, rebel leaders expected women to perform their ‘traditional’ roles to serve the goals of rebellion. Moreover, women faced resistance from community members who felt their leadership violated established gender norms. Ganya,¹⁶ who served as the chief of her village’s *jana sarkar*, told me: “Our work was

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Name has been changed.

not dependent on individuals, whether man or woman, we would act the same according to the agenda of the party. And so, as a woman, the party had me prioritize women's issues."¹⁷ When I asked her to clarify what she meant by 'women's issues', she stated that women's issues encompassed reducing domestic violence, enforcing bans on polygamy, gambling, and drinking, increasing women's political awareness, training women to sew for the party, and improving children's education and well-being.

Gamya's experience was not unique. The responsibilities the party assigned to women and men in village People's Governments were different. During interviews, I asked respondents' "What were your primary responsibilities as a member of the *jana sarkar*?" Prior to analyzing the qualitative data, I determined which Maoist services constituted 'care' services. Following the definition of direct social services as services that require emotional and personal investment and contribute to social reproduction, Maoist direct social services include community relationship management (e.g. through facilitating participation in mass organizations), community education or awareness raising, solving community disputes, especially domestic disputes, and providing healthcare. Women overwhelmingly reported being responsible for direct social services like communicating with the community and solving domestic disputes. Though some men were charged with these tasks, they also oversaw infrastructure projects (mostly road and bridge construction), land registration, the management of the PLA's comings and goings, and the provision of security. No women respondents mentioned responsibilities in these categories. Table 3.6 reports these patterns.¹⁸ These interview data are not representative of all members of People's Governments. However, as interviews with leaders and excerpts from *The Worker* confirm the party expected women to focus on social and family issues.

¹⁷ Remote interview with author (January 12, 2022).

¹⁸ Respondents often used slightly different language to refer to similar tasks, e.g., 'awareness raising' and 'education' or described tasks that were closely related like 'building roads' and 'constructing a gate'. Upon my first read of the interview data, I created groups of governing categories.

Table 3.6: Governing Responsibilities by Gender

# of respondents	Community awareness raising	Civilian participation	Dispute resolution (family issues)	Dispute resolution (non-family issues)	Infrastructure	Land registration	Managing PLA	Security provision
Women (n=6)	4	5	4	2	0	0	0	0
Men (n=10)	2	2	3	2	1	3	1	1

Women in governing positions not only had to respond to the demands of Maoist leaders, but also had to navigate the expectations of the community members they governed. Women stated that when they first took on positions in the *jana sarkar*, portions of the community (particularly men) hesitated to accept their leadership, viewing governance as a male domain. In response to the question: ‘Were there any factors that made it difficult for you to fulfill your governing duties? If so, what were they?’, women overwhelmingly mentioned resistance from the community, whereas men more commonly discussed state violence or lack of resources. In Rolkot¹⁹, a village in Dhading district where the vast majority of people I interviewed—both community members and *jana sarkar* members—stated that support for the *jana sarkar* was high and people welcomed Maoist governance, women cited lack of community buy-in as a major challenge, while men did not. In Rolkot, a male member of the *jana sarkar* responded that the main challenge he faced was that “[The People’s Government] had to hide from the state and the opposition. Our main threat was from them.”²⁰ A woman who served with him on the same People’s Government responded, “I had a hard time convincing people because I am a woman.”²¹

This pattern held true in every village I visited. A woman in a village in Rolpa district—considered one of the areas where Maoist policies and ideology held the most sway—told me “Women were happy to get a woman’s leadership. Women were happy about it, men

¹⁹ Name has been changed.

²⁰ Interview with author (April 18, 2022).

²¹ Interview with author (April 18, 2022).

doubted my ability to make decisions.”²² A man in a neighboring village noted that lack of financial resources constrained his ability to do his job.²³ Table 3.7 depicts interview participants’ characterization of challenges they faced as insurgent governors by gender. Women most frequently cited lack of acceptance from the community as the main factor that made it difficult for them to accomplish their jobs. This was true no matter whether these women felt the community responded positively to Maoist governance writ large. Of the People’s Government members I interviewed, 5 out of 6 women and 7 out of 10 men said the relationship between the People’s Government and the community was positive.

Table 3.7: Challenges by Gender

# of respondents	Community resistance	Lack of resources	State violence	No challenges
Women (n=6)	4	1	1	0
Men (n=10)	1	4	3	2

Women’s Governing Priorities

Women understood and responded to the expectations of both party leadership and the community by focusing on direct social services. They strategically leveraged their prescribed roles as community and family managers in their rebel governing positions, seeking to secure their positions and build support from the community by prioritizing direct social services. Some women I interviewed maintained that the community never accepted their leadership. For example, a woman who served as vice-chair of her village *jana sarkar* in Dhading told me, “The community did not and still has not accepted women’s leadership”²⁴ Many women, however, indicated that over time, the community came to accept them. The strategies they used to gain this acceptance conform to my theoretical expectations. Women largely described building community support by doubling down on the areas of rebel governance that most closely represented their traditional domestic roles.

I asked former People’s Government members how they worked to build the community’s

²² Interview with author (April 6, 2022).

²³ Interview with author (April 7, 2022).

²⁴ Interview with author (April 20, 2022).

trust in their leadership and governing abilities.²⁵ Women discussed solving social problems, caring for sick people, and other traditionally feminized tasks. In a village in Rolpa, a woman who served on her village People’s Government recounted, “We stayed with the community day and night. If the community needed help, we helped them. We resolved health issues and domestic violence issues, etc. Eventually they trusted us.”²⁶ A woman who held a position on her village People’s Government in Dhading stated, “We began with solving problems in the community—social issues. People started searching for us to solve their problems.”²⁷ Another woman in Dhading told me, “I used to work together with community people in order to win their trust. I used to help each other at the time of need, like when someone was sick.”²⁸

Men who served on village People’s Governments, on the other hand, highlighted the importance of ideological education or mobilizing influential local elites in securing community buy-in. For example, a male respondent in Dhading told me, “We approached priests, teachers, rich, and well-educated people. We hoped they would convince the community.”²⁹ In another interview in Dhading, the former chief of the village *jana sarkar* stated, “We gave speeches about these issues [discrimination] using different approaches. Sometimes we would have one on one meetings and sometimes we would call groups to meet. In the groups, we told people that if we had power we’d guarantee food, shelter, and education opportunities. We gave people lessons day and night. We gave people our ideology so much that people were ready to go to war without thinking about their lives.”³⁰

Several men told me that it wasn’t necessary to form strategies to build community

²⁵ When respondents mentioned community resistance as a challenge they faced, I asked this question as a follow-up: “What strategies, if any, did you use to overcome that resistance?” When a respondent did not mention community resistance as a challenge, I asked: “How did you work to build the community’s trust in you as a leader?”

²⁶ Interview with author (April 6 2022).

²⁷ Interview with author, (April 19, 2022).

²⁸ Interview with author, (April 19, 2022).

²⁹ Interview with author (April 19, 2022).

³⁰ Interview with author (April 20, 2022).

support because anti-state and anti-police sentiment was so high. For example, in Rolpa, a man who was a former village *jana sarkar* member recounted, “The situation was like this: Police had troubled the villagers- they used to raid the village from time to time, women, children whoever they met, they used to beat them, they used to take and eat people’s hen, chicken with them. There was Ra. Pra. Pa (National Democratic Party) at that time so people thought this Ra. Pra. Pa police troubled people and hence they supported Maoist.”³¹

There were clear gendered patterns in both the degree of resistance People’s Government members faced from the community and in how those members sought to gain the respect and support of the community. Women I interviewed consistently mentioned community resistance as a main impediment to their ability to achieve their duties, while men rarely did. Women described how they convinced the community by solving social problems, caring for individuals who were sick, and spending time helping community members in their homes. Members of Maoist-governed communities—particularly men—viewed women’s entry into governing positions as a transgression of traditional gender norms. To convince community members of their capability and safeguard their governing positions, women in the *jana sarkar* focused on feminized work like solving familial disputes and providing care and other forms of domestic labor.

Baburam Bhattarai, the ideological leader of the Maoist rebellion, described both the resistance faced by women in the *jana sarkar* and the ways in which they used their traditional positions to secure community support: “It wasn’t easy [for communities] to accept women as equals. But in the rural areas, because [the women in the People’s Government] are the mothers in the communities, there was not so much discrimination... the community came to see women as effective, even better than men, on social affairs.”³²

Once women insurgent governors gained some degree of buy-in from the community, they used their social networks and roles as the caretaker of their families to legitimize rebel rule,

³¹ Interview with author (April 8, 2022).

³² Interview with author in Kathmandu (May 20, 2022).

enforce social rules, and mobilize other community members to participate in and serve the rebellion. Women were especially effective in these areas of governance because they were better able to build community trust in rebel institutions and services.

Maoist political leaders, village-level People's Government representatives, and civil society experts emphasized women were more trusted and more effective at mobilizing community participation and cooperation. One civil society expert who traveled across Nepal during the conflict documenting human rights abuses by both the state and Maoists, frequently staying in Maoist-governed villages, observed: "For the Maoists, I think women were an easy entry point to engage in the village...Women, at that time, because of the society structure, women were trusted more than men."³³ Renu Chand, who served as the district-in-charge in Doti district, among other roles, told me women in the People's Governments were "the first communicators with the community."³⁴

This capability is in large part a result of their traditional family roles and their influence over other women. Renu Chand argued that having women in governing positions was critical in gaining the trust of women in the community:

The party thought that without the support and participation of women, no political war was going to take place in our region...It became very necessary for us to get women to participate in our People's War because women are half of the population. And if a woman does not understand what's going on in the nation, in the region, she will not allow her husband, her son, to participate. Because when a woman cries, [the men] don't have the guts to go and fight for the nation. But when a woman says okay I'll take care of my children, I'll take care of the house, you go and fight for the people, then they will go. So my dad said you have to come and work with women. Because when a male comrade comes and talks about women's liberation, they don't believe him.³⁵

³³ Interview with author in Kathmandu (March 11, 2022).

³⁴ Interview with author in Kathmandu (March 27th, 2022).

³⁵ Interview with author in Kathmandu (March 27th, 2022).

Central committee member and bureau-in-charge of Mahakali Zone, Lek Rhaj Bhatta, also emphasized the importance of women's influence over other women in garnering community buy-in.

It was easier for women to form associations.³⁶... Women used to convince other women by highlighting their stories of pain, their right to equality, other similar rights of women. The women leaders at that time produced villager women in huge numbers... Women used to listen more to the words of another woman instead of men.³⁷

Hisila Yami described how women used their social positions to garner civilian contributions:

[Women in People's Governments and women's associations]...mobilized productivity in the village. They got contributions from their families and their connections. They were making roads, all of that. I think that they were more effective in getting people to contribute.³⁸

As my theory asserts, women navigated gendered pressures from rebel leadership and from community members by focusing on traditionally feminized labor. It is important to emphasize that I conducted interviews with a limited number of civil society experts and people who held high-level positions in the Maoist movement and in a limited number of villages outside of Kathmandu. While I selected villages and respondents with an eye toward including a variety of perspectives and wartime experiences, it is possible that, given the relatively small sample of interviewees and villages, my research risks amplifying the voices of certain people over others. For example, people who volunteered to speak with me or who were identified by snowball sampling may have different perspectives than those

³⁶ 'Associations' refers to the civilian groups that Maoists formed in order to organize community labor and contributions.

³⁷ Interview with author in Kathmandu (March 23, 2022).

³⁸ Interview with author in Kathmandu (March 17, 2022).

who were not identified or were not willing to talk. With this caveat in mind, the evidence I gathered through interviews demonstrates that gendered expectations about women's appropriate role, in both rebellion and in the community, contoured their recruitment, their responsibilities, and their experiences as governors. However, women did not merely comply with external pressures. They responded strategically to expectations by emphasizing and building trust in rebel services. In doing so, they secured greater legitimacy in the eyes of the community and proved indispensable to the Maoist governing apparatus.

Evidence for Alternative Explanations

Rebel Strength

I conducted interviews in districts where the Maoists had varying degrees of civilian support: Rolpa, one of the districts where the insurgency launched that is considered the heartland of the Maoists, and Bardiya and Dhading, where the Maoists exerted uneven influence and had fewer networks prior to the outbreak of conflict. There were not striking differences in the proportion of women who served on village People's Governments across these districts. Table 3.8 shows that in all three districts, respondents' reports of the proportion of women who held these positions varied.³⁹

If variation in women's representation in People's Government followed variation in rebel strength, rebel strength would pose a significant challenge to my argument. Yet, the ability of Maoists to mobilize women into governing positions was not directly correlated with the degree of influence they exerted in a given area. A civil society expert who traveled to Maoist controlled villages during the conflict and played a large role in the peace process corroborated this, telling me there were not specific districts where the Maoists mobilized more women, though they mobilized more people overall in the mid-western hills.⁴⁰ A former Maoist political leaders indicated that there was variation in the gender diversity

³⁹ To estimate the size of the *jana sarkar* in each village and the number of women who held positions on it, I asked each respondent in a given village: 'Around how many people were on the People's Government of this village?' and 'How many of those members were women?'. I took the average of the answers I received. Answers to both questions across respondents differed at most by two, giving me confidence in people's recollections.

⁴⁰ Interview with Author in Kathmandu (March 30 2022).

Table 3.8: Reported Gender Breakdown of Village People’s Government

Village Identifier	District	Size of Jana Sarkar (respondent average)	# of women in Jana Sarkar (respondent average)	% Women
Village 1	Baridya	13	7	53.8
Village 2	Dhading	11	1	9.1
Village 3	Dhading	5	1	20
Village 4	Dhading	10	4	40
Village 5	Dhading	9	3	33.33
Village 6	Rolpa	15	5	33.33
Village 7	Rolpa	7	2	28.7
Village 8	Rolpa	11	1	9.1
Village 9	Rolpa	9	2	22.2

of People’s Government in all regions where these governments were formed, regardless of rebel strength in that area. Moreover, women expressed that lack of community support was a key governing challenge even in Maoist strongholds.

Women’s Advocacy

While women in the Maoist movement certainly exerted agency in their positions, the evidence does not support the notion that women secured positions in rebel government and pushed leadership to invest in private-sphere services. Instead, as argued above, rebel leadership mobilized women with the expectation that they would perform the work traditionally expected of them in the domestic realm. There were not clear gendered patterns in the motivations of women and men to take on positions in People’s Governments. People had varied reasons for seeking out or accepting these positions. Some wanted to help the Maoists win the war to achieve political change, others wanted to eliminate caste, gender, or economic inequality, still others were motivated by personal security. Rather, gendered patterns emerged in the types of responsibilities the party gave insurgent governors.

Interestingly, Maoist political leaders reported that women at higher levels of the party (e.g. central committee members, regional bureau members, district-in-charge) pushed the party to emphasize gender equality and prioritize women’s rights. Yet this did not appear to be the case for women at a more local level. Neither village-level rebel governors, community

members, nor civil society experts mentioned that women in village-level positions pushed the party to focus more on direct social services. As this paper is focused on the influence of local-level women insurgent governors, the reason for this disparity is beyond the scope of the paper. However, one plausible explanation is that women in higher levels of the party do not interact with local communities as much, and therefore might not be constrained by community expectations. Another potential reason is that as women gain more influence in the party, they can promote more gender transformative policies.

Ideology

Ideology partly motivated the CPN-M to mobilize women into governing positions. Maoist political leaders brought up the CPN-M's ideology consistently when I asked why it was important to appoint women into People's Governments. However, ideology does not satisfactorily explain the relationship between women's representation in rebel governing structures and the outcomes of rebel governance. First, the ideology of the CPN-M did not vary significantly sub-nationally. While the Maoists strategically emphasized different elements of their ideological goals in different areas of the country, the core of the ideology was consistent. Second, ideology does not explain the gendered differences observed in the responsibilities of village-level rebel governors. If ideology alone explains both women's mobilization into governing positions and a greater emphasis private-sphere services, why are women expected to take on these duties and not men?

3.4 Discussion & Conclusion

In this paper, I develop a theory of how pressures from rebel leadership and ordinary community members drive women to focus on direct social services once they secure political power. An initial cross-national analysis finds support for the theorized relationship between women in insurgent government and the provision of private-sphere services by rebels. Qualitative analysis of evidence about the CPN-M provides evidence that gendered expectations and women's capacity to meet those expectations underpin this relationship. I show that women in rebel government meaningfully influence the services provided by

rebels. I provide novel insights into reasons for variation in rebel governance, the impact of conflict on people's lives, and women's mobilization into and agency within armed organizations.

Understanding rebel governance is fundamental to understanding armed groups, civil war processes, and conflict legacies. Rebel governance shapes communities during and after war. The extent, form, and quality of rebel services can determine civilians' migration decisions (Revkin, 2021), ex-rebel influence after conflict (Martin, 2021), and postwar institutional outcomes (Huang, 2016). My findings contribute to the literature on rebel governance by suggesting that women's participation in and influence over rebel governing structures contours the types of services rebels provide and the trust that civilians have in those services. It is therefore an important factor in understanding the landscape and long-run impacts of wartime governance.

Moreover, this paper demonstrates the value of interrogating women's contributions as rebel governors in addition to their contributions as combatants. As several scholars have shown (e.g. Hedström, 2016; Loken, 2022; Matfess, 2020; Parkinson, 2013a; Viterna, 2013b), women's non-combat contributions are foundational to armed group viability; gendered social norms frequently make women's labor in these spaces particularly valuable to armed groups. Yet, the lion's share of research on women's participation in armed rebellion focuses on female combatants. My findings indicate that women insurgent governors face pressures that are distinct from women militants and that they shape rebel behavior and strategy in unique ways. In doing so, it deepens our understanding of the consequences of women's participation in armed organizations.

The findings of this paper also open promising avenues for future research. Scholars might explore the temporal dynamics of women's influence over insurgent government. One important question my findings do not address is whether as women gain community and rebel leader support, their goals and priorities shift away from direct social services and toward more gender transformative goals. Future research could also assess how variation in community characteristics and in the identities of women insurgent governors might

condition the impact of women on rebel governance.

4. Women Service Providers and Local Channels for Collective Action: Evidence from Nepal

Women’s collective action is a powerful tool for advancing women’s rights and equality. Organized in self-help groups, local NGOs, and cooperatives, women have challenged harmful social norms and reduced gender-based violence, expanded women’s political influence and participation, increased social protections for women and girls, and improved women’s employment conditions and opportunities (Brody et al., 2015; Desai & Joshi, 2014; Diprose, 2023; Kabeer, 2017; Prillaman, 2023; Sanyal, 2009). These effects are clear even in contexts where barriers to women’s collective organization are numerous and high. Local collective action has improved gender dynamics in communities with deep-rooted patriarchal norms and severe gender inequality, with limited access to traditional seats of power, and in fragile contexts where women are intensely vulnerable, like the aftermath of a conflict or natural disaster (Berry, 2018; R. Brulé, 2023; Desai & Joshi, 2014; Prillaman, 2023; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002; Zulver, 2022).

But, this type of collective action is not universal. A gender gap persists in nearly every measure of political participation (Burns et al., 2001; Isaksson et al., 2014; Kruks-Wisner, 2018; Prillaman, 2023), including collective action and participation in civil society organizations (McDuie-Ra, 2007; Norris et al., 2004). The grassroots formation of channels for women’s collective action varies significantly across communities, even those in close proximity to one another (**newbury2000aftermath**; Rodríguez-Garcia, 2015; Zulver, 2022). Development interventions that establish conduits for women’s collective action like self-help groups and agricultural cooperatives, though often successful, sometimes fail to have the desired effect (Banerjee et al., 2015), perhaps because women do not join or do not actively participate (Baden, 2013; Lahiri-Dutt & Samanta, 2006).

Though existing literature has provided robust theory and evidence on the impact of women’s collective action, it does not explain the reasons why women form channels for collective action in some communities and not others. Where should we expect local groups for women’s collective action to emerge and why? Prior scholarship has demonstrated that,

where groups for collective action emerge, they succeed because they broaden women’s social and economic worlds beyond the household (Prillaman, 2023; Sanyal, 2009) or increase access to financial and vocational resources (Desai & Joshi, 2014; Nessa et al., 2012).

This paper investigates whether small investments in women service providers—local women who mobilize to provide services to women in their communities—even when their work is household-focused and not intended to alter women’s economic or political standing, can nonetheless plant the seeds of women’s collective action. It asks: can investments in women service providers drive the creation of local channels for women’s collective action?

I argue that investments in local women service providers improve service providers’ ability perform three functions critical to collective action: gathering *information* about the needs of women in their communities, deepening *strong interpersonal ties* between women in their communities, and building the *institutional knowledge* necessary to assert and advocate for collective demands. Moreover, I argue that the effects of resource allocation to women service providers on collective action are likely to be resilient to shocks because, due to the private, personal nature of their work, women service providers are practiced in cooperating under difficult conditions and build particularly durable social ties.

The empirical analysis focuses on the impact of investments in the Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) program in Nepal. Nepal’s Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) founded the FCHV program in 1988 in an effort to help fill significant gaps in state service provision in rural areas. FCHVs are married mothers selected by other women in their wards, Nepal’s smallest administrative unit. They provide door-to-door health services and counseling, convene meetings of women in their communities, and educate women on health-related topics. When the program began in 1988, all wards in Nepal appointed one FCHV. In 1993, the government of Nepal adopted a ‘population-based’ model in 28 of Nepal’s 75 districts. Wards in these 28 districts above given population thresholds could appoint additional volunteers, while wards in these districts below the population thresholds had only the standard, one volunteer. Increasing the number of FCHVs in a community constituted an important investment in women service providers. It gave volunteers the

time to engage in more meaningful interactions with women in the community. I focus on the subset of wards located in population-based districts, where wards above the population thresholds appointed additional volunteers and wards below did not. In these districts, I use both a difference-in-differences (DiD) design and a regression discontinuity (RD) design to examine the impact of appointing one and two additional FCHVs on the registration of women's services NGOs in wards over a nearly 20-year period. This period includes Nepal's civil war, which spanned from 1996-2006, allowing me to examine the resilience of this investment in FCHVs impact to political, economic, and social upheaval.

The results of the DiD design are robust and clear. I find that mobilizing additional FCHVs increases the registration of women's services NGOs in wards, including after the conflict. Given that the RD design estimates the local average treatment effect (LATE), examining only communities right around the cutoff populations, the design is underpowered and yields null results. In addition to the findings of the DiD design, qualitative evidence drawn from three focus group discussions (FGDs) with FCHVs in Nepal further suggest that investments in women service providers have encouraged women to come together to form organizations for collective action. Moreover, focus group participants emphasized the role of information, strong interpersonal social ties, and institutional knowledge in underpinning this relationship.

This study makes several empirical and theoretical contributions to political science literature. First, my findings points to an alternative—and perhaps unlikely—pathway to women's broader political participation. Much of the literature on the sources of women's political participation examines the impact of women elected to political positions (Beaman et al., 2009, 2012; Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006; Dassonneville & McAllister, 2018; Ladam et al., 2018; Schuler, 2019; Wolbrecht & Campbell, 2007) or the impact of groups created, at least in part, to foment women's participation in public life (Brody et al., 2015; Desai & Joshi, 2014; Nessa et al., 2012; Prillaman, 2023; Sanyal, 2009). I demonstrate that women mobilized to do quite 'traditional' work can nonetheless harness their power to catalyze women's collective action. Investments into 'private', 'traditional' support networks do

not just transform ‘private’, ‘traditional’ networks but also foment the creation of new organizations and networks for asserting women’s rights and demands. This is an important insight given these types of service providers are especially common in highly patriarchal contexts. My findings suggest that women can build collective action capacity to demand greater political and economic rights even through gender-conforming work. Second, while these findings are applicable beyond post-conflict and post-disaster contexts, this paper builds on work highlighting the complex effects of civil war and disaster on women’s lives (Berry, 2018; Berry & Lake, 2021; R. Brulé, 2023; Justino et al., 2012; KC & Van Der Haar, 2019; Lake, 2018; Shoemaker, 2001; Tripp, 2015; Viterna, 2013b) by shedding light on variation in local, collective action after a civil conflict. I show that institutional investments in women service providers can withstand such an upheaval and help to rebuild community life in its wake. Finally, the paper has clear policy implications. It shows that small institutional investments in women service providers can have substantial spillover effects for women’s political and civic participation.

4.1 What We Know about Local Women’s Collective Action and Community Participation

The roots of the gender political participation gap and the factors that might close this gap are central topics in political science literature (Barnes & Holman, 2020; Berry, 2018; R. Brulé & Gaikwad, 2021; Burns et al., 2001; Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006; Dassonneville & McAllister, 2018; Ladam et al., 2018; Robinson & Gottlieb, 2021; Tripp, 2015; Wolbrecht & Campbell, 2007). Increasingly, scholars have studied the barriers and catalysts of women’s political participation at a local level. Much of this literature examines whether and how quotas for women’s political representation in local seats shape women’s position in society, including their political participation, more broadly.

Scholars have found that women’s local political representation improves women’s political engagement and ambition (Beaman et al., 2009, 2012; Schuler, 2019), increases politicians’ responsiveness to women’s issues (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004; Iyer et al.,

2012; Parthasarathy et al., 2019), helps women secure greater economic, social, and political rights (R. E. Brulé, 2020), reduces gender gaps in educational attainment aspirations (Beaman et al., 2012) and lessens gendered divisions of household labor (Beaman et al., 2012). While local quotas have no doubt improved women’s position in society, this work has also raised questions about which groups benefit from women’s increased political representation (Berry & Lake, 2020, 2021; Hughes, 2011; Karekurve-Ramachandra & Lee, 2020). Under some circumstances, electoral quotas for women can reduce representation for other marginalized groups (Karekurve-Ramachandra & Lee, 2020) or provide opportunities for elite women while further excluding minority women (Berry & Lake, 2020, 2021; Hughes, 2011). Moreover, quotas do not exist everywhere and there are many other forms of women’s local leadership and participation that might similarly have positive spillover effects. Can other forms of women’s civic participation—which are perhaps more accessible to marginalized women than political office—have similar impacts on women’s political empowerment?

A growing body of scholarship on local women’s groups, primarily self-help groups (SHGs) in India, explores this question. This work has demonstrated that local women’s groups that aim to empower women through collective action—often through access to collective financial resources or joint ownership and control of agricultural enterprises—can improve women’s social, economic, and political position (Brody et al., 2015; Desai & Joshi, 2014; Diprose, 2023; Kabeer, 2017; Prillaman, 2023; Sanyal, 2009; Theeuwes et al., 2021). Scholars have pointed to several pathways through which participation in these groups catalyze further collective action and political participation by women. These include increasing household bargaining power (Osmani, 2007), challenging existing social norms (Swain & Wallentin, 2009), widening women’s networks beyond the household (Prillaman, 2023; Sanyal, 2009), and granting access to financial and vocational resources (Desai & Joshi, 2014; Nessa et al., 2012). While this scholarship has provided robust theory and evidence on the impact of these local groups for women’s collective action, it focuses on groups created by development interventions and intended to empower women: “ the majority of

SHGs target women with the explicit goal of empowering them” socially, politically, and/or economically (Brody et al., 2015, p.10). Because these studies examine groups for women’s collective action created through development interventions and devised to foment women’s empowerment, they cannot tell us much about where these organizations organically arise.

This paper studies whether channels for collective action can stem from a more unlikely source: women service providers. Women service providers are local women mobilized to provide services to women in their communities. They are especially likely to work in patriarchal contexts where social norms preclude women from receiving services from men and in contexts where the state has limited reach and capacity to directly deliver services. In doing so, it answers several questions past research has not addressed. First, where should we expect local groups for women’s collective action to emerge and why? Second, can women’s collective action stem even from initiatives that are household-focused and not intended to alter women’s economic or political standing?

4.2 Investments in Women Service Providers and Collective Action

I theorize that investments in women service providers engender groups for women’s collective action through three mechanisms: improving access to *information* about community needs, deepening *strong interpersonal ties* between women, and building the *institutional knowledge* necessary for women to formally advocate for their collective priorities. I further argue that the effects of investments in women service providers are durable and resilient.

I define women service providers as local women who provide services to other women in their communities. These services encompass services whose target beneficiaries are women and girls—e.g., women’s healthcare—or services that address ‘practical gender interests’, which “arise from the concrete conditions of women’s positioning within the gender division of labor” (Molyneux, 1984, p.233). The latter category comprises, for example, services that ease the burden of caring for children, including community kitchens, child health services, and local Mothers’ Groups. A common type of women service providers are community health volunteers. Community health volunteer (CHV) programs are frequently

implemented as a way to improve access to health in rural and hard to reach landscapes and are present in a wide array of contexts. For example, Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan, among other countries all have women only programs (Keeling, 2022). Numerous other countries, like Afghanistan, Indonesia, Kenya, and Thailand have CHV programs that are staffed almost entirely by women (Keeling, 2022; Koon et al., 2013).

Women service providers, as defined here, are most likely in contexts where women are expected to perform the majority of domestic and care labor: organizing the household, performing child and elder care, managing the needs of the family, etc. (Dwyer, 2013; Folbre, 2006; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2006; Molyneux, 1984).

This gendered division of labor is a scope condition of my theory. Moreover, because I examine the impact of often quite small investments in this type of service provision, I expect my theory to apply most strongly in small communities where state support and other sources of aid for this work—e.g., family or community wealth—are limited. Under these conditions, small changes in resource availability or team size can meaningfully shape service providers' capacity and interactions with the community. Having laid out the key definitions and scope conditions of my theory, the remainder of this section develops the argument for the three proposed theoretical mechanisms: information, intimate social ties, and capacity.

4.2.1 Information

Information is foundational to collective action and advocacy. I argue that investing in women service providers enables them to effectively gather information about the specific local needs of women and diffuse that information across networks of community women. This collective information is one critical step in encouraging collective action. It aids women in aligning their priorities so they can take action to address their needs.

Echoing existing literature that shows the information-gathering power of grassroots leaders and central local figures (Auerbach, 2016; Banerjee et al., 2013; Paller, 2014; Read,

2012), I posit that women service providers can play a major role in gathering and sharing this type of information to women in their communities. Women health volunteers in Iran, for example, were critical advocates for improving the program and their community's health because they had in-depth, local knowledge of the sources of community problems. In an interview with Homa Hoodfar, one volunteer health worker stated, "Most of the doctors who designed these programs were from the middle classes and had never lived in these neighborhoods. They did not know about our dusty roads, dirty ditches, or shops with no refrigerators. There are many variables that they simply did not know they needed to include if they want a healthy population. So we have to bring it to their attention" (Hoodfar, 2010, p.502).

I assert that women service providers are especially effective at gathering information about the needs of women in their communities because they are often meeting them in private or women-only spaces. Interactions in these types of spaces can drive women to share information more openly (Mujica, 1994; Prillaman, 2023; Sanyal, 2009). Moreover, I argue that investments in women service providers will deepen their ability to gather and share critical information about women's needs. Indeed, mobilizing even one central, trusted community member can effectively diffuse important information through and create links within communities (Banerjee et al., 2013, 2019; Beaman et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2015). A small number of central community members significantly improved information diffusion about micro-finance in India (Banerjee et al., 2013), health behaviors in Honduras (Kim et al., 2015), and technology adoption in Malawi (Beaman et al., 2021).

Shared information is key to collective action. It can align expectations about how others will behave, lowering the costs of taking action (Kuran, 1998) or otherwise help overcome barriers to civic participation (Prillaman, 2023). Just as effective state service provision depends on state legibility—the span and depth of a state's knowledge about the people and activities within its borders (Scott, 1998, 2009)—I argue that local channels for collective action established to address the needs of a community necessitates accurate information about what those shared needs are. Investments in women service providers

deepen shared knowledge about the needs of women in a given community, therefore easing collective action.

4.2.2 Strong Interpersonal Ties

Investments in women service providers also deepen women’s strong interpersonal ties—relationships characterized by personal familiarity, giving and receiving care, and holding private knowledge (Davis, 1973; Morgan, 1996)—which help build the trust necessary for collective action.

The job women service providers perform requires access to private spaces and intimate knowledge. The services they provide may be sensitive and private—like many elements of women’s health—or concern what is happening within people’s homes and families. Women service providers can therefore build deep social ties with women in their community through their involvement in everyday decisions about personal and familial well-being. Women service providers also often construct strong interpersonal ties between women in their communities through bringing women together to deliver services and discuss intimate topics. For example, community kitchens established and run by local women in Lima, Peru forged strong relationships and solidarity between women in part because they provided a venue for women to discuss family issues, such as problems with their spouse (Mujica, 1994, p. 17).

Investments in women service providers strengthen these strong interpersonal ties by increasing the time service providers can spend with the women in their communities. This additional time can deepen their emotional relationships, trust, and knowledge: the foundations of strong interpersonal ties. Such ties can encourage women’s collective political participation even absent changes to gender inequalities in resources (Prillaman, 2023). Where women’s organizations have improved solidarity between and social connectedness among women, women develop civic skills and collective action capacity (Prillaman, 2023; Sanyal, 2009). Strong interpersonal social ties are especially likely to ease collective mobilization under difficult circumstances (Baines & Paddon, 2012; Ketola, 2023; McAdam,

1986; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993), making investments in women service providers powerful tools for collective action even where barriers to this action are high.

4.2.3 Institutional Knowledge

Collective action not only requires that individuals have information about their priorities and trust one another enough to work together, but also that they understand the channels through which they can advocate for and address their needs. I posit that investing in women service providers increases the institutional knowledge of women in a given community that is critical to forming such channels.

A growing body of literature explores what determines whether citizens in areas thought to be overlooked by the state—because they are very poor or very rural—make demands on the state (Auerbach, 2016; Kruks-Wisner, 2018). This work has found that ‘claimmaking’ (Kruks-Wisner, 2018) under these conditions requires knowledge of political systems and connections to political figures (Kruks-Wisner, 2018). Informal local leaders can play a key role in whether communities have these resources; leaders’ networks and influence can determine whether vulnerable communities are able to demand services and development from the state (Auerbach, 2016).

While forming channels for local collective action is not the same as demanding services from the state, I argue that it requires similar knowledge and access. Indeed, establishing channels for local collective action including local NGOs, cooperatives, and self-help groups, often require navigating some form of bureaucracy, often state bureaucracy. Moreover, in many contexts, forming these channels is an alternate way that communities can demand rights and services. Knowledge of and access to state and state-like structures can make forming collective organizations easier. Access to institutional politics has increased the ability of women’s organizations the world over to achieve their goals (Akchurin & Lee, 2013).

Women service providers often act as a bridge between the state and community members. They have experience navigating state or state-like institutions and advocating for

the needs of their communities. Where investments in these service providers are made, their institutional know-how grows. They can spread this knowledge throughout their communities, enhancing the capacity of women in the community to establish channels for local collective action.

4.2.4 Resilience

My theory asserts that the effect of investments in women service providers on channels for collective action are likely to be resilient to major shocks like disasters and civil conflicts. During conflict and disaster, intimate social ties become a critical source of agency and resilience. These upheavals often shape community social networks in ways that elevate the importance of familial and domestic ties compared to other social connections (Shesterinina, 2021; E. J. Wood, 2008). War fragments social networks, narrowing people's social world to their most foundational social connections (E. J. Wood, 2008, p. 555). Similarly, people rely on family and kinship ties above other types of ties during disasters and in their immediate aftermath (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). Indeed, intimate social ties are particularly powerful tools for collective mobilization in response to war (Baines & Paddon, 2012; Ketola, 2023) and other high-stakes circumstances (McAdam, 1986; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Where investments in women service providers have engendered strong intimate social ties, women's collective action capacity is more likely to withstand shocks like conflict and disaster.

Moreover, because the work women service providers do can be sensitive—for example, the provision of women's health services that go against prevailing cultural norms—it can provide women a set of practices and tools for cooperating under difficult conditions. This can enable them to form channels for collective action even under incredibly difficult circumstances, including after conflict and disaster. This logic aligns with scholarship finding that a history of political or community organization can ease future collective action (Finkel, 2017; McAdam, 1986). Therefore, I argue that the effect that investments in women service providers have on the formation of channels for local collective action are likely to

be resilient to large upheavals. For example, during the civil war in Liberia, women drew on existing networks and organizations in their community to support themselves when the conditions of the civil war necessitated they become breadwinners (Gizelis, 2021, p. 182). In the postwar period, communities that had a stronger history of prewar women’s organizations were better able to participate in peacebuilding efforts after war (Gizelis, 2021).

4.3 Empirical Approach

4.3.1 Case Selection and Background

I test my theory by examining how the assignment of one and two additional Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) to wards in Nepal shaped an important local institution for women’s collective action and civic participation: women’s services NGOs. The case of Nepal offers a unique opportunity to study the consequences of women service providers for women’s collective action and to probe the durability and resilience of this relationship.

Theoretically, the case fits in my scope conditions. Wards in Nepal are small communities. While there is sub-national variation in gender relations and economic development in Nepal, the country is characterized by strict gendered divisions of labor and resource-constraints, specially in the time period of my analysis (B. Adhikari, 2018; R. Adhikari & Sharma, 2022; Leder, 2022; Lundgren et al., 2013).

Empirically, variation in state resources allocated for appointing FCHVs—detailed in the sections below—allow me to probe the causal link between state investments in women’s social leadership and women’s collective organization.

In 1993, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), established ‘population-based’ models for FCHV allocation in 28 of Nepal’s 75 districts. Wards located in population-based districts over a given population size could mobilize additional volunteers, while wards in these districts below certain populations continued with the standard one FCHV. In these population-based districts, I compare wards that received an investment in the form of

appointing additional volunteers to those that did not receive additional volunteers.

Since the mobilization of additional FCHVs occurred three years before the start of Nepal's civil war, I am able to examine their durability and resilience to conflict. Nepal's civil war began on February 13, 1996 when the CPN-M launched simultaneous attacks on police posts and other local state institutions in six districts across the country's midwestern region. The subsequent "People's War" claimed the lives of over 13,000 people until it ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2006.

I assess the effect of the prewar investment in the FCHV program on the registration of women's services organizations before, during, and after the war. In the remainder of this section, I provide background on the FCHV program and the sources of variation in the investments made in the program. I then provide background on women's services organizations in Nepal, before detailing my inference strategy, data sources, and measures.

The Female Community Health Volunteer Program in Nepal

The Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) in Nepal started the FCHV program in 1988 to improve community health access and outcomes by mobilizing local women. FCHVs were initially responsible for family planning initiatives and dispensing birth control, but their responsibilities quickly grew to encompass a wide range of maternal and child health issues, including providing counseling on maternal health, running child immunization campaigns, facilitating 'mother's group' meetings, and running sessions on birth preparedness for women in the community (Amano et al., 2014; Basnet et al., 2021; Betron et al., 2021; Kamar, 2022; Khatri et al., 2017; Manandhar et al., 2022; USAID, 2007). FCHVs are selected by local Mother's Groups, groups of local mothers who focus on gender and social issues (USAID, 2007). Once selected, FCHVs go through eighteen days of training and participate in a 'refresher' training every five years. FCHVs are not paid, but they receive a uniform and a small stipend for transportation costs and other necessities.

FCHVs are trusted individuals in their communities. The FCHV force is made up of older women who are long-standing and respected members of their communities. By

policy, FCHVs must be married women who have children of their own, in part to ensure that they are respected by community members and are unlikely to move away from their community (USAID, 2007). A 2007 survey of 5,750 FCHVs across all districts in Nepal found that the median age of FCHVs was thirty-six and only one percent of FCHVs were under the age of twenty (USAID, 2007, p.7). Moreover, the turnover rate for FCHVs is low. Of the FCHVs surveyed in 2007, over 50% had served for longer than ten years (USAID, 2007, p.10). Public health experts and government officials have recommended FCHVs be deployed to address numerous community issues, from gender-based violence to the spread of non-communicable diseases, because of their trusted position in communities (Basnet et al., 2021; Betron et al., 2021). That FCHVs are frequently the first line of defense for improving public health in Nepal is a testament to the influence and efficacy of the volunteers.

The selection criteria and process for FCHV appointment ensure both that FCHVs are strong information diffusers and central in community networks. A small number of central community members, identified by their own communities, can be incredibly effective at transmitting information and strengthening networks (Banerjee et al., 2013, 2019; Beaman et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2015). FCHVs are selected by their own communities and by policy, are longstanding and respected members of their communities. To illustrate, a profile of SukuMaya, an FCHV in Makwanpur district, outlined how “The mothers from her community appointed her [SukuMaya] since she was someone they felt would be the right person for the program” (SDA-Nepal, 2022).

In April 2023, I conducted two focus group discussions (FGDs), each with six FCHVs, in Nuwakot district and one FGD with six FCHVs in Lalitpur district.¹ These FGDs affirmed that FCHVs are selected by local Mothers’ Groups. Of the 18 FCHVs I spoke to, each volunteer was selected by her local Mothers’ Group.

FCHVs largely serve and interact with other women in their communities. Once local

¹ The focus group discussions were conducted in Nepali with the assistance of an interpreter. The focus group participants were recruited through a contact at UNICEF who had worked with FCHVs.

Mothers' Groups select FCHVs, the two groups work in tandem, with FCHVs becoming de facto leaders of the groups (USAID, 2007). One of the central activities of FCHVs is to convene monthly Health Mothers' Group (HMG) meetings, where mothers in the community convene to talk about maternal and child health, nutrition, and healthy relationships, among other topics (Kamar, 2022; Khatri et al., 2017; Manandhar et al., 2022; Pant et al., 2014). In the FGDs, the impact of Health Mothers' Groups on women's networks in the community was a theme. A participant in one of the focus groups in Nuwakot district stated: "[HMG meetings] bring women in the community closer to one another. The relationship has been very good. The mothers are very excited. People share a lot during that meeting."²

A major challenge in the FCHV program is that FCHVs are often overburdened and overworked (Betron et al., 2021; Khatri et al., 2017; USAID, 2007). Dedicating more resources to the FCHV program in the form of additional volunteers makes a large difference in the program's efficacy. Having an additional FCHV operating in a given ward meaningfully increases the strength of the FCHV program and, subsequently, the network between women in the community. As further detailed in section 5.1, mobilizing additional FCHVs increases attendance at Health Mothers' Groups (Pant et al., 2014), allows FCHVs more time to provide meaningful counseling to women in their communities,³ and increases FCHV's community knowledge (USAID, 2007, p. 31). This finding is mirrored in a 2007 study of 5,750 FCHVs across all districts of Nepal, which determined "FCHVs covering more than a minimal population may not know about all pregnancies, births or children in their areas. For many programs there is evidence that although FCHVs with larger catchments do work harder, their coverage of larger populations declines" (USAID, 2007, p. 31). The study found similar effects for knowledge of births and pneumonia treatment rates (USAID, 2007, pp. 31-32, 41).

² FGD in Lalitpur District, April 2023.

³ FGD in Nuwakot District, April 2023.

Women's Services Organizations in Nepal

I assess the impact of investments in the FCHV program on the registration of women's services non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Nepal's Social Welfare Council (SWC) in wards. Women's services NGOs are local organization who conduct programming or advocacy with the primary goal of improving the social welfare of women and girls.

The SWC was officially established in 1992 (Nepali Year 2049), following Nepal's 1990 democratic transition. Nepal's Social Welfare Act of 1992 mandates that all NGOs which receive any form of foreign funding—either from foreign governments, international organizations, or individual foreign donors—and all NGOs that receive funding from the Government of Nepal must be registered with the SWC. There are very few loopholes for NGOs to avoid this registration process, which according to expert interviews is lengthy and requires substantial interaction with local government officials and representatives of the SWC.⁴ In fact, Nepali banks will not release funding to NGOs unless they have a certificate of approval from the SWC.⁵

It is reasonable to assume that the majority of NGOs in Nepal are registered with the SWC. While not all NGOs receive foreign or governmental funding, the experts I spoke to estimated that the vast majority do. They stated that alternate sources of funding might be entirely local donations, which were common after the 2015 earthquake, for example. However, they were confident that most NGOs in Nepal receive some amount of funding that requires them to register with the SWC.

The SWC determines the type of NGO (categories include environmental protection, educational development, child services, community and rural development, women's services, and others) based on the target beneficiaries of the NGO and its projects. Women's services NGOs encompasses all NGOs whose target beneficiaries are girls and women.⁶ These services could include, for example, advocacy for women's rights, education provision for

⁴ Virtual expert interviews, April 2024.

⁵ Virtual expert interviews, April 2024.

⁶ Virtual expert interviews, April 2024.

women and girls, employment training for women, or women’s health.⁷ While it is certainly possible that other categories of NGOs are run by and/or provide benefits to local women, that is not their explicit mission. I therefore focus on women’s services NGOs, because this type of NGO most clearly matches the outcome I am interested in: channels for women’s local collective action.

The goal of all NGOs registered with the SWC must be social welfare. The organizations have to seek to improve the rights, services, or environment for Nepali people. Outside of Kathmandu and other large cities, like Nepalgunj or Pokhara, where NGOs are more likely to be nationally focused, NGOs registered in a particular ward are local NGOs: they are run by local people and intended to serve local people.⁸

While not all NGOs receive foreign or governmental funding, the experts I spoke to estimated that the vast majority do. They stated that alternate sources of funding might be entirely local donations, which were common after the 2015 earthquake, for example. However, they were confident that most NGOs in Nepal receive some amount of funding that requires them to register with the SWC.

4.3.2 Data and Measures

I use two sources of data—the 1991 Population Census and registration records of local women’s services non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with the Social Welfare Council in Nepal—to compile a dataset of 13,500 wards in Nepal.

Explanatory Variable

My explanatory variable is the assignment of additional Female Community Health Volunteers to wards, which was determined by the ward population at the date of the 1991 Population Census of Nepal. Nepal’s Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) provided me with the 1991 ward-level population data.

Using the ward-level population data, I create a binary indicator of whether or not a

⁷ Virtual expert interviews, April 2024.

⁸ Virtual expert interviews, April 2024.

given ward was eligible to appoint additional FCHVs.

Outcome Variable: Women's Services NGOs

My measure of channels for women's collective action is the registration of women's services NGOs with the Social Welfare Council (SWC) in wards in Nepal. I employ a binary indicator that takes a value of 1 if the given ward registered a women's service NGO and 0 otherwise.

The registration of women's services NGOs in wards at the SWC is an appropriate measure of local channels for women's collective action for several reasons. First, because the scope of my theory is restricted to small communities and excludes large cities like Kathmandu, these are NGOs registered and run by local people (often women) for local women. Second, the requirement to register with the SWC is strictly enforced. Any NGO that wishes to receive any type of foreign or governmental funding must register, or else they will not have the funds to conduct their project.⁹

Though expert interviews confirmed that most women's services NGOs are likely registered with the SWC, it is important to note that this is not a comprehensive list of every NGO in Nepal focused on women's services. There may be some NGOs funded entirely locally or operating on a volunteer basis and requiring little funding. There are likely to be systematic differences between NGOs registered and not registered at the SWC. First, these are NGOs that secured governmental or foreign funding. Second, registration with the SWC is arduous and requires a great deal of bureaucratic maneuvering, according to civil society experts in Nepal.¹⁰ I argue, that using this outcome measure is thus a *hard* test of my case, as the barriers to registering at the SWC are significant.

Figure 4.1 visualizes the geographic distribution of women's services NGOs across VDCs in Nepal's 28 population-based districts.

⁹ Virtual expert interviews, April 2024.

¹⁰ Virtual expert interviews, April 2024.

Geographic Distribution of Women's Services NGOs across VDCs in Population Districts

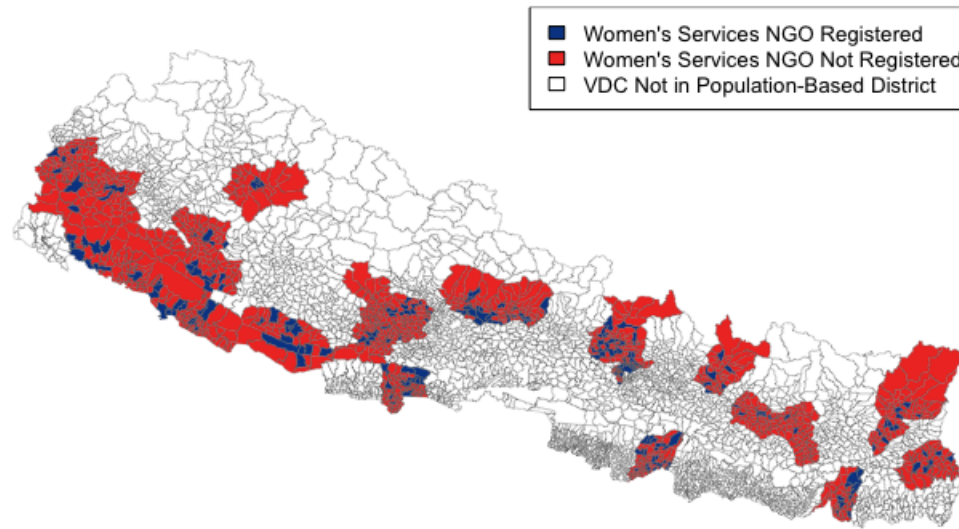


FIGURE 4.1: Women's Services NGOs in Population-Based Districts

4.3.3 Empirical Strategy: Difference-in-Differences (DiD) and Regression Discontinuity (RD) Designs

When the FCHV program began in Nepali Year 1945 (1988) every ward in Nepal appointed one FCHV. In Nepali Year 2050 (1993/94), the MoHP instituted a population-based model for FCHV appointment in twenty eight of Nepal's seventy five districts. Figure 4.2 shows the location of population-based districts across geographic regions. In these districts, wards that exceeded pre-determined population thresholds appointed additional FCHVs, while those that fell below these thresholds did not. The MoHP used population data from the 1991 census to determine whether wards could receive additional FCHVs. The population requirement varied based on which geographic region the district was located in: the Terai—where wards received an additional FCHV for every 400 people; the Hills, where wards received an additional FCHV for every 250 people; and the Mountains, where wards received an additional FCHV for every 150 people.

Location of Population-Based FCHV Districts by Geographic Region

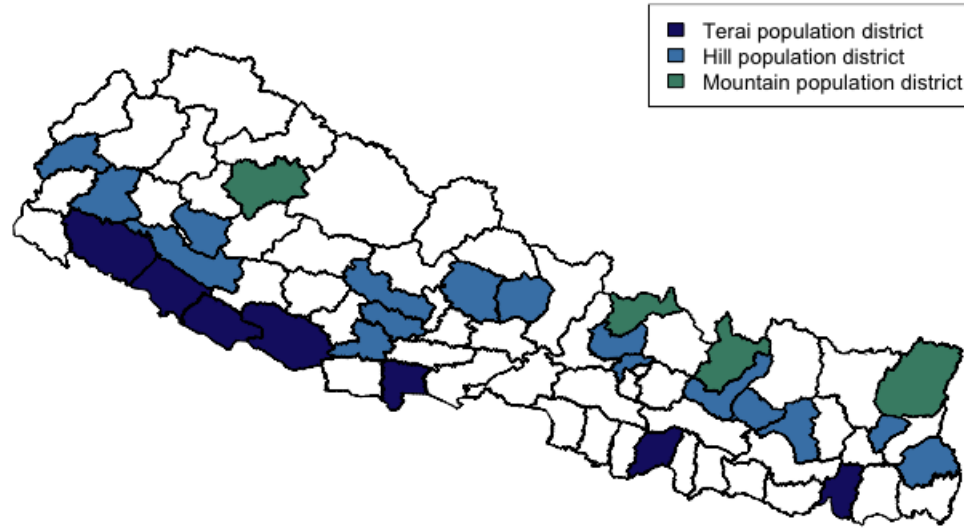


FIGURE 4.2: Location of Population-Based FCHV Districts by Geographic Region

My analysis focuses on the subset of wards in population-based districts. There are 13,500 wards in these districts. Since a scope condition of my theory is small communities and qualitative evidence from Nepali civil society experts indicated that NGOs registered in large cities may not be entirely locally focused, I examine wards that have a population below 2000.¹¹ This yields 13,274 unique wards. Table 4.1 reports the number of treated and untreated wards in my sample, where treatment is the mobilization of one and two additional FCHVs.

Treatment	Treated Wards	Untreated Wards	Total
+1 FCHV	9755	3519	13,274
+2 FCHVs	3329	9945	13,274

In these wards, I use a difference-in-differences (DiD) design to study the effect of

¹¹ My results are robust to a different definition of ‘small’ communities, show in Appendix B.3.2.

receiving additional FCHVs on women’s collective organization. This design compares the change in the number of women’s services NGOs registered before and after additional FCHVs could have been appointed in wards where an additional FCHV was and was not appointed. I estimate the average treatment effect on the treated ATT both in the canonical difference-in-differences setup where there are “two time periods are available, there is a treated population of units that receives a treatment of interest beginning in the second period, and a comparison population that does not receive the treatment in either period” (Roth et al., 2023, p.1). That is, I estimate the average treatment effect of receiving additional FCHVs in Nepali Year 2050 (1993/94) on the total number of women’s services registered in every year after treatment. I also estimate the effect of treatment in several time periods in an event study-style difference-in-differences design. This helps me further interrogate the resilience of these investments to Nepal’s civil war.

While I cannot conclusively determine whether every community that met the given population thresholds appointed the allotted additional FCHVs, there is suggestive evidence that treatment uptake was very consistent. In my focus group discussions and expert interviews, I did not encounter any communities that did not appoint additional FCHVs. This is likely because FCHVs are selected by Mothers’ Groups—women in the community who benefit from the FCHV program and who count the current FCHVs among their members. Moreover, as shown in Appendix B.2, a survey from USAID that counted the number of FCHVs working in each district in 2007 demonstrates that population districts consistently have an FCHV to ward ratio of above 1. I therefore interpret the estimated treatment effect of the difference-in-differences design as the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT).

Since it is not feasible to definitively test the key identifying assumption of parallel trends in the treated population and comparison population absent treatment, I employ the method proposed by Rambachan and Roth, 2023 to probe the sensitivity of my results to violations of parallel trends. The results for the mobilization of one additional FCHV are robust to allowing violations of parallel trends up to 0.5 times as big as the maximum

violation in the pre-treatment period. The results for the mobilization of two additional FCHVs are robust to allowing violations of parallel trends up to 0.9 times as big as the maximum violation in the pre-treatment period. This analysis can be found in Appendix B.1. Appendix B.1 also includes a visual inspection of parallel trends.

I also estimate the local average treatment effect (LATE) using a regression discontinuity (RD) design in Appendix B.4. While the results show a positive trend after the population cutoff, they are not significant, likely due to the design being under-powered. As in the difference-in-differences design, I focus on the subset of wards that were eligible to receive additional volunteers. I examine the first and second cutoffs in each geographic region—which determines the assignment of one and two additional volunteers, respectively. I therefore subset my data to wards with a population below the cutoff value for two additional FCHVs, when examining the impact of one additional volunteer which results in 7,460 ward level observations.¹² To assess the impact of 2 volunteers, I subset my data to wards with a population above the cutoff for 1 volunteer but below the cutoff for 3 volunteers, which results in 3,938 ward level observations.¹³ I estimate models using the sharp RD approach for multiple cutoffs (Cattaneo et al., 2016, 2020). More information on this design can be found in Appendix B.4.

4.4 Investments in Women Service Providers Encourage Collective Action

The results of the empirical analysis are consistent with the theoretical argument that investments in women service providers engender the creation of local channels for women’s collective action. The mobilization of one additional FCHV increases the probability of the registration of a women’s services NGO by 0.002 and this result is statistically significant. While this may seem like a modest substantive effect, the overall probability that a given ward registered a women’s services NGO at any point in time in my data is quite low:

¹² Following Cattaneo et al., 2019, I subset the data to wards with populations below $\text{cutoff } 1 + [(\text{cutoff } 1 + \text{cutoff } 2) / 2]$.

¹³ Following Cattaneo et al., 2019, I subset the data to wards with populations below $\text{cutoff } 2 + [(\text{cutoff } 2 + \text{cutoff } 3) / 2]$.

0.02. The mobilization of two additional FCHVs significantly increases the probability of the registration of a women’s services NGO by 0.004. This is four times higher than the baseline probability. These results are shown in 4.3. The point estimates represent the ATT and the vertical lines are 95% confidence intervals calculated with robust standard errors clustered at the ward level.

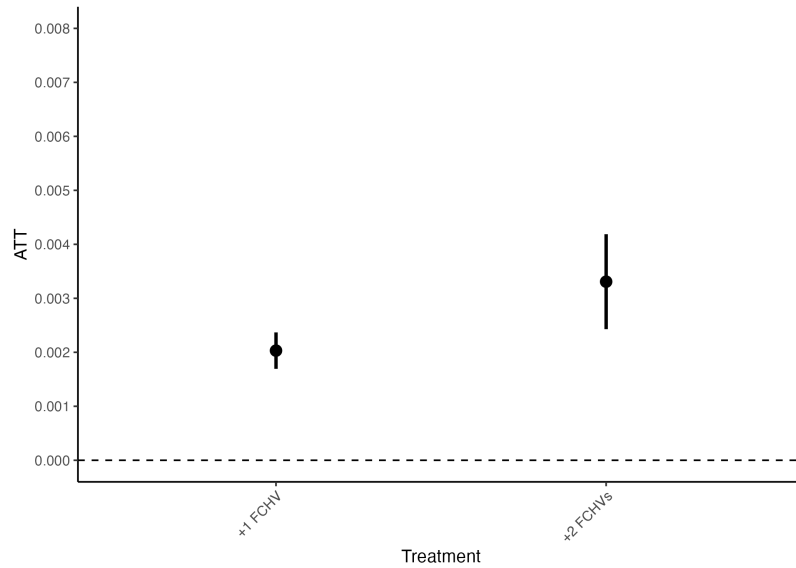


FIGURE 4.3: ATT of Additional FCHVs on Women’s Services NGOs

The results further indicate that the effects of these investments are resilient to—and perhaps even magnified by—a major political, social, and economic upheaval: Nepal’s civil war. 4.4a and 4.4b depict the impact of receiving one and two additional FCHVs, respectively, on the ATT of registering a women’s service NGO across periods. Period -2 represents Nepali Years 1934 (the earliest date a women’s service NGO was registered in my data) to 1944, the year before the FCHV program was instituted. Period -1 represents Nepali Years 1945-1949, when the FCHV program was in place, but the population-based model had not been instituted. Period 0 represents 1950, the year the population-based model was put into place and eligible wards appointed additional FCHVs. Period 1 is the post-treatment period before the onset of the war (1951-1953). Period 2 encompasses the years of the

conflict (1954-1964) while Period 3 represents the post-conflict years of 1964-1969.¹⁴ The point estimates represent the ATT. The shorter and longer vertical bars represent 90 and 95 % confidence intervals, respectively. The impact of two additional FCHVs is positive and significant in all three post-treatment periods. The substantive impact ranges from 0.002 (period 1) to 0.003 (period 2). For reference, the baseline probability of a ward registering an NGO in any given period is 0.005. Interestingly, the impact of one additional FCHV is positive and significant only in the wartime and postwar periods. These results suggest that the effects of investments in women service providers on women’s collective action may not only be resilient to conflict and other shocks, but also magnified by these shocks.

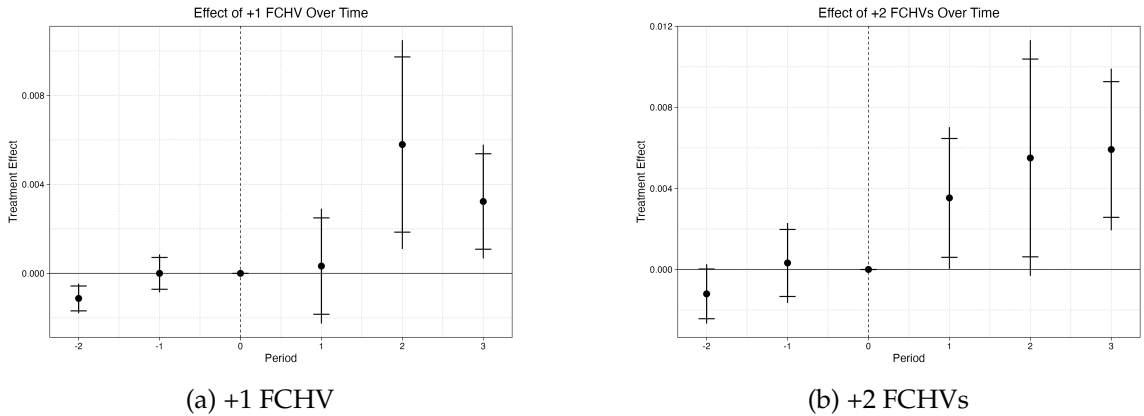


FIGURE 4.4: ATT of Additional FCHVs on Women’s NGOs by Period

4.4.1 Qualitative Evidence from Fieldwork in Nepal

Qualitative evidence provides strong evidence that investments in the FCHV program had durable effects on the establishing local channels for women’s collective action. In the focus group discussions I conducted in April 2023,¹⁵ it was clear that receiving additional FCHV deepened volunteers’ ability to gather information, build intimate social ties, and increase women’s organizational capacity to form and run women’s services NGOs.

¹⁴ I use the Nepali Calendar, as it is more accurate to identify when events occurred in Nepal.

¹⁵ The focus group discussions were conducted in Nepali with the assistance of an interpreter. The focus group participants were recruited through a contact at UNICEF who had worked with FCHVs.

In Nuwakot district, the focus group participants described the importance of receiving an additional FCHV. They told me that each FCHV is responsible for a specific area of the community. When an additional FCHV is recruited, “it is much easier. We have assigned areas and it’s much easier when another FCHV is recruited. We have to reach each and every household no matter what. If we don’t get these to the houses in our areas, the community will question us. We know everyone. We know in which households there are pregnant women. We know how many kids are in each household. We know how many elderly people are in each household. We keep it in our memory. When there are more FCHVs, we can spend more time with each household and give deeper counseling.”¹⁶ One additional FCHV can make a substantial impact; connecting with different women in the community, sharing the workload, and deepening FCHV’s knowledge of the community members they serve.

One of major impacts of these investments on the FCHV program is that receiving additional FCHVs improves attendance and involvement in the Health Mother’s Groups that FCHVs run. This is a key way that FCHVs use their position to spread information to women in the community and to build connections between women in the community. Personal connections to community health volunteers is one of the most important determinants of Health Mother group attendance (Pant et al., 2014). When these meetings are well attended, they create strong bonds between and empower local women (Pant et al., 2014). One focus group participant in Lalitpur discussed how it was difficult for her to get women to participate in Health Mother’s Groups at first, and making sure that people in her community knew her and her work was key to ensuring participation: “It was also very difficult to form HMGs because people didn’t understand what we would talk about. Now, people know our work and they support our work.”¹⁷ On the contrary, FCHVs from a ward in Nuwakot that was not eligible to receive an additional FCHV told me “It would be easier if we could work together with another friend. If there is an emergency, it’s very hard. If

¹⁶ FGD in Nuwakot District, April 2023.

¹⁷ FGD in Nuwakot District, April 2023.

we had a backup person, it would be much easier. . . Holding Health Mothers' Groups is a problem sometimes.”¹⁸

Health Mothers' Groups (HMGs) meaningfully shape relationships between women in the community. A focus group participant in Nuwakot told me “ Health Mothers' Groups are a place for friendship... It has strengthened relationships among women very much.”¹⁹ Participants across focus groups echoed this sentiment, noting how the groups bring women in the community closer together and encourage women to share information with one another.²⁰ HMGs not only lead to a sense of solidarity and connection between women in the community, but also are a key place for information diffusion through FCHVs. One FCHV from the same ward told me of the impact of Health Mothers' Groups in her community, which has two FCHVs operating: “People are so much more aware. Women who come to the [HMG] meeting spread the information to other women.”²¹

It is evident that the FCHV program has given women in the community better access to and understanding of how to interact with the local state and what services they can demand. Because of the services FCHVs provide, women have become more comfortable seeking out services from not only their local health post, but also demanding services from other local officials. Numerous FCHVs told me they have witnessed a change in how women demand services, particularly maternal health and post-natal care, but also agricultural and sanitation services ²²

Moreover, the focus group discussions and additional sources provide evidence that strong FCHV programs encourage women's collective action and political participation. A woman from Rupandehi, who participated in the FCHV-led HMGs, detailed how HMGs have encouraged women to challenge gender norms and engendered greater gender equality: “HMG meetings have also taught us to live in community and groups. It has taught us to

¹⁸ FGD in Nuwakot District, April 2023.

¹⁹ FGD in Nuwakot District, April 2023.

²⁰ FGDs in Nuwakot and Lalitpur Districts, April 2023.

²¹ FGDs in Nuwakot and Lalitpur Districts, April 2023.

²² FGDs in Nuwakot and Lalitpur Districts, April 2023.

share a different bonding between men and women. Before we did not even sit with men but now things have changed. Due to HMG meetings, we treat everyone equally” (Pant et al., 2014, p. 5). When describing the impact that the program has had on her community, an FCHV from a ward that received additional volunteers told me: “Now the situation is that if there is any meeting in the community, all of the women come and the men will stay home cooking. If there are 100 participants, not even 25 of them will be men. It used to be that wherever you go, there are men. Now, wherever you go, there are women. Women’s political participation has increased a lot.”²³

The qualitative evidence also emphasizes that FCHVs have this impact despite the program being given very few resources and operating under difficult circumstances. It is evident that though the program aims to improve health outcomes for women, it is not intended to increase women’s political or economic empowerment. The FCHVs described their frustration with the lack of economic support they receive for their work.²⁴ They also noted that despite performing this incredibly valuable and time consuming work for their community, their household responsibilities remain the same, telling me “When we are in our communities, we are doctors, but we still have to do all our household work.”²⁵ Though they face these structural barriers, and resistance from their communities, in every FGD, individual FCHVs described how they have gained respect as leaders in their post. One participant in Lalitpur district told me, “I am a leader. People come and ask us questions. We are experts.”²⁶ Despite performing work that aligns with gendered expectation of ‘women’s work’ and being given very few resources, FCHVs use their position in the community to become leaders and harness the collective action capacity of women in their communities.

²³ FGD in Nuwakot District, April 2023.

²⁴ FGD in Nuwakot District, April 2023.

²⁵ FGD in Lalitpur District, April 2023.

²⁶ FGD in Lalitpur District, April 2023.

4.5 Conclusion

Using newly compiled data on 13,500 wards in Nepal and a DiD design, alongside qualitative evidence from fieldwork in Nepal, this paper shows that allocating resources to women service providers has positive and durable impacts on the formation of local channels for women’s collective action. These findings make several contributions to scholarship on women’s political participation and to scholarship on the gendered nature and legacies of conflict and other major shocks.

This paper highlights an overlooked source of women’s collective action capacity: women service providers. Existing research often focuses on women elected to political positions or on groups formed with the explicit goal of promoting women’s public engagement. This study demonstrates that women service providers—who operate in a broad range of contexts, but are not frequently thought of as political leaders—can capitalize on their position and networks to catalyze channels for women’s collective action. Women service providers are commonly deployed in highly patriarchal settings, making this insight particularly important. In these settings, women can leverage gender-conforming activities to foster collective action and advocate for their rights and needs.

The insights of this paper also help make sense of the complex gendered legacies of civil war. Existing scholarship illustrates how social, political, and institutional factors lead to both an uptick in women’s political representation and legal rights and the hardening of gender inequalities and gendered barriers in the postwar period. Yet, explanations for these complex dynamics do not account for variation in local-level collective action by women. My paper points to a causal factor—women’s prewar social leadership—that might help us understand the extraordinary resilience of some women’s networks after conflict.

This study not only makes important academic contributions, but also holds policy relevance. My findings suggest that minimal investments in women service providers can create resilient communities capable of collective action. Providing resources to women service providers can be a powerful force not only for postconflict recovery, but also for a

host of policy issues, including community development, health, and information diffusion initiatives.

5. Conclusions

This dissertation broadly considers the causes and consequences of social change during civil war. It aims to elucidate how the dynamics of conflict, strategies of armed groups, and pre-existing social conditions intertwine to shape the social transformation during and after war. The three distinct essays that comprise this dissertation each examine a different aspect of social transformation during conflict: the depth of rebel influence within communities, the impact of gender dynamics on armed group governance, and how pre-war women's networks can influence women's collective actions during and after conflict. In doing so, the findings from each essay contribute to our understanding of the roots and repercussions of social change during civil war, with interesting implications for future research.

My first essay, "Insurgent Conscription for Capacity and Control: State Violence and Coerced Recruitment in Civil War", conceptualizes and studies a particular form of coerced recruitment—insurgent conscription—whereby rebel groups rely on their administrative capacity to compel civilians to fight. Insurgent conscription has a profound impact on the social landscape of communities because it ties the majority of families in a given community directly to the armed group. This essay examines one catalyst of insurgent conscription: state violence. Building on scholarship that highlights the impact of state violence on rebel recruitment, I theorize that state violence incentivizes armed groups to employ insurgent conscription. Leveraging a novel, cross-national dataset of insurgent conscription in state-rebel dyads between 1946 and 2008, I find that state targeting of an armed group's civilian support base increases the likelihood of insurgent conscription.

In my second essay, "Gendered Governance: How Women in Insurgent Government Shape Rebel Rule", I theorize that women rebel governors increase rebel delivery of direct social services during civil war because pursuing goals that conform to gendered expectations aids the consolidation of their social standing and political power. I use cross-national, quantitative analysis to show that women's leadership in armed groups is strongly correlated with rebel-provided care services. Drawing on in-depth interviews and other qualitative evidence about the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) rebellion, I find support for

my proposed mechanisms.

These findings indicate that women's involvement in rebel governance shape the nature of services provided by insurgents and the level of trust civilians place in these services. This insight opens up promising paths for future research, including temporal dynamics of women's influence over insurgent government. An important inquiry unanswered by my findings is whether, as women garner support from both the community and rebel leadership, their objectives and priorities veer away from direct provision of social services toward more transformative gender-related goals. .

The final essay, "Women Service Providers and Local Channels for Collective Action: Evidence from Nepal" explores the circumstances that enable women's social networks to endure conflict and encourage women's collective action after war. I examine whether investments made in women service providers before conflicts can catalyze women's collective action and whether these effects are resilient to conflict. I focus on the case of Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) in Nepal, local women who provide maternal and child health services door-to-door. Utilizing newly compiled data from 13,500 wards in Nepal and employing a difference-in-differences design, I demonstrate that increased allocation of FCHVs enhances the likelihood of communities establishing local women's services NGOs, and this effect persists despite Nepal's decade-long conflict.

This study sheds light on the consequences of civil conflict for women's empowerment and gender equality. While existing scholarship highlights how conflict can lead to both an increase in women's political representation and legal rights and the reinforcement of gender disparities and barriers in the post-conflict period, it fails to account for variation in channels for local collective action after conflict. My paper identifies a causal factor—investments in women service providers—that helps explain the resilience of certain women's networks post-conflict.

In concert, this dissertation project deepens our theoretical and empirical understanding of wartime social transformation and its implications for the postwar period.

Appendix A. Insurgent Conscription for Capacity and Control: State Violence and Coerced Recruitment in Civil War

A.1 Coding Examples

Clear Case of Insurgent Conscription: Government of Peru-Sendero Luminoso (1991)

The State Department Report on Country Human Rights Practices for 1991 states, “It is believed that the number of persons forcibly recruited by Sendero is underreported” (DOS, 1992, p.711); “Sendero was also credibly accused of regularly forcing peasants to join its military ranks” (DOS, 1992, p.715). Additional sources reveal that the means of forced recruitment fits the description of insurgent conscription, but not other forms of forced recruitment. Sendero Luminoso forcibly recruited from the indigenous populations living in the areas they governed (Mealy & Austad, 2012; E. J. Wood, 2008). They required families to submit a child to the cause as a war tax and “when indigenous communities did not voluntarily deliver their children to fulfill Sendero’s quota, the children were drafted against their will through threats of reprisal or actual assassinations” (Mealy & Austad, 2012, p. 560). Wood writes that the group “forced entire communities to move to base camps to work on behalf the insurgency; community members were not allowed to leave, and in some camps, insurgent leaders forced girls and young women into sexual relationships” (E. J. Wood, 2008, p. 542). It is also clear from both the State Department report and other sources that this practice was occurring in 1991. Sources show that following 1982, Sendero Luminoso became increasingly coercive in their recruitment tactics and that this lasted through nearly the end of the war (Gandhi, 2011; E. J. Wood, 2008). Insurgent conscription is coded 1.

Clear Case of Non-Insurgent Conscription Forced Recruitment: Government of Russia-Republic of Chechnya (2005)

The State Department report for this year refers to how the armed forces of the Republic of Chechnya, “forced civilians to build fortifications” and as “human shields” (DOS, 2006, np). The State Department report for this year does not mention recruitment by Chechen

forces. Additional sources reveal that the Chechen rebels would abduct Russian citizens to use as human shields and forced laborers (Budennovsk, 1995; Press, 1996). This fits the description of forced recruitment, but not insurgent conscription.

Clear Case of both Insurgent Conscription and Non-Insurgent Conscription Forced Recruitment: Government of Congo-MLC (2000)

Sources reveal that the MLC, whose army is called the ALC, forcibly recruited: “The RCD-ML, the RDC-Goma and the MLC have been known to regularly recruit and conscript children. Opposition politicians have claimed that many young recruits join voluntarily, often as orphans seeking protection, food and a place in society. Other sources report that many under 18’s are recruited forcibly by opposition groups, often with the assistance of Ugandan and Rwandan armed forces” (C. S. International, 2001, np). UNHR suggest the group impressed individuals to fight in ways consistent with both other forms of forced recruitment and insurgent conscription; violent abductions occurred in areas inside and outside of MLC control, but the group mostly forced children to fight in areas of Equateur province only once it had seized governing authority and used that authority to do so (UNHR, 2010). A later HRW report also observes a pattern of armed groups using schools as conduits for conscription (HRW, 2016).

Clear Case, Voluntary Recruitment: Government of Lebanon- Lebanese National Movement) (1982)

According to interviews with female ex-combatants who fought for LNM associated militias, coercion was not employed and recruitment was voluntary (Eggert, 2018).

Difficult Case, Insurgent Conscription: Government of Burundi-CNDD-FDD (2000)

The State Department report for this year states, “[The CNDD-FDD] also require the rural population to perform uncompensated labor, including the transport of rebel supplies

and weapons“ (DOS, 2001, np). There are numerous reports of the CNDD-FDD abducting individuals from refugee camps and villages they attacked (A. International, 2004; C. S. International, 2004). There is also evidence of CNDD-FDD extracting forced labor from the individuals living under their control (DOS, 2001). The Child Soldiers International Report from 2004 notes, “Many families who initially gave their children to opposition groups later refused to continue and were subsequently targeted in punitive attack” (C. S. International, 2004, np). The CNDD-FDD also facilitated child recruitment through schools and dense colline (village) networks, though it’s not clear the extent to which this was forced or coerced recruitment (Dilworth, 2006, p. 8). Families were also lured to hand over their children to the cause with the promise of monetary promises, though these rarely emerged (Dilworth, 2006). It is clear that the CNDD-FDD conducted forced recruitment in areas it controlled. The extent to which they used existing institutions to do so is less clear, but I conclude that the evidence of the use of schools, village networks, and monetary rewards to families is sufficient.

Difficult Case, No Insurgent Conscription: Government of Myanmar- SSA (1970)

I could not find any information on the recruitment practices of the Shan State Army. However, Human Rights Watch describes how a faction of the SSA, the SSA-South, which continued armed conflict after the SSA signed a ceasefire agreement, instituted a stringent system of insurgent conscription: “In separate interviews with RCSS central executive committee member Sao Ood Kesi and RCSS General Secretary Sai Tern Sarng, both informed Human Rights Watch that prior to 2001 SSA policy was that “every able bodied man between sixteen and forty-five must serve his country. . . The officially stated term of service in the SSA-South is five years for both volunteers and conscripts, after which they can decide whether to remain or be discharged. While admitting that the SSA-South policy specifies mandatory conscription, the RCSS spokesmen asserted that this is rarely exercised and that the majority of recruits to the SSA-South are volunteers” (HRW, 2002a, pp. 118-120). The

report suggest that this was a system instituted before the splinter. However, the evidence is not sufficiently strong to conclude insurgent conscription occurred in the SSA.

Note on Annual Coding

To code the two criteria for insurgent conscription—reliance on existing rebel institutions and recruitment from territories the armed group asserted control over— in each dyad-year, I primarily relied on annual reports, including the annual State Department Reports on Country Human Rights Practices, Amnesty International annual reports, and Child Soldiers International annual reports. I also relied on reports that covered a distinct and clear period of time, like Human Rights Watch reports that state the investigation period. However, these sources were not available for all cases, so I supplemented time delineated sources with qualitative investigations into specific groups and looked for clear evidence of if, how, when, and where, forced recruitment was occurring.

The Government of Philippines-Huk Rebellion provides a good example of this process. There is no information on Huk recruitment practices contained in the State Department report or other annual sources. From 1946-1953, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the National Military Department (HMB), the political and military organizations of the Huk Rebellion, maintained a complex formal institutional structure and asserted incredible control in its stronghold, Luzon (Moore, 1971, p.11-15). While the Huks enjoyed widespread popularity among the peasantry and did not rely on forced recruitment exclusively (Moore, 1971), there is evidence that some Huks were conscripted into fighting. Fifield writes, “Inside Huklandia the Huks... collect taxes called ‘dues’, and conscript men into the army” (Fifield, 1951, p.17). Moore details how near the end of the conflict, surrenders were high among Huk soldiers who had been impressed into the HMB (Moore, 1971, p. 40). These sources indicate that the Huk rebellion had built up much of this wartime organization, including local councils who were responsible for recruitment and indoctrination, in the early 1940s during the resistance against Japanese occupation. How-

ever, sources indicate that these councils were not sufficiently organized to impress fighters for the insurgency against the new government of the Philippines until 1948 (Greenberg, 2005; Moore, 1971). Given Fifield, 1951's description of the Huks conscripting men within Huklandia, and the systematic and hierarchical order of the Huk rebellion throughout from 1948-1953 (Greenberg, 2005; Moore, 1971), I code 0 for insurgent conscription in 1946 and 1947 and 1 for 1948 onwards.

A.2 Robustness Checks

Tables A.1-A.2 replicate the main analysis with the clearest cases of insurgent conscription. These are cases where insurgent conscription was a stand-alone policy, like or the one child per family policy of the LTTE, or relied extremely explicitly on an existing rebel governing institution. Table A.1 reports the results from the matching models. Table A.2 shows the results from linear probability models. Restricting the outcome to only the clearest cut cases of insurgent conscription does not significantly alter the relationship between sustained state targeting and insurgent conscription. The results for the impact of state violence on insurgent conscription remain positive and statistically significant, though substantively somewhat smaller than in the main models.

A.2.1 Clear Cases

A.2.2 Secessionist Rebels

Tables A.3-A.4 replicate the main analysis with rebel goals as an additional covariate. This variable takes a value of one if a rebel group's stated goal was secession and 0 otherwise. Table A.3 reports the results from the matching models. Table A.4 shows the results from linear probability models. Accounting for rebel goals does not significantly alter the relationship between sustained state targeting and insurgent conscription. As seen in Table A.3 and the first column of Table A.4 the results for the impact of state violence on insurgent conscription remain positive and largely statistically significant.

Table A.1: ATT of State Violence on Clear Cases of IC

Outcome Period	Estimate	Standard Error	2.5%	97.5%
1 pre-treatment year, with missing values				
t + 1	0.126	0.044	0.048	0.218
t + 2	0.132	0.047	0.046	0.226
t + 3	0.150	0.048	0.068	0.251
1 pre-treatment year, without missing values				
t + 1	0.126	0.044	0.048	0.218
t + 2	0.132	0.047	0.046	0.226
t + 3	0.150	0.048	0.068	0.251
2 pre-treatment years, with missing values				
t + 1	0.130	0.044	0.051	0.221
t + 2	0.152	0.048	0.070	0.254
t + 3	0.172	0.050	0.085	0.281

CBPS weighting on treatment and covariate history. Standard errors computed with 1000 weighted bootstrap samples.
 58 (minimum)-61 (maximum) treated units matched to 2 (minimum)-17 (maximum) control units.

A.2.3 Alternate State Targeting Threshold

Tables A.5-A.6 replicate the main analysis when an alternate duration threshold for state targeting is used to determine whether an observation is ‘treated’. In this analysis, dyad-year observations are treated after a rebel group’s civilian constituents have been the victims of state targeting during at least one year.

Here, treatment and control units are matched considering only a one year pre-treatment period. Using a two year pre-treatment period did not generate enough matches to produce results. Results remain largely unchanged. These results can be seen in Table A.5.

Table A.6 shows the results for linear probability models when a 1-year threshold is considered. Here, state violence increases the probability of insurgent conscription by 20 percent in models using no controls and limited controls and around 34 percent in the models with the full set of controls. This result is significant at the 0.01 level.

A.2.4 Adoption of Insurgent Conscription

While the matching models in the main body of the paper account for whether or not armed groups employed insurgent conscription prior to exposure to state violence, they do

Table A.2: Linear Probability Models: Clearest Cases of Insurgent Conscription

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	IC clustered on dyad			IC clustered on country		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Sustained state targeting	0.170** (0.072)	0.188*** (0.071)	0.418*** (0.120)	0.170** (0.067)	0.188*** (0.067)	0.418*** (0.124)
Excluded			-0.123 (0.121)			-0.123 (0.115)
Excluded population			0.298 (0.273)			0.298 (0.299)
Dyads first year		-0.021 (0.028)	0.219* (0.132)		-0.021 (0.032)	0.219* (0.127)
Fighting capacity			-0.472 (0.546)			-0.472 (0.483)
Rebel support			0.175 (0.147)			0.175 (0.152)
Intensity		0.086** (0.038)	0.087 (0.072)		0.086*** (0.031)	0.087 (0.088)
Pre-1980		-0.183** (0.081)			-0.183** (0.089)	
Natural resource funding			0.206 (0.189)			0.206 (0.185)
Irregular		-0.081 (0.100)	-0.148 (0.126)		-0.081 (0.094)	-0.148 (0.133)
Communist ideology		-0.006 (0.095)	-0.051 (0.162)		-0.006 (0.085)	-0.051 (0.170)
Constant	0.220*** (0.049)	0.118 (0.143)	-0.326 (0.283)	0.220*** (0.051)	0.118 (0.146)	-0.326 (0.301)
Observations	1413	1379	165	1413	1379	165

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

not distinguish between the initial adoption of insurgent conscription and the continuation of insurgent conscription. In these models, the dependent variables *insurgent conscription adoption* take a value of 1 only in the first year that an armed group employed insurgent conscription. Dyad-years where armed groups employ insurgent conscription after the year they first adopt the strategy are then dropped. This results in a total of 921 dyad-year observations. Table A.7 reports the estimated effects of state violence on the likelihood of

Table A.3: ATT of State Violence on IC, Models Including Rebel Goals

Outcome Period	Estimate	Standard Error	2.5%	97.5%
1 pre-treatment year, with missing values				
t + 1	0.1589	0.0471	0.0776	0.2589
t + 2	0.1569	0.0487	0.0692	0.2614
t + 3	0.1763	0.0494	0.0879	0.2762
1 pre-treatment year, without missing values				
t + 1	0.1592	0.0471	0.0783	0.2588
t + 2	0.1569	0.0487	0.0692	0.2614
t + 3	0.1763	0.0494	0.0879	0.2762
2 pre-treatment years, with missing values				
t + 1	0.1615	0.0470	0.0815	0.2616
t + 2	0.1861	0.0509	0.0952	0.2963
t + 3	0.2069	0.0531	0.1111	0.3158

CBPS weighting on treatment and covariate history. Standard errors computed with 1000 weighted bootstrap samples.

58 (minimum)-61 (maximum) treated units matched to 2 (minimum)-17 (maximum) control units.

insurgent conscription adoption in the year after exposure to treatment, respectively. Table A.8 reports the results from linear probability models. In all models, I use the alternate threshold of state targeting as the independent variable—in other words, I consider an observation “treated“ after a rebel group’s civilian constituents have been the victims of state targeting during at least one year—because it yielded far more matches than using a 2-year pre-treatment period.

The results demonstrate that rebels are 10.8% more likely to adopt insurgent conscription one year after exposure to sustained state targeting and this result is significant with 95% confidence intervals. The results of the linear probability models are very slightly negative and insignificant. However, it’s important to note that these outcomes are quite rare. There are 48 armed groups in my data that ever employed insurgent conscription. The variable *insurgent conscription adoption* is only coded 1 once per armed group.

Taking the results of the more rigorous matching approach, it seems that state violence exerts a positive, but weaker, effect on insurgent conscription adoption than on insurgent conscription persistence.

A.3 State Violence and Other Forms of Rebel Recruitment

This paper argues that insurgent conscription is a distinct form of forced recruitment that likely has different drivers and impacts from other forms of forced recruitment. One of its key contributions is to provide data on whether or not armed groups employed this particular type of forced recruitment. In doing so, it builds on several, impressive existing datasets that have documented forced recruitment by armed groups. Table A.9 provides an overview of several of these datasets and notes how the insurgent conscription dataset differs. In addition to documenting unique information about the way forced recruitment occurs, the insurgent conscription dataset has the broadest temporal coverage.

I illustrate the usefulness of distinguishing insurgent conscription from forced recruitment writ large by probing the relationship between state violence and a broader definition of forced recruitment. In particular, I test the relationship between state violence and the measure of forced recruitment from Walsh et al., 2023. This is the most appropriate existing measure of forced recruitment to use because it has a global coverage, the unit of analysis is the dyad-year, and it covers forced recruitment of adults and children. Walsh et al., 2023 include a variable indicating whether there was evidence of forced recruitment in both State Department and Amnesty International Reports. They also code whether these sources provided evidence that the forced recruitment was widespread or ad hoc. I dichotomize the variable to take a value of 1 if either source indicated forced recruitment occurred.

State violence does not exert a consistent effect on the likelihood of forms of forced recruitment, writ large. Table A.10 reports the estimated ATT of sustained state violence on forced recruitment, as measured by Walsh et al., 2023 for up to three years after exposure. Matches are identified using a 1 year pre-treatment period and a 2 year pre-treatment period. Up to 15 control units are matched to each treatment unit for the analysis with 1 pre-treatment year, and up to 10 control units are matched to each treatment unit for the analysis which considers 2 pre-treatment years. I match both with and without miss-

ing values when considering 1 pre-treatment year. The results demonstrate that there is no relationship between exposure to sustained state violence and forced recruitment, writ large, in the two years following such violence. The results are substantively inconsistent and statistically significant. However, there does appear to be a positive and significant effect three years after exposure. The associated linear probability models, show a positive and significant relationship between sustained state targeting and all forms of forced recruitment, but this loses significance when all controls are included.

Since insurgent conscription is a subset of forced recruitment and cases of insurgent conscription are included in Walsh et al., 2023's measure of forced recruitment, I run another analysis where I recode Walsh et al., 2023's measure of forced recruitment to equal zero for dyad-years where my data indicates that insurgent conscription occurred. In other words, I remove cases of insurgent conscription—a subset of forced recruitment—from the variable capturing forced recruitment, thereby measuring non-conscription modes of forced recruitment. There is no evidence that state violence encourages non-conscription forms of forced recruitment. In all specifications of the matching models, reported in Table A.12, the relationship is either substantively negative or very slightly positive and statistically insignificant. The results are similar for the linear probability models, reported in A.13. In all specifications, the relationship between sustained state targeting and non-conscription forms of forced recruitment is substantively inconsistent and statistically insignificant.

A.4 State Violence and Other Rebel Human Rights Violations

To further probe the theoretical logic that sustained state violence exerts a distinct impact on the likelihood of insurgent conscription, I explore whether such violence incentivizes other forms of rebel coercion. While I do not propose that state violence has no theoretical relationship to other forms of rebel violence, and I do not explicitly theorize about how state violence shapes overall patterns of rebel coercion, my theory would not predict that state violence should lead to an overall uptick in rebel coercive behavior. Rather, it incentivizes a particular form of coercion: insurgent conscription. To explore whether this is

the case, I examine the relationship between state violence and three other rebel violence and coercion against civilians: killings, sexual violence, and displacement. All of these measures are drawn from (Walsh et al., 2023). I chose these because they are among the most extreme forms of rebel human rights violations. I argue that sustained state violence enhances the necessity of civilian support, so I would not expect forms of obvious, explicit, and highly violent coercion following state violence. I apply the matching approach using a 1 year pre-treatment period to test the impact of state targeting on rebel killings, sexual violence (SV), and displacement. I find a largely statistically insignificant and substantively inconsistent relationship, as depicted in A.1

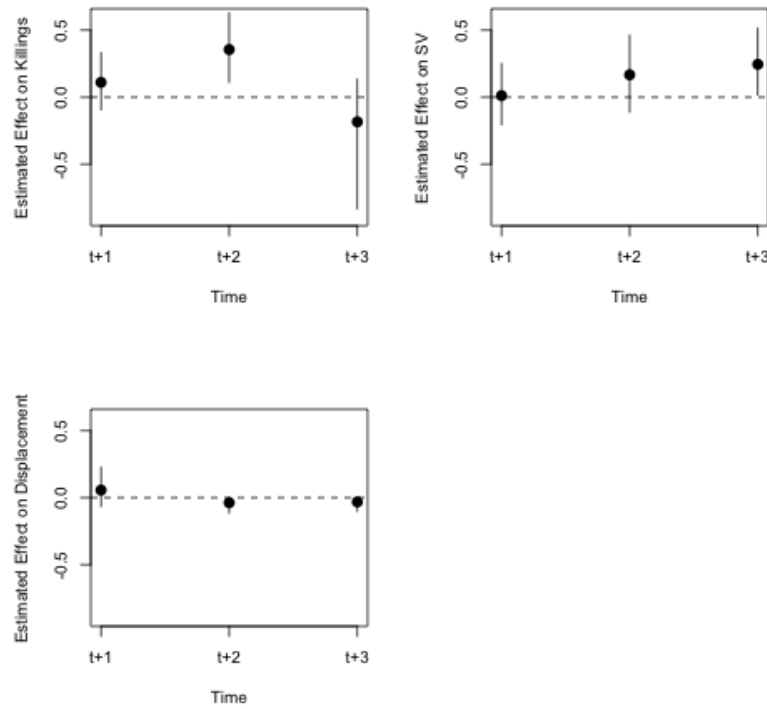
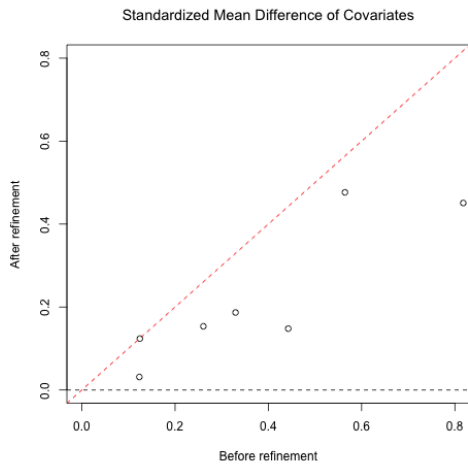


FIGURE A.1: Estimated Effect of State Violence on Forms of Rebel Violence over Time

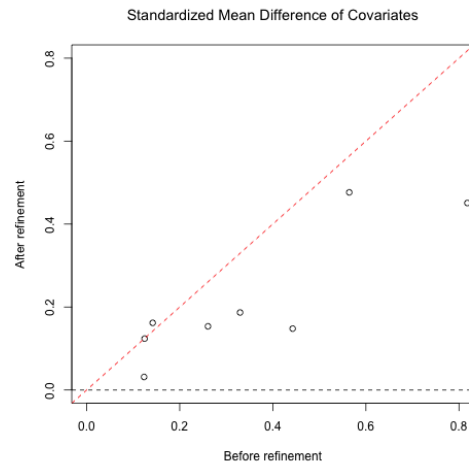
A.5 Covariate Balance

Figure A.2 visualizes the change in covariate balance after refinement. Due to low variation, fighting capacity and natural resource funding were removed from the covariate

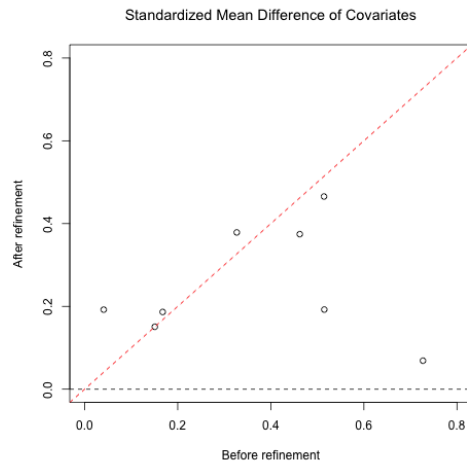
balance diagnostic analysis. The x-axis shows the standardized mean difference between treatment and control units prior to refinement. The y-axis shows the standardized mean difference between treatment and control units after refinement. Points underneath the red dotted line indicate that refinement improved balance. Points above the dotted line indicate refinement decreased balance. Points on the line indicate no change. Balanced increased or did not change for almost all covariates. The exceptions are that in the models with the alternate treatment, Refinement slightly decreased balance for fighting capacity, irregular war, and the lag of insurgent conscription. However, the, in these cases, the standardized mean difference is low and unlikely to bias results. In all models, the standardized mean difference between treatment and control for intensity remains higher than desired, despite an improvement in balance. The precise point estimates found in these plots can be reproduced in in the replication code.



(a) Main models



(b) Group goal models



(c) Alternate treatment

FIGURE A.2: Covariate Balance

Table A.4: Linear Probability Models Including Rebel Goals

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	IC clustered on dyad		IC clustered on country	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Sustained state targeting	0.228*** (0.072)	0.448*** (0.123)	0.228*** (0.065)	0.448*** (0.131)
Excluded		-0.110 (0.119)		-0.110 (0.121)
Excluded population		0.153 (0.270)		0.153 (0.298)
Dyads first year	-0.035 (0.029)	0.179 (0.120)	-0.035 (0.033)	0.179 (0.116)
Fighting capacity		-0.364 (0.541)		-0.364 (0.491)
Rebel support		0.246* (0.143)		0.246* (0.146)
Intensity	0.118*** (0.038)	0.114* (0.067)	0.118*** (0.031)	0.114 (0.082)
Pre-1980	-0.225*** (0.082)		-0.225*** (0.083)	
Natural resource funding		0.153 (0.184)		0.153 (0.181)
Irregular	-0.067 (0.102)	-0.126 (0.136)	-0.067 (0.092)	-0.126 (0.156)
Communist ideology	0.014 (0.090)	-0.058 (0.170)	0.014 (0.076)	-0.058 (0.181)
Secessionist	0.043 (0.090)	0.034 (0.128)	0.043 (0.087)	0.034 (0.126)
Constant	0.030 (0.141)	-0.381 (0.280)	0.030 (0.147)	-0.381 (0.278)
Observations	1374	164	1374	164

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.5: ATT of State Violence on IC, Alt. Duration

Outcome Period	Estimate	Standard Error	2.5%	97.5%
1 pre-treatment year, with missing values				
t + 1	0.1206	0.0404	0.048	0.206
t + 2	0.2099	0.0518	0.115	0.315
t + 3	0.2342	0.055	0.133	0.347
1 pre-treatment year, without missing values				
t + 1	0.1212	0.0403	0.049	0.206
t + 2	0.2099	0.0518	0.116	0.315
t + 3	0.2342	0.055	0.133	0.347

CBPS weighting on treatment and covariate history. Standard errors computed with 1000 weighted bootstrap samples.
62 (minimum)-71 (maximum) treated units matched to 2 (minimum)-16 (maximum) control units.

Table A.6: Linear Probability Models: Alternative Treatment

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	IC clustered on dyad			IC clustered on country		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1 year state targeting threshold	0.200*** (0.071)	0.205*** (0.075)	0.338*** (0.117)	0.200*** (0.073)	0.205*** (0.066)	0.338*** (0.095)
Excluded			-0.070 (0.137)			-0.070 (0.128)
Excluded population			0.159 (0.258)			0.159 (0.279)
Dyads first year		-0.041 (0.027)	0.217* (0.122)		-0.041 (0.031)	0.217* (0.117)
Fighting capacity			-0.498 (0.592)			-0.498 (0.523)
Rebel support			0.240* (0.143)			0.240* (0.145)
Intensity		0.113*** (0.038)	0.115 (0.074)		0.113*** (0.031)	0.115 (0.089)
Pre-1980		-0.228*** (0.080)			-0.228*** (0.082)	
Natural resource funding			0.134 (0.195)			0.134 (0.191)
Irregular		-0.039 (0.101)	-0.007 (0.127)		-0.039 (0.094)	-0.007 (0.138)
Communist ideology		0.003 (0.090)	-0.100 (0.167)		0.003 (0.084)	-0.100 (0.170)
Constant	0.222*** (0.055)	0.060 (0.143)	-0.493 (0.305)	0.222*** (0.058)	0.060 (0.144)	-0.493 (0.319)
Observations	1413	1379	165	1413	1379	165

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.7: ATT of State Violence on IC Adoption

Outcome Period	Estimate	Standard Error	2.5%	97.5%
1 pre-treatment year, with missing values				
t + 1	0.1078	0.0525	0.0106	0.2123
1 pre-treatment year, without missing values				
t + 1	0.1078	0.0525	0.0106	0.2123

CBPS weighting on treatment and covariate history. Standard errors computed with 1000 weighted bootstrap samples.

61 treated units matched to 2 (minimum)-17 (maximum) control units.

Table A.8: Linear Probability Models: IC Adoption

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	IC clustered on dyad			IC clustered on country		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Sustained state targeting	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.003 (0.009)	0.020 (0.052)	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.003 (0.010)	0.020 (0.061)
Excluded			0.082* (0.047)			0.082* (0.048)
Excluded population			-0.046 (0.068)			-0.046 (0.074)
Dyads first year		-0.0004 (0.003)	-0.027 (0.026)		-0.0004 (0.001)	-0.027 (0.026)
Fighting capacity			0.014 (0.067)			0.014 (0.064)
Rebel support			0.020 (0.040)			0.020 (0.046)
Intensity		0.022*** (0.006)	-0.044 (0.035)		0.022*** (0.007)	-0.044 (0.038)
Pre-1980		0.005 (0.008)			0.005 (0.006)	
Natural resource funding			0.050 (0.052)			0.050 (0.052)
Irregular		-0.034** (0.015)	-0.166*** (0.060)		-0.034** (0.015)	-0.166** (0.075)
Communist ideology		-0.002 (0.007)	0.093 (0.056)		-0.002 (0.005)	0.093* (0.055)
Constant	0.032*** (0.007)	-0.006 (0.018)	0.259* (0.134)	0.032*** (0.007)	-0.006 (0.021)	0.259* (0.152)
Observations	1413	1379	165	1413	1379	165

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.9: Comparison with Existing Data

Data	Unit of Analysis	Temp. Coverage	Geo. Coverage	Sources	Unique Info. on Forced Rec.
Insurgent Conscription Data	Dyad-year	1946-2008	Global	State Dept. Amnesty Int. Human Rights Watch Child Soldiers Int. Group-specific accounts	-Insurgent conscription -Non-conscription FR
Beber and Blattman, 2013	Dyad	1980-2004	Africa	Group-specific accounts	-Forced recruitment of children
D. Cohen, 2016	Conflict-year	1980-2009	Global	Expert survey State Dept.	-Abduction (violent) vs. other forced recruitment
Haer and Böhmelt, 2016	Conflict-dyad-periods	1989-2010	Global	Group-specific accounts	-Forced recruitment of children
Haer et al., 2020	Dyad-year	1990-2011	Global	Group-specific accounts	-Frequency (Proportion of victims) -Forced recruitment of children -Frequency (# of victims) -Notes on mode
Walsh et al., 2023	Dyad-year	1990-2018	Global	State Dept./Amnesty International	-Frequency (scale of victimization)

Table A.10: ATT of State Violence on RHRV Forced Recruitment

Outcome Period	Estimate	Standard Error	2.5%	97.5%
1 pre-treatment year, with missing values				
t + 1	-0.014	0.083	-0.183	0.142
t + 2	0.086	0.108	-0.116	0.298
t + 3	0.238	0.122	0.009	0.505
1 pre-treatment year, without missing values				
t + 1	-0.014	0.083	-0.183	0.142
t + 2	0.086	0.108	-0.116	0.298
t + 3	0.238	0.122	0.009	0.505
2 pre-treatment years, with missing values				
t + 1	0.162	0.047	0.079	0.262
t + 2	0.186	0.051	0.095	0.296
t + 3	0.207	0.053	0.111	0.316

CBPS weighting on treatment and covariate history. Standard errors computed with 1000 weighted bootstrap samples.

13 (minimum)-25 (maximum) treated units matched to 2 (minimum)-17 (maximum) control units.

Table A.11: Linear Probability Models: RHRV Forced Recruitment

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Forced rec. clustered on dyad			Forced rec. clustered on country		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Sustained state targeting	0.275*** (0.055)	0.316*** (0.070)	0.131 (0.110)	0.275*** (0.062)	0.316*** (0.078)	0.131 (0.126)
Excluded			-0.066 (0.093)			-0.066 (0.093)
Excluded population			0.436 (0.273)			0.436 (0.276)
Dyads first year		0.025 (0.047)	0.028 (0.115)		0.025 (0.039)	0.028 (0.090)
Fighting capacity			0.292 (0.365)			0.292 (0.185)
Rebel support			0.054 (0.108)			0.054 (0.109)
Intensity		0.258*** (0.089)	0.327*** (0.106)		0.258*** (0.086)	0.327*** (0.120)
Natural resource funding			0.368** (0.180)			0.368* (0.194)
Irregular		0.021 (0.095)	0.081 (0.089)		0.021 (0.106)	0.081 (0.085)
Communist ideology		0.040 (0.078)	-0.077 (0.136)		0.040 (0.093)	-0.077 (0.143)
Constant	0.128*** (0.025)	-0.709** (0.280)	-1.104*** (0.394)	0.128*** (0.036)	-0.709** (0.288)	-1.104** (0.431)
Observations	938	353	156	938	353	156

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.12: ATT of State Violence: Non-Conscription Forced Recruitment

Outcome Period	Estimate	Standard Error	2.5%	97.5%
1 pre-treatment year, with missing values				
t + 1	-0.0766	0.0564	-0.1999	3.5097e-09
t + 2	0.0000	0.0000	0	5.3007e-08
t + 3	0.0909	0.0898	0	0.3083
1 pre-treatment year, without missing values				
t + 1	-0.0766	0.0564	-0.1999	3.5097e-09
t + 2	0.0000	0.0000	0	5.3007e-08
t + 3	0.0909	0.0898	0	0.3083
2 pre-treatment years, with missing values				
t + 1	-0.0526	0.0519	-0.1667	0
t + 2	0.0000	0.0000	0	0
t + 3	0.1000	0.0987	0	0.3333

CBPS weighting on treatment and covariate history. Standard errors computed with 1000 weighted bootstrap samples.

13 (minimum)-25 (maximum) treated units matched to 2 (minimum)-17 (maximum) control units.

Table A.13: Linear Probability Models: Non-Conscription Forced Recruitment

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Forced rec. clustered on dyad			Forced rec. clustered on country		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Sustained state targeting	0.039 (0.029)	0.071 (0.063)	-0.041 (0.037)	0.039 (0.028)	0.071 (0.064)	-0.041 (0.034)
Excluded			0.032 (0.029)			0.032 (0.029)
Excluded population			0.055 (0.045)			0.055 (0.043)
Dyads first year		0.029 (0.033)	0.008 (0.020)		0.029 (0.052)	0.008 (0.018)
Fighting capacity			0.281 (0.178)			0.281 (0.183)
Rebel support			-0.031 (0.020)			-0.031 (0.021)
Intensity		-0.059 (0.046)	0.031 (0.023)		-0.059 (0.057)	0.031 (0.021)
Natural resource funding			0.018 (0.056)			0.018 (0.056)
Irregular		-0.073 (0.092)	0.009 (0.023)		-0.073 (0.092)	0.009 (0.024)
Communist ideology		-0.119** (0.047)	-0.028 (0.021)		-0.119** (0.048)	-0.028 (0.022)
Constant	0.024*** (0.008)	0.289 (0.190)	-0.109 (0.074)	0.024** (0.012)	0.289 (0.183)	-0.109* (0.063)
Observations	938	353	156	938	353	156

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix B. Women Service Providers and Local Channels for Collective Action: Evidence from Nepal

B.1 DiD Design Validation

Parallel Trends

The key identifying assumption of a difference-in-differences design is that the treatment and control groups would have followed parallel-trends absent the treatment. While this assumption fundamentally impossible to test, I take steps to both probe the likelihood that the parallel trends assumption holds and to test the robustness of my results to violations of the parallel trends assumption. First, I visually inspect parallel trends using the data on the registration of women’s services NGOs by year. Figure B.1 examines these trends in the wards that received 1 additional FCHV versus the wards that did not, while Figure B.2 examines these trends in the wards that received 2 additional FCHVs versus the wards that did not. The trends for the latter group indeed look parallel prior to treatment, while there are small differences in pre-treatment trends for the former group.

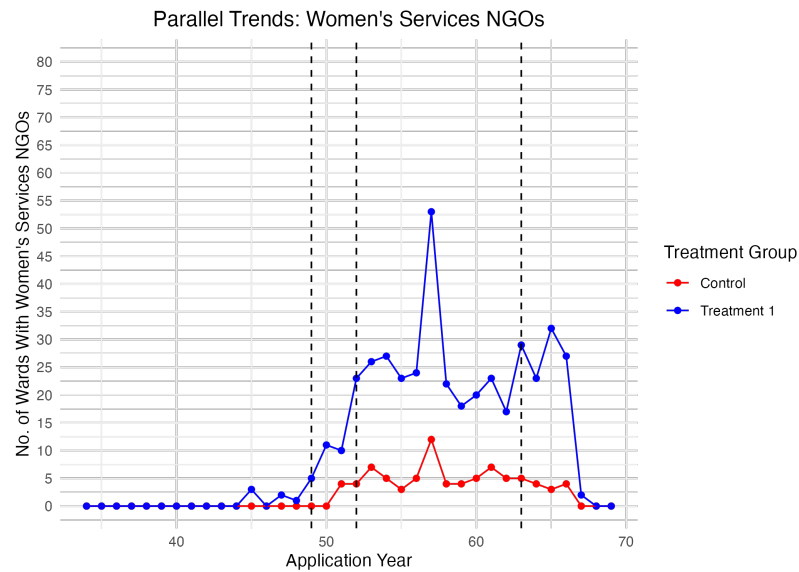


FIGURE B.1: Trends in Women’s Services NGOs across time: +1 FCHV

Visual inspection is not as rigorous as sensitivity analysis. I therefore employ the method proposed by Rambachan and Roth, 2023 to probe the sensitivity of my results to violations

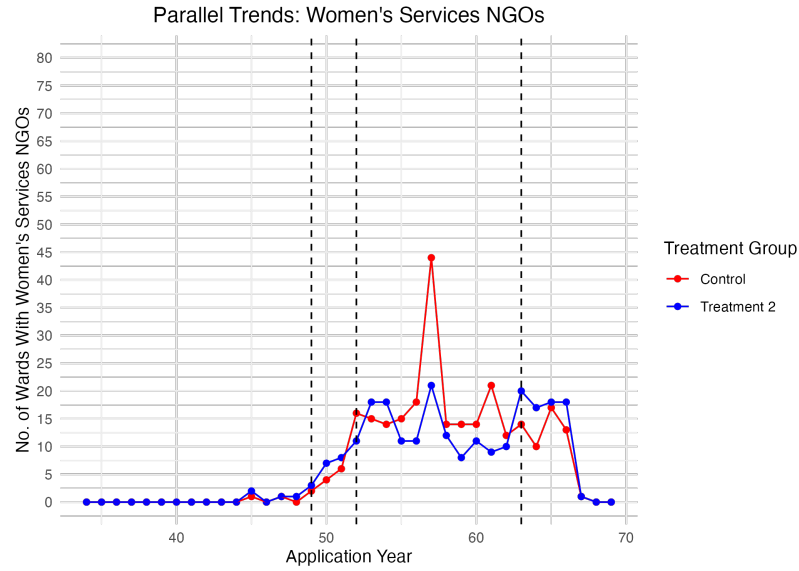


FIGURE B.2: Trends in Women's Services NGOs across time: +2 FCHV

of parallel trends. This method provides an estimate for the size of the relative violation of parallel trends my results are robust to.

The results for the mobilization of one additional FCHV are robust to allowing violations of parallel trends up to 0.5 times as big as the maximum violation in the pre-treatment period, as depicted in Figure B.3a. The results for the mobilization of two additional FCHVs are robust to allowing violations of parallel trends up to 0.9 times as big as the maximum violation in the pre-treatment period, shown in Figure B.3b.

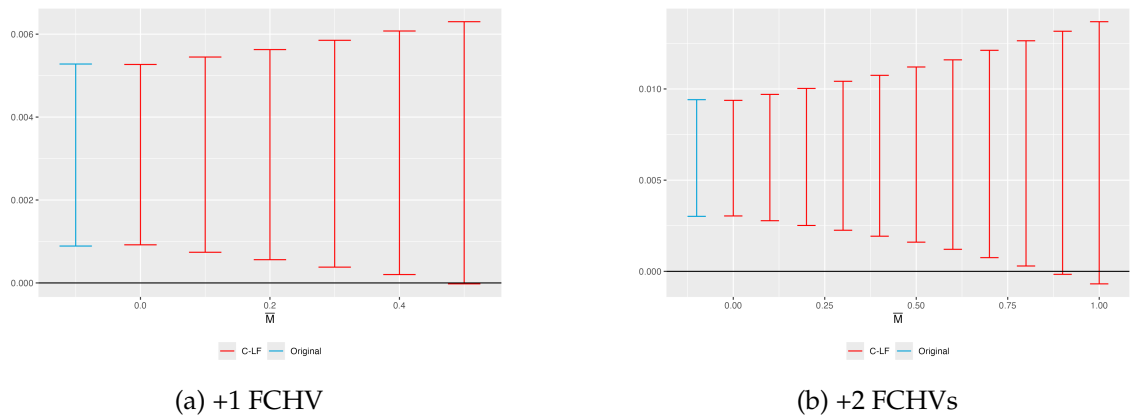


FIGURE B.3: Parallel Trends Sensitivity Analysis

B.2 Treatment Uptake

While there is not definitive evidence about whether every community that met the given population thresholds appointed the allotted additional FCHVs, it appears that treatment uptake is consistent. There is suggestive evidence that treatment uptake was very consistent. Table B.1 reports the ratio of FCHVs in each district to the total wards in the district across every district of Nepal. The number of FCHVs in each ward is drawn from USAID, 2007. The ratio of FCHVs per ward is consistently just around 1 in non-population districts, and over 1 in population districts.

Table B.1: Ratio of FCHVs to Wards in Districts

District	No. FCHVs 2007	Total Wards	FCHVs/ward	Population based?
Baglung	848	558	1.5	Yes
Kailali	1144	401	2.56	Yes
Mugu	216	216	1	No
Siraha	954	1005	1	No
Achham	675	675	1	No
Arghakhanchi	842	369	2.28	Yes
Baitadi	686	612	1.12	Yes
Bajhang	445	423	1.05	No
Bajura	258	243	1.06	No
Banke	665	431	1.54	Yes
Bara	884	947	0.93	No
Bardia	757	306	2.47	Yes
Bhaktapur	144	206	0.7	No
Bhojpur	567	567	1	No
Chitwan	324	354	0.92	No
Dadeldhura	382	225	1.7	Yes
Dailekh	750	540	1.39	Yes
Dang	786	362	2.17	Yes
Darchula	369	369	1	No
Dhading	450	450	1	No
Dhankuta	315	324	0.97	No
Dhanusa	909	933	0.97	No
Dolakha	1234	485	2.54	Yes
Dolpa	207	207	1	No
Doti	625	478	1.31	Yes
Gorkha	594	612	0.97	No
Gulmi	997	711	1.4	Yes
Humla	243	234	1.04	No

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Table B.1 – continued from previous page

District	No. FCHVs 2007	Total Wards	FCHVs/ward	Population based?
Ilam	1154	431	2.68	Yes
Jajarkot	270	270	1	No
Jhapa	503	475	1.06	No
Jumla	563	269	2.09	Yes
Kalikot	270	261	1.03	No
Kanchanpur	666	189	3.52	Yes
Kapilbastu	1054	713	1.48	De facto
Kaski	790	441	1.79	Yes
Kathmandu	1168	627	1.86	Yes
Kavre	783	857	0.91	No
Khotang	933	684	1.36	Yes
Lalitpur	369	382	0.97	No
Lamjung	669	549	1.22	Yes
Mahotari	684	697	0.98	No
Makwanpur	387	396	0.98	No
Manang	111	108	1.03	No
Morang	585	606	0.97	No
Mustang	144	144	1	No
Myagdi	360	360	1	No
Nawalparasi	694	693	1	No
Nuwakot	1080	551	1.96	Yes
Okhaldhunga	713	486	1.47	Yes
Palpa	585	587	1	No
Panchthar	369	405	0.91	No
Parbat	495	486	1.02	No
Parsa	738	757	0.97	No
Pyuthan	441	441	1	No
Ramechhap	752	495	1.52	Yes
Rasuwa	245	162	1.51	Yes
Rautahat	864	909	0.95	No
Rolpa	459	459	1	No
Rukum	387	387	1	No
Rupandehi	1290	776	1.66	Yes
Salyan	423	423	1	No
Sankhuwasabha	297	324	0.92	No
Saptari	1026	1036	0.99	No
Sarlahi	1323	900	1.47	Yes
Sindhuli	477	495	0.96	No
Sindhupalchowk	711	711	1	No
Solukhumbu	306	306	1	No
Sunsari	1064	479	2.22	Yes
Surkhet	895	461	1.94	Yes
Syangja	540	612	0.88	No

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Table B.1 – continued from previous page

District	No. FCHVs 2007	Total Wards	FCHVs/ward	Population based?
Tanahu	423	405	1.04	No
Taplejung	855	432	1.98	Yes
Terhathum	411	279	1.47	Yes
Udayapur	396	423	0.94	No

B.3 Robustness Checks

B.3.1 Alternative Outcome: Women’s NGOs as Percent of All NGOs

Since the treatment variable—the assignment of additional FCHVs—is dependent on pre-treatment population size, a concern in this design is that the impact of treatment on the registration of NGOs is a function of population. It’s possible that larger wards are more likely to register women’s NGOs because they register more NGOs overall. To assess this concern, I conduct an analysis with a different outcome variable: women’s services NGOs as a percentage of all NGOs in each ward.

My results are largely robust to this different specification. The two-period difference-in-differences design are positive and significant for both treatments, seen in Figure B.4. The results per period are generally positive, but largely lose statistical significance, seen in Figure B.5.

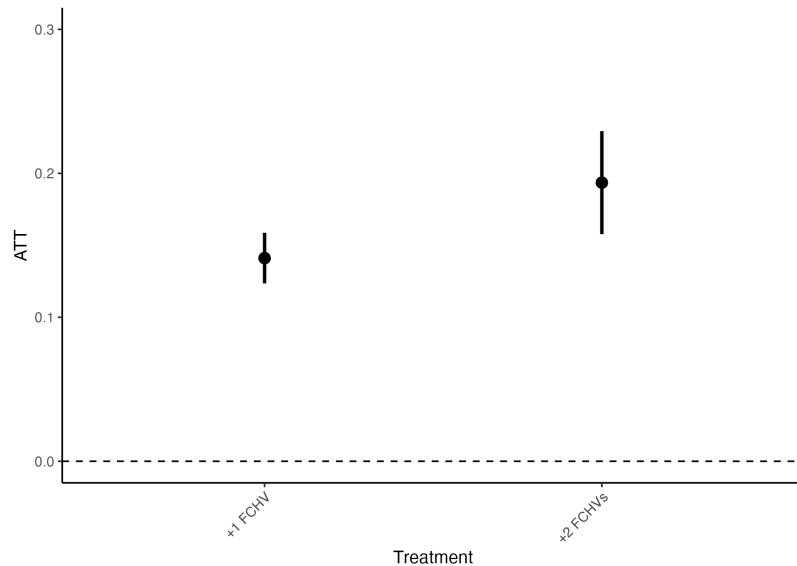


FIGURE B.4: ATT of Additional FCHVs on Women’s NGOs as Perc. of Total NGOs

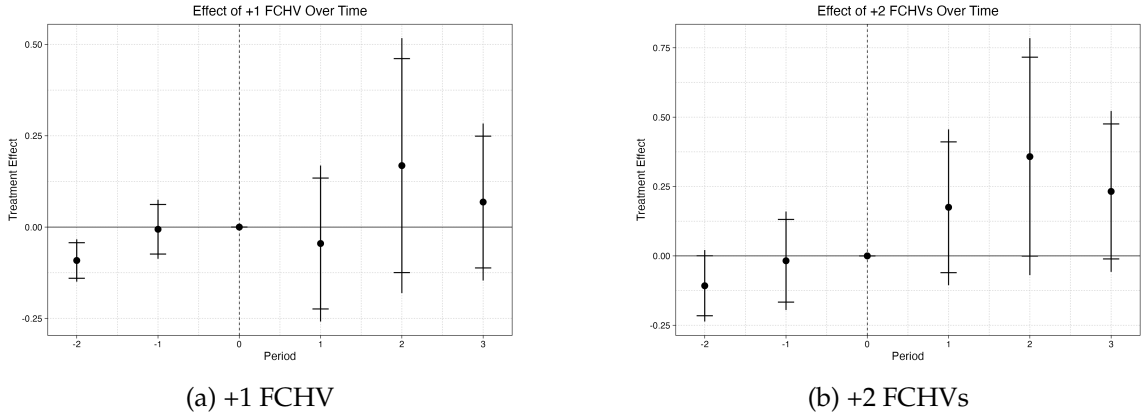


FIGURE B.5: ATT of Additional FCHVs on Women's NGOs as Perc. of Total NGOs by Period

B.3.2 Alternative Definition of Small Communities

In my main analysis, I define small communities as wards with a population under 2,000. In this section, I replicate the main analysis on the subset of wards with a population under 1,500. My results are robust to this alternate definition of small communities, as shown in Figures B.6 and B.7.

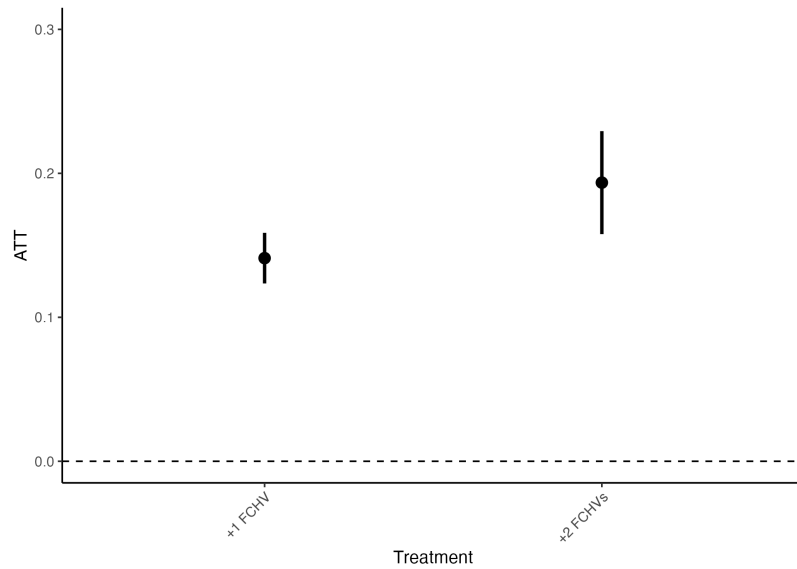


FIGURE B.6: ATT of Additional FCHVs on Women's NGOs: Alt. Pop. Scope Condition

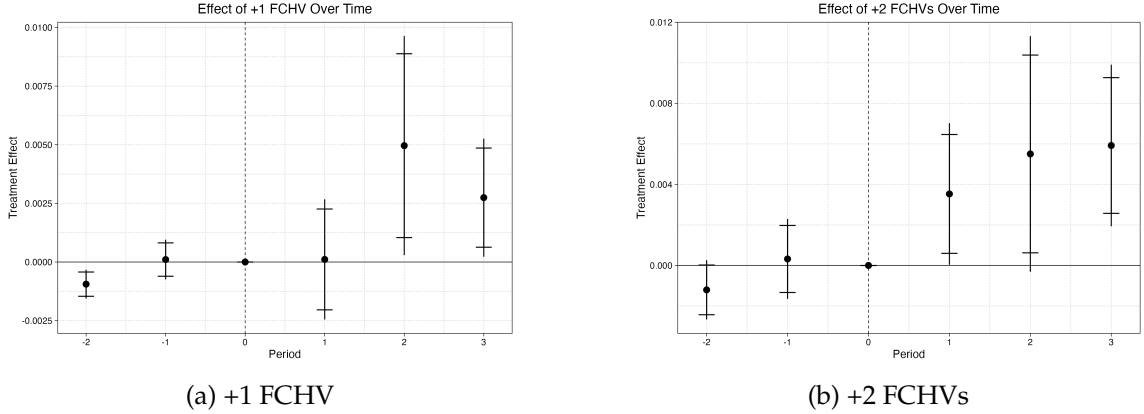


FIGURE B.7: ATT of Additional FCHVs on Women’s NGOs by Period: Alt. Pop. Scope Condition

B.4 Regression Discontinuity Design

I also estimate the local average treatment effect (LATE) of receiving additional FCHVs on the likelihood of the registration of women’s services NGOs in wards. As in the difference-in-differences design, I focus on the subset of wards that were eligible to receive additional volunteers. I examine the first and second cutoffs in each geographic region—which determines the assignment of one and two additional volunteers, respectively. I therefore subset my data to wards with a population below the cutoff value for two additional FCHVs, when examining the impact of one additional volunteer which results in 7,460 ward level observations.¹ To assess the impact of 2 volunteers, I subset my data to wards with a population above the cutoff for 1 volunteer but below the cutoff for 3 volunteers, which results in 3,938 ward level observations.² Table B.2 provides an overview of the population cutoff value for each region and descriptive statistics for the wards in my sample.

I estimate models using the sharp RD approach for multiple cutoffs (Cattaneo et al., 2016, 2020). This method calculates both global and cutoff specific local average treatment effects (LATE) with data-driven bandwidth selection, bias-corrected point estimates, and

¹ Following Cattaneo et al., 2019, I subset the data to wards with populations below cutoff 1 + [(cutoff 1 + cutoff 2) / 2].

² Following Cattaneo et al., 2019, I subset the data to wards with populations below cutoff 2 + [(cutoff 2 + cutoff 3) / 2].

Table B.2: Population Cutoff for Treatment by Region

Geographic region	Cutoff value	No. of wards	Median ward pop.	Mean ward pop.
Terai (7 population districts)	400	1,939	396	389.1
Hill (17 population districts)	250	4,984	257	251.6
Mountain (4 population districts)	150	537	163	154.3

robust standard errors. For simplicity, I present the global LATE, which normalizes the running variable to 0 and calculate a normalized and pooled LATE for all treatment effects across the regional cutoff values.

Neither the results for the effect of 1 additional FCHV nor the effect of 2 additional FCHVs are significant using this method. While the trend in the likelihood of women’s services NGOs is generally positive past the cutoff, especially for wards that appointed 2 additional FCHVs, the results are not significant in either model. These results can be seen in Figure B.8. The plots show the discontinuity at the normalized cutoffs. The points show mean value of the outcome at bins automatically selected using the IMSE-optimal evenly-spaced method (Calonico et al., 2015). The vertical lines report 95% confidence intervals for each bin.

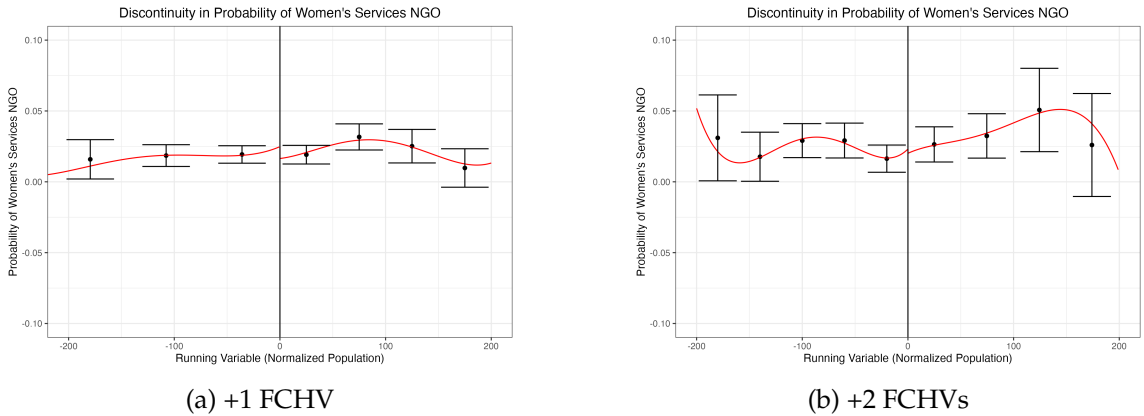


FIGURE B.8: Discontinuity in Women’s Services NGOs

My strong suspicion is that this design is underpowered. Registration of a women’s service NGO in a given ward is already a rare outcome. Examining only registration

around small population cutoffs means that the outcome is exceedingly rare.

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