UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Civil Society, Civil War:
Revolutionary Development, Civilian Collective Action, and the Making of a New State

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Political Science

by

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University of California San Diego

2023

DEDICATION

To my son, whose unaffected curiosity reminds me every day that science is about wonder.

To my wife, whose insistence that I'm underpaid fills me with a strange kind of self-confidence.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Civil Society, Civil War:
Revolutionary Development, Civilian Collective Action, and the Making of a New State

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California San Diego, 2023

Professor Philip Roeder, Chair

Where and when do insurgent groups engage with civilian populations to create a new social order? How do revolutionary organizations partner with allied civilians to build capacity and develop their movement?

This dissertation argues revolutionaries invest in political development among communities where their allied civilians are well-organized and capable of sharing the bureaucratic burden or administering territory with the revolutionaries. Well-organized groups of civilians can provide assurance to revolutionaries that they can develop a proto-state with fewer concerns about defection or foot-dragging among their new constituents.

The dissertation tests this theory in the context of the Maoist revolution in Nepal (1996-2005). It presents evidence that Nepali villages with robust and organized grassroots conservation groups developed a different relationship with Maoist rebels than those without. Maoist rebels in conservation villages were more likely to challenge the state for territorial control, remove opposition civilians, and build governance and service institutions.

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

I. Introduction

This dissertation considers the organizational development of revolutionary groups. In particular, it explains patterns in "revolutionary development" by examining where revolutionaries chose to develop political bonds with civilian communities. It provides a narrative, first in theory, and then using the history and practices of Maoist rebels in Nepal, that explains how revolutionary movements grow and spread through partnerships with partisan grassroots civilian organizations in the heartlands of their rebellions.

The term "revolutionary development," means the movement's attempts to build a state within a state — what Maoist strategists refer to as "base areas". Base area communities serve as the well-spring from which the revolutionary movement fulfills its need for safety, income, and recruits. Revolutionary development gives rise to a number of discrete conflict outcomes, including localized conflict onset, territorial control, civilian casualties, service provision, and recruitment.

Each of these outcomes already enjoys a robust and mature treatment in the literature on civil conflict. Why combine them into a new concept? While each literature is independently crucial for several academic and policy reasons, their interrelation in the process of generating and sustaining revolution receives substantially less attention. Insurgent groups may provide services while abusing civilians, or recruit new members from communities without attempting to control the territory.

Yet the prosecution of a successful revolution requires that these outcomes be combined in a particular way in at least some of the territory in which the revolutionaries operate. To create a base area, revolutionaries must challenge the state and take its territory, cleanse and cajole a

civilian population into loyalty, and begin the give-and-take of governance. By combining these discrete outcomes into a process of revolutionary development, this dissertation contributes to a different set of questions: how is the revolutionary state made? Where do revolutionaries build their proto-states, and why? What is the role of civilian communities in supplementing and maintaining the revolution's violent (and non-violent) efforts?

A. Revolutionary Development

Revolution — defined here as the attempted use of violence to replace a state in all or part of its territory[1] — is a risky enterprise. Most revolutions fail (Fortna 2015; Mason, Weingarten, and Fett 1999). Both students and practitioners of insurgency agree on the main challenge facing insurgents: the state they face has superior financial resources, military hardware, and policing infrastructure. Revolutionaries must not only survive this disadvantage but also cultivate political legitimacy and territorial control among the people and in the places they wish to replace the state. Leadership must carefully allocate its capital toward revolutionary development in communities where the return on investment is highest.

Revolutionary development in a putative base area proceeds through three developmental phases—contestation, consolidation, and control. During the contestation phase, the revolutionaries attack the state. During the consolidation stage, rebels cajole or cleanse civilians they believe are likely to defect (those outside the platform population). During the control, they recruit, tax, and provide services.

B. Platforms and Organizations

[1] Marks (2012:6) argues that combat tactics (terrorism versus guerrilla war or mobile war) are irrelevant to describing the conflict compared to the rebel goal. Whatever the tactics, where they are "only tools to accomplish a political end … the remaking of the political system… we refer to them as revolutions or insurgencies". I use the terms "revolution" and "insurgency" interchangeably.

During each developmental phase, the success of revolutionaries depends on both a supportive platform population and organizational capital. Histories of revolutions stress the pairing of a popular grievance to an insurgent promise. Revolutionaries must map their proposed social change to felt needs among the communities they propose to represent.

I refer to these constituencies as "platform populations," borrowing from Roeder (2018) and adapting to Maoist revolutions. (3). In this context, the platform population is the population that the movement sees as its constituency. It is the group among whom the Masoist project is most likely to find support.

In this dissertation, I argue that revolutionaries privilege revolutionary development in communities where their platform populations, due to their grievances, goals, and organizational capabilities, are best prepared to act as partners in controlling territory. In considering the organizational capabilities, insurgents assess civilian preparedness and choose to invest where pre-existing, grassroots institutions create and enforce rules of material consequence for local citizens. These institutions affect the revolutionaries' chance of success in each of the three phases of revolutionary development.

Why do such pre-existing institutions condition revolutionary success? Because they facilitate solutions to tricky coordination problems endemic among civilians in conflict zones. They reduce civilian defection to the state and render administration of revolutionary taxation and services more efficient. Fear, opportunism, and uncertainty afflict cooperation more severely in conflict zones than where order prevails. Where grassroots institutions have experience solving real distribution problems and enforcing social bargains before the conflict, these institutions develop fungible organizational capital and local knowledge they can employ in service of preferred combatants.

The interaction between the insurgents, the state, and the community unfolds across the phases of revolutionary development. In the first phase, insurgents decide whether to invest in the community as a base area, and then contest the state's control. In the second, the state attempts to break the insurgents' consolidation of civilian support. They do so in part by threatening or making promises to individual civilians as enticements to defect. In the third stage, insurgents and the community attempt to assess which community members defected against the insurgency, and punish those defections.

C. Local Knowledge and Local Enforcement

Because the insurgents typically lack complete information about village events and politics, their solo attempts at identifying defectors often fail. For example, in the third stage, rebels punish innocent civilians, often at the behest of their self-interested neighbors. The guilty go free. Civilians cease to believe that they can spare themselves rebel punishment by complying with rebel orders. The state's selective rewards look more and more enticing.

Local institutions provide crucial monitoring and enforcement capacity to aid in the insurgent's assessment during the third stage, lowering the costs revolutionaries face in administering base areas and raising the benefits they obtain from doing so. Local institutions engage in many behaviors that might otherwise burden the revolutionaries: they can aggregate and vet locals' observations of defection behaviors, and alert revolutionaries or take action themselves. They can monitor tax contributions and adjudicate local claims for revolutionary aid and services. Because this policing and provision is carried out by local elites with a stake in maintaining local order, revolutionaries trust it more than disaggregated reports. Fearon and Laitin (1996:725) explain the prevalence of inter-ethnic cooperation despite the difficulty in punishing defectors from other groups by proposing a "mediator" institution that gathers

information and punishes defection within the ethnic groups to preserve cooperation between them. I propose a similar mechanism in conflict zones.

Civilians comprehend the future. Civilians in the second period are more likely to cooperate with the insurgency if they will face policing from a local civic group in the third because they understand that the local civic group increases the likelihood of punishment for defection and decreases the likelihood of punishment against the innocent.

The central argument of the dissertation is thus:

Insurgents that choose to engage in revolutionary development in platform communities with higher organizational capital before the conflict begins can reduce insurgent costs during the conflict.

D. Insurgents versus the State

Insurgents and the state both understand the importance of local knowledge and local enforcement to their success. This sets up intense competition for villages that can provide organizational capacity. Insurgencies are more likely to offer base-area benefits to communities with civic groups during the first stage. But states also target these communities.

Both states and insurgents prefer well-organized civilian supporters to poorly organized ones because, all else equal, such organization helps deter defection by civilians facing selective threats or enticements from the opposition. The dissertation uses data from the Maoist conflict in Nepal (1996-2006) to test the observable implications of this theory. Nepal's Maoists present a compelling case study for at least two reasons. One, their eventual stalemate with the state occurred after a great deal of physical expansion of their territory, providing some leverage to identify the order in which villages were targeted for development. Second, their explicit and strict adherence to Maoist tactical doctrine provides a baseline expectation of what revolutionary development should look like in this case. As described in Chapter 3, Maoism offers

revolutionaries specific guidance on the selection and development of base areas that I expect to obtain in Nepal.

In line with the central hypothesis set out above, I find that the pre-existence of forestry usage and conservation groups, a widespread and important type of civic organization in Nepal, is associated with earlier and more intense local conflict, with the selective, violent targeting of civilian demographics thought to oppose Maoists, and with Maoist service provision and recruitment drives. Forestry groups typically engage in detailed monitoring and management of community activity and disproportionately engage with the ethnic and economic groups most likely to support the Maoist cause (Chapter 5 provides more details). Accordingly, I argue that forestry groups offered Maoists a reasonable shortcut to assessing the costs and benefits of governing a community as part of the revolutionary base area.

This statistical and historical analysis supports the argument that, even within their broad heartland, Maoists selectively engaged with well-organized communities.

This story is local. I look within regions that experienced civil conflict to provide insight into the order in which rebel organizations target communities in which they build a new state. Understanding how the evolving constraints of the insurgent movement pattern its treatment of civilians and geographic expansion offers insights into both insurgency and local political development.

In the following sections, I define "organizational capital" and "platform constituency" with greater precision, and situate the study of organizational capital within the literature that analyzes civil conflict. I preview the methods I use to interrogate the relationships the theory predicts I should observe in Nepal, briefly discuss the implications of my findings, and lay out the organization of the rest of the dissertation.

II. What is Organizational Capital?

In this section, I explore the definition of "organizational capital" and explain the intuition that communities can leverage pre-existing institutions to solve battlefield coordination problems. "Organizational capital" refers to the human capital built by hierarchical institutions with experience managing coordination or distribution conflicts. Two of these capacities are most central here. First, investigating and punishing defection from local rules teaches generalizable investigation skills and generates knowledge about local friendships, socio-economic conditions, and practices. Second, participation in institutions teaches skills in logistical and bureaucratic practices. Individuals with previous experience in institutional roles can recreate those roles to build new institutions.

Ostrom (1990: 183) lays out the problem facing communities seeking to build new institutions without the state: "…individuals who have high discount rates … are not likely to choose jointly beneficial strategies unless such strategies happen to be their dominant strategies." Even where a rule change would benefit everyone, the tendency to free-ride frustrates cooperation without force (Bates 1983). Creating new institutions similar to those found in ideal Maoist base areas implicates a nested collective action problem. Community members must invest in creating the new institutional rules in the first stage, then undertake monitoring and enforcement costs to administer those rules in the second (Ostrom 1990: 49). Coordination problems at the grassroots level thus require "institutions that enable individuals to achieve productive outcomes in situations where temptations to free-ride and shirk are ever present" (*Id*: 15).

Institutions confer a number of benefits. Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti (1993: 89-90) argue that institutions both build trusting interpersonal networks and create experienced

organizers capable of balancing the needs and expectations of multiple groups. With strong organizational capital communities can transform themselves. Organizational capital can underpin the development of democracy (Toqueville 2003 [1840]: 153) and rural development: "we cannot visualize any strategy of rural development combining growth in productivity with broad distribution of benefits in which participatory local organizations are not prominent" (Esman and Uphoff 1984: 40). Modern development studies reflect this finding. Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2013: 114) find that "the complexity and hierarchical structure of precolonial ethnic institutions correlate significantly with contemporary regional development".

III. Organizational Capital in Civil Conflict

One of the most obvious questions prospective rebels must ask themselves is 'will the people rise up behind us?'. To answer "the poor and marginalized will join our cause" fails to account for the exacerbated free-rider problem that arises when the proposed collective action is violent resistance to a more powerful enemy. Popkin's (1979) potent criticism of this "moral economy" assumption inspired a generation of literature focused on rational, individual incentives to fight. Yet this literature ignores the problem highlighted here. How and when do individual choices aggregate to mass revolutionary support? Why would rational, self-interested individuals willing to undertake violence agree to revolutionary goals, organizational structure, and performance?

The macro- and micro-level analyses of revolutions both fail to connect individual motivations to the groundswell of support for a specific, organized, social movement. In the macro telling, national (or international) developments create a rebellious fever that sweeps through the peasantry. In the micro telling, social forces probabilistically affect the personal risk and benefit calculations of individual civilians, who join or create movements. The macro story

ignores the hyper-local cleavages that frustrate coordination on resistance while the micro story ignores the processes by which rational, self-interested individuals willing to undertake violence coordinate on revolutionary goals, organizational structure, and performance.

Attempts to link individual choices to mass movements often frame revolutionary ideas as a contagion. According to these studies, some communities feature shared norms or network structures ideally suited to spread the fever once a few key patients fall swoon. These studies make similar claims about social structure but emphasize the role of informal networks and influence. Without denying the value or accuracy of these models, I consider the role of formal, organizational capital in mass mobilization and, subsequently, on revolutionary development. Rather than a contagion or tipping point game, local mobilization is cast as a choice made and enforced by local elites holding positions in important local institutions.

It thus explores the role of local elites in conditioning revolutionary behavior in a way often ignored by studies of mass mobilization. I take the preferences and intentions of platform communities as a given; they wish to support the revolutionaries but confront a coordination problem. The revolutionaries in turn respond to the capacity of the elites and community to effect this preference. This response is the focus of the dissertation.

Both theorists and practitioners note that aligning local collective interests to a larger revolutionary cause requires effort, organization, and local knowledge. Lenin (1902) strenuously rejects the reliance of "Economists" on the spontaneous adoption of their class interests. Instead, he argues that political organizers need to point to concrete local examples of abuse: "…this clear picture cannot be obtained from any book… It can be obtained only from living examples" (43). "Lenin stressed that the constant task for campaigns seeking to transform states is to link belly concerns to the campaign's goal" (Roeder 2018:13, see also 47-49). Skocpol (1979:15)

argues that "for the occurrence of a revolution, a necessary causal condition is the emergence of a deliberate effort an effort tying together leaders and followers that is aimed at overthrowing the existing political or social order."

How does this project unfold? How do revolutionaries know (or guess) where these political projects will take root and produce a local, collective movement? How should we study empirical patterns in revolutionary mobilization among civilians from the perspective of the revolutionaries?

This dissertation joins a small group of studies that occupy a mezzanine position in the study of revolution. It agrees that certain macro-social changes shift the distribution of attitudes toward a pro-revolutionary sentiment. It agrees that individuals consider personal cost-benefit trade-offs when determining whether and how to participate in revolutionary action. It acknowledges that collective mobilization can make or break a rebellion while taking seriously the coordination problems that often frustrate cooperation among similarly situated individuals. It argues that well-organized civilian groups act as a bridge between social conditions and individual decisions. Variation in the location of such groups has important implications for the spread and uptake of revolution. Revolution spreads first to places where such partners exist because revolutionaries anticipate the cost of mass organizing to be lower, and the benefits of mass organizing to be higher. Local partners bear the laboring oar in resolving civilian coordination problems, and in so doing link both the civilian to the rebellion and the macro-cause to the micro-decision.

I focus on the ability of civilian institutional elites to punish defectors against a take-it-or-leave-it deal with rebel fighters. Where civilian elites prefer an alliance with the rebellion, civilians must decide between cooperation or defection primarily by asking whether a particular

enforcement officer is likely to observe and punish their defection. The sanctions at issue are formal and material, up to and including violence generated by officers of the revolutionary group or the community itself.

IV. Platform Constituencies and Intra-community Conflict

Until this point, I have spent little time considering the very real possibility that participants in pre-existing groups may not favor the revolutionaries. Accepting that communities will almost always disagree within themselves about the merits of the revolution gives rise to a reasonable question: Why should we assume that pre-existing local institutions will use their organizational capital to support the rebels?

We should not. Revolutionaries should, of course, recognize that organizational capital controlled by the revolution's most natural enemies may mobilize to oppose it; organizations controlled by a mixed group of civilians probably cannot be trusted. Instead, revolutionaries should invest disproportionately only where their platform constituencies are selectively well-organized. How should the revolutionary, or the social scientist, identify such a constituency?

I adapt Roeder's concept of "platform populations" (discussed above) for non-seccessionist movements by arguing that similar logic applies in evaluating the identity of natural beneficiaries of <u>any</u> policy program or institutional reform an insurgency might mobilize to achieve.[2] For these reasons, any study of organizational capital must pay careful attention to the networks and demographics which actually organized in any given community.

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[2] The notion that platform constituencies mobilize in favor of a revolutionary offering beneficial policy changes faces substantial objections. In addition to the standard collective action concerns raised by Popkin (1979), we might expect even sympathetic civilians to refuse to support the movement outwardly if the state is more powerful (Kuran 1991; Kalyvas 2006). Evidence from a numerous cases also establishes civilian antipathy for anything other than the end of the war. Roeder (2018:Ch 3) argues extensively that revolutionaries must undertake substantial political development among the platform population to confront these concerns. I analyze the role of platform populations and the scope conditions of their collective mobilizations in greater detail in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 4, I provide evidence that, in the context of Nepal, the platform population consists of groups known as "janjatis". The janjati group comprises primarily of Sino-Tibetan speaking Buddhists living in the Himalaya or their foothills and lower caste, rural Hindus. The Maoist movement promised redistribution of human development and infrastructure spending to rural parts of Nepal, and to diversify the government and bureaucracy by inclusion of these underrepresented populations. While the Maoist policy platform was explicitly neutral in terms of ethnicity, observers of Nepali politics consistently noted that members of the Hindu upper castes (often referred to collectively as brahmins), even when desperately poor, were systematically favored for spots in government schools and jobs programs. Janjati-heavy districts fell substantially behind brahmin-heavy districts in social services and human development outcomes. Policies to address inequality and redirect development funds to the rural West would disproportionately benefit janjatis.

Chapter 5 identifies a key grassroots institution organized to meet janjati political goals: the forestry conservation group ("FCG"). As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, FCGs marshal substantial human capital to closely monitor individual agricultural activity in many parts of rural Nepal, and their conservation goals largely align with denying encroaching upper-caste Hindus the spoils of environmental depredation at janjati expense. Because the record supports viewing forestry groups as janjati institutions, and viewing janjatis as largely supportive of the Maoist cause, I use forestry group presence as an estimation of platform constituency organizational capital in Nepal. If Maoists reached the same conclusion, they would rely on FCG presence as a signal of the costs and benefits associated with administering that community as part of the base area.

V. Empirical Strategy and Summary of Findings

Having defined three key terms — political development, organizational capital, platform population — and examined their importance for understanding the dissertation's theory and situating it in the broader literature on revolutionary mobilization, I can now set out the theory's main and sub-hypotheses, and describe in brief my methodology and results.

My main argument is that communities in which the insurgent's platform population has higher organizational capital before the conflict begins will attract earlier and more intensive insurgent revolutionary development during the conflict.

From the discussion above, we can replace the general terms with proper nouns. In the context of the Nepali Maoist movement, the janjati platform population was in some places organized into forestry conservation groups and in other cases not. I therefore expect that Nepali Maoists will invest more in revolutionary development in villages in which FCGs pre-existed the conflict. In general, the empirical record offers substantial support for this hypothesis.

While I will argue in Chapter 4 that forestry groups offer a compelling identification strategy for understanding revolutionary investment, this study is ultimately observational. The persuasiveness of the project relies partly on the diversity of related outcomes organizational capital influences, which mitigates the weaknesses of any individual measure. I operationalize the process of revolutionary development into six variables: the timing of conflict onset, the number of battle deaths, casualties among opposition populations, displacement among opposition civilians, rebel service provision, and recruitment. *Figure 1.1* (next page) breaks these hypotheses down by Chapter.

I take the Nepali Village Development Committee ("VDC") as the unit of measurement. Nepal has about 4000 VDCs in 75 districts. VDCs are the smallest political unit in Nepal for which reliable data is available on all necessary variables. VDCs often contain multiple

settlements. Many villages contain multiple FCGs, and the most rural Himalayan VDCs are territorially quite large. Yet, after removing a few highly populated "metropolitan" committees, the average VDC represents about 6,000 Nepalis; more than small enough to measure local variation.

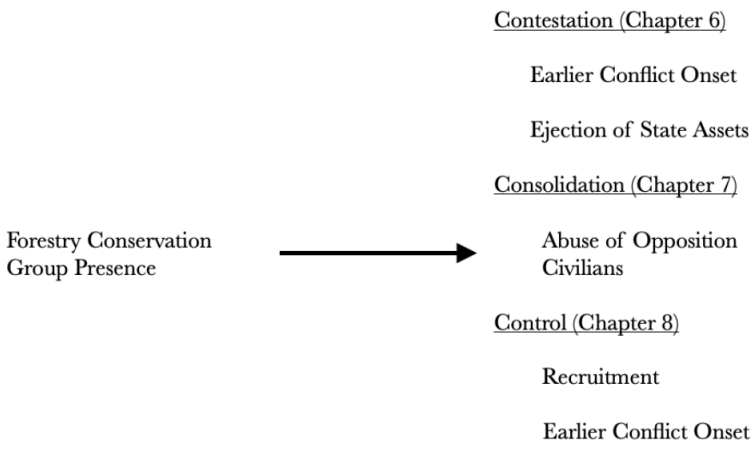


Figure 1.1: Hypotheses by Chapter

To compare villages, I measure which VDCs had registered FCGs prior to 1995. I test the hypotheses listed above primarily through statistical regression models that check for relationships between the pre-existence of FCGs (both as a binary and continuous measure) and the conflict outcome at issue. I employ a number of controls representing the VDC's topography, vegetation, and isolation, and the diversity, poverty, and income inequality of each VDC. I gathered this information from a variety of sources, including Nepali census reports, World Bank data, satellite sensing data, and topographical maps.

I also gathered supplementary qualitative data from several sources. First, over two short trips to Nepal, I conducted several interviews with representatives of the army and police, with Maoist officers, and with members of civil society groups active in service provision during and

after the conflict.[3] Second, I aggregated summaries of personal accounts of the conflict compiled by my Nepali research assistant. Third, I synthesized a voluminous secondary literature of wartime accounts written in English, many by Nepali journalists and academics, or by Western academics studying in Nepal during the war.

The results broadly support the theory outlined above and in Chapter 2. In all but one test, FCG presence is associated with revolutionary development.[4] VDCs with forestry groups experienced fighting an average of 17 months earlier than non-FCG villages and were 35% more likely to see state-Maoist fighting that resulted in casualties. Upper-caste Hindu civilians, but not janjatis, were more likely to be killed or displaced in FCG villages. Maoists responded to more reports of defection to the state with lethal violence in FCG villages, recruited more fighters and political workers in such places, and were more likely to establish government and service provision outposts, as well.

Maoist leaders and leaders of civic organizations alike directly characterized forestry groups to me as fonts of democracy and local organizing capacity. Three of the four Maoists I spoke with said directly that Maoists met with forestry group members, and two reported that they had been recruited at a meeting of their own village's forestry group or through other FCG members. Secondary accounts also describe forestry and other local organizations as arbiters of the community's relationship with Maoists, or an institution in which civilians discussed village policy toward Maoists.

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[3] Further elite interviewing and two trips to Western Nepal for village studies have been postponed indefinitely due to the outbreak of COVID.

[4] I obtained from the Nepali Maoist party a list of VDCs in two districts in which the Maoists built People's Courts. Only a fraction of VDCs did not receive a court, and the record intimates that almost all of the courts were established on the same day. Whether the data is credible or not, neither the establishment of a court nor the order of establishment provides much leverage as a test.

IV. Contributions

This dissertation offers five contributions.

First, it offers the only available comprehensive and quantitative account of the organizational development of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. Better documentation of the Maoist insurgency is important for several reasons. The Maoists fought the Nepali state to a standstill and negotiated sweeping changes to its political and economic institutions. The success or failure of the Maoist party in Nepali governance has a substantial effect on the well-being of millions of people, many of whom are among the poorest, most isolated, and most vulnerable in the world. Understanding the origins of this conflict and the history of how it came to such prominence will offer insights to future studies of Nepal's political and human development.

Apart from the humanitarian concerns, Nepal's revolution is one of the few modern examples of successful insurgency. The tactics and development of the Nepali Maoists deserve attention from students of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary strategy. Maoist strategy continues to influence modern insurgents. As Marks (2012:2) notes: "Revolutionary wars which look to the Maoist model are not going to disappear. … The Maoist approach offers the most highly developed construct available for 'making a revolution'."

The Nepali case also looms large in the social sciences. Despite its relative poverty and small size, Nepal boasts a committed and highly capable core of bureaucrats and civil society organizations. While digitization lags, a wealth of information awaits anyone willing to wade into Kathmandu's massive ministerial archives and the record rooms of district outposts. Already, several of the civil conflict literature's most cited articles concern Nepal (Do & Iyer 2011; Nepal, Bohara, and Gawande 2014; Gilligan, Pasquale, and Samii 2014). A raft of new research on public service and party politics has emerged recently (*e.g.*, Gulzar 2021; Gulzar, Hai, and Paudel

2021; Sudhardiman and Karki 2019). Popular histories of the conflict and anthropological accounts of life in Himalayan villages straddle the border of academic and popular science (Whelpton 2005; Jha 2011; Adkihari 2015).

Yet little has emerged to chart the spread of the Maoist conflict or its social, economic, and demographic impacts at the village level. This dissertation and the dataset it assembles offer a deeper and more analytical history of the movement.

Second, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of the ability of local, grassroots political organizations to hold the state and quasi-state actors to account. Influential theories of political development argue that central governments offer political rights and services only to communities and demographics that can credibly threaten to challenge the state or avoid its influence locally (Tilly 1992; Scott 1985). The resistance of local elites with preferences at odds with the state presents major hurdles for the consolidation and projection of state power (Migdal 1988; Herbst 2000).

Boone (2003:2) agrees: "the political capacities and interests of rural notables [explain] much of the variation we observe in regimes' strategies in governing the countryside". Boone stresses that "[h]ierarchical communal solidarity gave rural elites bargaining power, for it made more credible their threats/promises to control peasants and mobilize collective action" (29). A combination of experience in governance and economic stability allows locals to negotiate greater autonomy from the center. How does this process evolve?

This dissertation provides an account of local combatants engaging with local civilian organizations in ways that unquestionably altered the course of Nepali political development. Nepali Maoists received no outside support and relied entirely on local mobilization for survival. The process of consolidating support was messy, violent, and often incomplete. Yet in a very real

way, the citizens of Western Nepal, so long ignored and marginalized by the Kathmandu valley elite, engaged in a form of successful violent contestation mostly relegated to history books. The Maoist movement gained the power to negotiate a new social contract because locals seized a chance to support an alternative state that offered them the development outcomes they preferred, lending credibility to macro-historical accounts that stress the threatened or actualized resistance of marginalized demographics for their eventual inclusion.

Third, this dissertation outlines a mezzanine-level mechanism for mass mobilization that complements existing theories that emphasize community strength and structure. These accounts help reconcile the observations in Scott (1977) and Popkin (1979) by explaining the conditions under which collective mobilization in conflict zones is likely. Literature focused on "strong community" mechanisms of mobilization (*e.g.*, Petersen 2001) would likely find little that surprises them in this account, yet it offers unique implications that help reconcile tensions between the collective action and opportunity structure accounts of conflict.

The descriptive evidence shows that many relatively large, diverse Nepali communities developed forestry conservation groups, and, all else equal, attracted the attention of Maoist rebel political development. While the dissertation provides direct evidence only of Maoist decision-making, the revolutionary preference for well-organized communities speaks to the influence civilians may wield over conflict outcomes. The empirical sections include controls for the common variables used to operationalize community strength: size and isolation. Despite these controls, well-organized communities were more likely to be integrated into the rebellion. These results suggest that 'weak' communities can sometimes overcome their natural disadvantages through organization.

Fourth, the concept of revolutionary development brings together elements of the literature on civil war by investigating how seemingly discrete behaviors and outcomes fit within a larger strategy of building a revolution and revolutionary state. Civilian casualties, the provision of revolutionary services, and attacks against the state, for example, serve an important goal. Studying each of these in isolation can introduce substantial limitations.

Take the example of civilian casualties. Are civilian deaths highest where the motivation to rebel is greatest or where the next operation of the revolution is focused? Do civilians die where the civilians are most likely to support the revolution (Do & Iyer 2011; Nepal, Bohara, and Gawande 2011) or where the civilians are most resistant (Kalyvas 2006)? Do combatants attack civilians in their own territory to root out rump supporters of the opposition (Balcells 2017) or do they attack civilians in opposition territory to grind down the enemy's will (Downes 2017)?

The answer is probably "all of them, sometimes," but when and where will depend on how local conditions are viewed by the revolutionaries through the lens of their strategy of revolutionary development. Civilian casualty counts have been operationalized to represent a wide array of on-the-ground realities. One set of studies considers density of civilian death as evidence of the types of grievances that lead to civil war. Another argues that it really measures the changing landscape of control.

Attempts to connect discrete outcomes often lump all rebel activity together. Berman, Shapiro, and Felter (2011) consider the connection between employment and support for insurgency. To operationalize support for Iraqi insurgents, they measure the number of attacks against coalition forces in Iraq.[5] Is it fair to assume that insurgents attack where their support is

[5] The study finds a correlation between employment and violence, which they interpret as evidence against the theory that general economic stagnation or individual depredation are relevant factors in revolution or recruitment.

highest? Perhaps in some cases, but it is reasonable to doubt this assumption without more evidence of the insurgents' strategy.[6] Insurgents could rationally prefer not to frustrate the communities they recruit from with high levels of violence and may prefer to attack commercially important places with high employment. Chapter 2 goes some distance to demonstrate that undifferentiated violence harms the interests of the combatants that engage in it. Interpreting civilian casualties as a thermometer of the underlying social fabric or military strategy in the conflict plainly requires a great deal of context.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this dissertation considers whether a community's mobilization potential conditions the strategy of revolutionary elites. The community strength theories described above address themselves entirely to the behavior of the community itself, predicting when and where civilians will mobilize. This dissertation is unique in its exploration of community mechanisms as a predictor of how the rebellion expands its control. Revolutionary elites condition their strategy for expansion and revolutionary development based in part on where they find willing local partners who can police and administer rebel order more efficiently.

The evidence provided in the empirical chapters demonstrates the plausibility of this relationship. Forestry group presence is associated with a wide array of indicators of the Maoists' development of local political relationships. In addition to providing insight into each individual conflict outcome addressed, linking these outcomes into a pathway of revolutionary development teaches us about how revolutionary movements rely on communities and expand where civilian supporters provide them with plausible base areas.

VII. Structure of the dissertation

[6] The modal Iraqi district is only 35 miles across. Suicide bombers take months to train at camps far from their homes.

This dissertation demonstrates that pre-existing organizational capital among a revolution's platform constituency conditions the rebellion's allocation of scarce military and political development resources. Communities richer in such capital are targeted for highly localized development programming first. The dissertation proceeds to explore this question as follows.

Chapter 2 lays out the theory in the form of a stylized interaction between the revolutionary organization and civilian communities. It uses existing literature to explain why rebel leaders might appraise the benefits of engaging in political development in a well-organized community differently than a poorly-organized one: because existing organizational capital is fungible to the task of managing defection and distribution problems during the conflict, lowering rebel costs and increasing the chance of success at mass mobilization. Examples from revolutions around the world, and in particular movements influenced by Maoist tactics, demonstrate the plausibility of each of the theory's important assumptions.

Chapters 3 and 4 situate this stylized story in the context of Nepal's Maoist insurgency. In addition to describing Nepal's relevant history, these chapters justify the dissertation's most important measurement decisions. Chapter 3 considers the idealized Maoist insurgency and compares Nepali practice to it. This exercise grounds the dissertation's measurement strategy for "insurgent development" by discussing what Maoists do when they wish to convert government-held territory into a base area.

Chapter 4 addresses the history of Nepali political development, including the development of grassroots community organizations that dominated rural life. Chapter 4 explains the coding of Sino-Tibetan-speaking Buddhists and lower-caste Hindus as the Maoist platform population. Despite an explicitly ethnicity-neutral Maoist platform, a long history of

suppression led both Maoists and the Nepali state to treat these 'janjati' groups as Maoist sympathizers, which led these communities to see themselves this way.

Chapter 5 lays out the common elements of the research design, and, in particular, the sources of the data used to test the theory. It justifies the use of forestry conservation groups as a measure of local janjati organizational capital by tracing their history and usage. It details the highly technical and contentious role such groups played across Nepal and provides some background as to their origin and distribution.

Chapters 6-8 lay out the empirical results grouped in the phases of rebel conquest set out in Section IV above. The empirical chapters are organized to represent an idealized order in which insurgents gain control over territory: contestation, consolidation, and control. During the contestation phase, the revolutionaries attack the state. During the consolidation stage, rebels cajole or cleanse civilians they believe are likely to defect (those outside the platform population). During the governance stage, they recruit, tax, and provide services.

In the messy reality of a conflict zone, these stages often blur. I separate them based on the intuitive appeal of the order more than an expectation that the process is followed absolutely. Following this order, Chapter 6 provides evidence and analysis demonstrating that Maoist forces fought earlier and harder to establish territorial control in villages with FCGs. Chapter 7 presents evidence that Maoists were more likely to selectively kill or displace upper-caste, Hindi-speaking Nepalis than their own platform constituency in VDCs with forestry groups. Maoists were also more likely to receive and respond to tips about civilian defection in these villages. Chapter 8 demonstrates that FCGs predict the density of Maoist recruitment and service provision, fulfilling the promise of governance.

Chapter 9 summarizes the empirical results and explores their support for the theory and explores in greater detail the dissertation's contributions, and two avenues for further research implicated by the dissertation in total.

CHAPTER 2 - The Theory

I. Introduction

The first chapter lays out the general claim of the dissertation: all else equal, rebel groups focus on building base areas where their platform constituency is well-organized.

This chapter breaks down the mechanics of this claim by examining the decision-making logic of rebel groups and civilians operating in a zone of mixed control.[7] It also lays out the observable implications of this claim in conflict zones. In brief, I expect that insurgent groups will selectively target opposition civilians, fight harder against state forces, recruit more heavily, and provide services more often in communities where their own civilian allies are pre-mobilized into civic groups with local authority and policing capacity.

In addition to explaining the mechanics of the theory, this chapter provides evidence for two related propositions that underlie it. First, the creation of a base area requires service provision and enforcement that are costly for revolutionaries to provide. Acting as a state within a state compels revolutionaries to build civilian-facing bureaucracy that drains capital from the war effort. Second, organized platform civilians can reduce the administrative burden of creating base areas by supplying their own labor and organizational capital. As the balance of civilian contribution to building base areas rises, the required inputs from insurgents falls.

This chapter proceeds as follows: the first section models theoretical interaction between a rebel group and its platform constituency in which the rebel group attempts to obtain maximum compliance with its objectives from the civilians while the civilians decide whether to obey rebel

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[7] In the empirical chapters, I focus on observations of rebel behavior. These observations provide direct evidence on revolutionary strategy. I do not attempt to systematically observe civilian behavior. Explaining the revolutionary's decisions, however, requires some speculation about the civilian behaviors that influence it. This chapter includes discussion of civilian strategy in conflict zones and provides indirect evidence from other studies to ground my assumptions about civilian thinking.

edicts or the state's counter-insurgency. This section defines in detail and explains the importance of platform constituencies, base areas, and the policing capacity of civic organizations. The second section elaborates on the theory's observable implications, which are tested in the empirical chapters.

II. The Theory

The theory describes the interaction of four actors: an insurgent group, the state counter-insurgents, individuals in a community over which the state and insurgents compete, and a local civic organization. The interaction occurs in three stages. In the first, insurgents decide whether to contest and invest in the community as a "base area". In the second stage, the state attempts to break the rebel's political development project, primarily by attempting to gather information from community members on insurgent movements. In the third stage, insurgents and community members attempt to assess which community members defected against the insurgency by cooperating with the state. I argue that all three stages unfold differently where communities are well versus poorly organized.

The analytic model assumes that both insurgents and civilians understand each other's interests and limitations. The critical decision point occurs when civilians threatened with state reprisal decide whether to defect against the insurgency; a decision they make primarily based upon how likely they feel the insurgency is to catch and punish them if they do. Because civilians in the second round are less likely to defect when they face policing from a local civic group in the third round, insurgencies are more likely to offer base-area benefits to communities with civic groups in the first period where such groups exist.

A. Stage 1: Contestation and Development of Base Areas

In the first stage, insurgents select and attempt to develop certain communities as base areas. In such areas, insurgencies build political relationships with civilians, particularly those in their platform constituency, upon which they will rely to expand their movement. This section describes the base area relationship and the process of its development by insurgents by answering the following questions: Why do insurgents need base areas? What do they provide? How do insurgents develop base areas? What sorts of insurgent behaviors win the support of constituents? The answers to these questions set the stage for how state disruption of the base area project will look in stage 2, and also provide the list of observable insurgent behaviors examined in the empirical chapters.

Insurgents rely on civilian communities for crucial support, including recruits (Fjelde and Hultman 2014: 1235; Petersen 2001: 17-18), materiel and taxes (de la Sierra 2016; Downes 2007: 424; Deininger 2003: 579; Petersen 2001: 3, 75), information about counter-insurgent operations (Felbab-Brown 2009: 88; Balcells 2010: 42: Wood 2009: 152-3), and secrecy about its movements (Berman and Matanock 2015: 451; Condra and Shapiro 2011: 168; Felbab-Brown 2009: 76; Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011: 8; Kalyvas 2006: 90-91). For this reason, insurgent and counter-insurgent practitioners alike adopt the position that insurgents require civilian support to make any progress against the state. Mao's (1937: Ch 6 [2015]) sentiment that the people are the

sea in which the guerrilla must swim like a fish is echoed in insurgent governing documents[8] and in counter-insurgency strategy manuals.[9]

Given the insurgent reliance on civilian support, and the insurgent's general lack of resources compared to states, choosing base areas in which they can maximize the compliance and benefits the community provides while minimizing the costs of development is a crucial and foundational step in building a successful rebellion. As described by Clutterbuck (1966:176) "Authority must be established patiently, village by village, … dealing with the easiest areas first". The creation of a useful base area is thus a local political project more than a military one. Roeder (2018:7), discussing separatist movements, makes clear:

> …the main operational objective for campaign leaders is convincing members of the platform population that independence is their objective, will serve their individual purposes, has a significant possibility of achieving success, and is likely to be embraced by many other members of the platform population.

1. Selection of Base Areas

How do insurgents select base areas? One factor is the administrative cost of maintaining civilian cooperation. Therefore, base areas are most attractive to insurgents when they can count on highly organized, allied civilians to help manage enforcement and defection problems.

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[8] E.g., Guevara (2002 [1961]: 2)("The guerrilla fighter needs full help from the people of the area. This is an indispensable condition."); Giap (2015 [1961]: 20) ("…the entire population took part in the fighting; every commune had its fortified village, every district had its regional troops fighting under the command of the local branches of the Party…"); Irish Republican Army General Headquarter (1956: 8)("Outside of the support he gets from the people among whom he operates-and this support must never be underestimated for it is vital to his eventual success-he fights alone."); Omar (2009; §§ 11 and 13).

[9] U.S. Army 2010 (§ 1-5)("…other opponents have offset America's fires and surveillance advantages by operating close to civilians, as Somali clans did in 1993 and insurgents in Iraq have done since mid-2003; these enemies have been more successful in achieving their aims"); Kilcullen 2011.

Literature on base area selection[10] tends to focus on a territory's potential for delivering logistical inputs for armed struggle. For example, we should expect insurgents to target places with strong opportunities for revenue generation, whether through looting of resources (de la Sierra 2016; Weinstein 2006; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Le Billon 2001), the extraction of direct taxes (Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011), or the pillage of outside development aid (Crost, Felter, and Johnston 2014; Nunn and Qian 2014; Berman, Felter, Kapstein, and Troland 2013).

Rebels may also focus on territory where they suspect they will find willing recruits; where, for example, poverty lowers the opportunity cost of participation (Do and Iyer 2013; Dube and Vargas 2013; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Collier and Hoeffler 2004), or where relative deprivation or inequality (Nepal, Bohara, and Gawande 2011; Gurr 1977), or where historical and moral opposition to the state (Wood 2003; Petersen 2001) generate a pool of willing fighters. In many cases, such grievances arise in communities excluded on the basis of ethnic or other identity characteristics (Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch 2011; Buhaug, Cederman, and Rød 2008; Horowitz 1985).

These predictors have proven effective at isolating regions or countries in which insurgencies are likely to ignite or remain intense,[11] but as the empirical section below demonstrates, substantial variation remains in insurgent developmental strategy, even within the heartlands of its greatest support or control.

Collecting revenue and engaging in recruitment involves costs and requires the compliance or cooperation of at least some locals. All else equal, rebels may prefer territory with

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[10] Literature on selecting and developing base areas per se is scant, but the logics of conflict onset and territorial control echo rebels' need for secrecy, information, recruitment, and resources, and therefore provide a reasonable start at understanding which communities offer the greatest reward.

[11] And therefore become the basis of control variable selection in the empirical chapters.

high potential for revenue, but little existing research considers how local politics shape the cost or efficiency of collecting it. A rational revolutionary group may prefer to set up shop in places with fewer raw resources, but where collection efforts are cheap and there is less shirking.[12]

Civilians in civilian roles (Petersen's (2001) "+2" civilians) can help maximize the production of taxes, recruits, and secrecy on the insurgency's behalf while minimizing costs. Hirose, Imai, and Lyall (2017: 48) argue that patterns in civilian partisan support for counterinsurgents led to more IED attacks by insurgents. Rubin (forthcoming) uses established understandings of Filipino family structure to estimate broad community cohesion that correlates with insurgent territorial control.

Why should civilian organizing maximize the delivery of key civilian performance to insurgents? The full answer to this question is best left until after the description of state pressure for civilian defection (Section B, infra) and insurgent attempts to police and punish such defection (Section C, infra). In brief, however, we will see that civilians in stage two of base area construction civilians face several temptations to defect: to refuse to fight, to hold back resources, and, in particular, to inform on the rebels under state pressure. Community groups can repurpose the local knowledge and human capital used to solve community problems into assets that identify defectors. Because the use of such knowledge increases the likelihood and precision of punishment for defection in the last stage, doing so in the second stage becomes less attractive, which in turn maximizes production in the first stage.

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[12] Recent literature on civilian collective action in conflict zones partially addresses this concern, but stresses the community's interest in maintaining neutrality to deliver peace (Kaplan 2017) or autonomy (Arjona 2016) holistically to all civilians. Studies of partisan collective action (Paige 1978; Scott 1976; Petersen 2001) tend to emphasize the dynamics of internal community mobilization rather than the behavior of the combatant groups in response to it.

2. Development of Base Areas[13]

What do insurgents do when they develop base areas? In order to identify which territory becomes a base area, it is essential to define the rebel behaviors consonant with this political development project. These behaviors become the dependent variables in the following empirical chapters. If insurgents select base areas on beneficial demographic, economic, and geographic variables to maximize certain types of civilian performance, and if they subsequently engage in a suite of efficient developmental behaviors to consolidate control in those areas, we should observe correlations between the factors that recommend war onset or intensity with later development.

Communist revolutionaries turned frequently to Mao's writings to develop blueprints for base area consolidation.[14] Consolidation efforts involve purging state loyalists, engaging in political education programs, and providing services.[15] Guevara[16] summarizes Maoist teaching on consolidation:

> The first task is to gain the absolute confidence of the inhabitants of the zone; and this confidence is won by a positive attitude toward their problems, by help and a constant program of orientation, by the defense of their interests and the punishment of all who attempt to take advantage of the chaotic moment in which they live in order to use pressure, dispossess the peasants, seize their harvests, etc.

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[13] This section considers the broad need for most insurgencies to develop base areas, and the uses of these areas that apply across cases. For more on the Maoist tactics that informed the Nepali rebels, see Chapter 3.

[14] Although the creation of base areas is hardly limited to left forces. Many post–Cold War insurgencies (including ethnic ones) develop systems of state rule (Finnegan 1992; Geffray 1990; Linn 1989:40), although the level of sophistication varies from place to place. Insurgent state building is why civil wars are often perceived as "really" being about "a competition in government" (Clutterbuck 1966:57).

[15] Mao 1939a [Schram, et al. 2015]: 291; Mao 1939b [Schram, et al. 2015]: 182; Mao 1940a [Schram, et al. 2015].

[16] 1966 [2002]: 28

Students and practitioners of modern counterinsurgency emphasize that maximizing the benefits insurgents receive from civilians requires a holistic linking of political and military strategy:

> Political power is the central issue in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies; each side aims to get the people to accept its governance or authority as legitimate. Insurgents use all available tools—political (including diplomatic), informational (including appeals to religious, ethnic, or ideological beliefs), military, and economic—to overthrow the existing authority.[17]

The development of a base area thus requires insurgents to engage in observable behaviors consistent with a holistic strategy to cultivate support among communities of the insurgents' platform constituency, including greater willingness to confront the state over control in base areas, the provision of governance or benefits[18] and the solicitation of recruits and taxes.[19] "Insurgents engage in state-like activities: they collect taxes, organize policing, administer justice, and conscript fighters. In short, they enjoy a local monopoly on violence, which they use to punish their enemies and sanction noncompliance." (Kalyvas 2006:219).

Generating services is a crucial political development behavior. "Non-state social welfare organizations offer the population an alternative entity in which to place their loyalty" (Grynkewich 2008: 353). As Mampilly (2017: 8) argues "it is only by replicating some of the functions and forms of the nation-state–chiefly in regard to state strategies used to generate civilian compliance–that will allow an insurgent organization to derive attitudinal support for its political authority and achieve some form of legitimacy." A substantial amount of empirical evidence supports the proposition that counter-insurgent service provision increases civilian

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[17] U.S. Army 2010: § 1-3.

[18] Magaloni, Robles, Matanock, Diaz-Cayeros, and Romero 2020; Stewart 2018; Mampilly 2017.

[19] Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011.

performance (e.g., Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011) and counter-insurgents use their deep pockets to outperform insurgent provision (US Army 2007 at 3-24).

We should additionally expect minimal abuse of allied civilians[20] and maximized abuse of opposition civilians. Mao discusses two reasons for treating opposition civilians abusively, which are supported by modern empirical studies. First, insurgents hope to clear state supporters from behind their lines in order to frustrate state attempts to interdict. Kalyvas (2006:122, 182) makes a similar finding that disruption of opposition populations forces compliance or, at the very least, dislocation that reduces defection. According to Downes (2017: 4) "attacking enemy civilians often makes good strategic sense because it eliminates "fifth columns" that could rebel in an army's rear area and also heads off potential revolts that might occur later on." Displacing opposition civilians through violence and forced migration appears to have little downside for combatants. Wiesner (1988) demonstrates in Vietnam that forcible evacuation turned many peasants who were resentful of the government for their removal into Vietcong sympathizers, but refugee camps never became a security problem for the Americans. Sympathy did not translate into collaboration.[21]

Second, insurgents often redistribute opposition assets to supporters as a form of policy. For example, Harding (1984:75) tells the story of a carpenter murdered by anarchist militiamen in Spain because his business was the rival of an ally.[22] Rebels especially tend to target moneylenders to allies. A U.S. advisor in Vietnam recalls "one guy who was a source of information about the VC relieved his family of three generations of debt" (Moyar 1997:293).

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[20] Souleimanov and Siroky 2016.

[21] On Vietnam, see also Pike (1966: Volume 7, generally).

[22] Kolbert (2003:66) tells a similar story of a blacksmith in Madrid.

Redfield's (1989:134) study of Tepoztlán in Guatemala saw civilians urge rebel reprisals even against money lenders in their own families. Wood (2003) details how insurgency in El Salvador redistributed landlord property to campesinos. Murshed and Gates (2005) link conflict intensity in Nepal to land ownership inequality. The ability to redistribute land appears to have driven Vietcong strategy to selectively abuse wealthy peasants (Elliot 2003:348).

Further stories of civilians demanding and rebels providing targeted assassination of economic rivals can be found in Tennessee during the American Civil War (Fisher 1997: 63), the Russian Civil War (Brovkin 1994: 419; Schmemann 1999:259), Sri Lanka (McGowan 1992:221), Liberia (Brehun 1991:67), and China (Thaxton 1997:290). In Guatemala, rebels often killed civilians to settle disputes "over women, over land, (even) over religion" (Watanabe 1992:181). Such "redistribution" can, of course, be non-economic. Hart (1999:314-15) finds that the IRA removed out-groups from neighborhoods because local Catholics simply wanted "unruly" neighbors gone or to restore the homogeneity of their neighborhoods.

Opposition civilians understand that they are targeted for these reasons and flee preemptively. In Colombia, villages became politically homogeneous as known opponents fled (Sánchez and Meertens 2001:17; *see also*, Darby 1990:98 (Ireland); Fellman 1989:74 (Missouri); Carr 2004 (Boston)). Anti-Japanese guerrillas in the Philippines "encouraged the migration of loyal Filipinos from the enemy-controlled areas to the unoccupied districts." (Lear 1961:120). In sum, as Kalyvas (2006:365) puts it: "violence is a key selective benefit that produces collective action and support on the ground."

As laid out in more detail in the hypotheses section below, I test the overall support for this theory by examining the correlation between pre-existing platform constituency mobilization

in Nepali villages and Maoist attempts and successes at territorial control, protection of platform civilians and abuse of opposition civilians, service provision, and recruitment.

B. Stage 2: Disruption in Base Areas

In the second stage, state counter-insurgents enter the base area and attempt to gather information that will help uproot the rebels. During this stage, the insurgents have established a permanent presence in the developing base area, and may even have driven the state out. Yet the state can still access the territory, and its citizens, although sometimes with only selective shows of major force or by sending in agents in disguise.

The state's goal is to prompt enough defection from local civilians to undermine the insurgent's attempt to consolidate control. To achieve this, states can promise to selectively punish or reward civilians who refuse or cooperate with the state, respectively. The state's strategy creates an administrative challenge for insurgents; who must investigate hidden defections in the community they approach from the outside.

As the description of the third stage makes clear, civilians thus make their decisions about defection based on their relative expectation of being punished for each choice. Will the state's agent detect a false promise to collaborate with the state? Will the insurgents be able to identify defectors? The balance of the civilians' expectations on these questions, and therefore the relative capacity of the state and insurgents to detect defection, will determine the civilians' actions.

1. The State's Goal

Existing literature establishes the structural advantages that accrue to the state directed by the central government[23] seeking to undermine base area projects of insurgents: it can achieve its

[23] In the context of this case study, insurgents seek to establish base areas and states seek to undermine them. In principle, however, the asymmetrical reliance on total civilian compliance applies to incumbents seeking to establish political control, and is a common problem among counter-insurgents seeking to establish control through "hearts and minds" strategies. See Section C(3), *infra*.

goals with only selective defection from local civilians.[24] When it comes to the goal of establishing or disrupting the consolidation of political power, the state (in the context of this case study) can rely on selective defection to frustrate the insurgent's need for high levels of compliance.[25] Incumbency brings challenges. Where rebels in base areas attempt to consolidate control, they require higher levels of compliance than the state that acts to disrupt the base-area project.

Evidence from Vietnam suggests that this asymmetry plays out as described. The Vietcong only needed one or two informants to grind counter-insurgent consolidation to a halt,[26] yet complained in the Hua Nghia province that civilians would not willingly provide full support until government officials were completely excluded from the villages.[27] This experience highlights a critical lesson: at one end of the spectrum of control, the Vietcong took full advantage of a problem it could not mitigate upon becoming the incumbent power. The difficulty of base-area consolidation rises exponentially as a combatant nears the goal.

2. The State's Strategy

Given that the state disruptor needs only to turn a few civilians, it can approach the community selectively; by choosing a few civilians and offering them the immediate, face-to-face choice to inform on the rebels.[28] Where the state makes such demands, civilians face a choice familiar to students of corruption through the euphemism "silver or lead". Dal Bó, Dal Bó, and di Tella[29] formally establish an intuitive result: individuals facing the choice between a small

[24] Cf. Popkin 1979: 111.

[25] Kalyvas 2006; Popkin 1979.

[26] Race 1973: 147.

[27] Herrington 1997: 29.

[28] The porosity of borders renders such incursions feasible even where rebels basically control territory (e.g. Kalyvas 2006 88-89 and Crawford (1958:82), applying the concept in Malaysia.

[29] 2006: 46-47.

bribe[30] and a massive punishment will choose the former, even if achieving it requires acting against the long-term interest of their community. "No matter how deep the beliefs and how powerful the allegiances … violence is used to force people to alter their behavior inconsistent with their preferences."[31] Game theoretic analysis of counter-insurgency strategy commonly assumes that civilians respond to such selective incentives.[32] As Kaplan (2017:36) argues:

> "From an organizational standpoint, communities face the risk that armed groups may peel off individual community members from a pacifist cause by offering selective incentives, either in the form of payments or the application of violence to settle feuds."

Civilians understand that the state collects information this way and the gravity of refusing. Asked about neighbors who rejected the state's solicitation for information against the PKK in Turkey, a local village guard responded "oh, they were burned."[33] Punishment by the state is, of course, probabilistic. The state may believe an informed civilian's protestation of ignorance, may erroneously trust that bad information was provided in good faith, or may lack the resources to follow up violently on every bad tip.

Moral economy approaches often assume that community members' common preferences stop this individual defection through the cultural support of community-level collective action.[34] Popkin called this assumption into question, arguing that outsiders seeking to recruit defectors "will use divide and conquer strategies that capitalize on conflict and

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[30] For examples of the selective services combatants may offer for information on rivals, see Kalyvas (2006: 96).

[31] Kalyvas 2006: 95.

[32] E.g., Berman, Felter, and Shapiro 2018.

[33] Vick 2002: A18.

[34] Paige 1975; Scott 1976.

competition among peasants".[35] Civilians therefore seek mostly to "minimize their exposure to harm … while maximizing the benefits offered by combatants, including material assistance and basic security."[36]

State counter-insurgents do engage in mass repression,[37] but the selective strategy pays better net dividends. The state rewards informants' accurate tips while punishing refusals and inaccuracies.[38] This dynamic reinforces the puzzle that animates this dissertation. Insurgents can choose broad regions in which available resources and grievances augur well for the development of civilian support but still find themselves broadly denied its benefits where they cannot prevent moderate levels of civilian defection. We should expect, therefore, that insurgent organizational strategy or base area selection criteria should reflect this concern. Yet, as the next section establishes, the reality of community politics and policing in conflict zones severely limits the tactics an insurgency can adopt to confront this identification problem. Given this, the existence of allied community groups becomes a crucial resource for insurgents hoping to consolidate influence in base areas.

C. Stage 3: Insurgent Defense Against Defection

In the third stage, insurgents attempt to mitigate the problem of strategic defection of individual civilians. This section lays out the basic dilemma for insurgents: identification and selective punishment of defectors is extremely expensive even where possible, but collective punishments rarely shift behaviors.

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[35] 1979: 77.

[36] Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013: 680.

[37] E.g., Gulden 2002; Stoll 1993; Jones 1989: 265–75.

[38] As Arjona (2016: 67) puts it: "While cooperating with an insurgency is often portrayed as an instance of collective action … in many cases resisting against an armed group, rather than aiding it, entails a risky enterprise, the benefits of which cannot be delivered to participants alone."

1. Effectiveness Collective Punishment

Could revolutionaries relieve the administrative burden of investigating defection by engaging in collective punishment? Practitioners and students of insurgency agree that collective punishment against civilian communities for individual acts of defection is a poor policy. The reason is obvious: as violence becomes more indiscriminate, civilians can no longer assure their immunity by cooperating. Indiscriminate violence "defeats deterrence because it destroys the possibility of anticipation of a forthcoming evil and, hence, the ability to avoid it."[39] Put another way, "abstention ceases to be a protection".[40]

For this reason, practitioners of counter-insurgency often argue that collective responses undermine the efficacy of operations to consolidate support. Speaking on Vietnam, John Paul Vann[41] argued:

> This is a political war and it calls for discrimination in killing. The best weapon for killing would be a knife, but I'm afraid we can't do it that way. The worst is an airplane. The next worst is artillery. Barring a knife, the best is a rifle – you know who you're killing.

A German reporter interviewing civilians in the occupied Soviet Union during World War 2 summed up the civilian attitude:[42]

> "If I stay with the Germans, I shall be shot when the Bolsheviks come; if the Bolsheviks don't come, I shall be shot sooner or later by the Germans."

In occupied Poland:[43]

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[39] Kalyvas 2006: 143.

[40] Aron 1966: 170.

[41] Quoted in Halberstam 2008: 95

[42] Cooper 1979:27.

[43] Gross 1979: 212

> The population quickly recognized the new logic of the situation: whether one tried to meet German demands or not, one was equally exposed to violence. . . . It makes no sense, in the context of random punishment, to style one's life according to the possibility of being victimized, any more than it makes sense to orient all of one's everyday acts to the possibility of an accident.

Evidence that the population quickly comprehends the nature of its situation abounds in other conflict zones, such as the Greek civil war,[44] in Kenya during the Mau Mau uprising,[45] and occupied France.[46] Unless the incumbents can protect them from the selective threats of the disruptors in the second stage, civilians have little choice but defect, in any case. In Guatemala, "spying and informing became endemic" (Zur 1998:73); and "Fear divide[d] communities through suspicion and apprehension, not only of strangers, but of each other" (Green 1995:105).

When collective violence works, it does so by temporarily creating a paralyzing and irrational fear that atomizes society.[47] Such wanton victimization typically backfires. "No measure is more self-defeating than collective punishments."[48] Not only do civilians become angry at their irresolvable plight, but selective defection is often the only way to protect oneself from the undifferentiated mass of potential defectors! Gross[49] notes that defectors are often relocated to safer areas, or provided documentation and training that prepares them for questioning. In

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[44] Condit 1961: 268. ""The wanton nature of the retaliation – the picking of victims at random meant that pro-German Greeks or their relatives suffered as much as anti-German Greeks … there was little advantage in being a collaborator. As the numbers of the homeless and dead grew, the Greek population became simultaneously more terror stricken and more anti-German."

[45] Barnett and Njama 1966: 130. "In Kenya, it had become dangerous not to admit having taken the Mau Mau oath because "a denial of having taken the oath was often replied [to] by a bullet or a club on the head."

[46] Kedward 1993: 181. "…there was no consistency in the German response to acts of armed Resistance which allows a meaningful correlation between different kinds of maquis action and the incidence of reprisals."

[47] Walter 1969:25-6; Thornton 1964: 81.

[48] Heilbrunn 1967: 152; Mason and Krane 1989: 175.

[49] 1979: 234

addition to the evidence provided above, studies present examples of indiscriminate reprisal turning civilians against the incumbent in the American Revolution,[50] Chechnya,[51] Cuba,[52] Guatemala,[53] Ireland,[54] Kosovo,[55] Liberia,[56] Nazi-occupied Serbia,[57] Sri Lanka,[58] Vietnam,[59] and Venezuela.[60] The Japanese occupiers by themselves left tragic evidence scattered across the Pacific.[61]

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[50] Crow 1985: 145. "A man who was captured by a loyalist band in North Carolina noted in 1781 that the band "consisted of persons who complained of the greatest cruelties, either to their persons or property."

[51] Souleimanov and Siroky 2016.

[52] Wickham-Crowley 1992: 139. "Che Guevara located a key mechanism driving peasant support for the rebels precisely in the indiscriminate behavior of incumbents…"

[53] Carmack 1988: 54-5: "Immediately after the Guatemalan army killed about 50 people, including women and children, in the village of La Estancia, forty young men and women left the village to join the guerrillas." Warren 1998: 109. "The feeling emerged – it wasn't fear but anger. Why do they come persecuting if one is free of faults, if one works honorably? You felt bad, well we all did. Grief but also anger."

[54] Sluka 1989:288-9. "One of the best ways to turn politically moderate or apathetic Divis residents into IRA and INLA supporters or members is for policemen and British soldiers to unjustly harass, intimidate, and brutalize them, and for Loyalist extremists to assassinate members of the community. . . . Repression of the Catholic population by the Security Forces is enough to generate enough support for the guerrillas to ensure their survival."

[55] Hayden 1999.

[56] Berkeley 2001: 49. "We didn't even have to act. People came to us and said, 'Give me a gun. How can I kill the man who killed my mother?" [insurgent leader Charles Taylor].

[57] Browning 1990: 68. " [German observers] frankly concluded that rather than deterring resistance, reprisal policy was driving hitherto peaceful and politically indifferent Serbs into the arms of the partisans"

[58] Senarathne 1997.

[59] Race 1973:172 "The party was correct in its judgment that government doctrine . . . would drive additional segments of the population into opposition where they would have no alternative but to follow the Party's leadership to obtain protection." See also, Harrington 1997: 21.

[60] Wickham-Crowley 1990:234. "A Venezuelan guerrilla suggested that there was probably a new recruit for every woman raped by government soldiers."

[61] In China: Lary 2001: 109-110; Li 1975: 231. In the Philippines: Kerkvliet 1977: 68; McCoy 1980: 215. In Malaysia: Kheng 1983. In Burma: Tucker 2001.

This list establishes evidence of the counter-productivity of mass reprisals no incumbent in civil conflict could ignore and simultaneously establishes the propensity of incumbents in civil conflict to do precisely that. Why do incumbents turn repeatedly to such a strategy so destined to fail? Because they have no choice.

2. Costs of Selective Punishment

Revolutionaries seeking to build political support must thus rely on selective punishment, which is extremely costly. Soldiers make terrible police officers. They lack local knowledge and any principled way to choose locals to provide it. Local politics, particularly in conflict zones, are affected by land ownership policies, internecine marriages between factions that back credit- or security-swap arrangements, trafficking and participation in gray markets, and other hard-to-observe norms and commercial networks (see, e.g., Driscoll 2015:10-11). The sources of mistakes in attempting to identify defectors are many, prompting a competition over original aphorisms to describe its difficulty.[62]

Mixed control exacerbates the problem, as soldiers cannot tell whether acts of support for the opposition are genuine or forced: "many people in Divis support the IRA in one role, while simultaneously condemning them in another" (Sluka 1989: 291). In Vietnam, "a rice farmer could easily find himself sitting under a banner at midnight … play[ing] the role of an outraged and exploited peasant, under the watchful eye of a Communist propaganda cadre. The following morning, the same farmer could send his children to the new, government-built school under the watchful eye of government hamlet chief" (Herrington 1997:37).

Conflict zones are also rife with misinformation, "riddled with deceit, double-dealing, contrived and genuine moves, and sometimes simple methods which are assumed to be complex"

[62] "Like eating soup with a knife;" (Lawrence 1971: 132); "like teaching an elephant to ballet dance" (Negus 2004: 5).

(Dillon 1990: 229). Even residents find comprehending the truth difficult, as "rumors rule, faith in established categories disappears … and feelings of extreme contingency and vulnerability take over" (Warren 1998: 110).

Of course, as Kalyvas carefully documents, such misinformation is often provided by civilians purposefully in the hopes of removing a personal rival. Once the rival is denounced, the civilian need merely wait until the more powerful actor does the dirty work. Observers cite such behavior in a number of conflict zones. An IRA operative recalls "the allegation that so-and-so was an informer became one that I heard regularly from people who wanted extreme violence done to their neighbours" (Collins 1999:229). In El Salvador, Binford (1996: 107) saw that "No one was immune from the violence. An argument with a neighbor, a conflict over a debt, or an insult made under the influence of *güaro* might lead the aggrieved party [to denounce the other]". In Germany, the Gestapo "occasionally published reminders in the press that it was not the "complaint bureau for personal spitefulness or even of base denunciations" (Gellately 1991:134, 146).[63]

Over time, combatants learn to distrust locals. An American soldier characterized local Iraqi informers during a military operation in the city of Tal Afar: "I think they just pick people from another tribe or people who owe them money or something" (Finer 2005:A1). In another part of Iraq: "These people dime each other out like there's no tomorrow; out of a hundred tips we've gotten from Iraqi intelligence, one has worked out" (Packer 2003:71). CIA advisors in

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[63] Again, the anecdotal evidence accumulates, particularly from Afghanistan: ("Don't make the mistake the Russians made. They had informers and they arrested the wrong people and it turned everyone against them" (in Zucchino 2004:A9) and Vietnam ("The people who identified members of the [Vietcong] shadow government often had many types of non-Communist enemies in their area of operation… they had personal enemies: the men who had insulted their sisters, the men who had stolen their sweethearts, the farmers who had borrowed money from their families and failed to repay it" (Moyar 1997:114).

Vietnam,[64] Guatemalan state police,[65] Soviet investigators,[66] and American soldiers in the Philippines[67] all learned that most local information they received could not be trusted.[68]

Incumbents might instead choose to observe locals themselves. This proves extremely challenging for incumbents with few resources, as it requires a constant and vigilant presence dedicated to observing civilians instead of fighting rivals (Kalyvas 2006: 165; Toolis 1997:70 ("No army can patrol all of the roads all of the time.")). The collection of intelligence capable rooting out resistance requires "an enormous infrastructure" (Trinquier 1964:35).

A South Vietnamese official noted that infiltration is often a matter of the disruptor's patience: "…we cannot stay with the people all the time. We come and go with operations by day, but we do not have enough strength to protect the people by night. The Vietcong wait and wait…" (Race 1973:135). A Union officer in Missouri observed that rooting out spies and defectors would be impossible "unless the government can afford to send ten soldiers for one guerrilla" (Fellman 1989:126). In Ireland,[69] Bangladesh,[70] Rhodesia,[71] and Colombia,[72]

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[64] Moyar 1997: 122.

[65] Stoll 1993: 20.

[66] Fitzpatrick 1997: 107

[67] Linn 1989: 144.

[68] Of course, at the other end of the spectrum, an insurgent might use its power to litigate civilian disputes precisely to curry favor with platform populations when the target is from the opposition group, even if the complaint has little to do with conflict. Lenin argued that revolutionaries should link local disputes to the master cleavage (Roeder 2018:13, see also 47-49). Reflecting that, the Communist NPA in the Philippines (for example) explicitly told allied civilians they would handle local disputes (Jones 1989: 289).

[69] "[T]he police and military forces are too small to cope" (in Hart 1999:73).

[70] "…the Pakistani army would have needed 375,640 men as opposed to its actual force of 41,060." (Salik 1978:101)."

[71] "…people in the rural areas would soon realise that [our presence] could not be sustained and that a transient military presence could not enforce government policy" (Flower 1987:122).

[72] "…the army is simply too small to cover the country. . ." (Forero 2001:A3).

combatants cite stretched forces as the main reason defectors cannot be identified. It bears mention that in most of the cases cited above, the combatant complaining is the state. Insurgents rarely play the part of incumbency, but they face the same problem with fewer resources.

Not that more troops would necessarily solve the problem. As argued above, true defection is elusive even when staring directly at it. Investigation by outsiders often alienates locals. It often involves kicking in doors in midnight raids, arresting and questioning innocent civilians, and violating local gender and social norms. Filkins (2005:54) observed many such raids while embedded with the American forces in Iraq and concluded "[t]he searches seemed absolutely necessary, given the violence, but they seemed to be draining whatever good will the Sunnis had left for the Americans."

In sum, while incumbents understand that collective responses to defection are counter-productive, the high cost of policing and selective response typically leaves them with little choice but to engage in this kind of intimidation. Revolutionaries should prefer strategies that increase the accuracy of detection efforts while reducing their costs.

D. Rational Action Given Insurgent Constraints

At this point, we can briefly summarize the stand-off between the incumbent insurgent and disruptor state from the perspective of a civilian living in insurgent territory but immediately facing a state agent demanding information or other compliance. If the civilian is a part of the insurgent's platform constituency, how should the civilian respond to this solicitation?

While our hypothetical civilian may prefer to support the insurgency, civilians often betray that interest when their own survival is on the line. Attitudes do not determine behavior (Hirose, Kosuke, and Lyall 2017; Kalyvas, 2006:95, 2012; Stoll, 1993:128; Leites & Wolf, 1970). In the American Civil War "[l]oyalty was not the safest and most common presentation of self

during this guerrilla war; prevarication was. Frankness and directness led to destruction more often than did reticence and withdrawal" (Fellman 1989: 48).

Civilians understand that incumbent insurgents face substantial costs that prevent or inhibit the identification of specific defectors, even as the defectors stare down the barrel of the state's gun. According to Michael Hechter (1987:162), a key determinant of collaboration is the perceived probability of sanction. Zimring and Hawkins (1973) stress that effective threats must be publicly known, persuasive, and personalized. "[I]n order to be able to apply a sanction or reward, there must be some way to identify supporters and non-supporters." (Petersen 2001:84). Heilbrun's (1967:150) presentation of German policy during World War 2 strips away the academic hedging: "the population must be more frightened of our reprisals than of the partisans".

Given the identification problem discussed above, the insurgent threat to hunt down defectors is neither persuasive nor personalized. The civilian prioritizes the immediate danger, selling out incumbent insurgents and handing the advantage to the state's disruption effort. To be sure, the state faces certain challenges in determining whether the civilian's response to the silver or lead offer is honest or not. But even at the extreme, the state comes closer to selective punishment if it opts to kill any civilian that claims a lack of knowledge or provides a tip that leads nowhere.

In sum, the incumbent rebels in the base area face two structural challenges. First, they must obtain the compliance of the vast majority of civilians where disruptive states need only change a few hearts or minds. Second, the selective punishment of defection is much harder for incumbent rebels than state disruptors. Insurgents understand that their inability to selectively

sanction defectors in the third stage encourages defection in the second, lowering the insurgents' incentive to invest in the community as a base area in the first.

E. The Role of Local Organizations

Institutions with information-gathering and punishment capacity alter the calculus of civilians given a "silver or lead" option by the state. These institutions are more likely to observe and punish defection, generating a credible threat of selective enforcement. Insurgents recognize this altered calculus reduces defection, and prefer base-area development in such communities with such institutions. (In the context of Nepal, I argue that FCG presence offers a highly visible shortcut to assessing how effectively a given platform community can lower the cost of extending the base area to its village.)

Existing literature offers several mechanisms by which informal institutions such as community norms (Petersen 2001) or reputational mechanisms (Taylor 1988) sustain cooperation. In the main, these theories describe an inter-subjective and organic understanding among community members. Sanctions against defection are typically disaggregated, and each civilian calculates the cost of cooperation or defection by considering who within the community is likely to observe behavior and how they will react. Simplification of these theories often implicitly involves the aggregation of these consequences from the view of a hypothetical median community member and assumes that most other members of the community share the median member's perceptions. Petersen, for example, argues that old norms generate specific behavioral expectations through the use of "focal points" in the community's history that apply old experiences, fears, and grievances to the present conflict (2001:68).

Without denying the power or persuasiveness of these theories, I focus here on a more objective mechanism by which many communities can organize compliance with an incumbent:

pre-existing institutions. These institutions are more formal and hierarchical than Petersen or Taylor's explanations. In the case of local institutions, community leaders with political preferences make discrete decisions to deploy their organizational capital for a purpose explicitly communicated to their constituency. They can analyze existing organizational capacity and adapt it to the new challenges of insurgent politics.

The concept of local institutions as enforcement mechanisms that instill confidence in outside groups is hardly new. Fearon and Laitin (1996:725) explain the prevalence of inter-ethnic cooperation despite the difficulty in punishing defectors from other groups by proposing a "mediator" institution that gathers information and punishes defection within the ethnic group to preserve cooperation outside it. States often manage out-group populations by elevating their local elites. In Czarist Russia, the regime used Russian-speaking Jewish advisers to "impose greater order and direct supervision on the Jewish population" (Lederhendler 1989: 92).

Arjona (2016:70) makes a similar argument about conflict zones: "legitimate and effective dispute resolution institutions foster communities' ability to launch and sustain collective action". In her case, collective action facilitates maintenance of civilian autonomy in conflict zones. Kaplan (2017) describes local institutions maintaining community neutrality by supplying information on defectors and protecting those wrongfully accused.[73]

Such institutions generate compliance in two ways. First, practice with local political organizing and enforcement trains local leaders with skills at least partly generalizable to mobilizing their communities to any number of tasks required for revolutions. For example, leaders of community labor or environmental management groups have experience delegating

[73] Because these groups provide better local intelligence for cheaper than insurgent policing strategies, insurgents should prefer well-organized communities even if the insurgent is broadly willing to engage in policing in base areas.

tasks and managing projects. Others may have experience managing budgets or communicating with government officials.

Second, where institutions repeatedly assess and manage member performance, they generate substantial local knowledge about individuals, which institutional leaders can use as a baseline to evaluate civilian behaviors in the new conflict context. Institutional leaders know who is rich and who is suffering; they know which families have children serving in the military, and which have children who left mysteriously after the rebels came through. They know who harvests what and when; who employs seasonal labor and who cannot afford it. Changes in these patterns may 'out' those receiving selective incentives for defections.

Local social organization generates compliance by creating public authority figures with practice solving collective action problems. As Masullo (2020:4) argues "Ideational content needs to be activated and mobilized. This is typically the job of political entrepreneurs. In the context of community collective action in civil conflicts, most such entrepreneurs are community leaders." Marston (2020) demonstrates that ties to such community figures reduce defection and displacement. Leaders that have succeeded in past mobilizations generate trust through a sense of "repeat play" (Koehane 1984). "Because organizing on the spot in the midst of a conflict is possible but difficult, preexisting organizations that have already solved collective action problems empower civilians" (Kaplan 2017:40).

A number of cases demonstrate the point. In Colombia, local Catholic Church functionaries generated wider buy-in and participation in peace protests (Masullo 2020:11); in Japanese-occupied China, local Communist party members taught fellow villagers how to hide during attacks, and transitioned their success into resistance behaviors (Wuo 1994: 231). In Lithuania, Scouts and Catholic youth groups took attendance at anti-occupation rallies (Petersen

2001:98-9). Popkin (1979) demonstrated how local leaders gained civilian confidence; after succeeding in one type of collective action, villagers saw how the same figures' leadership could deliver other collective results (*see also*, Petersen 2001: 135). For this reason, Vietnamese landlords discouraged peasants from joining irrigation collectives, believing such activity would teach political skills useful for resistance. (Popkin 1979:209).

Such institutions also produce trusting social networks (McAdam, 1986; Morris, 1984), especially important for recruitment to high-risk dissent activities (della Porta, 1995; Gould, 1993; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Putnam (1994) argues that social capital generated by civic participation is fungible to maintaining accountability and trust in broader political relationships.

The use of local institutions also generates substantial actionable intelligence. The Vietcong used committees made up of local elites to review evidence on potential defectors (Moyaw 1997:204) and to aid in planning local political development and strategic planning initiatives (Race 1973: 164).

Locals have the advantage of constantly observing their neighbors (Gambetta 1993: 168; Hechter 1987:154). "There were no secrets in a rural Vietnamese hamlet" Herrington recalls (1997:23). Masked members of Guatemalan death squads were often identified by their shoes, height, or the way they walked (Paul and Demarest 1988:123). In Sri Lanka (Argenti-Pillen 2003:61-3) and the Philippines (Berlow 1988:44), informants were guessed by triangulating their victims. During the war in Cyprus, villagers would say of defectors "He thought he could beat his wife without his neighbors hearing" (Durrell 1996:224).

Crucially, this type of intelligence gathering can also exonerate the innocent accused. In France, "revolutionary committees in smaller communities did usually seek to ignore or downplay denunciations that were overtly motivated by personal interests and emotions" (Lucas 1997: 35).

Where local institutions are weak, this can result in widespread distrust or acceptance of what combatants say (Moore 1993:628; Martin 2000:181). (A Vietnamese villager recalls: "The VC executed four persons in my village. They explained that these people were paid agents of the Government authorities. Nobody could figure out whether this was true or not" (in Mallin 1966:72)). For these reasons, civilians sometimes explicitly set up institutions to survey and adjudge this information (Kaplan 2017; Jones 1989:249). South Vietnamese set up "screening committees" consisting of officials at the hamlet, village, and district levels to view ever wider scopes of evidence (Moyar 1997:204).[74]

On this logic, insurgents should prefer to rely on local organizations for certain enforcement and compliance roles. Two major moral hazards might theoretically undermine this insurgent preference.

First, if civilians in civil war are likely to inform (falsely, in many cases) on neighbors based on pre-existing disputes (Kalyvas 2006: 203), why should insurgents expect civic groups organized around the war's cleavages to act differently?

They should not. The partisan organization will plainly press the rebels to punish opposition constituencies, and perhaps without any pretext that opposition constituents have defected in any way against the rebels. The partisan organization may in fact trade the promise of platform compliance for opposition abuse, which, as detailed Section II(A) above, is demonstrated to help consolidate legitimacy and influence for the insurgents in the community.

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[74] Combatants attempt to create similar institutions from the ground up. The Vietcong set up a vast network of committees beginning at the village level (West 1985:21). In Central America, arming these committees in "civil patrols" was extremely common. In Guatemala, civil patrols informed on civilians suspected of supporting guerrillas (Carmack 1988:63) and in some cases took on judicial powers to settle civilian disputes (Shelton 1988). Similar groups operated in Kenya (Kitson 1960:45) and Malaysia (Stubbs 1989:74).

Partisan organizations need only assure combatants that violence meted out to members of the platform constituency is based on individual performance that supports the consolidation of the base area. Doing so allows the insurgency to create redistributive violence that enriches the platform group, purges enemies, and delivers local control, all without the risks attendant to random or collective violence within the group. It also bears mention that such a system allows some number of opposition civilians to join the fold. While powerful or rich members of the opposition constituency are guaranteed targets for a variety of reasons (the insurgents gain by making an example, redistributing wealth, etc.). Opposition commoners can more plausibly make a show of switching sides, perhaps agreeing to more intrusive surveillance by local institutions as a show of good faith.

The case of Nepal is instructive here. Many objectively poor upper-caste Nepalis in rural areas allied with the Maoists.[75] They could protect themselves in part by simply being socio-economically similar to the Maoist platform constituency, but also by submitting to a local order headed by the platform constituency; an order that cannot exist without the organization.

A second moral hazard problem arises because once local organizations establish themselves as indispensable partners in local governance, they have leverage to make demands from the rebel groups they ostensibly support. The rebels then have added obligations to well-organized communities greater than they have where supporters are poorly organized.

This dissertation elides this concern in large part by focusing on the behavior of insurgencies with a good faith preference to create and maintain base areas. As the previous section alluded to, and Chapter 3 will make more explicit, the key elements of base area construction include service provision and the selectively gentle treatment of the platform

[75] The asymmetric violence demonstrated in Chapter 3 likely reflects attacks and displacement among wealthier upper-caste Hindus.

constituency. The demands such a community might make will largely accord with what the rebels hope to provide!

Some communities may over-demand, or ask to be treated preferentially to other communities of similar or higher strategic value to the insurgency. At the extreme, local leaders might promise to deliver the village to the state if the insurgency fails to comply. Insurgents must view such demands and threats as outliers. Few members of the platform constituency would prefer to live under the old order, at least not if the insurgents have made a credible promise to alter political, economic, or social life to the platform's preferences. Further, the insurgency might selectively remove the local leaders, reducing the village's value to the insurgency without losing it fully to the state.

F. Keys to Organizational Effectiveness.

Not all civic organizations are created equal. To this point, the theory implies that organizations are most potent when they 1) pre-exist the conflict and 2) organize selectively among the platform constituency. Here, I expand on the characteristics of an organization that might meet the revolutionary demand for local partnership.

Putnam, Leonardo, and Nonetti (1993) argue that social capital generated by civic participation is fungible to maintaining accountability and trust in broader political relationships. Yet in conflict zones, the social role of local organizations described above is both specific and onerous, and only certain institutions should logically be able to carry it out. Pre-existing organizations are better positioned to manage defection against incumbents when they previously managed real distributional problems among the incumbent's platform population.[76]

[76] Where the group is controlled by opposition civilians, it may in fact be used to coordinate resistance (Petersen 2001).

Ostrom (1990) highlights a number of characteristics civic organizations must have to manage collective action problems. Most crucially, Ostrom highlights local rule-making, broad participation, and flexible enforcement mechanisms as requirements for effective community management. These characteristics accord well with the intelligence-gathering and adjudication roles required for civic organizations in the theory above. Ostrom argues, for example, that poor families will simply reject community conservation rules that call for punishment of true subsistence consumption. Conservation is more successful when families on the brink are afforded some latitude. Of course, the prevention of free-riding in this context requires gathering and assessing information on the socio-economic status and resource usage of individual families.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the application of this requirement to the case of Nepal reveals the complexity of management task before the forestry groups. Stevens (1996) describes how Nepali Sherpa villages sustain quotas on multiple forestry products and multiple opening and closing dates for livestock grazing. Each community manages forestland at different altitudes, which implicates different restrictions. In order to punish defectors, local forestry managers must be able to track consumption and animal grazing across households and multiple forest sites. To further apply these rules flexibly based upon the individual situation of each family requires even deeper knowledge of the economic and consumption habits of the family.

In sum, then, the theory expects that pre-existing mobilization of an insurgent's platform constituency offers the insurgent a tantalizing benefit. Such groups can police against defection within the constituency, making defection, even for a selective benefit, less likely among its members. This does not eliminate collective violence from the community but rather allows the insurgents to direct violence at members of the opposition constituency in order to provide redistributed benefits to platform members and sweep their rear of civilians tempted to provide

information to the state. This benefit should draw rebel attention to communities with pre-organized platform constituencies.

II. **Hypotheses**

The generalized observable implications of this theory might be grouped chronologically in the ideal phases of rebel interaction with successfully established base areas: confrontation, consolidation, and control. During the contestation phase, rebels confront the state directly in the base area territory. During the consolidation phase, rebels attempt to organize the population. During the control stage, rebels engage in the process of governance.

Contestation

H1: Villages with well-organized rebel platform constituencies should, all else equal, experience conflict between rebels and state forces earlier and more intensely.

H2: Villages with well-organized rebel platform constituencies should, all else equal, fall under rebel control earlier and more completely.

Consolidation

H3: Villages with well-organized rebel platform constituencies should, all else equal, experience greater violence toward upper caste Nepalis.

H4: Villages with well-organized rebel platform constituencies should, all else equal, experience less violence toward lower caste Nepalis.

H5: Villages with well-organized rebel platform constituencies should, all else equal, identify and punish more civilian defectors.

Control

H6: Villages with well-organized rebel platform constituencies should, all else equal, provide more recruits to Maoist forces.

H7: Villages with well-organized rebel platform constituencies should, all else equal, benefit from more Maoist service provision.

How should these hypotheses be operationalized in the context of Nepal? Chapters 3 and 4 consider, respectively, the details of Maoist strategy and the history of political development in

Nepal to answer this question. In short, I argue that forestry conservation groups proxy the organizational capacity of the Maoist platform population at the village level. Forestry groups exist across Nepal, require substantial local capacity to sustain, and disproportionately mobilize the lower-caste targets of Maoist rhetoric.

In Chapters 5-8, I test the implications listed above in the Nepali context, using the presence of forestry groups presence as the key independent variable. Chapter 5 briefly lays out the common elements of the research design, including a description of the data and the processes by which it was gathered, and the promises and limitations of observing outcomes in Nepal at the village level. Chapters 6-8 take on the hypotheses listed above by stage in the conflict, demonstrating a strong relationship between forestry group presence and Maoist activity in each phase of base area development. These results help establish the importance of local organizing capacity for conflict outcomes, help tie the outcomes together as part of the political development of rebel groups, and couch the success of rebellions more firmly in the characteristics of its platform constituencies.

CHAPTER 3 - A Nepali Dinner Party

Chapter 2 laid out in greater detail the predicates of the dissertation's main claim. Rebels prefer to build political relationships in communities with strong, pre-existing partisan organizations because such organizations reduce the costs associated with transitioning from rebellion to control. Chapter 2 provided evidence of the theory's plausibility with a selective review of evidence and statements from modern insurgency around the world.

Chapters 3 and 4 situate the reader in the dissertation's case study of Nepal's Maoist rebellion. This chapter considers the historical practice of Maoists around the world and the efficacy of Maoist movements in comparison to other insurgent methods. It has two main goals. First, this chapter explains the choice of dependent variables presented in the empirical sections of the dissertation as a function of Maoist revolutionary science. Chapter 1 defines the concept of insurgent investment; revolutionaries dedicate a certain amount of resources to the development of base areas. Chapter 2 presents a theory that explains why local, partisan organizational capital should draw such investment. But what does revolutionary investment look like on the ground? What relationships should we actually observe if Nepali FCGs attracted Maoist investment? The answers to these questions must take into account Maoist strategy.

Second, many students of revolution will find the theory in Chapter 2 implausible on its face. Such readers may note that insurgent organizations are often undisciplined and prone to paying lip service to motivational ideologies they fail to practice.[77]

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[77] Others might wonder "if Maoism promises so much success, why don't state counter-insurgents copy the strategy of rural development?" or, alternatively, "why did the state not simply assassinate community leaders likely to foment rebellion?". Indeed, American counter-insurgency doctrine shifted substantially to local project management and intelligence-gathering in response to persistent resistance in both Iraq and Afghanistan (US Army 2010; Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011). I consider this concern in Chapter 4, which presents a history of the Nepali conflict, including the state's counter-insurgent response.

This chapter examines Maoism as an insurgent doctrine with specific guidance on political development. The statements of Nepali insurgent elites, and the practices of the insurgents in the field, each establish that the Nepali movement followed a clear progression: harassment of state forces, purges of enemy civilians, and consolidation of civilian support through policing and service provision. Accordingly, the hypotheses section that concludes this chapter predicts earlier skirmishes, greater violence against the upper castes, and more instances of service provision in villages with forestry groups. The chapter's second section considers the relative merits of Maoist strategy in comparison to other options (such as Leninist or Guevarist) for insurgent organization. While this comparison deserves substantially more depth than I can provide, readers of this chapter should feel comfortable with a basic understanding of Maoist strategy, understand why the empirical chapters are organized and feel reasonably certain that Nepali Maoist elites intended to deploy a Maoist strategy for reasons of both rhetoric and efficacy.

A. **Maoism in Nepal and Around the World**

Maoist writing and practice delineates a specific method of revolution. First, and most obviously, Mao believed that revolution required violence, famously stating that

> A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle … A revolution is an uprising, an act of violence whereby one class overthrows the power of another. (2015[1927] at 436).

Mao specifically divorced his strategy for revolutionary violence from the Soviet model, which he believed over-relied on conventional warfare (Lovell 2019: 93). Mao derided a conventional military as too inflexible, tantamount to "cutting the feet to fit the shoes" (Mao 1992[1936] at 466).

In matching the revolution to local concerns, Mao saw rural peasants as the key to revolutionary progress. According to Race (1973:98):

> [The Communists] say: the peasants are the main force of the revolution; if they follow the Party, they will become masters of the countryside and owners of their land, and that scratches the peasants right where they itch.

This reliance on rural peasants also broke with Soviet practice. Marx likened peasants to 'potatoes in a sack,' believing that the urban proletariat would carry the revolution. Lenin and Stalin turned to the peasantry only as a source of 'primitive capital accumulation' to speed modernization. The macro-progress of the Soviet versus Chinese conflict demonstrates the importance of this shift:

> The fingers of one hand would not be required to count the number of villages that the Soviets controlled before seizing power in 1917, whereas peasant militias formed the logistical backbone to CCP victory in the civil war in 1949. (Lovell 2019: 98.)

Focus on the hinterlands allows for a different kind of tactical contestation, in which Maoists can harass the state in areas of marginal value, imposing costs until the state withdraws, then consolidate control and use the area for another round of expansion (stages often referred to as "strategic defense, stalemate, and strategic offense" (e.g., Marks 2012: 7)[78]. During strategic defense, insurgents focus on survival, satisfying themselves with contestation over territory (Beckett 2001: 74-5). Mao recognized the value of rural areas and difficult terrain for surviving this onslaught, but also as the best place to lay the political groundwork. In Mao's (1970: 228) own summary:

> This move is crucial; it is indeed of primary importance, while our inferiority in weapons and other things is only secondary. The mobilization of the common

[78] Similarly: "When the enemy advances, retreat; when the enemy rests, harass; when the enemy grows tired, attack; when the enemy retreats, pursue…" Short (2004: 222).

> people throughout the country will create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy…[79]

The second phase, strategic stalemate, begins as the revolutionaries consolidate power and influence and power in the hinterland base areas. In this phase, insurgents sap the power of the state through repeated attacks, especially on state infrastructure (O'Neill 2005: 51-3). By the third phase, the insurgents have largely encircled urban elites with rural base areas. Attacks, while highly mobile, become more and more conventional as the insurgents begin to match state power (Beckett 2001: 77; O'Neill 2005: 53-4).

In Maoist practice, rural areas transcend military strategic value. Rather, "the countryside is the "heart" which pumps resources into the government, its initial loss will destroy the defensibility of the urban areas…" (Race 1973: 148).

Each stage of building a rural base area implicates a complicated and interwoven suite of military and civilian political development tactics, what Race (1973: 205) describes as "an integrated conception of social change which proved an effective guide to revolutionary action." Maoists effect this change by harassing the state in marginal rural areas, consolidating support among civilians by ejecting class enemies and redistributing wealth to peasants, and then using the base area to launch new attacks. As Lin Baio (1965) described it:

> Comrade Mao Zedong's theory of the establishment of rural revolutionary base areas and the encirclement of the cities from the countryside is of outstanding and universal practical importance for the present revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed nations and peoples.

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[79] Mao's focus on popular mobilization in these phase highlights a key distinction between Maoism and other revolutionary technologies. For example, Guevarist writings emphasize that a small revolutionary group can create the conditions for broader insurgency by highlighting the corrupt and brutal nature of the regime (Beckett 2001: 170).

This concept of encirclement proved influential to a wide variety of revolutionary groups, including those in Malaysia,[80] Zanzibar,[81] Mozambique,[82] Cameroon,[83] Ghana,[84] Zimbabwe,[85] Cape Verde,[86] Vietnam,[87] Cambodia,[88] Peru,[89] and India.[90] Maoist tactics were particularly influential in South Africa, where at least six ANC members attended training camps in China (Lovell 2019: 489). A former ANC general noted "we all read Mao as a practical manual for guerrilla warfare" (Hutchinson 1975: 230); other accounts noted that ANC soldiers "recited Mao's 'Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention' and reminded each other that 'the popular masses are like water and the army is like a fish'" (Snow 1988: 84-85). O'Neill

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[80] "We must study … in a solemn manner … the Mao Tse-tung ideology, because it is a Marxist–Leninist theory having very close bearing on our present revolutionary struggle." (Malaysian Communist Party 1969.)

[81] "The people of Zanzibar learned so much from the writing of Mao that they sent him personal greetings." Cooley (1965: 41).

[82] A member of the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee felt that "The methods of the [Chinese] Army … are right for Africa. The Russian methods are wrong." (Hutchinson 1975: 220).

[83] "In 1961 a team of Cameroonian guerrillas smuggled into China learned the 101 of insurgency … A large tranche of the training was dedicated to political education: there were lectures on Communism, its applicability to rural areas, and its inevitable global victory over imperialism." (UKNA FCO 1962).

[84] "Nkrumah went on to publish his own guerrilla warfare manual, 'was based on Mao's Selected Military Writings [with] countless quotations from Mao" (Ghana Ministry of Information 1966: 42).

[85] "The seven guerrillas had been trained in China and when the Rhodesian intelligence service searched the dead bodies after the massacre, they found a notebook recording one soldier's experiences at Nanjing Military College in 1965." (Martin and Johnson 1981:12).

[86] Beckett 2001:77.

[87] "[Giap] taught the Vietnamese to observe Maoist military discipline: publicly praising role models, commemorating victories and martyrs … 'Mao's military thought', Giap agreed, was 'very applicable to Vietnam'." (Qiang 2000: 33, 35).

[88] Lovell 2019: 599 (transcript of meeting between Pol Pot and Mao).

[89] "Guzmán … venerated 'the masses' and the prospect of grass-roots organisational work. … "In China, he further concluded, 'the main form of struggle is war; the main form of organization, the army … Without a people's army, the people have nothing.' (Lovell 2019: 787); Marks 2012: 255.

[90] Kennedy and Purushotham 2012; Banerjee 1984:22.

(2005: 49) argues that "The protracted popular war articulated by Mao Zedong is undoubtedly the most conceptually elaborate and, perhaps, the most widely copied insurgent strategy."

Nepal was no different. Internal planning documents use the precise language of Maoism to delineate the various stages of rebellion. For example, the Communist Party of Nepal's (CPN) Second Plan, which lasted from October 1996 to August 1997, was intended to "prepare to convert specific areas into guerrilla zones" (CPN 1997) while the third stage ("Develop Guerrilla Warfare to New Heights") was intended "to be a transitional phase [for] the establishment of base areas…used by the Maoists to launch strikes against government forces" (Thapa 2003:101).

Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist (CPN-M)[91] documents openly proclaimed Maoist slogans glorifying the army and war as the ideological foundation of their new state: 'The people without the army have nothing of their own' and 'The main instrument of the state is the army' (Karki and Seddon 2003: 220). At the Party's Nationwide District Secretaries' Conference in 1979, Nirmal Lama, the general secretary, proposed "training guerrillas, proletarianising a party cadre, creating base areas, taking action against local cheats, and initiating an agrarian uprising". His motion was adopted (Thapa 2003: 25).

Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the Nepali Maoist general better known by his nom de guerre "Prachanda," declared his intent to "follow the path of People's War with the strategy of encircling the city from the countryside [as] developed by Comrade Mao" (Adkihari 2014 at 33). Strategic analysis of the Maoist combat strategy bears out their dedication. "The party's military strategy adopted Mao's concept of protracted warfare. Prachanda and his comrades-in-arms

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[91] The Communist Party of Nepal split and re-combined repeatedly during and after the war. The new parties often defined themselves by the socialist luminary they felt most inspired them. Relevant for this description are the the CPN, the CPN-M, and the CPN-Marxist/Leninist, or CPN-ML. In the late phases of the war, some schisms occurred over the terms of a prospective peace, but the parties remained mostly unified in terms of supporting the CPN and later CPN-M's People's Army.

reverently cited Mao's prescriptions on moving from 'strategic defence, to strategic equilibrium, to strategic offence'" (Sharma 2004 at 51-2).

Prachanda's excitement about Maoist strategy, and his eager participation in the Revolutionary International Movement,[92] where Maoist insurgents used to trade training and political strategies, was not lost on a leftist journalist who embedded with the rebels: "…it struck me how the revolutionary methods created by Mao Zedong are being consistently and conscientiously applied in Nepal." (Onesto 2003 at 153).

Lovell (2019) interviewed several other Maoist elites in Nepal, who frequently quoted Mao (983) and discussed the influence of contraband copies of Red Star Over China (959). Surendra Kumar Karki, the Maoist minister of information and a veteran guerrilla commander, remembered in 2016 how he acquired his Maoism through English texts. 'I learned about the Cultural Revolution through Westerners writing about China: Agnes Smedley, Edgar Snow, William Hinton, Han Suyin. I went through all the books on China by Westerners." (Id.) Maoists also frequently shared Nepali translations of Mao by Khagendra Sangroula with each other. According to Nepali historian Prashant Jha, "These translations would become the educational nucleus of the Maoist civil war between 1996 and 2006" (2014: 25).

Nepali Maoist dedication to social change through insurgent action justifies the selection of particular dependent variables selected as tests of the theory in this case, and the remainder of this section is dedicated to examining Maoist theory and practice of building and expanding local base areas.

Maoists often begin the project of base area cultivation by approaching communities surreptitiously, through contacts and secret meetings with local organizations. In the Philippines

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[92] See also Thapa 2003:28-29; which quotes Prachanda as calling RIM "the embryo … of an organized form of class and ideological struggle".

> Contacts were first made with a community by a propaganda team, normally working through acquaintances and relatives. This gave the CCP sufficient local presence to make a number of converts, who then formed the basis of sectoral Organizing Groups. (Marks 2012: 99)

Where locals are amenable, Maoist rebels used these contacts to harass state forces until they withdrew. A shrinking state presence cleared the way for military bases (Lovell 2019: 96, 100) and the further development of mass organizations (Hofheinz 1967:26-7).

Perhaps the most important tactic Maoists used to consolidate control as the state withdrew was use of selective violence to intimidate and drive out opposing civilians. An environment "composed of sympathetic and natural elements" provided the foundation of Maoist security (Race 1973: 146). In Mao's (1992[1927]: 447) own words:

> The only effective way of suppressing the reactionaries is to execute at least one or two in each county … it is necessary to bring about a brief reign of terror in every rural area … to exceed the proper limits.

Early in the revolution, Mao believed that all "peasant proprietors" were valid targets to executions, but relented to build support among a broader base (Kim 1967: 81). Maoists built the case for webs of conspiratorial class enemies:

> a villainous landlord who tried to sabotage all land division, a rich peasant who schemed with him, a middle peasant who worried lest the new land law be used against him, and a village political worker who sold out the poor for favors from the rich. (Hinton 2008: 15).

In the Philippines, Maoists used asset investigations and targeted assassinations to remove recalcitrant class enemies (Marks 161, 167). In Peru, Senderistas killed the upper class members of the village and "more reluctant supporters" (Hazelton and Woy-Hazelton 1988: 481); Guzmán, the Maoist leader, "venerated permanent revolutionary violence against political enemies" (Smith 1994: 27). Nearer to the Nepali case, Naxal Maoists would:

> …enter a village and pull out the landlord. Then they convene a people's court in the village. When the people vote to execute the oppressor, our comrades hand

> him over to them, with his entire family. The peasant comrades hack them all to pieces. (Truscott 1970 at A7.)

The CPN similarly emphasized a united front, which requires assiduous attention to local concerns and opinion. Prachanda, writing in *The Worker* (1998), stated that "[t]he importance of the united front is, on the one hand, as an instrument of struggle … and, on the other, [develops the People's War] practically away from the local level to an instrument of state power". To this end, the CPN sought to unify "oppressed nationalities" with Dalit castes and women.

Violence against class enemies contrasts with the Maoist treatment of allied civilians. Lovell (2019: 100) summarizes from several campaigns:

> Strict rules for army discipline were laid down: 'Obey orders'; 'Don't take as much as a sweet potato from the masses'; 'Anything confiscated from landlords and local bullies to be handed in for public distribution.

This treatment reflected a broader strategy intended to cultivate political support among base area residents that survived consolidation. The majority of Maoist insurgencies attempted, not always successfully, to engage in service provision, land reform, and re-education in order to maximize later capacity for taxation and recruitment from the peasants.

The expulsion of the suspect classes allowed for the appeasement of remaining locals through land and asset redistribution programs. In the words of one close observer of China (Kim 1967: 92) "the anti-rich peasant policy was a logical development and extension of the policy of mass mobilization." Mao's Draft Agrarian Law of 1947 resulted in the confiscation of $20 billion dollars worth of land (estimated in 1947 dollars) and "made country-wide overthrow of the landlords and the compradores, rather than the defense of the Liberated Areas" Hinton 2008: 14).[93]

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[93] Of interest for this dissertation, the Draft Agrarian Law put technical control of village farmland in the hands of peasants associations on the grounds that they had the knowledge to manage the land for the sustainable benefit of the people. (Hinton 2008: 13).

In Vietnam, where villagers in Communist controlled areas were obliged to register for land redistribution drives within three months of the insurgents' arrival, a party official noted:

> …when the Party seizes an area, it considers that land reform is a strategic task which must be carried out regardless of cost, in order to produce an impact on the peasantry and in order to set the peasantry in opposition to the government and the landlords. (Race 1973: 127-8)

The impact of this policy in Chinese villages was no less pronounced, as it "shift[ed] the outlook and morale of the landless and land poor… For the first time in their lives they felt some measure of control over their destiny" (Hinton 2008: 157). Hinton also tells of the redistribution of other property, such as two distilling businesses that passed into pubic control upon the Red Army's arrival (*id.*).

Nepali Maoists plainly intended to emulate this strategy. In 1995, the Central Committee of the CPN wrote "the target of armed struggle will be confiscating the lands of the feudal and landlords and distributing them among the landless and poor on the basis of and-to-tiller theory" (CPN-Maoist 1995; see also, Thapa 2003: 97).

Upon the expulsion and deconstruction of upper class interests, Maoists could move from base area consolidation into control. During this phase, insurgents began the give and take of control, including taxation, service provision political education consistent with their cause, and recruitment of locals.

Mao's insurgent theory requires the devotion of substantial assets to service provision in liberated areas. Such services should reflect the needs of each community, and result from a repeated cycle of consultation, scientific evaluation and implementation, reeducation, and feedback (Mao 1943[1992]):

> This means to take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and … turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas by means of study, then

> propagandize and explain these ideas to the masses until the masses embrace them as their own … testing [their] correctness [in action].

Service provision in other contexts reflected this guidance. For example, in Vietnam, service policy generated at the village level passed through six echelons of committees before passing back down to the village for adaptation by progressively local committees for implementation (Race 1973: 28).

This service provision was administered by Maoist cadres, groups of civilian supporters with technical experience or training civic management, in cooperation with peasants' associations (Hofhienz 1967: 26).[94] The cadres worked on a number of projects, including the improvement of redistributed lands (Kim 1967: 84).

One important development project (though of dubious public value) came in the form of political re-education. In Lovell's (2019:309-310) words:

> Re-education was a foundational ingredient in the Chinese Communist revolution. Without the ability to persuade ordinary people that the radical changes they were suggesting would transform their lives for the better, the CCP would not have been able to mobilise mass support.

Mao believed that political education could fast forward a developing country past the democratic-capitalist phase of development theorized by Lenin (Marks 2012:11), and in some cases even allow for the indoctrination of richer peasants rather than executing or expelling them (Kim 1967: 91). Re-education often included training in rural organizational skills and propaganda techniques (Hofheinz 1967: 27). According to Hofheinz "…practically every

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[94] I adapt this definition from Hinton (2008: 13), who describes the Chinese cadre in Fanshen as "a person who plays a full or part-time leading role in any area of political activity… It is also used to describe technical personnel in industry, agriculture, education, etc., who are employed by the government." This definition reflects the usage in other works reviewed for this section, and the usage of the term by the Communist Party of Nepal in documents released during the war.

While Hinton and others often distinguish between state and Maoist cadre members, in this dissertation "cadre" always refers to Maoist technical workers.

commenter on Chinese communism during the Anti-Japanese War period remarks upon the immense efforts put into education" (*id* at 43).

Re-education efforts are described in China (Kim 1967), Vietnam (Race 1973), Thailand (Zimmerman 1976), and Cameroon (UKNA-FCO 1962) in addition to the Nepali case detailed in Chapter 6.

Such service provision did not come free, obviously. Mao himself wrote to village cadre leaders to demand specific production; in one case, 7,000 pairs of straw sandals (Mao 1929[1992]). In Peru, upwards of half of local production went to support Sendero services and war efforts (Marks 2012: 273).

Creation of a substantial "mass line" marks the culmination of the Maoist strategy set forth above. In Mao's (1934[1992]) own words:

> The central task of [the base-area government] is to mobilize the broad masses to take part in the revolutionary war … Anyone who does not attach enough importance to this central task is not a good revolutionary cadre.

Kim (1967) argues that localizing fights between landlords and peasants are contrived entirely for the purpose of creating the mass line. Oksenburg (1967: 175, 178-180) breaks the reliance of the Maoists in China on local labor down in great detail. Over 90% of sub-village cadre officers and over 80% of village cadre officers were recruited from the peasant classes in the villages they served, despite the fact that only 60% of these officers were CCP members. In the Philippines, the moment "a village came under the control of the PT 'shadow government', its mobilization included providing manpower for the militia" (Marks 2012: 43). Maoist reliance on local recruitment was a defining feature of the encirclement strategy.

B. **Maoism's Effectiveness**

The preceding discussion establishes that Nepali Maoists, like many other Marxist movements, employed the twin doctrines of Maoist revolutionary strategy's early stages: That is, they focused activity in rural, marginal territory the state found hard to reach, and complemented military tactics with assiduous dedication to the development of a mass line through political programming among civilians. We now turn to the question of efficacy. Clausewitz (1982 [1832]) cautioned that statesmen must determine "the kind of war upon which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into something that is alien to its nature" (88-89). How well does the Maoist strategy work compared to other insurgent technologies?

Such a question could plainly serve as the motivation for a separate dissertation. While the literature on rebel tactics, such as the distribution of violence or governance, is well-developed, very little of it considers the relative efficacy of tactical decisions across rebellions (Holtermann 2019).[95] A number of histories of rebellions draw conclusions about the possible reasons for their success and failures, this section cannot draw scientific conclusions about the efficacy of Maoism. Rather, it demonstrates the rationale of Nepali insurgents in deploying Maoist guerrilla tactics.

Jones (2017) outlines three broad categories of insurgent strategies: conventional, guerrilla, and punishment. The conventional strategy most closely maps onto international warfare: insurgent troops attempt to defeat state security forces rather than winning over the population (id: 43). Insurgencies that employ conventional strategies normally receive funding from other states to acquire heavy weapons or inherit them from fractured militaries during

[95] The reasons for this are clear enough. Quality, granular data on rebel activity is hard enough to come by in single cases, and revolutionary contexts differ so greatly that measuring the casual impact of tactical changes would present substantial challenges.

secessionist movements (e.g., Byman 2005). For this reason, few insurgencies begin by using conventional strategies, although Maoism calls for a transition to conventional warfare in the third stage.

Nepal's Maoists could hardly have engaged in conventional warfare. The revolution began with a midnight raid of a police outpost, during which the triumphant insurgents captured four rifles, one of which was homemade. Nepali Maoists received no aid from China[96] or any other state, were actively opposed by India, and, after a classification as a terrorist organization in the wake of the 9/11, by the United States. Both India and the US provided hundreds of millions of dollars in counter-insurgency aid and military trainers to the Nepali government. Even the international communist community provided little support. High-level officers attended seminars hosted by the Revolutionary International Movement, and some rumors suggest that Indian communists harbored CPN political officials. Indian Naxalites perhaps trained Nepali guerrillas sporadically. No aid rose near the level required for a conventional civil war.[97]

Punishment strategies involve deliberately targeting noncombatants, such as killing civilians or destroying infrastructure, in order to raise the societal costs of continued resistance and coerce the government to concede to insurgent demands (Jones 2017: 47). In such rebellions, civilian targets belong to demographic groups represented by the government rather than the insurgents. The strategy thus involves "partial annihilation, intended to convince the target population that one is resolved to go the whole way" (Leites and Wolf 1970: 100; *see*

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[96] Prachanda boasted that he would have refused such aid had it been forthcoming.

[97] As Maoists, the Nepali insurgents intended to transition to a conventional strategy, and, as detailed in the previous section saw themselves as progressing toward that goal. The eventual peace deal with the state came before the Maoist leaders saw themselves as ready for head-on confrontation with the state.

also Crandall 2014: 179). Such violence may also distract the security forces and force the dedication of resources to areas not under contestation (Holterman 2019). Jones (2017: 161) finds that punishment strategies are associated with rebel losses and shorter rebellions. This accords with Weinstein (2006), who argues that overly violent insurgencies tend to fail.

Nepali Maoists undoubtedly abused civilians. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7, the CPN People's Army appears to have selectively targeted upper-caste Nepalis for assassination in territory they held, and to have also purposefully displaced such class enemies to clear and consolidate their base areas. Yet the Maoist movement clearly limited this punishment strategy. Both civilian casualties and overall deaths were instrumental to the Maoist strategy and therefore overwhelmingly concentrated in areas of contestations. The heartland areas suffered casualties first, and the fighting spread later as Maoists expanded their theatre of operations (*see* Chapter 4).

Maoist theory, and Nepali Maoist action, holds that the early stages of rebellion are marked by guerrilla tactics. In Jones's (2017: 38) definition:

> The primary goal of a guerrilla strategy is to defeat the will of the government by mobilizing the civilian population, undermining government support, and raising the costs of continued fighting.

In contrast to both punitive and conventional strategies, guerrilla war sets a central place for civilian mobilization and support, with the goal of making the state "sick of the expense, the hassle, the coffins" (Coogin 1994: 336). Such an approach is obviously well-suited for Nepal, which, as we will see in the following sections of this chapter, includes abundant territory the state found remote and difficult to access, and large numbers of disaffected, second-class citizens. The guerrilla strategy plainly reflects the best available of Jones's options for a resource-poor movement in a context like Nepal.

A number of guerrilla traditions emphasize different methods of using asymmetrical fighting to take down the government. Because Mao's strategy emphasizes the gradual cultivation of rural support to transition the insurgency from guerrilla phases to conventional phases, we briefly consider alternatives that focus on urban development (Leninist and urban *foco)* and strategies that emphasize the use of rural areas without mobilization of the population (Guevarist *foco* theory).

Guevarist theory similarly emphasizes the centrality of rural hideouts from which relatively weak guerrilla forces can strike at the state. Guevara departs from Mao on the issue of popular support. According to Guevara, "a successful revolution can be achieved by a core group of dedicated insurgents (the vanguard)" (Moriarty 2010: 478). The central goal of Guevarist guerrillas, then, was to provoke reactions from the state that revealed its fascist character, leading to a popular uprising without insurgent political organization required.

Did Nepali Maoists act rationally by engaging in Maoist political development, when a cheaper and similarly popular technology existed? While the evidence available falls far short of establishing causation, the performance of rural *foco* theories leaves much to be desired. During the early to mid-1960s, numerous rural-foci inspired insurgencies developed in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. They failed, without exception (Beckett 2001: 171-175; Rochlin 2003). Having witnessed these failures, Régis Debray, a close ally of Guevara's and a staunch supporter of rural foco theories, admitted that such revolutions required "more interaction with the people" (Lacquer 1998: 340). A study of the Cuban revolution (Moriarty 2010: 485) even calls into question whether *foco* worked particularly well there, chalking up Guevara's stunning success to luck:

> Not only had Guevara's attacks failed to increase his ranks (in fact, his ranks actually got smaller due to desertion and natural attrition), but his insurgency also proved extremely unpopular with the population (because of Guevara's lack of attempt to indoctrinate them politically or ideologically to his cause).

Leninist theories of revolution also emphasize the creation of a mass line through political development, but characterized the rural peasantry as too backward to engage in revolution. Marx likened peasants to 'potatoes in a sack,'. Guevarist theories were also amended to emphasize city insurgency in a theory of revolution often termed "urban *foco*".

Urbanist revolutions fare little better than rural *foco* strategies. Examples of modern urban rebellions include Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil, all of which failed (Russell and Hildner 1971; Kohl and Litt 1974; Rochlin 2003).

This basic review of the comparative effectiveness of revolutionary strategies lends credibility to the dissertation's historical characterization of the revolution in Nepal in two ways. First, it suggests a reason that Nepali rebels would have adhered to Maoist strategy: Maoist edicts were well-suited to fighting a guerrilla war in Nepal, and have a historically superior track record to competitive theories of insurgency. Second, it sets the table for a later discussion of the failure of the Nepali state by pointing out that the Maoist strategy employed by the insurgents was at least plausibly well-suited to exploit Nepal's geography and abysmal human development.

C. **Measuring Maoist Outcomes**

The preceding sections contextualize the choices of the dependent variables used to measure political development in the rest of the dissertation, and justify the use of a Maoist conception of the insurgency's political and organizational development. The empirical chapters of this dissertation attempt to operationalize the Maoist approach in three stylized phases: contestation, consolidation, and control. In order to operationalize the Maoist interest in harassing states to the point of abandoning marginal territory suitable for building a base area,

Chapter 4 examines the timing of battle onset and the number of battle deaths. The operationalization of the consolidation process is the Maoist abuse of upper-caste Hindus. The operationalizations of the control stage are measures of service provision, the expulsion of state forces, and Maoist success in local recruitment.

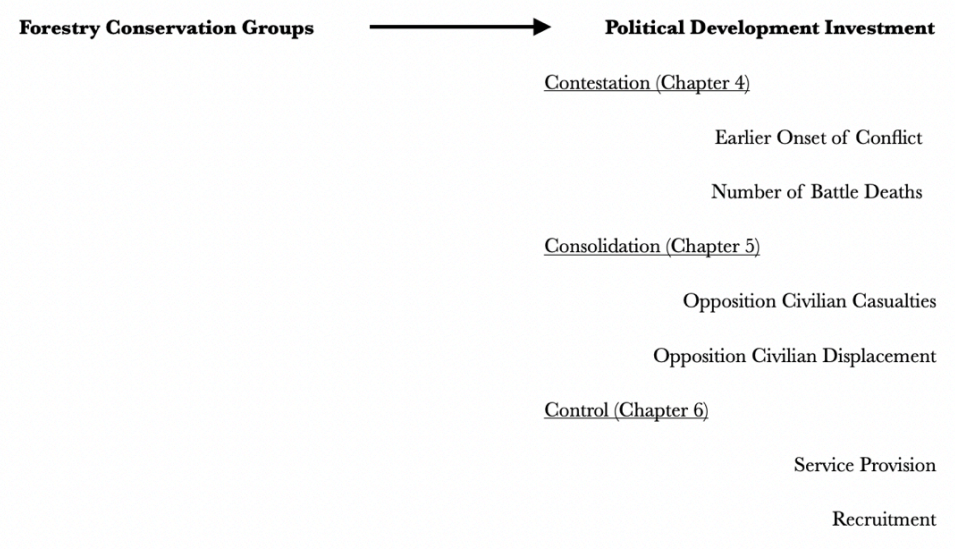


Figure 3.1: Hypotheses in the Nepali Context

Figure 3.1 summarizes the dependent variables by chapter. In each case, the theory would expect the listed outcome to be correlated with the presence of partisan civic organizations; forestry conservation groups in this case.

The next chapter considers the history of ethnic conflict and political development in Nepal, and the history of community forestry conservation. In addition to providing better historical context for the rest of the dissertation, this chapter justifies splitting the Nepali population into Maoist-allied janjatis and upper-caste Hindus, and the use of forestry conservation groups as a measure of relative organizational capital between the two groups.

CHAPTER 4 - Organizing a Nepali Platform

I. **Introduction**

This chapter sets out a history of the Nepali conflict, and of the broader origins of ethnic and class tensions in Nepal. A central claim of the dissertation is that organizational capital is far more likely to draw insurgent investment when it mobilizes a partisan platform population of insurgent support. This begs the question who makes up the Maoist platform population in the Nepali case. Despite their explicitly economic rhetoric, Nepali Maoists targeted an ethno-religious grouping of Buddhist and lower-caste Hindu minorities collectively called *janjatis* as their platform. The first section of this chapter therefore reviews the history of Nepali political development and evolution of the Maoist movement to make this case. The statements and practices of the Maoists, the state security forces, and the civilians in the conflict zone demonstrate that the Maoists identified the platform population as the janjati .

The primary source of partisan organizational capital in janjati society that the Maoists drew upon came from forestry conservation groups throughout much of Nepal's forested regions. The third section of this chapter reviews past studies and descriptions of forestry groups in order to establish both their tendency to mobilize janjatis and their bureaucratic capacity to manage meaningful social outcomes.

The second goal of the chapter is to address an important puzzle: "if Maoism promises so much success, why didn't the state counter-insurgents copy the strategy of rural development?" or, alternatively, "why did the state not simply assassinate community leaders likely to foment rebellion?".

This chapter reprises the characterization of the Nepali Maoist movement as a relatively disciplined organization that selected and maintained a strategic and tactical vision suited to insurgency in Nepal. Nepali Maoists benefitted from a number of conditions that augur well for sustained revolution, such as remote and mountainous terrain and a rural populace fed up with state neglect.

The Maoists were aided by a Nepali state beset by arrogance and infighting, and establishment political parties and elites more interested in framing the rebellion for their own purposes than confronting it. The Nepali state failed to respond seriously to rebels and locals alike for a reason common to other insurgent contexts: elites felt such efforts unnecessary given the state's overwhelming military resources. The state rarely relied on people from the hinterlands to sustain the war effort. To make matters worse, as Weinstein (2006) observes, resource-rich combatants came to generate a corporate interest in sustaining conflict and abusing local populations.

History paints a grim picture of Nepali counter-insurgency. At turns apathetic and cruel, the state ignored the insurgents until they had dug in too deep for simple suppression. Nevertheless, the government relied principally on intimidation and force, believing that superior numbers and resources would eventually overwhelm the Maoists.

II. **The Crafting of a Platform Population**

This section considers the history of Nepali political development, and in particular the exclusion and isolation of Buddhist Sino-Tibetians in Nepal's western Himalayan foothills. In doing so, it presents three interwoven narratives. The first concerns the development of Nepali state institutions. The second considers the development of the Maoist movement. The third

charts the divergent human development outcomes of urban, upper-caste Hindus from rural janjatis.

The western foothills became the heartland of the Maoist insurgency in the 1990s. The description of the region's conquest, its subsequent under-development, and the treatment of its residents as second-class citizens in Nepal makes sense of a number of critical questions about why the war started, why the Maoists chose to operate from specific provinces, and how the insurgency grew to draw a stalemate with state security forces. The section traces the history of the Nepali conflict to the final ceasefire and spotlights how neglect of *janjatis* suffused all of Nepali policy, including, crucially, a counter-insurgent strategy that failed to take the organizational capacity of these populations seriously.

Most importantly for the research design of Chapters 5-8, this section describes the historical basis of anti-*janjati* discrimination, and the subsequent development among janjatis of anti-state attitudes and Maoist sympathies. This dissertation stakes the plausibility of its central evidence on the conclusion that janjatis (and low-caste Hindus)[98] made up the platform constituency of the Maoist movement.[99]

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[98] The distinction between caste and ethnicity is not clearly made in the Nepali language, which uses the term *jat,* or 'descent group,' for both (e.g., Whelpton 2005: 8). While *janjati* technically refers to Buddhist indigenous groups subsumed in the lower castes by law in 1854, Nepalis use it colloquially to include lower caste Hindus of rural extraction. I adopt this more inclusive definition here. Some previous research distinguishes between "ethnic castes" and "untouchable castes" (see, e.g., Thoms 2008: 1457), but for reasons described below I believe this distinction is unnecessary for the measurement strategy here.

[99] Any simplification of Nepali social structure invites disagreement. Whelpton (2005:3) counts 70 languages among the country's 23 million people. While Hindus are broadly advantaged by their central place in Nepali culture, Pettigrew (2013:40) documents discrimination by ethnic castes against untouchable or dalit castes. Byrne, et al. (2016:1298) note that "at the local scale we find more complex entanglements of territory, property and identities that are bound up in both national political ruptures (federalism) and historically embedded practices and claims (ailani, community forestry, and district borders)," and Guteratne (2002:128) argues that caste and ethnic meaning change over space: "every Tharu village in Chitwan had some Tharu households that could be accorded the status of elite; in western Dang, most Tharu villages were dominated by a Brahman-Chhetri elite that had taken control of the land".

A. **The Early Conquest of the Nepali Hinterlands and the Rana Dynasty**[100]

The domination of janjatis by upper-caste Hindu Nepalis suffuses even the state's early history. The territory of what is now Nepal was, in recorded history, at least, settled from the south by speakers of Indo-Aryan languages in 1000 BC, and from the north by Sino-Tibetan speakers crossing the Himalayas seasonally for herding and early agriculture. Indo-Aryan groups largely settled in Nepal's southern plains, known as the Terai, and in the broad, lower altitude valleys that wind from the Terai into the middle foothills. The Sino-Tibetians settled primarily in the higher, western foothills. The Daraudi River Valley, eighty miles west of Kathmandu and one the largest of the gentle valleys leading to the Terai, was settled by an Indo-Aryan group called Gorkhas, who built up wealth and sophistication unrivaled in the hills.

The formation of the modern state of Nepal began in the latter half of the eighteenth century, when Prithvi Narayan Shah, the prince of the Gorkhali states in Daraudi, began a conquest of the hills and Kathmandu Valley, which continued under his children. This expansion consolidated Nepali control over land west of the current border, as far as Simla, the capital of the modern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh (Nepali territory also extended as far east as Darjeeling until 1816). This expansion was checked and ultimately reversed by conflict with the East India Company, which sought access to spices and rare lumber available in the foothills.

Shah's family continued to rule Nepal, but from 1845 to 1849, a young Gorkha military officer from the rival Rana family engineered a series of coups and inter-marriages that saw him installed as the Prime Minister. Over the next decade, Jang Bahadur Rana consolidated his family's influence. From 1846-1951, a Rana family member served continuously as Prime

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[100] The basic history presented in this section draws from Whelpton (2005: 6-94); Pettigrew (2013: 10-15) and Thapa (2003: 11-25). Citations for less well-known propositions are provided.

Minister, with other Ranas occupying most of the important cabinet positions. Shah's family remained in the palace, but enjoyed increasingly marginal roles in politics as a figurehead king.

Jang Bahadur continued centralizing the Nepali state. While the transition from the Shah regime to *de facto* Rana rule did not represent a cognizable break for most Nepalis in the hills, the state introduced new government officials, known as *jimidars*, to manage tax collection at the local level. Jang Bahadur must have recognized that members of local ethnicities tended to bilk the state, and intensified a program of land grants to upper caste Hindus, which often came with jimidar responsibilities.[101] Jimidars and the state brought cattle to the hills, and often required members of indigenous ethnicities to tend cattle as part of their tax payments. Jha (2014: 173) summarizes the process:

> At the same time, people of 'Nepali descent' — which could include Nepali speakers from Darjeeling and Sikkim in India, or Bhutan — were granted citizenship and encouraged to move to the Nepali hills and plains.

The basis of power in Nepal has been control over land and the labor necessary to cultivate it, and the appropriation of land in this way has been a source of tension between the upper castes and other Nepalese communities. (Gaige 1975: 73, 82; Caplan 1991: 310). The Nepali state, particularly under the Ranas, facilitated the upper caste migration through policy and public works projects ostensibly intended to benefit janjatis. For example, in the 1950s, the state demolished wide swathes of community forests controlled by Tharu groups in the name of eradicating malaria. These cleared forest areas were promptly resettled by the upper castes who brought cattle and acted as landlords and moneylenders (Adhikari 2014: 85).

In 1854, Nepal instituted a sweeping social reform law intended to centralize the influence of the Hindu religion and the Nepali language. Jha (2014:171) refers to the caste

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[101] See especially Whelpton 2005: 51-2. The role of the jimidars in this description resonates particularly with Popkin's (1979) mandarins.

structure and the central influence of the Nepali language and the Hindu religion[102] as "the glue of Nepali society". Known as the Muluki Ain, the law codified the lower-caste status of hill Buddhists and other non-Hindus. Guterante (2002: 73) describes the process:

> The state, through the instrument of the Muluki Ain, organized this multiethnic population on the model of the Hindu caste system; it divided the population into five strata, ranked hierarchically in relation to one another, and defined in terms of attributes of purity and pollution. This ranking in turn was modified by the political importance of the different groups to the state itself.

Nepal outlawed slavery of the upper castes (Brahmin, Chhetri, and Newar groups) in 1803. The state allowed slavery of lower caste Hindus and Buddhists for 50 more years, then requiring the enslaved person to pay a tax to register as free. The Muluki Ain explicitly placed Sino-Tibetan speakers in the enslaveable category (Guterante 2002: 93; de Sales 2003: 93). Slavery in its entirety was not banned until 1921. Bonded labor of janjatis remained legal until 2001.

In the wake of World War 2, calls for Indian independence strengthened. Major voices in the movement opposed the Rana kleptocracy for its repression of Nepali political development and the Rana's international alignment with Britain. Upon gaining independence, the Indian government supported an insurrection by the Nepali Congress Party. While Congress's violent strategy delivered very little, it successfully pressed its Indian allies to threaten confiscation of the vast fortunes central Rana figures had invested there, and splits within the Rana family about the extent to which to capitulate led to tepid responses and the replacement of the Rana regime with a "the party-less panchayat" (a bureaucratic non-democracy at the local level, described in detail below) with the restored monarchy at its center.

B. **Nepali Political Development in Modern Era**

[102] Whelpton (2005), Guterante (2002) and Thapa (2003) refer to this process as the Sanskritization of Nepal.

While marginalization of janjatis began with the founding of Nepal, these groups lacked the resources to resist, and in some cases even the education and exposure to understand the developmental possibilities denied them. In the post-Rana (after 1951) era, more educated Nepalis began to perceive the injustice of upper caste domination, and more came to document it. The Communist Party of Nepal was founded in 1949 in Calcutta, India, by Pushpa Lal Shresthra, who had recently translated the works of Karl Marx into Nepali for the first time.

The Rana era ended in 1951 with a tripartite compromise between the remaining Ranas, the Congress Party, and King Tribhuvan, the King of Nepal and a direct descendant of Prithvi Narayan Shah. The Shahs had remained marginalized royal figureheads during the Rana period, and Tribhuvan's decision to flee to India and declare support for Congress created for him a role in the new settlement; a simultaneous symbol of Nepal's continuity and renewal. During this period, Nepali Communists briefly backed the re-establishment of the monarchy as a plausible way to promote rural rights through democratic representation.[103]

Tribhuvan moved immediately to marginalize the Ranas and Congress by refusing to seat either a Rana family member or Congress's charismatic head, B.P. Koirala, as the Prime Minister. Under the monarchy's supposed support, the parties foundered. Soon after the death of Tribhuvan, his successor, Mahendra, ushered in a new constitution that placed the monarchy squarely at the center of Nepali governance. Nonetheless, under the new constitution, Congress handily won parliamentary elections and Koirala was finally invited to form a government.[104] By 1961, Mahendra declared Nepal's experiment with democracy a failure, outlawed political

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[103] Nepali Communist parties split and recombine a dizzying number of times between 1950 and today. Since these intrigues matter very little to research design of the dissertation, I gloss over them by presenting a mainstream Communist position unless otherwise noted.

[104] Despite Lal Shresthra's urging against it, the Communist Party contested these elections and lost soundly.

parties, and jailed the most prominent party leaders, including Koirala. Nepali Communists reacted with internecine fighting that marginalized and, arguably, radicalized its left wing further (Thapa 2003: 23-4).

The partyless panchayat system, which lasted until from 1961 to 1990, stressed local government through a four-tiered system of councils. Each of about 4,000 Nepali villages elected nine-member councils, who in turn sent representatives to councils aggregated for larger Nepali regions. Because the royal administration carried such sway, the elected officials were typically descendants of the upper-caste *jimidar* tax collectors, who retained substantial wealth and influence through their land grants and cattle businesses.

Excluded from politics by the partyless panchayat, left-wing Communist Party activists launched a revolt in the district of Jhapa. (Political parties continued to operate under the panchayat, but only secretly (Hutt 2004: 3).) The revolt lasted two weeks in May 1971, saw the abduction and murder of eight "class enemies" before swift police action put the rebellion down (Gersony and Lindborg 2003: 26). Broader protests against the panchayat followed in 1980, when a series of student disruptions sought constitutional reform and greater democracy.

A more substantial attempt at reform to the government occurred in 1990. By this point, all major Nepali Communist parties embraced the notion of multi-party democracy (Thapa 2003: 86), and in February, 1990, they joined with other liberal parties in the People's Movement to Restore Democracy. The Movement organized a general strike in Kathmandu on April 6, which ended when police fired indiscriminately into a crowd that had vandalized a statue. Despite clampdowns, protests and rioting spread for days. Finally, the palace introduced a plan for multi-party elections.

Janjatis held out great hopes for political reform that would recognize local languages and emphasize rural development. The change never came. While the new constitution recognized Nepal's mutli-ethnic nature, it retained Nepali as the national language (Thapa 2003: 33).

While Communist parties carried, in total, around 36% of the popular vote in the 1991 elections, in most cases, the previously serving village *panchas* simply rebranded themselves as members of Congress or the Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist/Leninist (CPN-UML, the largest and most moderate of the communist parties) and village life hardly changed (Guantam, Banskota, & Machanda 2003: 105; Adkihari 2014: 19). In 1994, the CPN-UMN won an outright majority in parliament, but the government collapsed within a year, and without generating noticeable reform (Thapa 2003: 39-40).

C. **The Widening Gap in Human Development**

Nepali policy and public works established a preferential system of treatment that Lecomte-Tilouine calls "brahmanocracy" (2004: 116). Janjati Nepalis found themselves left behind by the government's lack of rural development programming and expressed growing frustration with the development gap new support for the left-wing Maoists, and greater willingness to engage in violence for reform. In this way, the janjati emerged as the Maoist's platform population.

Nepali governance had for decades failed to deliver any real development. As late as the 1950s, less than 10% of men and less than 1% of women were reported to be literate (Nickson 2003: 4). Between 1965 and 1989, per capita income rose only 0.9% in real terms (World Bank 1991). In 2004, 75% of registered Nepali businesses were owned by citizens of India (Thapa 2004: 23). Nepal still ranked 142nd of 150 countries ranked in the 2020 Human Development Index.

Nepalis broadly blame the government for these outcomes. Interviews carried out by MercyCorps International, a development organization, showed that most Nepalis blamed the conflict on the government's corruption, ineptitude, and failure to deliver basic services (Gersony and Lindborg 2003: 21). They continue continue (*id*: 41):

> Diminishing income from traditional livelihoods, the hashish ban which largely eliminated their main source of cash income, and the lack of roads and economic development (in their perception aggravated by attempted government interference with their own development initiatives), left the communities with increasing gaps between what they produced and what they needed to survive. Generation after generation, the small parcels of land they farmed were systematically sub-divided among their children, further impoverishing them.

The burden of failed development fell unevenly on Nepal's demographic groups, however. Sharma (2002) calculated that dalits in Nepal earned $40 per year, compared to an overall average of $210. The same report demonstrates a 10% literacy rate among the lower castes, despite a 50% overall literacy rate. Around two-thirds of Nepali households in rural areas suffer a food deficit of between 2 and 6 months annually; these number rise to 79% among Buddhist hill ethnicities such as the Gurung, Limbu, and Rai, and 94% among dalits (Thoms 2008: 1457). In 2001, overall Nepali life expectancy was 59 years, while in the janjati-heavy western foothills life expectancy was only 42 (Thapa 2003: 58) and the human development index of urban Kathmandu was twice that of the far west (*id*: 62). Macours (2011) demonstrates that janjati incomes actually fell in both absolute and relative terms from 1995 to 2003, and noted that the severity of decline at the district level seemed to lead to greater Maoist recruitment.

According to Macours, income rose most in rural areas for families with large landholding. Macours, Thapa (2003: 74), and Whelpton (2005: 51-53) all trace land inequality back to the policy of granting military officer and bureaucrats from the upper castes *jimidar* roles

with estates. Thapa (2003: 62) describes landlord relations with lower caste peasants as "medieval". Gersony and Lindborg (2002: 53) describe the system in more detail:

> Once indebted, the laborer and his heirs were 'bonded' to remain in the landlord's employ and to actually reside on the landlord's property until the debt was repaid, which seldom happened. In fact, the laborers had to take more loans to survive and interest was compounded year after year until many Tharus fell into a state of permanent indentured servitude and were commonly called 'bonded laborers' or Kamaiyas.

The government also famously failed to provide services in rural areas. There was no police post in the VDC where Judith Pettigrew (2013: 42) carried out her wartime ethnography. She described the health posts in her village (41):

> The health post comprised two minimally equipped rooms, and I quickly learned that the medicines—carried up from Pokhara in a large basket transported on the back of the health post porter— ran out before the end of each month. Health post staff operated a parallel private business, buying medicines in the town which they then sold privately to villagers at inflated prices.

Gersony and Lindborg (2003: 7) note that the Maoist heartland that hosted the insurgency contained not a single motorable road at the time the conflict broke out.

Janjatis further lacked the political representation to confront these failures through government itself. Despite dalits making up one-seventh of the Nepali population, only one was elected to parliament between both contests in the 1990s (Gyawali 2002: 229). In 1994 Brahmins and Chhetris occupied 63% of parliamentary seats and 81% of passing scores on the civil service exam, despite making up a combined 29% of the population (Thapa 2003: 77). In Chitwan, the upper castes accounted for 70% of all party committee members, and Brahmins alone constituted 52% of village party leaders (Guneratne 2002: 113). These disparities appear to be long-lasting. Gersony and Lindborg (2003: 33) report that 98% of civil service posts in 1854 had been held by the upper castes. Adkihari (2014: 6) summarizes the state strategy of employing upper caste Nepalis:

> The young men who came to Kathmandu to study may have experienced material depridation, but in the context of Nepali society they were relatively privileged. They were upper-caste men whose mother tongue was Nepali, the language of the state elite and administration. The belonged to the lower echelons of the class that the Panchayat elite sought to groom, which it did by employing them in its rapidly expanding bureaucracy.

Within the context of this abysmal development and inequality, janjatis did, nevertheless, begin to experience higher levels of education. Nickson (2003: 29) notes that primary school enrollment in Nepal skyrocketed from 20% to 82% between 1965 and 1987. De Sales (2003: 61-2) argues that while the schools were created to further the aim of Sanskritization, education often resulted in greater skepticism about the government's ability to deliver more holistic development. Thapa (2003: 80) writes that "literacy allowed [janjatis] access to the tools to understand, compare, and contrast their lives with life in the outside world." Some lower caste Nepalis did find manage a higher standard of living… by "going foreign," but even well-educated janjatis knew their ability to earn and live elsewhere was limited by immigration law (see, e.g., Pettigrew 2000: 14).

In sum, then, we can see that janjati Nepalis were increasingly qualified to judge the inequality and service failures that denied them access to prosperity. This mix proved fertile for Maoist recruitment and sympathy. For example, Guantam, Banskota and Machanda (2003: 120) argue that women's literacy campaigns in particular "paved the way for women … to be drawn into the armed struggle." Many note that Nepali Maoists made few overt calls to ethnicity or caste when articulating their policy platform, focusing, as Maoists would, on class. For example, Scniederman and Turin (2004: 103) find that Maoist rhetoric in Dolakha rarely mentioned ethnicity and the Maoists did not promise ethnic autonomy of any kind.

Even if janjatis were relatively deprived in economic and political terms, would they have understood class arguments to apply to them? Several lines of evidence suggest that they did.

First, the correlation between ethnicity and class in Nepal is near perfect. Nearly all of the landless families in Nepal are janjati (Sapkota 2007: 9). "Every bonded laborer in far-west Nepal is Tharu … approximately 97% of the landlords are Brahmans, Chetris or Thakuris" (Cox 1995: 11). Landlessness and poverty correlate with ethnicity in part due to denial of services like education to janjatis in the past. Many janjatis describe how their own illiteracy or ignorance of the law led them into debt bondage and the sacrifice of their land, which leads Guteratne (2002: 91) to argue that "the class dimension of agrarian conflict in Nepal is often overshadowed by its ethnic aspect because of the close congruence between ethnicity and class."

Considering the description of janjati repression described above, the Maoist platform would have intuitively appealed to any members of lower castes who felt their precarious lives were at least partially the fault of the government. The Maoist demands, delivered to the government in February 1996 (see section 4.A.4, *infra*) included calls for a secular state, language equality, and the abolition of caste. Other Maoist literature (CPN Maoist 1996) stressed "confiscating the lands of the fuedals and landlords and distributing them amongst the landless and poor peasants," which would plainly have benefitted janjatis disproportionately.

Second, by most accounts janjati ethnicities and castes made up the lion's share of Maoist recruits and supporters. Guantam, et. al., (2003: 102) find that nearly 70% of the women participants in the war were from "Tibeto-Burman and dalit communities". In a series of interviews with an embedded journalist, Prachanda stressed the importance of the participation of members of "oppressed nationalities" in sustaining the rebellion (Onesto 2005). Pettigrew (2013:154) describes the crowds coming to vote for Congress and the Maoists after the end of the war:

> the Maoist group outside the polling booth was impressively large and included Tamu ex-British Gurkha soldiers, relatively well-off farmers, older Dalit men,

> middle-aged Bahun women, and Tamu and Chhetri youth. The Nepali Congress and UML groups were also large but less diverse.

Finally, the widespread perceptions of what groups support the government and Maoists would have constrained janjati ability to support the state, even if they individually preferred it. Put very simply "there was a perception of Congress as the party of the 'haves' and of the various Communist groups as representing the 'have-nots'" (Whelpton 2005: 119). Human rights organizers allege that the government immediately engaged in counter-insurgency to suppress janjatis because they assumed these groups were Maoist supporters (Acharya 2018). The people of Western Nepal understood as much:

> as far as [village women] were concerned, the army did not see people; rather they saw "smoke," "running on village paths," "noise in the forest," "kurtas, no tika, no bangles"; and on the basis of these identifiers they shot people. In a world of rumor and counter-rumor people tried to make some sense of the information they had. (Pettigrew's 2013: 38)

Interviews with Maoists show that they expected support from janjati groups when entering villages (Jha 2014: 47; Shah 2004: 218), and janjatis themselves often expressed their organic sympathy to Maoist policies. In an interview with a journalist, one dalit tailor, speaking about the government, claimed "We Dalits, we weren't even considered human beings … dogs were considered more human…" (Sengupta 2005). Over time, the Maoists learned from the reality on the ground. By the end of the war, Maoists had shifted to articulating more ethnic demands, even creating an autonomous Magar region within Rolpa district (Whelpton 2005: 232).

While no combatant enjoys unanimous support from any given demographic, ethnic cleavages in Nepali society largely correlated with the class cleavages the Maoists emphasized. Further, the assumption that ethnicity offered a shortcut to assessing support suffused both the insurgent and counter-insurgent strategy. In sum, the Maoist reliance on janjatis in the Nepali case is something of a given. Nepal didn't feature an urban proletariat in part because there is no

urban proletariat to draw on. Nepal was largely a pre-industrial society at the time of the war. Maoist rhetoric, and the observations of Maoist practice, presage the identification of a "middle peasant," or localized class enemy. Upper caste Hindus, even when abjectly poor, present the only recognizable alternative with broad application across the case.

D. **The Onset of the War**

This final subsection considers the history of the war itself. Here, our history shifts to consider the state's strategy in counterinsurgency in order to address the chapter's second question: "if Maoism promises so much success, why didn't the state counter-insurgents copy the strategy of rural development?" In fact, the state's militaristic and haphazard counter-insurgent strategy served to push janjatis further into the arms of the rebellion, which provides further context for the conclusion that the Nepali Maoist's relatively disciplined application of Maoist tactics underwrote the movement's expansion over ten years of fighting.

In October 1995, Maoist organizers began a campaign to recruit and organize cadre members in Rolpa and Rukum, which would become central to the Maoist's heartland (UNHR 2021: 38). Before the onset of any Maoist violence, the state ramped up a counter-campaign known as Operation Romeo (*id.*), which mobilized Nepali police (and not the Army) in hill country to gather intelligence and intimidate and Maoist organizers. In its 2001 "Democracy Under Threat Report," USAID characterized the governments effort as a "massive and brutal retaliation...[with]...widespread human rights abuses including torture, rape, detention and murder." At least 50 civilians were killed by police in Rolpa district prior to the war's onset (Shaha 2003: 43).

Communist organizing in the Western hills had begun long before October 1995. As detailed in sections above, the first Nepali Communist party was founded in 1949 in Calcutta,

India, and communists had engaged in several short-lived revolutions. Communists won four seats in Nepal's first election in 1959 (UNHR 2012: 37). The uprising in Jhapa in 1971 failed so spectacularly that it prompted a long period of withdrawal and self-reflect among the various Communist parties. The cadre that emerged "engaged itself in a long-term strategy of constructing and consolidating a nation-wide structure of clandestine party cells" (Nickson 2003: 6-7). Still, several Maoist[105] attempts at violent mobilization sputtered in the 1980s, leading to the transfer of CPN leadership to Prachanda (Thapa 2004: 43-5).

The various Communist parties kept a low profile, but their influence, in particular the newly-branded CPN-Maoist party led by Prachanda, was apparent. A drive to boycott the 1991 elections cratered voter turnout in the Maoist heartland, which led to the local view that the results were illegitimate (Nickson 2003: 23).

Communist recruitment and organizing remained strong as many janjatis perceived that democracy brought little change. A vaunted law to return land to local or peasant control was steadily defanged, and led to less than 0.5% redistribution (Adkihari 2014: 20-21). Although NGO foreign aid flooded into newly democratic Nepal after 1990, its distribution was unequal and corrupt, with local bigwigs successfully diverting it into projects that directly benefited them (Lovell 2019: 969-70).

On February 4, 1996, the CPN-Maoist party delivered a 40-point manifesto to the government. The manifesto outlined a number of social, economic, and political reforms, and demanded progress on the reforms within two weeks. The Congress Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, left for a series of meetings in India the following day without mentioning the

[105] At that time referring to themselves as the CPN - Unity Center.

demands. One week later, the Maoists struck their opening blow of the war. As reported in *The Worker* (CPN-M 1996), the Maoist's official magazine:

> On February 13, 1996 at about 3:45 p.m. a group of people, both men and women, took possession, almost without any resistance, of the office of the Small Farmer's Development Programme of the state owned Agricultural Development Bank in Chyangli in Gorkha district in central Nepal. … The same day in the evening (between 8 p.m. and 11 p.m.) three police outposts, one each in Rolpa and Rukum districts in western Nepal and one in Sindhuli district in eastern Nepal, were seized by armed youths. The raiding team took possession of a large amount of explosives and other utilities and valuables and escaped safely after making their revolutionary intentions clear to the captured policemen.

In this early phase of the war, Maoist forces remained mostly on the defensive, sending small cadres to the villages to knock on doors, and fending off the police only when necessary (de Sales 2013: 178). Analysis of videos taken by Maoists during early raids characterizes the insurgents as lacking the firepower and training for a sustained conflict (Cowan 2013).

Operation Romeo continued, with the government sporadically offering amnesty to Maoists that formally surrendered (UNHR 2012: 40). There were few takers. The war changed little in intensity during the next 18 months, but by July 1997, the government found it could not reliably guarantee security at polling stations in 87 villages in the Maoist heartland (Thapa 2004: 85). The government passed a new counter-insurgency law, the Terrorism and Destructive Activities Act, and in 1998, the police force engaged in a new counter-insurgent strategy known as Kilo Sierra II.

Kilo Sierra II appeared to deviate from Operation Romeo only in the greater scope of its abuses. Thapa (2004: 92) observed:

> From mid-1998 onwards, the killing of Maoists and their supporters — as well as civilians caught in the middle — escalated to unprecedented heights. … The pain and suffering of the peasantry due to the police action seems to have boomeranged on the political establishment and police, as new recruits flocked to the Maoist side. … Police brutality clearly provided the long-lasting motive energy for the Maoist insurgency throughout the country.

Guantam, Banskota, and Machanda (2003: 104) agree: "The brutality and arbitrariness of police operation Kilo Sierra 2 in 1998 drove many into the arms of the Maoists." This assessment is shared by a number of Nepali historians and anthropologists living in Nepal during the conflict, including Dixit,[106] Sharma and Prasain,[107] Jha,[108] and Lecomte-Tilouine.[109] In addition to over 1,000 civilians arrested and scores killed, more than 10,000 people, mostly young men, fled the region (Thapa 2004: 72). As a Maoist journalist gleefully summarized at the time "They picked up a rock and dropped it on their own feet" (Onesto 1999).

The state's vacillation between apathy and abuse lasted the whole conflict, and emerged from deep roots. In 1980, young Communist agitators ransacked a panchayat headquarters in Patan and set fire to police records on local dissidents. The police brutalized suspects and locals suspected of sympathy, prompting an uprising in which Patan and surrounding villages erected barricades and dug impassible trenches across roads (Nickson 2003: 6-7). After stifling the rebellion, the government withdrew, engaging in no cognizable form of outreach or reform among locals. The government seemed to understand, on some level, the alienation that police actions caused in the villages.

In 1999, the government of K.P. Bhattarai announced the formation of an "Integrated Security Plan," one element of which involved setting up a six-member 'High-Level Committee

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[106] (2002: 254): "There is little doubt that the period of state-sponsored terror gave a fillip to the Maoist movement."

[107] (2004:157): "Whenever the army enters a village, we get a few more women joining the militia… when the Army enters the village, the don't just eat and take away chickens and food, the also torture women and even rape them. They burn the houses and terrify people. Those poor people do not have anywhere to go to seek justice, so they come and join the party."

[108] (2014: 4): "The brutalities of the RNA had alienated the citizens of the state."

[109] (2013: 221, 240), describing frustration with government abuse and voter intimidation.

to Provide Suggestions to Solve the Maoist Problem' (UNHR 2012: 41). During this time, the security budget of Nepal increased sevenfold (Thapa 2004: 147). Yet the attitude of the government itself changed little, and the failure to consider the appeal of the Maoists to rural Nepalis undermined the war effort: "the official Congress position thus refused to admit that the Maoist movement could be a manifestation of forces other than petty political conspiracies." (*id.* at 73).

The Committee deliberated, making little progress of change, until a Maoist attack in Dunai, Dolpa province, killed 14 police officers on September 25, 2000. The rebels seized temporary control of a land taxation office and a bank, where they destroyed loan and ownership papers (Hutt 2000: 4; UNHR 2012: 42). Soon after the attack, Bhattarai was replaced as Prime Minister, and the new government, led by G.P. Koirala, opted for talks with the Maoists (UNHR 2012: 42). The Maoists demanded a release of all political prisoners as a condition for the talks, which fell through.

By 2001, the war hit a new pace. After talks failed, the governments drafted and passed Armed Police Ordinance 2057, which created a paramilitary unit to deploy additional forces against the Maoists given the ongoing escalation of the conflict (UNHR 2012: 57). The government also created civil defense forces in the mold of Guatemala and El Salvador, but failed to arm them (members could apply for firearm permits at district capital offices)(Thapa 2003). The state also began referring to Maoists as "terrorists" for the first time (Schniedermann and Turin 2004: 85).

In April 2001, the government launched yet another new program more in the vein of standard 'hearts and minds' counterinsurgency. The plan engaged the Royal Nepali Army (RNA) for the first time, as guards for for rural development projects situated in the eleven districts with

the highest Maoist activity. The "Internal Security and Development Plan" (ISDP) boasted a budget of NRs 400 million ($5.3 million)(UNDP 2012: 43).

Maoist forces also accelerated their own attacks. On April 6, a Maoist assault on a police station in Toli, Dailekh, killed 31 police officers (eight were allegedly executed after surrender). In early July, Maoists overran police posts in the capitals of Lamjung, Nuwakot, and Gumli districts (UNDP 2012: 43) and, in a later assault in Holeri, took more than 70 police officers hostage (Shah 2004: 208).

Accordingly, 2001 witnessed a substantial upturn in the number of war casualties and the number of civilians displaced. This reflects not only an intensification of the conflict in the heartland, but it's spread to other parts of Nepal. Figure 4.1 shows the volume of conflict casualties across Nepal for each six-month period during the war, demonstrating the severity of the change.

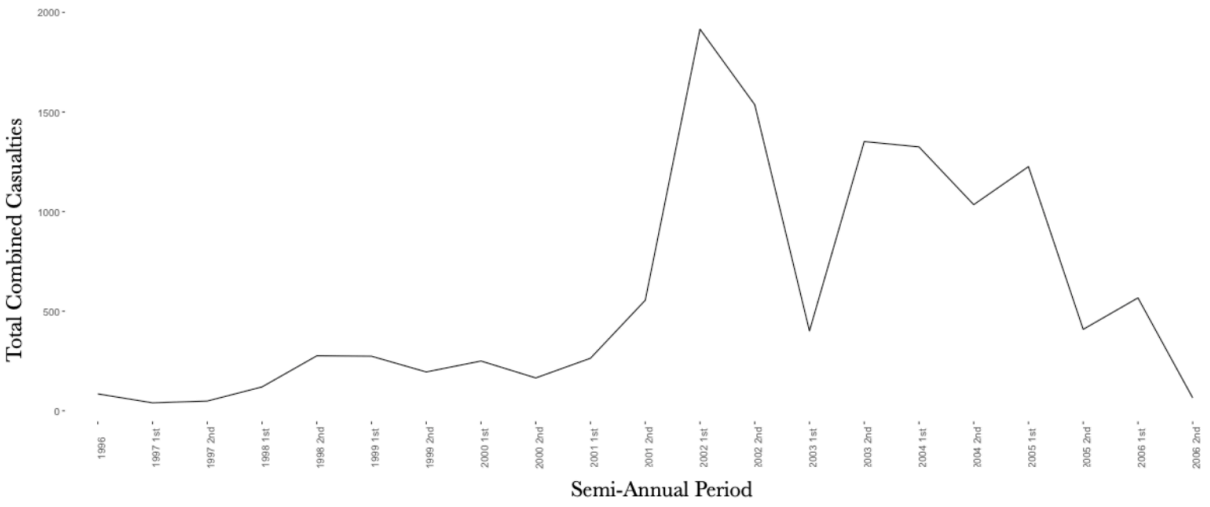


Figure 4.1: Conflict Casualties by Semi-Annual Period

In the midst of this rising chaos, Nepal suffered the greatest political shock in its history. On June 1, 2001, the Nepali Crown Prince Dipendra walked into a state dinner with a loaded pistol and murdered the Nepali king, Queen, and eight other members of the royal family. He then turned the gun on himself. The killings, in combination with the intensifying conflict, had two effects. First, it brought to power a new and relatively hawkish force in politics. King Birendra's brother, the newly crowned Gyanendra, put immediate pressure on the Prime Minister and members of the police and Army to get tougher on the insurgency.

Second, it further traumatized a Nepali public weary of instability. The conflict itself bought about unpredictable curfews and strikes on top of a period of legislative turmoil — Nepal saw twelve changes in government between 1991 and 2002 (Thapa 2004: 87). The office of the king was seen as relatively stable, and the shock of the murders and the conspiratorial palace gossip that followed pushed many in the Nepali business elite past the breaking point in their patience.

In July 2001, the Prime Minister finally ordered the RNA confront the Maoists directly for the first time. Soldiers deployed to Holeri and Nuwaguan, the site of another major attack that produced police hostages, under instructions to free the prisoners (UNDP 2012: 44). Involving the Army promised not only to a force better suited to confronting growing Maoist confidence, but also to reduce the depredations civilians suffered at the hands of state security. According to Dixit (2002: 304):

> In the beginning, soldiers were given the benefit of doubt from all quarters, and no one questioned the high calibre of the officer corps, whose presence, it was believed, prevented the worst of abuses. But as the army's engagement intensified, and the soldiers began to suffer attacks at the hands of hardened Maoist insurgents, the care with which civilians were treated decreased.

Both Jha (2014) and Sharma and Prasain (2004: 157) document continued allegations of abuse against the RNA, including murder, torture, disappearance, and sexual assault. Sharma and Prasain interview female members of the Maoist cadre and learn that these abuses drive female recruitment to the Maoist cause. Jha (2014:4) concludes "the brutalities of the RNA had alienated the citizens of the state."

The increases in abuses may have reflected official policy. In late 2001, the government ended the ISDP and declared a state of emergency. A 2002 update to the emergency laws gave the security forces the power to arrest without warrant and to detain suspects for up to 60 days in police custody for the purpose of investigation. In addition, under this Act, persons could be detained in preventive detention for 90 days, in a place "suitable for human beings." (UNDP 2012: 154). Allegations of human rights abuses increased dramatically following the declaration of the state of emergency and the mobilization of the army (*id*: 46). According to Adkihari (2014: 88) "Caught between an army that was indiscriminately brutal, and rebels who punished non-cooperation but also offered benefits in return for collaboration, many locals tended to gravitate toward the latter." The advantage that Maoists garnered from their attention to selective punishment is clear.

On July 23, 2001, the government of GP Koirala collapsed (again) and the newly elected Sher Bahadur Deuba called a unilateral cease-fire (UNDP 2012: 44). The government revealed that it had been engaged in secret talks with the Maoists during the long escalation (Kathmandu Post 2001). Representatives from the Government and the CPN (Maoist) initially met on 30 August 2001 in Godavari, Lalitpur District, on the outskirts of the Kathmandu Valley. In September, the Maoists put forward three main demands: a new constitution, an interim Government in which it would participate, and the declaration of a republican form of

government to come with constitutional reform. The government refused. On November 23, the Maoists broke the cease-fire with attacks on military barracks. By November 26, 2001, the state had re-declared the above-mentioned state of emergency. Maoists continued to expand influence in rural areas of Nepal, and transitioned into education and propaganda in the villages and district capitals near their zones of control (Schniederman and Turin 2004: 82). The continued failure of the counter-insurgency campaign prompted King Gyanendra to sack Deuba and replace him as Prime Minister with a panchayat-era loyalist (UNHR 2012: 46).

Early 2003 brought fresh peace talks and a preliminary agreement to a ceasefire code of conduct. Talks progressed more substantially, including a round of negotiations hosted by the Maoists in the heartland district of Dang. Ultimately, the government rejected the Maoist demand for elections to a constituent assembly, arguing that changes should be undertaken through amendments to the existing constitution and through gradual reform. This time, the Army broke the ceasefire, detaining and executing nineteen people on August 17. Prachanda declared the ceasefire over (UNDP 2012: 48). The Maoists also made inroads with the leaders of the other major opposition parties. Maoist calls for such talks with party leaders were public, but the content of the talks remained secretive.

In February 2005, Gyanendra dismissed yet another government and ordered the police to detain a number of left-leaning political leaders. The Maoists continued on their offensive, including an attack against a bus carrying RNA soldiers, but which also killed a number of civilians. The Maoists accepted responsibility for the casualties, stated that the killing of civilians violated its party philosophy, and engaged in a substantial slowdown of attacks.

Prachanda issued a statement that two of the CPN-M's top political leaders would hold meetings with Nepali political parties in order to create an atmosphere conducive to a pro-

democracy movement. By August 2005, six major political parties, including the Nepali Congress, changed their party platform documents to call for an end to constitutional monarchy. In November 2005, the parties formalized their agreement under the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) of opposition parties, and announced the adoption of a 12-point plan to end the conflict and engage in constitutional reform, starting with a constituent assembly. In the run-up to the announcement, the CPN-M announced and maintained a unilateral cease-fire. When the government failed to respond to the SPA, the Maoists renewed violence with a major attack on Tansen, a large district capital. The SPA continued to organize strikes and protests.

In late April 2006, tens of thousands of Nepalis in the Kathmandu Valley and elsewhere turned out for days of sustained, peaceful protests. By April 24, the King had resigned and re-instated the full powers of the House of Representatives. On April 26, the CPN-M announced a unilateral ceasefire. Negotiations and de-escalation lasted into November, but the war in terms of its devastating effects on the lives and livelihoods of Nepalis had finally ended.

This general history of the war provides some evidence of two major claims of some importance to the plausibility of the dissertation's main claims. First, while the Maoist forces participated in human rights abuses and made numerous mis-steps during the conflict, their practices leading to a systematic expansion of base areas match Maoist doctrine. Second, the Nepali state broadly failed to respond adequately to the Maoist threat, displaying "a paradoxical mix of arrogance and ignorance" (Jha 2014: 68). The major reason for this failure appears to be elite attention to palace politicking. Consistent infighting, instability, and the interference of the king prevented coherent policy from taking hold. Where the state did consistently consider counter-insurgent strategy, it relied overmuch on its resource advantages. It failed to embed itself in rural communities as a service and intelligence presence. Military commanders instead turned

to sporadic armed actions justified with body counts whenever the government's attention turned to the conflict.

As demonstrated in more detail in Chapter 5, the grassroots organization of rural janjatis offered the Maoist movement an opportunity to build on the state's weakness. Local cooperation frustrated state policing efforts and, perhaps more importantly, allowed the Maoists to broadcast a message of a success. A string of high-profile attacks on selected targets, plus the ability of the Maoists to extend services in its heartland lent the appearance of a defeated state, and an insurgency with more momentum than its material resources could likely have maintained. Coupled with the king's startling decision to make enemies of all political parties, the Maoists used their grassroots outreach to convince elites that the least expensive way to end the war was to settle it.

III. **Conclusion**

This chapter provided evidence for the claim that rural janjatis formed the main part of the Nepali Maoist movement's platform constituency. Nepali society and policy had long excluded janjatis from politics and policymaking, and the rapid growth of public education in rural areas laid these inequalities bare.

We also see evidence that the competition between the state and the insurgents was asymmetrical in more ways than one. In addition to (or perhaps because of) the state's overwhelming advantage in firepower, the government largely ignored Maoist success at mobilizing a grassroots insurgency. The Maoists, meanwhile, hunted and pecked for weapons and support for years, building deep connections in the isolated communities of the heartland. The state pursued a strategy of abuse among civilians, and especially among janjatis, while the Maoists engaged in more targeted forms of violence meant to root out state collaborators.

In the next chapters, the focus is squarely on the organizational strategy of the Maoists. Chapter 5 lays out the research design elements common to Chapters 6-8. In particular, it discusses the role of forestry conservation in rural Nepali society, and the selection of FCGs as an operationalization of social capital. In this way, Chapter 5 completes the argument started here: that forestry conservation provides a convincing measurement for the relative organization of the Maoist's platform constituency. Chapters 6-8 then demonstrate the patterns of revolutionary development associated with FCG presence.

CHAPTER 5 - Research Design

I. **Introduction**

The evidence presented in this dissertation is observational. Despite a suite of controls for common alternative explanations, I cannot fully banish concerns about omitted variable bias. The main strength of the design is instead the careful connection of multiple dependent variables consistent with the theory of revolutionary development to the presence of forestry conservation groups, the chosen measure of organizational capital among the Nepali Maoist platform population.

Chapters 6-8 present nine separate regressions on distinct outcome variables that represent different stages of revolutionary development, from the ouster of Nepali state officials, to targeted reprisals against accused informants, to the establishment of Maoist outposts. As explored in greater detail in Chapters 2 and 9, each of these variables can, in isolation, be assigned a variety of strategic purposes in the organizational development of a revolutionary movement. For example, the killing of civilians is characterized variously as intended to terrorize locals into compliance, to sweep the combatant's rear of oppositional civilians, to deprive the enemy of civilian support in forward areas, as attempts to loot the population, and so forth. Attacks against state assets are supposed, variously, to accelerate state reprisals, to weaken state resolve, and to demonstrate power and capacity to local civilians.

One of the main projects of this dissertation is to show how these behaviors combine into a coherent strategy. Observing these tactics together confirms the analytic approach that sees them as constitutent parts of the Maoist strategy of building base areas. For example, insurgents that selectively target civilians in the state's platform population where they also replace the state's

service provision with their own is consistent only with a strategy of revolutionary development. The insurgents must aim to take control in these places, building an alternative state.

To test these theory, this dissertation measures for an independent connection between each dependent variable within the revolutionary development strategy to the existence of forestry groups. Chapters 6-8 present regressions showing this association. These regressions control for a number of potential alternative explanations, and are validated with alternative measures of similar concepts.

This chapter describes all elements of the research design of the dissertation that are common across all chapters. It proceeds in two parts. The first describes the variables the dissertation uses to operationalize its key concepts across the qualitative and quantitative empirical sections. This description includes the sources of the data and the methods of measurement. Where appropriate, it also considers the logic of using the specific variable to operationalize the more abstract concept it purports to represent. This section takes extra time in two important places. A long section describes the history and practice of forestry groups in Nepal in order to show that it constitutes the most important source of organizational capital among the Maoist platform population. The second describes the methods by which the Informal Sector Service Center ("INSEC") gathered data on deaths and abuses during the war. This dataset is unusual in its detail, and it is important that readers trust the source and methodology.

The second section of this chapter describes some of the technical decisions made in carrying out the regressions and, to a lesser extent, the qualitative examinations in the coming chapters. Of particular notice here is the frequent employment of Poisson regression models over

the more common use of ordinary least squares, and the choice of the village development committee (VDC) as the unit of analysis.

II. Description and Validation of Variables

This section describes the specific data used to operationalize and observe the important concepts in the dissertation. It is organized into four sub-sections. The first offers an extended discussion on forestry user groups, the independent variable of interest. The second considers the INSEC dataset of wartime casualties in Nepal. A third section describes data gathered during a United Nations investigation[110] at the close of the war. These two sections provide insights on the majority of the dependent variables considered in the empirical chapters' regressions. The final section briefly describes variables used to control for alternative causes implicated across multiple outcomes.[111]

A. Forestry Conservation Groups

Do forestry conservation groups offer a plausible operationalization of organizational capital as described in Chapters 1 and 2? Would Maoists have plausibly viewed the presence of such groups as an indication of a lower cost for extending the revolutionary state? This section first considers the work of FCGs on the ground in Nepali villages. FCGs engaged in work consistent with the description and usefulness of organizational capital in two ways: by building institutional and administrative capacity among village residents and by establishing legitimacy for and best practices for close observation of individual Nepali families. FCGs can transition these capacities to fit the needs of Maoist insurgents during wartime.

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[110] The outputs of this investigation summarize loosely coordinated data collection efforts carried out by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights.

[111] Where a new control is introduced for a specific regression, I include a brief discussion of the data in the relevant chapter.

After discussing the day-to-day role of FCGs in Nepali villages, I describe the process of data collection and address a few legitimate concerns. In particular, since I use government data to establish FCG presence, readers may worry that missing unregistered FCGs introduces an unobserved bias into the measurement of the IV. In order to assuage these concerns, I discuss the history and bureaucratic process of FCG registration.

The notion that local knowledge can help stabilize micro-climates is presently in vogue among environmental organizations around the world, and for a number of reasons, many of the earliest programs that implemented or evaluated local forest conservation groups were administered in Nepal. This rich history left a substantial record of forestry group practice in Nepal, and generated a substantial body of civil expertise on forestry and conservation among Nepalis. This section draws on the extensive written histories and evaluations of forestry practice in Nepal. These histories were corroborated in my own interviews and conversations with forestry group members as well as managers at local branches of forestry NGOs during field trips to Nepal.

1. *The Usefulness of FCGs.*

FCGs generate organizational capital in Nepali villages in two main ways. First, the management of FCGs requires the creation and maintenance of institutionalized, administrative roles. The skills required to fill these roles include accounting, public outreach, and management of public projects that leverage capital and labor from across village society. Such skills are plainly and immediately fungible to supporting a combatant in governing a community during an insurgency.

The major goals of FCGs involve mobilizing and directing communal action to conserve forestry resources. FCGs accomplish these goals through informal and formal institution-

building. Approved FCGs must elect an assembly which prepares a constitution and operating plan, defines and recognizes user rights, determines rules and takes all forest management decisions including forest protection, harvesting and distribution of benefits. The assembly tracks funds, manages community development work and elects officers to executive its decisions (Acharya 2002: 150).

These experiences tend to train individuals and communities in leadership and organizational strategy. Dev, et al. (2003: 71) conclude that forestry conservation generates a substantial new source of social capital. Ambitious locals use FCGs as springboards for involvement elsewhere: "Even for those who are less dependent on simple access to the forest, there is a significant interest in forest governance authority, for example for purposes of political profiling, building up leadership experience, or deciding how the CFUG fund will be spent" (Byrne, Nightingale, and Korf 2017: 1271).

Community members build appreciable skills that survive within the organization, including "record keeping, community organisation, facilitation and conflict resolution, with records being maintained of the minutes of the FUG committee and assembly meetings; forest product collection and distribution; performance of individual duties; levy of fines and punishments, income and expenditure in community funds." (Pokharel 1999: iii). In almost every interview I conducted in Nepal, the subject suggested that community forestry served (and serves) as a well-spring of human capital development; a number argued that it maintained the spirit and practice of democracy during the panchayat years.

Some evidence suggests that these skills were fungible to managing relations with the Maoists during wartime. "The chairperson [of the FCG] was... very good at negotiating with the police, the army and the Maoists. He was not afraid... When approached by the Maoists he

would show them our records to demonstrate that the committee's decisions were made transparently. (Mid-West, disputed area)" Nightingale and Sharma 2014: 519. Another subject tells a similar story: "They [Maoists] came to us for 30% of our fund... We called a general assembly... and decided that we could not give 30%... there were some threats... but we were not afraid as we were united... (id at 530). FCGs were known to woo Maoists by pointing out their history of providing and protecting communal land rights and access; even where the Maoists felt threatened by FCG authority, to confront such a group risked the appearance of hypocrisy (Paudel 2018).

Second, FCGs monitored, often closely, the consumption of precious natural resources and the participation in public projects of individual Nepalis and Nepali families. This monitoring checked for compliance with highly specific rules. These sorts of skills and institutional knowledge would be fungible to observing defection to the state in Maoist base areas.

Forests serve as a key resource for rural Nepalis. Forests prevent erosion and grassland degradation, and Nepalis use forest products for a number of purposes, including construction, medicine, fuel for cooking and warmth, and fodder for livestock. Sherpas in Khumbu, for example, especially prize pine needles and leaves from rhododendron shrubs, which are first used as animal bedding, then placed in the fields along with livestock manure as a rich fertilizer known locally as mandur (Stevens 1996: 131). Shepards in Limbu settlements in the foothills were often tasked with recording the locations of medicinal herbs, harvesting them while caring for their animals, and sharing out the returns among the village (Pettigrew 2013: 47). Some groups share out useful forest soils, such as clay in Chuliban (Maharajan 1998: 9). Forests also serve as grazing land for smaller livestock, such as sheep and goats and, at higher altitudes where trees are sparse, as grazing lands for yak.

The need for products and their availability are, of course, seasonal, with seasons varying depending upon location. According to Adhikari, Williams, and Lovett (2007: 470):

In most FUGs, dead branches and fallen twigs can be collected throughout the year for domestic use. However, green firewood collection and animal grazing are prohibited in all community forests. Tree fodder collection in CF occurs primarily at the end of the dry season. Grass fodder can be collected throughout the year. Collection of leaf litter from CF for animal bedding and mulching is a common practice in most of the FUGs surveyed in this study.

In Maharaja's (1998: 4) case study of Chiluban:

> Fuel wood is collected from singling, pruning and thinning operations that are carried out in the 8 to 9 year old chir pine plantation. According to the operational plan, each household is required to send one person to carry out silvicultural operations. The fuel wood produced is distributed equally, free of charge, to each of the households. In addition, users can collect dry twigs and branches from the forest throughout the year free of charge."

Stevens (1993) provides an instructive and in-depth ethnography of Khumbu Sherpa forestry conservation practices in the high Himalayas. Like the middle hill band of Nepal, the mountainous regions are characterized by substantial variation in altitude and, therefore, temperature. Further, mountain slopes that face different compass directions have substantially different ecosystems. To manage these challenges, Khumbu Sherpa engage in relatively short distance annual migration. They grow a variety of crops, often seeding beds before leaving territory for weeks or months, and guide herds of yak and sheep to follow spring and summer blooms of fodder.

Ecological management among the Khumbu Sherpa thus confronts a number of challenges. First, they grow and herd for subsistence across dozens of micro-climates and ecosystems with vastly different demands. The main settlement splits and recombines along numerous routes as they move up- and down-range. Each field or forest requires careful

monitoring for required crop rotations, and rest to regrown fodder, wild foods, and construction materials. Second, many of the most important micro-ecologies are functionally abandoned for months at a time.

The attendant schedule of monitoring and communal work reflects this complexity. Representatives of households are expected for communal weeding or maintenance at seasonally appropriate times that vary widely from plot to plot and forest to forest. Ranges of forest and field open and close for grazing year-round. The temptation to sneak into closed forests to gather fodder early, or harvest trees for lodge-poles, or graze cattle off-season, looms large. In order to deter such theft of communal assets, Khumbu Sherpa send guards to important fields and forests, inspect homes to determine the age of and care given to supporting beams, and measure the thickness of animal bedding in sheep barns.

The institutions of the Khumbu Sherpa respond to their need for migration, but the requirement for local surveillance in other parts of Nepal is no less intensive. Forestry groups identify products that require governance, introduce controls or prices for their harvest, and patrol or monitor the use of each product by all households in the village (Richards, Maharajan, and Davies 1999: 1). The amount harvested by each household, and membership dues or labor owed by each household, is typically set by examining the household's size and wealth (Thoms 2008: 1455). FCGs also manage payments to enforcers. In a study of FCGs in the middle hills, "forest watchers are paid in grain by every household except the most poor. The effectiveness of the forest watchers varies with the strength of social sanctions against forest encroachment, though each village has some system of fines for villagers who enter the forest illegally." (Arnold and Campbell 1986: 18). In some cases, households farther from the forestry tracts in which they

claim an interest pay lower fees or have lower labor requirements on the assumptions that they draw from closer forests more frequently (Varughese and Ostrom 2001: 753).

Doing the job of the FCG thus requires a substantial amount of local knowledge (e.g., Arnold and Campbell 1985: 18). For every household with a stake in the forest, the group must assess the household's needs and capacities to determine the amount of forestry access or output to which the household is entitled and the extent to which the family can be expected to contribute labor or money for forest maintenance. The FCG must also patrol the forest or monitor usage by checking on household consumption; upon identifying a violation, an appraisal of the family's circumstance is again required.

This reality establishes a central reason for choosing FCGs as a measure of organizational capital at the village level. FCGs have experience gathering a substantial amount of local intelligence on local socio-economic conditions and consumption habits. Both the understanding of these familial situations and the capacity to gather further intelligence is of obvious value to rebel group hoping lower the costs of local enforcement.

FCGs were therefore organized into administrative units that taught crucial skills, including surveillance of locals, that would in principle be useful to Maoists looking to delegate governance to allied locals. Of course, these practices may simply be aspirational. Insurgents would plainly prefer to work with effectively organized platform populations.

Fortunately, the record contains plenty of evidence that FCGs were effective at forest conservation. FCGs appear to deliver substantial results in terms of deforestation and environmental management. Edmonds (2002) considers FCG practices in villages with histories of rapid deforestation. In a context where arresting the forest's decline is an FCG's most urgent goal, Edmonds estimated that FCG presence was associated with a 12.6% decline in volume of

firewood harvested. Of course, FCGs confront problems other than rote deforestation, and are asked to increase forest production or share it out more equitably, depending upon the context. They appear to rise to the challenge:

> "Community Forestry policy intervention in Nepal has been effective in increasing the number of trees on degrade sites; increasing biodiversity; in improving the supply of forest products to farmers and in improving the environmental situation of the hills." (Acharya 2002: 152).

FCGs even appear capable of identifying corrupt practices within their own management and structure. Acharya and Gentle (2006: 20) document that

> Misused and inappropriately handled money was also recovered through collective action of user group members. The Lakhana CFUG of Bardia recovered US$ 600.00 from the former executive committee members and utilized the recovered money in the construction of an office building. Similarly, the Ram Nagar CFUG formed a women's watchdog group to monitor group activities. The Ram Nagar CFUG also recovered misused money equivalent to US$ 430 from members.

Community forests have also been praised for reducing erosion, protecting watersheds and increasing agricultural output. Positive social benefits include increased participation and status of marginalized groups. Community forests have also contributed to local economic development: besides generating income and creating jobs for local communities, they have allowed the development of on-site added-value processing of raw materials (Pandley and Paudyall 2015).

2. *Data On FCGs … and Potential Problems*

Measuring any connection between forestry groups and conflict outcomes requires, of course, requires an observation of whether such groups exist in a given village. I gathered this data from the archives of Nepal's Department of Forest and Soil Conservation ("DFSC") in Kathmandu. The establishment of a legally recognized forestry group requires its members to file a statement with the DSFC. These statements include a description of the geographic extent

of the proposed community forest, its ecology, and the capacity and goals of the citizen group. The DFSC approves or denies the application, and adds the group to a register, which records the location, committee size and membership, and establishment date of the FCG.

DFSC archives include the register, the application documents (and required re-registration paperwork) and the decision of the DFSC concerning the application for registration. In order to know how many FCGs existed in a village at the outset of the war, I hand-scanned the historical registers at the archives and used a combination of optical recognition software to generate a dataset of over 13,000 FCGs approved by the DFSC. I also read dozens of applications and DFSC judgments to get more context on what forestry groups needed in terms of capacity to successfully file for inclusion in my dataset. These applications must be routed through and approved by Ward and VDC councils and chairs.

Is this count count of operating FCGs is even accurate? Certainly, the layers of requirements and approvals provide some assurance that I have not included fake or inactive forestry groups in the count. Recognized FCGs need to file follow-up paperwork every five years, and the recognition process provides little other than a warrant of non-interference in the forest's management by the government. It is, in other words, a lot of effort for little reward.

Might this bureaucracy dissuade some FCGs from registering at all? Almost certainly. In an interview, Krishna Acharya, the director general of DFSC, estimated that several thousand FCGs operated in Nepal without legal authorization. I received the expected answer when I asked why such groups would fail to file: "Often times these groups pop in and out of existence… or only organize around cleanup events every few years. The police are unlikely to notice or interfere with these activities, so why bother registering the group?" (Acharya 2018).

Readers may also worry that FCGs and their goals would have appealed to and mobilized upper caste or rich Nepalis, as well. Why would conservation of forestry products central to the economy only appeal to marginalized populations?

Nevertheless, it appears that long-standing FCGs had both the incentive and capacity to file for government recognition. The following section details the history of FCG development in Nepal. In the main, FCGs arose to resist upper-caste overconsumption. The Nepali government's move to formalize these institutions was broadly perceived as an opportunity to formalize communal property rights against these better-connected elites.

3. *The History of FCG Practice*

Communal forestry regulation in Nepal dates back many centuries. FCGs exist to manage overconsumption problems. In some Nepali ecosystems, overconsumption presented problems to even early settlers. For this reason, documentation of FCG activity in Nepal dates back many hundreds of years in higher-altitude and drought-prone geographies (Ostrom and Gibson 2000; Stevens 1993). FCG practices spread as populations grew and put pressure on progressively more abundant regions of Nepal. The westward expansion of jimidars, who took advantage of large land concessions by felling forests to make way for cattle, exacerbated the challenges of simple population growth. Because the inflow of migrants defined as upper caste in the Muluki Ain put such disproportionate pressure on the woodland foraging products required for janjati survival, forestry management became an issue inextricably linked in most places to class and caste struggle.

No direct study of the caste make-up of FCGs exists, but many FCGs formed as lower-caste responses to upper-caste overuse of resources. Many Nepali communities noticed deforestation and topsoil loss as important problems in the late 1800s (Whelpton 2005: 200), soon

after relocation of upper caste military leaders and other aristocrats to rural areas (Remi 1978). The grants of land offered to the relocated upper caste jimidars to maintain loyalty often resulted in unsustainable forest use. While Nepal nationalized most of its forested land in 1957, upper-caste Kathmandu families with old ownership claims continued in exploitation (Arnold and Campbell 1985: 12). Jimidars over-used forestry products in a number of ways, including overconsumption of wood for fuel and building, but by far the most pernicious influence was the importation of dairy cattle. In many villages, jimidar forest clearance for dairy products resulted in massive erosion and depletion of forestry resources for other local users. Maharajan's (1998:2) case study of the creation of the Chuliban community forest group is instructive:

According to local people, parts of the forest were entirely degraded because of uncontrolled cattle grazing, forest fire and illicit cutting of trees. Aware of the importance of the forest for their subsistence use and for conservation, the local people approached the District Forest Office (DFO) with the aim of setting up a Forest User Group (FUG).

These efforts have paid dividends for families excluded by upper-caste domination of forest products. The number of livestock in FCG villages decreased over time. (Adhikari, Williams, and Lovett 2007: 464) Not only are FCGs associated with lower overall firewood collection (Edmonds 2002), FCGs increase the amount of forest proceeds realized by the poor. "[M]embers of the very low income group recieve[] more fuel wood from the community forest than" unmanaged forests (Adhikari, Williams, and Lovett 2007: 465). FCGs have also used their income and resources to provide help to members of the community that fall ill or to start micro-credit schemes (Dev, Springate-Baginski, and Soussan 2003: 73). In sum, FCGs are associated with both sustainability and short-term redistribution; both effects that aid janjatis.

Prior to the 1990s, forestry conservation at the local level was a purely grassroots affair. Most rural villages were simply unreachable to outsiders, including most conservation NGOs. Additionally, Nepal nationalized its forests in 1957, prohibiting any sort of ownership claims that would have allowed official forestry management to occur. The Nepali state lacked the authority to govern rural areas effectively, however, which undermined its ability to punish either opportunistic poachers or the community organizations created to frustrate poaching (Paudel 2018). Quite a number of villages had practiced localized conservation in contravention of the law.

In 1993, Nepal de-nationalized the forests, and created a system by which local organizations could apply for communal forestry ownership by providing a description of the plot and submitting a management plan for approval with the Department of Soil and Forest Conservation. My own archival research at the Department of Soil and Forest Conservation shows more than 4,000 applications for forest ownership permits by grassroots groups in the three years after the government legalized local ownership and management. Acharya (2002: 150) lays out the burdens of applying for permits:

> The operational guidelines for the [community forestry] planning process identifies four distinct phases, namely: investigation, negotiation, implementation and review. The formal CF field planning process starts with the identification of co-owners of the resource under consideration. It bears further mention that many of the villages in which community forestry is practiced are many days walk from the nearest road.

Still, registration had obvious benefits. I asked Naya Sharma Paudel, the director of Forestry Action in Nepal, about what prompts FCGs to undertake all this work.

> Forestry groups can run into trouble when someone in the community claims to own forest property or that the group otherwise injured them. If this person is connected to the police or a powerful political figure, it can really help to show the forestry approval.

Across several interviews, including those with Acharya and Paudel, forestry officials and NGO managers agreed that the most active FCGs required recognition to avoid the sort of fraught, rural battles over title in which the tie goes to the best connected party.

The DFSC's census of forestry groups is therefore decidedly not a census of all groups in Nepal that regulate forest use. It comes much closer, however, to a full list of the forestry groups that engage in the sort of collaboration and distribution programs required to build social capital.

Based upon this history, the later infusion of NGO dollars into Nepali community forestry does raise concerns about elite involvement or the inclusion of poorly-organized FCGs in the data. In order to manage this problem, I count only FCGs registered with the Nepali Department of Forestry by 1995. This strategy mitigates two concerns. First, it excludes any FCGs founded during or after the war. The former of which may not have affected Maoist decision making; the latter certainly did not. Second, it excludes almost all FCGs developed with outside assistance. Nepal only legalized community forestry in 1993, with the Community Forestry Act (Acharya 2003: 247) and FCG appearing on the 1995 rolls would have needed to complete the relatively intensive application within two years, with no or very limited outside support.

Thoms records an 8% upper class participation rate in FCGs compared to 5% prevalence in the population; in 1994, the upper castes accounted for 29% of the general population of Nepal, but held 63% of parliamentary seats, 81% of passing scores on the civil service exam, 70% of all party committee members, well over half of village party leaders (Thapa 2003), and 97% of landlords (Cox 1995). 50% of dalits own less than a quarter-hectare of land, and 23% are completely landless (Rai Paudyal 2008: 51).

Despite some unrepresentativeness, janjatis and the lower castes dominate FCG governance, and FCGs are one of the few institutions with any power where such is true. Nearly all interviewees in Nepal mentioned the role of FCGs in preserving democratic participation among the lower castes during the panchayat period.

In sum, this section provides strong warrants for the claim that FCGs represent partisan organizational capital in Nepali villages that pre-dates the conflict itself. FCGs undertook complex management tasks which met similar goals across geography but responded to highly local ecological and social challenges. Such groups largely responded to jimidar in-migration by defending lower caste forest rights and maintaining indigenous forestry practices. They mobilizing the Maoist platform population and generating both human and institutional capital I argue is fungible to managing collective action problems and resolving conflicts between village residents during the war.

4. *Correlates of Forestry Group Presence*

This history suggest that the presence of forestry groups might be predicted or influenced by a variety of community characteristics that also interest insurgents. This raises the possibility of a spurious relationship in which these other, deeper causes produce both FCGs and Maoist success but the FCGs do not independently affect that success.

The social history of FCGs as a resistance institution might suggest that lower caste or janjati ethnic groups, or poorer Nepalis, were more likely to found such groups. Perhaps forestry groups became a tool of opposition to the Nepali Congress's largely upper caste policy platform. It also stands to reason that forestry groups might be more likely to emerge where forests are more plentiful, and therefore a larger part of the local economy, or scarcer and more central to subsistence. Smaller or more isolated communities might reasonably be expected to use forestry

management to protect themselves against the state… or to decide against registering on the grounds that the state is unlikely to appear or object to collective forestry management in economically marginal areas.

It stands to reason that FCG distribution is influenced by geography, for example. In the Himalaya and its foothills, where verified management practices are oldest, felled forests regrow slowly. The soil is rocky and often acidic, and high winds lead to substantial erosion over short periods (Stevens 1993: 57, 97). Forests in the Terai lowlands face threats primarily from high population densities and pressure to farm.

Any of these characteristics might also draw the attention of the Nepali Maoists, leading to spurious correlations between Maoist investment activities and forestry groups. For example, if communities of lower caste Nepalis were more likely to form forestry groups and the platform constituency of the Maoists, we might observe a correlation between forestry groups and Maoist investment simply because the presence of lower caste communities causes both. Similarly, if communities build forestry groups where forests are abundant and the Nepali insurgency prefersoperating under the cover of forests, we might observe a correlation between forestry groups and Maoist activity in the absence of a causal connection.

Figure 5.1 provides a map of all VDCs with at least one forestry group prior to 1995, with a detail for the districts commonly considered part of the Maoists' heartland, and provides something of an eye test. While we can see little pattern in the detail, there is a relative lack of FCGs along the southern and northern borders. A few factors may account for this. The southern plains of Nepal, known as the Terai, have relatively few forests, as most have already been felled to grow rice. Much of the remaining jungle has already been preserved in a belt of federal parks.

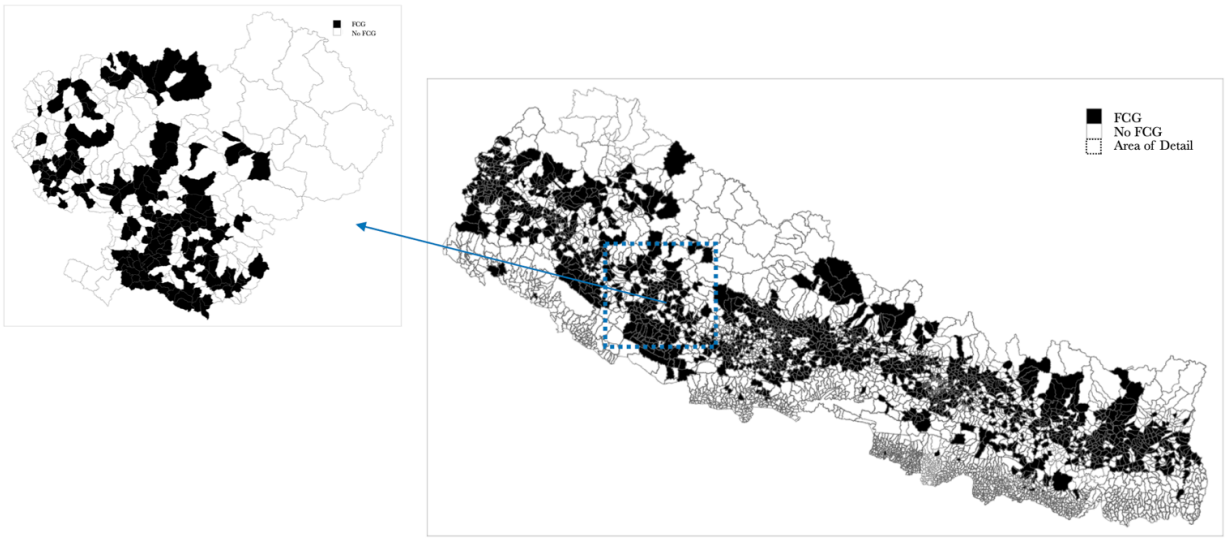


Figure 5.1: Geographic Distribution of Forestry Groups in Nepal, 1995

The story in the north is likely more complicated. While some of these VDCs feature a substantial amount of territory above the tree line, the relative scarcity and importance of timber and grasslands led to substantial development of conservation communities at higher altitudes (Stevens 1993). Some of these VDCs may lack enough forests to justify the organization of groups, others likely have long-lasting FCGs that they failed to register. Paudel (2018) explained to me that remoteness of these communities, coupled with low literacy rates, raised the costs of filing to license activities the state was never likely to observe.

Despite these explanations, geographic patterns and other concerns justify examining the correlates of FCG presence and the incorporation of these controls in the regressions in Chapters 6-8. *Table 5.1* presents these correlates. We see significant relationships with the ethnic mix, the percentage of forest cover, poverty rate, and altitude at the VDC level. For this reason, these variable all appear in the standard suite of controls in the regression analysis presented in Chapters 6-8. The data used to run these controls is described in this chapter below.

The coefficients reported in the substantive chapters thus represent the effect of FCG presence on an otherwise average village on these characteristics. However, the Maoist insurgency did not start in a set of average villages, but in a region of higher inequality with fewer members of the upper castes. The Maoist heartland is also slightly higher altitude and forest cover than most of Nepal. Accordingly, I ran the regressions presented below using only VDCs from provinces considered to be part of the heartland. The results in the heartland normally remained significant and increased in magnitude. I report and discuss these differences in the tests where doing so seemed most relevant.

Table 5.1: Correlates of Forestry Group Presence, 1995

Dependent Variable: Presence of Forestry Conservation Groups		
	OLS	Poisson
	(1)	(2)
Upper Caste Percentage	.004*** (.0004)	.010*** (.001)
Forest Cover	.006*** (.0006)	.017*** (.002)
Poverty	-.519*** (.0043)	-1.63*** (.160)
Inequality	.087 (.173)	.450 (.657)
Political Homogeneity	.0007 (.0005)	.0024 (.0017)
Altitude	.00009*** (.00001)	.00032*** (.00004)
Population (2001)	.135* (.055)	-.747 (.502)
Fixed Effects	No	No
Observations	3562	3562

It may be tempting to view Table 5.1 as an opportunity to verify the story about FCGs presented above and interpret the data as a window into where FCGs were the most needed. If

FCGs protect the lower castes against the depredations of richer and better-connected jimidars, we might expect FCGs to be most common in places that are poorer or less equal. Yet inequality is not significantly correlated with FCG presence and that the relationship with poverty is signed entirely in the wrong direction.

This interpretation of *Table 5.1* has serious limitations. At the outset, it would be difficult to know which relationship directions are consistent with need: are FCGs most useful where there are a lot of trees or where there are few? More importantly, there is no reason to suspect that urgency influences the success rate of collective action projects. Indeed, Ostrom's work became influential in large part because she noticed just how few communities in dire need of common pool resource protection were able to create it. Having a collective action problem is a necessary condition for observing cooperation to solve it, but it is not sufficient.

Of course, if Nepal includes enough relatively rich VDCs without a history jimidar over-consumption which do not need FCGs, we might still expect to observe a pattern. In this case, however, the overwhelming number of VDCs fit the need profile. According to the World Bank's 1995 Nepal Living Standards Survey (described below), over 45% of Nepalis lived on less than a dollar a day during the period of FCG registration. Villages at the 90th percentile for wealth still saw nearly 30% of resident below that figure. Subsistence agriculture and jimidar abuses are also nearly universal in rural Nepali experience, and VDCs are over 95% rural.

On the evidence available here, the ability of VDCs to solve common pool resource problems related to forestry appears somewhat stochastic within the group of villages that would benefit from solving them. This is not unexpected and this dissertation makes no claim to predict when and how communities with an urgent need to solve a collective action problem will do so.

Rather, it purports to show how organizational capital from a successful effort can be repurposed to condition the behavior of revolutionaries.

B. **The Informal Sector Service Dataset**

Several of the key dependent variables presented in the following chapters were gleaned from a massive dataset of wartime casualties gathered contemporaneously by The Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), a well-known and respected human rights organization in Nepal. A truncated version of the data can be found in Joshi and Pyakurel (2015). I spent about a week at INSEC's headquarters in Kathmandu early in my field research period. During this time I obtained an un-redacted version of the dataset and read raw reports filed by INSEC reporters during the conflict (each report became a row in the dataset). I also spoke frequently with INSEC's librarian, Bilal Sharma, and interviewed a number of INSEC employees. These interviews included several of the reporters who produced the raw reports, two office employees who converted the reports into the finished data, and INSEC's executive director. I base this description of the dataset on these experiences and on Joshi and Pyakurel 2015.

INSEC was founded in 1991, in response to democratic widening in the country at the time, and inspired by the deaths of pro-democracy activists the year before. The organization privileged quick reporting on potential human rights abuses, and as its first task built a network of around two hundred human rights reporters. Many of these reporters were already involved in media or social organizing at the time INSEC created its network, others were brought to Kathmandu or regional hubs for training in data collection. INSEC endeavored to keep at least one reporter active in all 77 Nepali districts. (A district is roughly analogous to an American county, and includes 50-60 VDCs.) Reporters were selected on the basis of their social networks in the area in which they would report. They travelled frequently throughout their districts,

speaking to VDC and Ward officials, and to heads of important civil society groups. In informational interviews with government and civic leaders in Kathmandu and in mid-western Nepal, all had heard of INSEC. Most volunteered that they knew the INSEC representative in their area, and believed that reporting violations to INSEC was for the good of society.

At the outset of the war, INSEC created a standardized form that reporters would complete upon investigating a casualty associated with a combatant, a maiming, or another human rights abuse. During the war period, INSEC instructed reporters to prioritize deaths and to filter other abuses based upon their severity, or their ability to offer a clarifying view of the rights records of the perpetrators. Raw reports were handwritten. Those I viewed ranged between two and thirty pages. The longest reports contained viewpoints gathered from multiple sources when key facts were disputed.

The resulting database characterizes almost 14,000 casualties. It includes a wide variety of data on the victim and incident, including the date, the location, the most likely perpetrator, the victim's occupation, caste, and birthplace, and whether the death was the result of targeted killing, an accident, or the exchange of fire between rival combatants. INSEC followed the cases after their investigations closed, primarily to assure that victims' families received proper compensation from the state. (The Nepali government paid out war-related deaths according to a number of factors, including who caused the death and the size of the victim's dependent family.) Several sources at INSEC claimed that the government used the results of INSEC's reporting to determine the level of compensation due to victims' families.

Accordingly, I use the INSEC data to disaggregate war casualties based upon caste and perpetrator. I also consider the specific case of deaths amongst the Maoist "cadre," a group of political and social workers stationed in villages to mobilize civilians and provide governance and

services (the Maoist cadre is a profession coded in the dataset). I rely on the month and year of reported casualties for several figures, and use the descriptions of deaths and abuses from the raw reports to contextualize the quantitative data in several places.

C. **UNHR/UN-OCHA Data**

At the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accords in 2006, the Nepali government and Maoist party agreed to admit investigators and aid workers from two UN agencies into the country. In words of Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights at the time, the UNCHR report was intended as "a preliminary exercise to identify credible allegations with a reasonable basis for suspicion that a serious breach of international law has occurred" (UNCHR 2012: ii). Despite claims that the report is non-dispositive, investigators amassed an impressive body of abuse reports, including after-the-fact descriptions of a number of incidents that match descriptions from the INSEC reports and from other contemporaneous descriptions in Nepali journalism. These specific reports are mentioned frequently in the descriptive portions of Chapters 6-8.

The UN-Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) also entered Nepal at the close of the war to supervise the disarmament and integration of Maoist forces. As part of a survey on humanitarian needs, the UN-OCHA gathered data on public service facilities, which included the presence or absence of government officers and offices, and on the presence of permanent Maoist governance and service provision capacity. At the time of my visit to the UN-OCHA offices, the raw data from this survey was missing, but UN-OCHA-produced maps were still available. These maps were detailed enough to include the VDC demarcations, but not the names of the individual VDCs. Other, district-level maps available through the UN-

OCHA's website did list the names for each VDC unit. I therefore took scans of the OCHA maps and hand-matched them to the VDC maps showing the borders from the same year.

D. **Control Variables**

1. *Ethnicity and Caste*

Chapter 4 helps establish that Nepali Maoists saw as their platform population members of *janjati* ethnicities and lower Hindu castes. It stands to reason that they may condition their behavior based upon the caste mix of a given community. Accordingly, almost all regressions presented in Chapters 6-8 control for either the percentage of upper caste Hindus in the VDC or the VDC's Herfindahl-Hirchman Index of caste and ethnic groups.[112]

Data for the VDC's caste and ethnic mix comes from the Nepali Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). Data from the 2011 census was available in digital form through the CBS website. The VDC-level results from the 2001 census were available only in hard copy. To obtain these data, I visited the CBS office on Kathmandu and hand-scanned over a thousand pages with my smart phone, and then converted the scans into a readable spreadsheet using a combination of OCR technology and hand fixes. Data from the 1991 census, gathered before the start of the war, included only district-level estimates of caste and ethnic populations. The 2001 census is the first in Nepal that claims to gather this data for each VDC.

The census documents also provided data on the total VDC population, and on other population parameters occasionally employed in robustness-check models, such as the VDC's literacy rate or the percentage of the population that reported owning cattle.

2. *Inequality and Poverty Data*

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[112] When applied to ethnicity, the HHI measure is commonly called the ethnolinguistic fractionalization measure, or ELF. The measures use the same logic, but since I parse between upper and lower caste Hindus (groups with identical ethnicity and language), I opted to use the HHI term.

Similarly, Maoist rhetoric keyed in on economic disparities and underdevelopment as a grievance. The Maoist may therefore treat relatively poor or unequal communities differently than rich or equal ones. For inequality and poverty controls, I rely on data generated by Nepal, Bohara, and Gawande (2011). This paper used consumption data from the 1995 *Nepal Living Standards Survey,* carried out jointly by the World Bank and the CBS. The survey audited the consumption and income of around 3,400 Nepalis living in over 274 VDCs. Using this data, Nepal and co-authors constructed a model which also predicts the poverty rate and the Gini-coefficient of inequality in the remaining VDCs.

3. *Altitude and Forest Cover*

Both the insurgents and the state might condition their behaviors based upon the distribution of forest cover or the mountainousness of particular regions. As described in greater detail in the empirical chapters, rebels are often drawn to impassible or rural areas because they find it easier to hide from the state.

To obtain measures for altitude and forest cover I turned to satellite data. The Vegetation Continuous Fields (VCF; Song and Hansen 2017) dataset provides an altitude and ground cover color measure for each ten-square meter block. The codebook provides a guide for color ranges of forest versus other vegetation cover. I overlaid shape file images of Nepali VDC borders and generated several observations. First, I measured the percentage of each VDC covered by forests. Second, I measured the average altitude within the VDC as a measure how mountainous the terrain in the VDC is. Finally, I took the standard deviation of altitude observations within each VDC to operationalize impassibility.

4. *Political Attitudes*

Finally, the political sentiments of Nepalis themselves might influence Maoist behavior. Chapter 4 detailed the efforts of Maoist mobilization in earlier periods of Nepali history in the mid-western region. Perhaps Maoists preferred to build base areas in villages where support was already high.

Using data from the CBS on election returns from Nepal's first-ever municipal election in 1992, I measured the margin of victory of Nepali Congress candidates by subtracting the Congress vote share against the next highest party (some of these values were negative where the Congress candidate lost). I also measured the overall margin of victory for any candidate by subtracting the highest vote share from second place. I use this to control for political homogeneity or pre-existing Maoist support in later regressions.

5. *Control Strategy in Regressions*

Each of the main regression outcomes presented below controls for a standard suite of variables: the diversity HHI index, inequality expressed as a GINI co-efficient, poverty rates, political homogeneity, forest cover, the log transformed population,[113] and standard deviation in altitude. The use of these controls in each regression is indicated by the "Full Controls" box. In many cases, I also tested alternative specifications of these controls, including the replacement of the HHI index with the percentage of upper caste citizens and standard deviation of altitude with the altitude mean. I also tested for the effects of relative isolation with a binary coding for rural districts that still lacked a road connection by 2005.

Across all models, measures of poverty and inequality were associated with greater Maoist investment. Altitude and forest coverage were commonly associated, and results on political

[113] The use of raw population and altitude numbers introduced problems in the use of the zero-inflated regression models discussed below. Such models often suffer from "convergence failure," or an inability to estimate effects, when variables have large value ranges.

homogeneity, HHI, and population were more mixed. These results largely match the expectations of previous studies in Nepal and across the conflict literature.

III. Other Methodological Considerations

This section very briefly considers three other elements of the regressions carried out in the empirical chapters: the unit of observation, the use of fixed effects, and the use of Poisson models in the main regression output. In the final section, I discuss my qualitative and contextual research, including a brief description of a structured interview protocol cancelled due to COVID.

A. The Village Development Committee

Over the course of the conflict, Nepal's political hierarchy was divided into 5 regions, 77 districts, and between 3800 and 4000 village development committees (the number varies from year to year as VDCs merge and divide). Each village development committee is further divided into wards. The number of wards in each VDC varies substantially. Urban VDCs sometimes have only one ward, while geographically large VDCs with disbursed populations often have a ward for every isolated hamlet within the VDC.

Nepal is not a highly federated system, and the powers of increasingly local units are limited mostly to proposing projects or block grant programs funded from the level of government directly above it. For example, ward councils and chairs receive word from VDC officials about the budgets and programs available for local development, and pitch projects which the VDC level decides to fund or pass. VDCs and districts each receive increasing amounts of discretionary funding determined by the number of people in the unit, the unit's development needs, and the whims of the party currently in power.

Every regression in this dissertation, and most of my implicit framing of qualitative data, relies on the VDC as the unit of analysis. To some extent, the structure of Nepali data compels this choice: the CBS does not disaggregate census or economic data to the ward, and I was unable to locate ward-level maps of the entire country to calculate altitude or forest cover data. Districts, on the other hand, are too few for strong statistical analysis (although Do and Iyer (2010) make some compelling findings at the level).

The VDC is, however, defensible as the best possible unit of Nepali territory for this project. Districts are simply too large to believe that Maoists approached them with a unified strategy. Some range from above the Himalayan tree line down into the foothills. Most include at least a small urban area with concentrated government presence and a very rural hinterland fringe. Conversely, wards are most often too small and demographically continuous with their neighbors to believe that Maoists would have approached them differently. VDCs have between four and twelve thousand residents.

The major drawback in using VDCs as the unit of measure concerns the wide variation in size and population distribution between the most urban and most rural VDCs.[114] The ideal VDC for our analysis here is common across the rural middle hills and Terai belts of Nepal: a single, often tiny, population center and the territory surrounding it. Often these boundaries are drawn to reflect walkability; residents of a valley that tapers toward a settlement are drawn into a VDC with that settlement, rather than the closer settlement over the steep hillsides. These VDCs form natural communities.

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[114] Nepal also recognizes a small number of Municipal Development Committees in highly urban areas. MDCs have much higher populations (as high as 50,000 in Kathmandu). Despite the name difference, MDCs fulfill functionally the same role as VDCs. In all regressions presented in the coming chapters, MDCs are included. For robustness, I dropped MDCs from the analysis in all regressions, which never altered the results.

Yet quite a number of VDCs in urban areas or the densely populated border with India blend into one another seamlessly, with as much economic and social business across VDC lines as within. Many of the highly rural VDCs in the high Himalaya bundle together multiple hamlets separated by deep ravines or mountain passes that forbid much exchange. In the former case, it is easy to imagine the Maoists using a single strategy for multiple VDCs. In the latter, the Maoists may have used a different approach in the VDC's various regions.

B. Fixed Effects

In addition to the suite of control variables discussed above and in the empirical chapters, all statistical models in this dissertation are presented with and without fixed effects at the district level. Statistical analysis of geographic regions often employs fixed effects at a higher level of administrative aggregation on the logic that places close to each other are usually more similar than places far away. Fixed effects therefore provide some protection against spatially clustered omitted variables. Given that the Maoist insurgency focused on a distinct heartland and radiated outward from base areas, concerns about spatial omitted variables loom large here.

It is not entirely clear, however, whether Nepali districts always respect the assumption that closeness breeds similarity. Unlike VDCs, many Nepali districts were expressly created to bridge ecologies and ethnic populations; especially where the foothills meet the Terai. The foothills villages of Bara, Sarlahi, and Parsa likely have far more in common with each other than with their down-river cousins in the same district. Furthermore, Nepali districts have few powers to set policy in ways that might create similarities within. Life in Las Vegas would change significantly were it annexed by California. The residents of Chorma VDC scarcely noticed when the boundaries of Bara were redrawn to make it part of Parsa.

Thankfully, this debate is mostly academic. The vast majority of models presented below show a significant connection between forestry groups and the target outcome with or without fixed effects. The sign of the relationship never changes.

C. Zero Inflated Models

In almost all cases, the outcomes of concern in this dissertation are zero-inflated. Most VDCs did not experience a death during the war; most that did experienced only one. Maoists set up service provision in only a few hundred of the four thousand VDCs. The standard regression models use ordinary least squares specification, which operate best when outcome variables are normally distributed (Angrist and Pischke 2008). Where outcomes cluster at zero, it is often best to use a model, such as negative binomial or Poisson, that assumes a different distribution (Lawless 1987).

The zero-inflated models in the next chapters all use Poisson specifications. When running the regressions using negative binomial models, many failed to return results. This "convergence failure" can occur in negative binomial models that include variables with wide ranges, such as the altitude and population measures used here (Brooks, et al., 2017).[115] In all cases where the negative binomial model converged successfully, it reported very similar magnitude and significance on the relationship with forestry group presence.

All results reported below include both Poisson and OLS models. In all cases, the OLS model returns the same sign, which is usually significant. The magnitude of the relationship between forestry group presence and the outcome variable usually declines, which is often taken as a sign justifying the use of the zero-inflated specification (Angrist and Pischke 2008).

D. Qualitative Data and Context

[115] Brooks advises using the logged values of the offending variables as a first step, which resolved the issue in only a few of my cases.

In addition to a standard desk review of hundreds of peer-reviewed and journalistic articles about Nepali history and culture, and the war itself, I developed my background understanding of Maoist insurgency during two short trips to Nepal, totaling five weeks. During this time, I gathered much of the quantitive evidence described above from INSEC, the CBS, the United Nations, and the CPN-M party. I conducted twenty-five background interviews with journalists, human rights activists, politicians, NGO leaders, local foresters, and members of the Maoist cadre. I spent the majority of this time in Kathmandu, but took a short trip to three villages in Jarjarkot, part of the Maoist heartland. The interviews conducted here were primarily purposed to support a proposed set of village case studies modeled on de la Sierra (2020). By March 2020, planning for these trips was complete, and I had begun scheduling interviews through my local research assistant, when I was compelled to cancel the interview trips due to COVID.

IV. Conclusion

This dissertation leverages two extremely fortunate realities to generate multiple streams of evidence to test the theory of revolutionary capital in Nepal. The first is the social position of forestry conservation groups in Nepal. I developed the notion that specific grassroots organizations could manage the local war effort for (or against) insurgents in theory first, and then set about finding examples of social capital that could serve as a clean test of the idea. Among a large number of possibilities, the Nepali forest groups stood out for their relatively straightforward mapping onto the major cleavages of the conflict. As described above, the forestry groups came to represent, in both reality and popular imagination, the struggles of janjati castes forgotten for generations by the Kathmandu policy elite.

The second is the overwhelming capacity of Nepali civil society, government record keepers, and NGOs that dedicated themselves with uncommon purpose to data collection in rural Nepal. Time and again I tripped over my own feet and fell into an archive of highly granular data staffed by a librarian eager for someone, anyone, to use it. Any number of privileged PhD students owe more or less everything to the labor of passionate and talented civil and social servants, and I am no different. One interviewee recounted to me pacing off miles of forest boundaries between private and community land in Jumla, duly noting the elevation and slope on each the corner, then enduring days-long bouncing bus journeys back to the Department of Soil and Forest Conservation to record the observations in the books I eventually scanned. Another walked for two weeks through Rukum, double-checking the family names of alleged victims of torture.

In the chapters that follow, I aggregate these painstaking observations into a set of tests that tend to support the notion that well-organized supporters of an insurgency incentivize a more symbiotic relationship with the rebels than exists elsewhere. This patchwork of relationships tends to exclude other explanations, and suggests that the notion of revolutionary investment is plausible.

CHAPTER 6 - Contestation

I. Introduction

The statistical evidence in the next three chapters supports the theoretical contention that insurgent groups focus disproportionately on sustained "revolutionary development" in communities where their platform populations are better organized. These chapters are arranged in chronological order of the idealized stages of revolutionary development: contestation, consolidation, and control. These stages are both intuitive (in most cases, insurgents will need to contest the state's authority before exercising control), and grounded in the actual revolutionary practice of Mao and those he influenced (see Chapters 2 and 3 for more details).

This chapter presents evidence that Nepali Maoists were more likely to contest the state's control in villages that featured forestry groups. What does contestation look like? This chapter operationalizes contestation in two ways. The first considers the actual displacement of state assets and representatives. In Nepal, each VDC unit hosts a government office and a bureaucrat charged with administering federal programs. Data from the UNHCR, the Nepali government's archives, and INSEC, demonstrate a statistical association between the presence of forestry groups and eviction of state assets.

The second operationalization of contestation considers the order and intensity of battle casualties in each VDC. According to the INSEC data, we see that VDCs with forestry groups experienced deadly fighting between the state and the Maoists earlier and at a higher intensity than similar VDCs that lacked an FCG.

II. Literature Review

In this chapter, I isolate attempts to <u>contest</u> territorial control from other revolutionary behaviors. Despite a robust science on the causes of civil conflict, very little research examines the

local spread of conflict, or differentiates between areas where insurgents attempt to create base areas versus those where their presence is transient or antagonistic. Even less of the research tackles the question in a comparative way, and no studies to my knowledge operationalize contestation by ordering battlefields chronologically or by documenting the displacement of specific state assets.

This gap likely exists for a number of reasons. First, investigation of these outcomes require highly granular records of the time and location of battle casualties, and the location of specific government assets destroyed. Such records are rare.

Second, the modern civil war canon concerns itself rather less with explaining the organizational development of insurgencies and more with identifying hotspots for violence.[116]

This dissertation makes no claim to add to understanding of the causes of conflict, and instead attempts to link specific insurgent tactics that support the creation of base areas to characteristics of the civilian populations in those areas. This chapter's two key dependent variables, the ejection of state governance capacity and the intensity of battle casualties, are both logically linked to the requirement that insurgents seeking to establish control must first confront the state's power.

A. Dispossession of the State

The evidence below considers the likelihood that government offices were destroyed and government bureaucrats removed from a VDC. There is presently no unique literature on the destruction of state assets or the ejection of state bureaucrats. I examine this issue on the logic that removal of the state's authority is a pre-requisite to serious consolidation of the insurgent's alternative government. Where should the insurgents prefer to build such base areas? The theory

[116] See Chapter 1 (VI).

introduced in Chapter Two predicts that insurgents will prefer communities where their civilian allies are well-organized enough to credibly assist in resistance against the state and insurgent government. At least two alternatives to this theory seem obvious.

The first might argue that insurgents will simply target areas rich in supporters, ignoring any differences in their organizational capital. As discussed at greater length in Chapters 4 and 5, in the case of Nepal "supporters" might be members of the lower economic classes (Do and Iyer 2013), those who experience the steepest inequality (Nepal, et al, 2014), members of traditionally repressed *janjati* castes (Gersony and Limborg 2003), or rural smallholders chafing under onerous land title policies (Murshed and Gates 2005). The relationship of dispossession to FCGs may be spurious. Accordingly, all models presented below control for measures of poverty, inequality, the percentage of *janjati* castes in the population, and population density.

Second, perhaps insurgents want to set up base areas in places where the state is already absent. Why fight to kick the state out of one village when it is already absent from the next village over? This possibility is particularly vexing given that FCG presence might correlate with state absence: Civil control of environmental policy might make the most sense where the state fails to make or enforce any of its own. FCGs were illegal during most of the pre-war period in Nepal. I discuss these objections at greater length after presenting the direct evidence below.

B. Order and Intensity of Violence

This chapter also presents evidence that Nepali villages with FCGs were the first to experience Maoist combat deaths. The INSEC dataset characterizes each casualty by the status of the victim and perpetrator, including killings of combatants during exchange of fire.[117] Using

[117] The density of aggregated war deaths, used in so many other articles to determine the epicenter of the conflict, lumps soldiers killed in a confrontation with the enemy together with civilians who died from abuse. But these two acts of violence that serve different strategic purposes.

this data, we can see where the Maoists and the state fought first. Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate, however, that Maoists often confronted the state directly in attempts to control territory.[118] The loci of fighting in Nepal is more likely to indicate contested territory than other contexts.

Very little literature considers the diffusion of battles over a conflict theatre. Ito and Hinkkainen (2019) argue that broad patterns in conflict diffusion can predict how the conflict ends. Slantchev (2003) and Walter (2009) argue that insurgent decisions about the spread of violence reveal their intentions and capacities. Grieg (2015) and Ruhe (2015) each argue that rebel movement toward the capital increases the likelihood of state-initiated negotiation.

In this case, we take the intentions of the rebels as a given: Maoist encirclement of urban areas. The question is rather how the insurgents chose to move contestation from one place to the next. Another developing literature argues that conflict follows displacement, either across borders (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006) or within them (Bohnet, Cottier, and Hug 2019). Both Salehyn and Bohnet reason that conflict may follow displaced communities because they are vulnerable to predation (e.g., Bohnet, et al., 2019: 691).[119] This hypothesis thus assumes that the combatants in question exist primarily to extract rents.

One other major paper tackles the determinants of the conflict's spread. Beardsley, Gleditsch, and Lo (2015) argue that insurgents without an ethnic homeland or which receive

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[118] "The mobilization of the common people throughout the country will create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy" (quoting Mao in Beckett 2001: 170); "…the establishment of rural revolutionary base areas and the encirclement of the cities from the countryside is of outstanding and universal practical importance for the present revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed nations and peoples." Lin Bao 1965.

[119] Salehyan also argues that displacement can spread the insurgency's ethnic or religious platform constituency to new territories, lending it support where it previously enjoyed none. Such an explanation holds little weight in Nepal, where the government explicitly sought to establish a minority, upper-caste rule. Brahmin Nepalis are the majority demographic in only 35 of the nearly 4000 VDCs. By any demographic measurable using census or similar data, the critical mass for insurgent support existed everywhere in Nepal prior to the outbreak of conflict.

outside military aid are more likely to spread fighting over a wide territory within the conflict state. Beardsley, et al., use the insurgency as the unit of analysis. The Nepali Maoists claimed no specific ethnic grievance as it's reason for existence, and from this perspective, the case broadly supports Beardsley's contention. But given the within-conflict focus of our questions, it is not possible to control for these factors. Instead, I provide controls for the standard suite of conflict determinants discussed in Chapter 5.

III. Evidence

A. Dispossession of the State

The history of the Maoist conflict immediately suggests that Maoists intended to violently contest the state's control in its perceived heartland. The first skirmish of the war occurred when the Maoists raided a local post office and police station to confiscate weapons. The Maoists persisted in this strategy during the early course of the war. Onesto (2003: 162), a communist journalist embedded with a vanguard unit of the Maoists, details multiple sackings of VDC offices. Describing an offensive in October 1998, he states "the post was totally destroyed and police uniforms, papers, and guns were burned. Two police were killed."

Threats and offensives against government officials at the local level continued through the end of the war. The UNHCR (2012: 51) gathered data on the targeted killings of VDC heads by the Maoists throughout the conflict, including an assassination of a VDC head in January 2006. VDC heads, who made the paltry official salary of R1,000 (US$14) per month, may have had little reason to stay when threatened, although they may have often used their official positions to impose themselves into local commerce and corruption (Adkihari 2014; Pettigrew 2012).

In terms of developing a base area, simple attacks against state assets are ambiguous. For example, Maoist might avoid raiding police posts for weapons where allied civilians live to avoid recrimination against the allied civilians. But the complete destruction of government outposts and the ouster of the government's representatives suggests a deeper purpose.

The measure of state dispossession was gathered from maps created by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) in July 2006, months before the formal end of hostilities. Because we know that Maoist insurgents were very successful at taking control of rural areas, which make up the majority of VDCs, measuring displacement at the end of the war biases against a robust finding. By the time the measurement is taken, we might expect Maoist control to have expanded beyond VDCs with forestry groups during a stage of rapid expansion of the fight against the state.

Map 6.1, created with the UN-OCHA data, bears this concern out. Large swathes of rural Nepal saw the destruction of government offices. Because the theory predicts that base-area behaviors will start in FCG villages and spread to others, the prospect of bias against the theory's hypothesized connection between FCGs and government dispossession is pressing. (No presently existing theory of insurgent control or service provision suggests any reason to think that Maoists would have spread influence from non-FCG villages to those with FCGs.) Ideal data would include the date at which Maoist forces took over particular villages, or the date of the destruction of particular offices. Of course, the only available data on control at the time of measurement is presently employed as the dependent variable.

Despite this concern, regression analysis find a robust relationship between FCG presence and the destruction of government offices. As shown in Table 6.1, the probability of a VDC experiencing destruction of its government office rises between 35% and 51% in the model

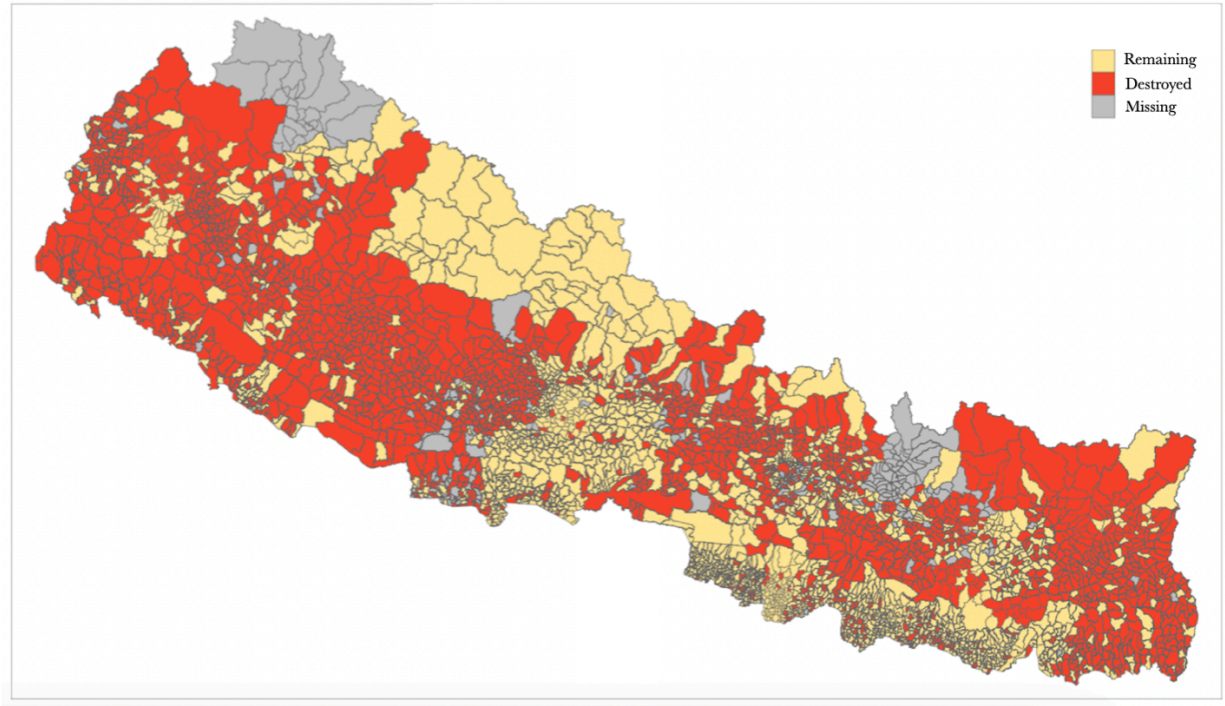


Figure 6.1: Map of Government Office Destruction

without district fixed effects and 9% to 33% when fixed effects are included. Table 6.1 uses the standard controls developed in this dissertation for upper caste population, poverty, inequality, political homogeneity, population, elevation, and forest cover. The main regression therefore demonstrates that, all other relevant factors equal, VDCs with forestry groups were more likely to experience the destruction of their government buildings. This relationship is robust to most changes in model specifications and alternative controls. The only model in which the relationship is not statistically significant is the OLS specification in Model 6.

It remains possible that the suite of controls selected here does not consider factors the Maoists saw as important for developing territorial control. Descriptive statistics in Chapter 5 showed the Maoist heartland districts to be slightly denser in FCGs than non-heartland districts, raising concerns that the FCG-dispossession relationship is spurious on some other logic behind

Table 6.1: Destruction of VDC Government Offices

Dependent Variable Description: Destruction of VDC Government Offices						
	Logit		Probit		OLS	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Forestry Conservation Group	.430*** (.080)	.213* (.121)	.262*** (.049)	.110* (.064)	.111*** (.030)	.022 (.016)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observation	3504	3504	3504	3504	3504	3504

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the .1%, 1%, and 5% level, respectively. Conservation group presence and destruction of offices measured as binary. Population and elevation scaled.

the Maoist's choice of heartland.[120] In fact, identical regression analysis using only the VDCs in the Maoist's self-proclaimed heartland districts show an increased effected of FCGs on dispossession. In a logit comparison with district-level fixed effects (identical to Model 2 in Table 6.1), the probability of a VDC experiencing destruction of its government office rises 87% in the heartland, a measure significant at the p=0.1% level.

In addition to the destruction of government offices, I also operationalize government dispossession in terms of the ejection of the government's appointed VDC chairman. As discussed above, the UNHCR documented dozens of cases in which the Maoist rebels assassinated or threatened local politicians associated with the state or the the dominant Nepal Congress party. In principle, the insurgents would have seen little value in scaring off bureaucrats in villages where they had little presence themselves.

Table 6.2 shows the results of the regression, carried out to identical specifications as those in Table 6.1. The observed effect is larger and the relationship stronger. Model 2, which employs logit assumptions and district-level fixed effects, shows that a VDCs chance of having its chairman displaced is nearly twice as high in the presence of a forestry group.

[120] This concern will arise again in subsequent chapters. In all cases, heartland-only models of the presented results remain statistically significant.

Table 6.2: Ejection of VDC Chair

Dependent Variable Description: Absence of VDC Chairman, June 2006						
	Logit		Probit		OLS	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Forestry Conservation Group	.560*** (.088)	.980*** (.140)	.359*** (.052)	.535*** (.078)	.108*** (.016)	.093*** (.014)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observation	3512	3512	3512	3512	3512	3512

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the .1%, 1%, and 5% level, respectively. Conservation group presence and chairman displacement measured as binary. Population and elevation scaled.

The stronger relationship is perhaps predictable. Attacks against district offices were sometimes carried out to capture weapons or equipment, or to destroy the records of minority debtors. It would be strategically sensible to carry out attacks against government buildings for the purpose of stealing weapons in VDCs with few supporters for the state to target in backlash, meaning that attacks that destroy office buildings are at least partially ambiguous in purpose. In contrast, the administrative, service-oriented role of the VDC chairman means that his ouster does little for the rebels' fighting capacity. Instead, it reduces the state's ability to administer human services.

In sum, Maoist rebels were substantially more likely to attack Nepali administrative capacity in villages with forestry groups. This observation is consistent with the theory that rebels will attempt to establish base areas where their platform constituency is well-organized. As we'll see in Chapter 8, this observation also matches with patterns in where the Maoists ended up providing rival services. The Maoist follow-through on service provision offers a powerful piece of additional evidence of the insurgent intention when it displaced the state.

B. **The Order of Direct Contestation with the State**

This section considers the spread of the conflict as operationalized by the first date of Maoist casualties caused by the state. There is relatively little narrative evidence of the spread of the Nepali conflict, and none of it provides data or anecdotes that could be probative here. A step back to consider the trend over the war in its entirety provides some context and evidence. Figure 6.1 lays out the volume of Maoist combat casualties in each 6-month period of the war from 1996 to 2006. The pattern is relatively clear. From the beginning of meaningful hostilities to the end of 2003, the number of Maoist soldiers killed in FCG villages is higher, with the relationship reversing after 2003. Worth special note is the divergence during the height of the Maoist expansion in 2001 and 2002. This observation is striking, and consistent with the hypothesis that insurgents will invest in revolutionary development where their platform constituencies are the most organized. The Maoist engaged the state more fiercely in FCG villages at the start of the conflict.

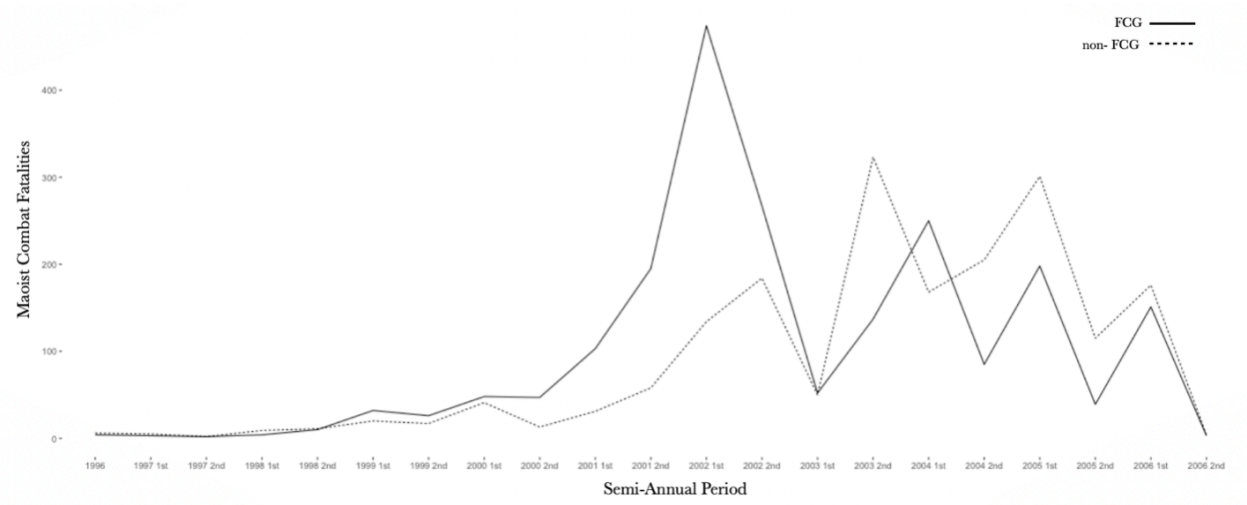


Figure 6.2: Deaths of Maoist Combatants, by FCG Status.

Does this pattern survive more serious statistical scrutiny? Table 6.3 measures the association between the date of the first reported Maoist battle casualty in a VDC and the

presence of forestry groups. Models offer controls for the standard suite of confounders discussed in Chapter 5 and, as noted, district-level fixed effects.

The consistent negative association of the FCG indicates that FCG villages were first to experience Maoist casualties. The association is consistent and significant to the 1% level across all specifications, including in models focused on the more conflict-prone heartland.

The results require some interpretation. Dates were coded starting with "1" on the date of the first death attributed to the war (July 25, 1994) and numbered sequentially until the last Maoist casualty attributed to conflict with the state (Day 4639; April 6, 2007). VDCs that never experienced a Maoist battle casualty were coded 4640, the following day.

Table 6.3: Dates of Combat Initiation

Dependent Variable Description: Date of First Maoist Combat Casualty					
	Full Country Models			**Maoist Heartland Models**	
	OLS	Poisson		Poisson	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Forestry Conservation Group	-556*** (111)	-28*** (5)	-28*** (14)	-102*** (23)	-79*** (24)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observation	3738	3738	3738	771	771

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the .1%, 1%, and 5% level, respectively. Conservation group presence measured as binary. Population and elevation scaled.

The results above thus indicate how many days earlier a VDC with forestry groups experienced a Maoist battle death compared to an otherwise equivalent VDC without one.

While the relationships are significant and in the expected direction, the effect sizes in the main models are extremely modest. These effect sizes are likely attenuated by two factors. First, the substantial majority of villages (3211) never experienced a Maoist casualty in battle. Second,

the great majority of Maoist battle casualties occurred between 2000 and 2004 (only 62 of the over 2000 recorded casualties occurred before the year 2000).

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter presented evidence consistent with the hypothesis that Nepali Maoists targeted VDCs with forestry groups earlier than comparable VDCs without forestry groups for the first stage of revolutionary development. Maoists were more likely to confront the state early, both in battle and by ejecting the state's institutions, in villages with forestry groups.

In the chapter above, I surfaced three potential concerns: that the relationship between FCGs and the Maoist contestation of territory may be spurious on VDC demographics, the pre-existing absence of the state, or the spread of IDPs.

The demographic concern is mitigated by the inclusion of a wide variety of statistical controls. The relationship between FCG presence and the first battle date remains significant in the expected direction.

My ability to engage in statistical controls for this second possibility are limited. I have no measure of the state's presence in the pre-war period outside of the VDC offices present in every district. I control for population density and the standard deviation of altitude on the logic that the state is unlikely to spend increasing resources to control ever fewer people. Yet the Nepali war started and simmered longest in the midwestern and far western regions, most of which is extremely mountainous and rural. Outside the district capitals, population density and altitude controls provide less leverage to distinguish Nepali VDCs in the conflict zone.

The actual history and experience of Nepal do provide some reasons to reject this second alternative explanation. Begin with the argument that illegal FCGs may have proliferated where the state was weak. In fact, as detailed in Chapter 5, FCGs grew precisely to confront the

capricious decisions of the state's *jimidar* representatives, who often monopolized forestry resources. Far from shirking away from conflict, the history of the Maoist movement in Nepal (Chapter 4) shows the insurgents' willingness to confront the state directly. Population density and altitude are not significantly correlated with forestry group presence (*see*, Chapter 5).

Perhaps most importantly, both my own experience in Western Nepal, and the narratives of journalists and anthropologists who lived there (*e.g.* Pettigrew 2012), suggest that the state's presence in rural, mountainous regions of Nepal has been uniformly weak. Like the *jimidar* of the royalist era, Nepal delegates the vast majority of day-to-day authority to VDC-level clients or agents who, prior to the war, unfailingly came from *jimidar* families. Police and army patrol visits were infrequent, alienating experiences. Pettigrew in particular discusses the efforts of rural Nepalis to handle crime and other issues locally to avoid the imposition of a police mission. At no point did any resident of Jarjarkot mention Nepali law or the police to explain the actions of local FCGs or even the VDC councils. Such decisions were always discussed as the best local solutions, and most people seemed to consider the government itself as a distant entity out of touch with local life.

I lack the data to adequately test whether conflict spread followed Nepali IDPs within the country; although interviews suggest the UNHCR attempted to track resettlement in the later days of the conflict, I never saw chronological data about IDP settlement patterns. In general, two considerations weigh in favor of rejecting this explanation of conflict spread in Nepal.

First, both available histories and the interviews I conducted with expert sources suggest that displaced Nepalis primarily fled to the larger cities of Pokhara and the Kathmandu valley, and to the densely populated border with India. There is little indication that Maoist forces ever seriously attempted to contest the state in these areas, and relied on terrorism and worker's strikes

to cripple urban Nepali life. Almost none of the VDCs in these areas ever experienced a Maoist casualty at the hands of the state.

Second, the record establishes that Maoist forces were relatively disciplined in terms of civilian abuse. The Maoists articulated and implemented a strategy of rural encirclement that drove the displaced into the cities and created some manner of base area in substantial parts of rural Nepal. Absent from the record is any indication of Maoist harassment of refugees.

This second point also reiterates the value of distinguishing battle deaths from civilian casualties and, more broadly, refusing to conflate conflict activity with rebel support. Given the state's track record of abusing civilian IDPs (UNHCR 2012), inclusion of civilian casualties would have biased toward a conclusion that the conflict spread to places the Maoists seem to have been entirely absent.

Still, these findings are not without problems. Three examples stand out. First, measures of state ejection were taken near the end of the war. (Ideally, we would know that Maoists ejected the state first on villages with forestry groups, but the available data does not allow examination of this issue.) Second, the magnitude of the relationship between forestry groups and conflict onset is small enough to call into question whether Maoists made much distinction between the two types of villages. Finally, the dependent variables considered here may not necessarily represent Maoist desire to contest the state's authority in the territory of measurement. Perhaps they fought first in villages with VDCs for reasons other than contestation.

The last concern is the most serious, as the development of the revolutionary investment concept is one of the key contributions of this dissertation. How do we know that the Maoist soldiers killed by the state fought in territory they hoped to hold? How do we know that Maoists

destroyed government building and ejected bureaucrats because they intended to replace state services with insurgent programs?

In short, because they did. Chapters 7 and 8 demonstrate more substantial and more robust relationships between FCG presence and tactics consistent with consolidation and control at the village level. The outcomes measurements presented in this chapter suffer two main weaknesses that bias against finding the proposed relationship. First, two of the outcomes (VDC office destruction and Maoist casualties) sometimes occur for strategic purposes other than the establishment of base areas. Second, two of the outcomes (VDC office destruction and government officer displacement) were measured at the end of the war, when Maoist control of the hinterlands was very advanced. (It is also possible that, in the early stages of the war, the Maoists did not yet understand which grassroots organizations presented the best opportunities for co-optation.)

Yet the predicted patterns persist, and, as demonstrated in the following chapters, FCGs are also associated with the establishment of base areas. The dissertation argues that the evidence of revolutionary development among organized platform populations comes through multiple sources and observations. The following chapters bear this argument out.

CHAPTER 7 - Consolidation

I. **Introduction**

The theory and history presented in Chapters 2-4 generate a central observable implication that is confirmed by the empirical evidence: Maoist rebels in Nepal sought to build base areas in communities with forestry groups and therefore disproportionately abused members of the upper castes in those communities. Disproportionate abuse of the non-platform population, "class enemies" in the parlance of Maoism, serves the dual purpose of cleansing the community of individuals pre-disposed to defect against the Maoists and generating a stream of assets that can be redistributed to build support among the platform constituency. The strategy of selective abuse thus plays a crucial role in the Maoist conception of consolidation of support in building base areas.

This chapter demonstrates asymmetrical abuse consistent with Maoist strategy in three main ways. First, Maoists were substantially more likely to kill members of the upper castes is villages with forestry conservation groups. Members of the upper castes were also more likely to flee villages with forestry conservation groups than those without. Both of these relationships affirm the basic correlations the theory chapter predicts: more concentrated efforts to build base areas where the platform population is already mobilized.

A final test considers the mechanism of civilian-rebel cooperation at the heart of the theory. If well-organized civilian communities are more likely to self-police than poorly-organized communities, then we should expect rebels to receive higher quality tips about defection from well-organized communities. As Kaylvas (2006: 14; 339) argues, rebels often receive low-quality information from civilians hoping to use rebel capacity to settle local scores and rebels prudently ignore this. But well-organized communities are more likely to suppress this low-quality

information and help insurgents identify more reliable intelligence about defectors. In line with these expectations, Maoists (or villagers) killed more suspected informants in FCG villages than villages without.

II. **Evidence**

On July 21, 1997, Bishnu Bahadur[121] was clearing weeds behind his house in Pipal, Rukum, when a Maoist soldier snuck up and stabbed him in the back with a khukuri, a curved machete favored by Nepali farmers. The prior week, a Maoist patrol had been ambushed by police near a Maoist camp outside Pipal. Locals blamed Bahadur, an upper caste farmer who often worked as an organizer for the Nepali Congress Party. He was killed the day after the accusation. Pipal was unusually well-organized, with three FCGs governing 147 total hectares of land before 1995. Over the course of the next three years, locals pointed out several other supposed spies. Maoists directed the killing of at least five residents of Pipal on the basis of informant tips; the highest per capita ratio in Nepal.[122]

The tendency of Maoists to selectively abuse members of the upper castes is well documented, and the reasoning behind the selective abuse is apparent. "These killings were intended, in the first instance, to eliminate political rivals from areas where the Maoists had a strong presence." (Adhikari 2014: 44). These attacks often targeted civilians known to organize for the Nepali Congress Party (Hachhethu 2004: 44; Jha 2014: 62; Pettigrew 2013: 66). Maoists engaged in high-profile killings of rural elites as a demonstration of power and intent, in many cases leaving the bodies conspicuously displayed with anti-capitalist messages (Thapa 2003: 157).

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[121] Names of victims have been changed to protect privacy; information for this description from INSEC 2015, Report MFID 12706.

[122] Maoist forces targeted other upper caste residents, but files on those killings make no mention of specific accusations by residents.

In Lekhguan VDC, Surkhet District, Maoists abducted a supposed defector and hung his body outside the home of a neighbor reported to have close ties with the police.[123]

Experts credit Maoist troops with engaging primarily in targeted killings that appeared to have military or political purpose.[124] Maoists often spared accused defectors when important village members vouched for them (Pettigrew 2013: 119), but engaged in substantial abuse of civilians that failed to contribute: "teachers and shopkeepers [had] legs broken by the Maoists for not giving "donations" on time or of sufficient amount" (*id.* at 67). The Maoists engaged in other forms of abuse against members of the upper castes. In one instance, a Brahmin cleric who continued performing forbidden rituals was forced to replicate the rituals while carrying a piglet, an animal considered to pollute the soul of the Brahmin castes. The Maoists later slaughtered the pig inside the priest's house to deepen his humiliation (Adhikari 2014: 132).

The record also indicates a number of times during which Maoists showed great symbiosis with FCGs, and harassed upper caste locals by killing or confiscating livestock deemed to degrade the environment (Gersony and Lindborg 2003: 9). In an interview with a Maoist lieutenant assigned to Kalikot, Jha (2014:61) hears "'We used to attack the jimindars. They were rogues. We used to collect information from the local people and then attack."

Of course, Maoist violence against civilians did not always relate rationally to political development of the revolutionary project. In June 2005, Maoist forces denoted an improvised

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[123] UNHR 2012: Ref. No. 006-06-10 - incident - Surkhet _4893

[124] "The Maoists' violence did alienate many citizens. But unlike the state, the violence of the rebels was more targeted. It was also backed by the rhetoric of justice, by slogans of bringing about revolutionary change, and fighting an evil regime." Jha 2014: 78; "[Low casualty levels are] partly explained by the movement's ideology: in striving for the liberation of the people, it had to protect them and only get rid of the "enemies" — those exploiting the people…" Lecomte-Tilouine 2013:10. Some disagree: "The local population complained that they had to be wary of the Maoists, otherwise they would be victims of their senseless violence." Shrestha-Schipper (2013).

bomb under a crowded bus, killing 39 people, including 3 soldiers on leave (UNHR 2012: 50). The incident prompted apologies and promises of change from the Maoists, who reduced offensives against the military and increased efforts to negotiate non-violent strategies in partnership with political parties opposed to the government (Adhikari 2014; Jha 2014).

Attempts, like this dissertation, to discern patterns from wartime behaviors invite a common and well-grounded concern about cherry-picking. Given the chaos, examples of any type of abuse likely abound. It bears mention, then, that a four-year UNHR Report on the Nepal conflict argued that "discernible patterns relating to killings by … the Maoists raise the question of whether certain patterns of unlawful killings were a part of [Maoist] policy" (UNHR 2012: 73). Indeed, the locations of high-caste killing differ substantially from lower-caste killings. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 detail the density of lower and upper caste killing in the Maoist heartland,

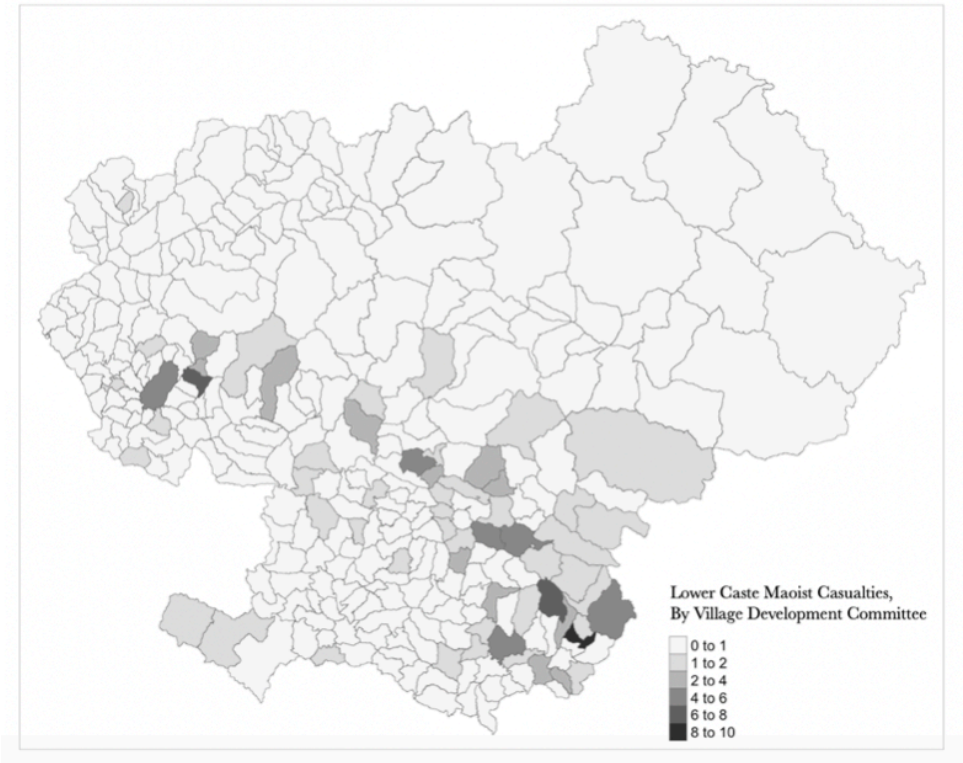


Figure 7.1: Map of Maoist Killings of the Lower Caste, Maoist Heartland

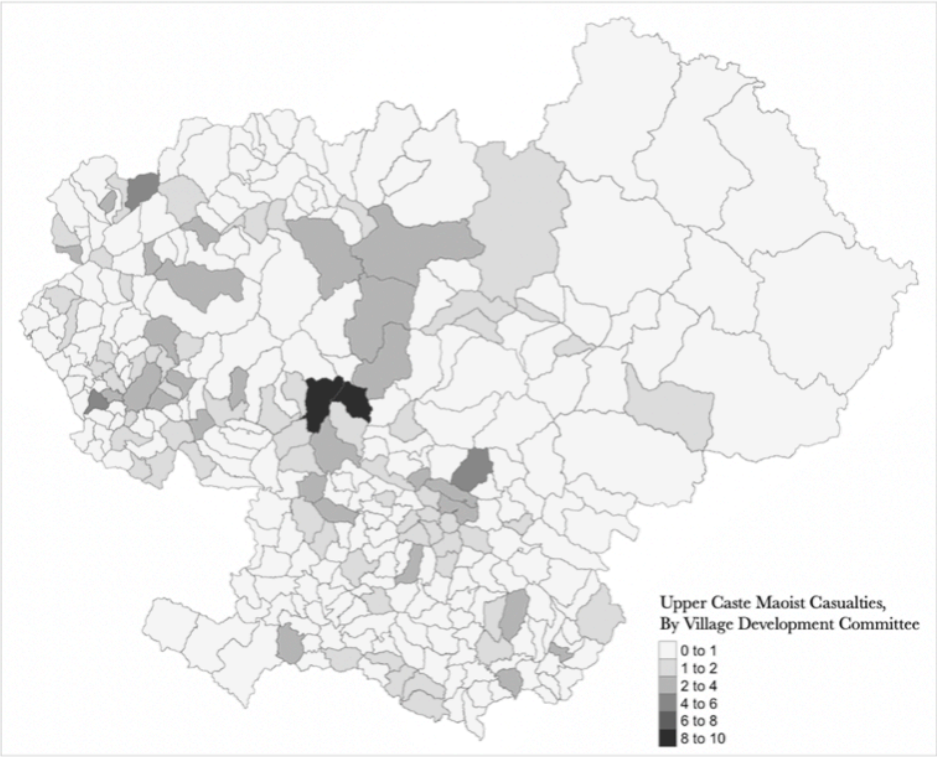


Figure 7.2: Map of Maoist Killings of the Upper Caste, Maoist Heartland

respectively. If deaths are the result of conflict intensity, or the need for information in areas that pass through mixed control during the conflict, we should see substantial overlap in the location of casualties of all demographics. Instead, upper caste casualties are almost absent from the south-western corner of the map where lower caste casualties cluster. (Demographic balances in the region are around 20% upper caste in most villages.)

While this observation is circumstantial, it is consistent with the notion that killing civilians within the platform population serves a difference purpose than killing members of the opposition demographic. By the logic laid out in Chapter 2, Maoists only turn to selective abuse of the upper castes if the lower caste population is reasonably unified against the state. This process of building collective consensus and behaviors proceeded fastest in VDCs with forestry groups.

A. *Patterns Targeted Killing Against Members of the Upper Castes*

Given the plausibility that Maoists engaged in selective violence against defectors and members of the upper castes as a policy consistent with Maoist doctrine, it is reasonable to ask whether patterns in such abuse correlate with the organizational capacity of the Maoist platform population.

Table 7.1 tests for a relationship between forestry group presence prior to 1995 and targeted[125] upper-caste casualties at the VDC level. In this table, upper caste assassinations are set as binary, and the association assesses the relative likelihood of any targeted killing in the VDC. The effects in all models are statistically significant and positive. Holding all else at the average

Table 7.1: Upper Caste Killings by Maoists

Dependent Variable Description: Occurrence of Upper Caste Casualty					
	Full Country Models			**Maoist Heartland Models**	
	OLS	Poisson		Poisson	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Forestry Conservation Group	.012*** (.004)	.032*** (.007)	.042*** (.010)	.168*** (.024)	.160*** (.020)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observation	3562	3562	3562	654	654

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the .1%, 1%, and 5% level, respectively. Conservation group presence and casualties measured as binary. Population and elevation scaled.

value, the probability that a village experiences a targeted killing of an upper caste resident by Maoists rises 5% per FCG in the model that includes all VDCs (4).[126] A one standard deviation upward shift in the number of FCGs (the addition of 2.66 FCGs) predicts a 13.3% increase in

[125] Using the INSEC data described in Chapter 5, I remove deaths that occurred from crossfire during Maoist-state engagements and accidental detonations of ordnance to focus on those which appear to have been targeted assassinations.

[126] Poisson models account for zero-inflated distributions in dependent variables. The effect size of Poisson results, which relates to the log shift in outcomes, can be calculated as e^{β}.

the probability of that a VDC will experience an upper caste assassination. In heartland villages, the chance of an upper caste killing is 17% higher per forestry group. Here, a one standard deviation upward shift in the number of FCGs (2.01 in the heartland) is associated with a 39% higher risk of an upper caste assassination by Maoists.

Observational designs require careful tests to assure that omitted variables are not responsible for the observed correlation. Table 7.1 includes controls for all the major variables discussed in Chapter 5 and in the brief literature review above. Encouragingly, the controls with known associations to casualty levels, including poverty and inequality, have signs consistent with previous findings, validating the data and overall design. Despite these relationships, the FCG variable survives all controls, district-level fixed effects, and the isolation of the Maoist homeland as a sub-case. One immediate concern is whether this relationship is an artifact of the specific suite of controls and operationalizations in the models. Tables A7.1 and A7.2 add additional controls, switch the operationalization of key variables to binary measures, and employ negative binomial models as an alternative strategy for managing the zero-inflation of upper-caste killings. The FCG measure survives in each instance.

Presenting separate results for the heartland district addresses two potential concerns. First, despite district-level fixed effects, it is possible that the heartland itself varies in some way from other regions of Nepal that explain both the concentration of FCGs and Maoist attention. For example, the Maoist heartland's forests are slightly denser than the rest of Nepal on average.[127] Running the regressions within only the heartland acts as a check for this effect.

Second, the effect of FCGs may actually be muted by the inclusion of regions where the insurgency did not spread until the very final days of the rebellion. If this concern reflects reality,

[127] Forest coverage of the heartland is about 25%, versus a 20% average across Nepal.

we might expect to see the effect of FCGs increase in territory where the Maoists had the most time to implement political development strategies selectively between well- and poorly-organized villages.

In fact, Table 7.1 reflects the latter pattern. Between the Poisson models with full controls ((4) and (7)), the size of the FCG effect quadruples in the heartland. The result suggests that the relationship between FCGs and upper-caste casualties is not spurious on some unobserved characteristic of the heartland. In fact, it appears Maoists distinguished more diligently between villages with and without FCGs in precisely the places a strategy of insurgent investment had the longest to play out. VDCs outside the heartland experienced something of an accelerated revolutionary development. Chapter 4 details how the Maoist perception of the state's weakness post-2001 led to faster expansion of Maoist territory on the grounds that encircling the state could bring its end without the need for expanding base areas.

The theory tested here, of course, argues that FCGs will draw Maoists and, therefore, combat. And so, the tests need to be careful that the relationship between FCGs and lower caste casualties does not, for any number of reasons, simply reflect a relationship between FCGs and violence more generally. To test this, if FCGs actually draw Maoist investment, expressed through selective civilian targeting, FCGs should not be associated with targeted assassinations of lower caste civilians by Maoists, or targeted assassination of civilians by the state. Instead, we should observe a change only in Maoist killings of the upper castes.

Table 7.2 illustrates this selective abuse. State targeted casualties of either caste do not correlate with FCGs. Neither is FCG presence a significant predictor of lower-caste killings by Maoists. In addition to direct tests for correlation between lower-caste casualties and FCG presence, I compare identical models of upper- and lower-caste casualties using Wald tests.

Table 7.2: Correlates of Lower Caste Killings by Maoists and All Castes by State

Dependent Variable Description: Maoist Lower Caste Casualties					
	Full Country Models			**Maoist Heartland Models**	
	OLS	Poisson		Poisson	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Forestry Conservation Group	-.019 (.014)	-.108 (.097)	.019 (.110)	.060 (.205)	-.083) .212
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Dependent Variable Description: State Upper Casualties					
	Full Country Models			**Maoist Heartland Models**	
	OLS	Poisson		Poisson	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Forestry Conservation Group	.076*** (.015)	.312** (.073)	.202 (.080)	.260 (.218)	.223) (.133)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Dependent Variable Description: State Upper Casualties					
	Full Country Models			**Maoist Heartland Models**	
	OLS	Poisson		Poisson	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Forestry Conservation Group	.035** (.013)	.218* (.093)	.271** (.105)	.216 .167	.074 (.173)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	3735	3744	3744	687	687

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the .1%, 1%, and 5% level, respectively. Conservation group presence and casualties measured as binary. Population and elevation scaled.

Wald tests of coefficients on an identical suite of causal variables allow an estimate of the probability that a particular independent variable (FCG presence) has the same effect on two dependent variables (upper and lower caste casualties). Wald tests here demonstrate the extreme unlikelihood that FCG presence had the same effect on upper and lower caste casualties. In the full country model with controls, the probability of equality is 0.036%; in the heartland model the probability rises to 2.9%. No easily substituted variable would explain theoretically why

Maoists selected out the upper castes for punishment in villages with FCGs. In fact, only the Maoist connection to upper-caste killings is the only significant relationship.

As described in the theory section, lower-caste casualties should in fact be lower in FCG villages. Table 7.2, in which the lower-caste models are identical to the upper-caste models in Table 7.1, provides no evidence of this prediction. The sign of the relationship flips between models and is never significant. One potential confound could easily explain this lack of correlation. If FCGs draw Maoist attention, Maoists are likely to spend more time in FCG villages than equally situated non-FCG villages. Chapter 6 has already demonstrated that Maoists arrived earlier in FCG villages. Maoists may be less violent per interaction, but we still observe higher violence due to increased exposure. The trends, working at cross-purposes, cancel each other out. Table 7.3 considers this possibility by adding a control for the date of first casualty caused or experienced by Maoists as a proxy for the amount of time Maoists spent in the village. In these models, the FCG coefficient is consistently negative, but

Table 7.3: Lower Caste Killings by Maoists, with Control for Earliest Maoist Presence

Dependent Variable: Victims Identified as Defectors to the State					
	Full Country Models			Maoist Heartland Models	
	OLS	Poisson		Poisson	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Forestry Conservation Group	-.057** (.019)	-.069 (.096)	-.076 (.101	-.104 (.207)	-.153 (.211)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	2126	2126	2126	453	453

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively. Conservation group presence and upper caste casualties measured as binary. Population and elevation scaled.

insignificant. A further refining of the Maoist exposure control that accounts for non-violent contact may generate significant results. For example, given more data about recruitment

successes or the deployment of services might offer a better measurement strategy for overall Maoist contacts with civilians. Still, the use of this control flipping the sign of the main independent variable as a promising indication that FCG presence helped protect the lower castes.

B. **Insurgent Killings Against Accused Informants**

Partisan civic organization attracts rebel investment in base areas because rebels can outsource policing to those groups, obtaining a higher-quality result for cheaper. The consolidation phase, during which the rebel group attempts to gather civilian support, is the time at which base-area development is most vulnerable to disruption by the state. During this period, the state attempts to co-opt individuals by offering selective rewards and punishments in exchange for informing on rebels. This strategy is especially effect where, as Popkin (1979: 19-21; 77) argues, the peasant class is differentiated in subtle ways in terms of the wartime survival strategies available. Where such differences exist, the state can identify individuals with specific interests or needs that can be met through side-payments for defection against the insurgents. Thapa (2003: 320) agrees, describing the case of an aged widow whose son was killed by the state as a warning to others that might fail to inform on the Maoists. He concludes: "It is not hard, after all, to sow discord in villages." Gersony and Lindborg (2003: 91) offer another example of a Maoist sympathizer "obliged to point out all the houses where in the past the Maoists had been given food". Security forces burned down 25 houses and killed 17 suspected Maoists. The UNHR (2012:20) concluded "the motive of the Security Forces in perpetrating acts of torture appears primarily to have been to extract information about the Maoists from anyone who might have had something to reveal."

A key challenge in consolidating control relates to persuading potential defectors against informing for the state. As set out in Chapter 2, pre-existing civic organizations help detect such defections because they institutionalize local knowledge, and generate experience in delegating enforcement tasks and aggregating their results into action.

Forestry group presence should therefore correlate with executions of defectors. This logic may at first blush seem counter-intuitive: if FCGs reduce defection, should we not observe fewer informant deaths in those districts? The theory does not predict an end to defection, but rather a change in how insurgents value intelligence from the community. As Kalyvas (2006: 179-180) argues extensively, combatant commanders often refuse to act on civilian tips when they cannot distinguish between real defection and false accusations. In poorly-organized communities, defection goes undetected in the first place, and insurgents distrust the community's accusations. In these communities with little organizational capital, the base-area order never consolidates, because the rebels can never credibly threaten selective punishment of actual defectors. Alternatively, in well-organized communities, the base-area order may consolidate because no one chooses to defect, or selective punishments in initial periods quickly deter future defection.

Whether insurgents receive higher-quality tips in FCG communities, trust tips in FCG communities more fully, or feel forced to act on dubious community tips in FCG communities remains an important question this data cannot answer.[128] Any of these explanations supports the paper's more general claim, because they are all consistent with a deepening civilian-insurgent relationship. Where FCGs are absent, Maoists may not have received tips (as there was no local group to aggregate intelligence), may not have trusted them (as there was no local group to vet the claim), or may not have cared enough to please the locals to risk killing an innocent.

[128] The full casualty reports reflect that some accused informants were killed directly by members of the community.

Using full INSEC reports, I code deaths in which the community characterized a civilian Maoist victim as a state collaborator. The coding procedure operationalizes the logic above: what was the relative prevalence of Maoist action based on (purported) community knowledge?

The data in this case support the hypothesis. To the controls in Tables 7.1 and 7.2, Table 7.4 adds a control for the total casualties in each VDC to rule out the possibility that casualties resulting from informant accusation are simply correlated with the overall number of civilian deaths. In almost all cases, the FCG term remains significant at the p<.01 level.145 Across all of

Table 7.4: Accused Anti-Informant Reprisal Killings By Maoists

Dependent Variable Description: Victims Identified as Defectors Against Maoists					
	Full Country Models			**Maoist Heartland Models**	
	OLS	Poisson		Poisson	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Forestry Conservation Group	.014*** (.002)	.047*** (.090)	.055*** (.011)	.108*** (.028)	.100*** (.029)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observation	3745	3745	3745	684	684

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the .1%, 1%, and 5% level, respectively. Conservation group presence and informant executions measured as binary. Population and elevation scaled.

Nepal, each FCG is associated with a 5.7% increase in the chance the village experienced the assassination of an informant identified by the community. In the heartland, FCGs are associated with an 10.5% increase. These results lend credibility to the conclusion that Maoists targeted the informants disproportionately in communities with forestry groups because the rebels trusted that their supporters in those communities were policing defection through reliable intelligence gathering.

C. **Upper Caste Displacement**

Of course, many upper caste Nepalis got the message before they were targeted for death. In Dhayankot, a wealthy farmer who considered himself friendly with the Maoists was asked one day to surrender his sons to fight for the Maoists. Instead, he urged them to flee. The Maoists retaliated, beating him up and seizing his house, his shop, his apple trees and his beehives, warning him to leave, as well (Sengupta 2005). Adhikari (2012) offers a concrete comparison of displaced and non-displaced Nepalis. As one might expect, Nepalis were more likely to flee their homes if faced with violence or the threat of violence, or where they suffered the loss of land or the destruction of crops and animals.

Nepali historians commonly consider the state's substantial and poorly targeted violence responsible for the majority of Nepali displacement. These abuses, documented extensively in Chapter 4, began before the war and often resulted in sudden and massive displacement. For example, Thapa (2003: 72) discusses a pre-war crackdown on Maoists involving 1500 police officers which resulted in "[m]ore than ten thousand rural youths, out of a population of 200,000 for the whole district, […] forced to flee their homes and take shelter in remote jungles." While the state's violence was often random in its effect, Maoists commonly ordered families to leave villages, appropriating assets and distributing them to others (Thapa 2003: 155).

I measure relative displacement by examining the difference between the upper caste's percentage of the population in each VDC in 2001 and 2011. The use of 2001 as a baseline year is less than ideal, but the 1991 Nepal census did not record ethnicity at the VDC level. Moreover, as Figure 4.1 (see Chapter 4, pp 98) establishes, the most violent phase of the war started in 2002 , two years after data collection for the 2001 census began. The UNHCR (2016) notes that the vast majority of displacement occurred after 2001. Further, the results in Table 7.5 would only be biased in favor of a consistent finding to the extent the pre-2001 displacement was

disproportionately lower-caste. Literature on displacement establishes that the first to flee are typically those with the most resources (e.g., Schon 2019). The use of the 2001 baseline, therefore, likely biases against the finding reported here.

Table 7.5: Upper Caste Displacement

Dependent Variable Description: Upper Caste Displacement (OLS)						
	Full Country Models			Maoist Heartland Models		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Forestry Conservation Group	-1.55*** (.000)	-3.38*** (.426)	-1.86*** (.331)	-.427 (.885)	-5.11*** (1.69)	-1.08 (.856)
Full Controls	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Fixed Effects	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observation	3735	3971	3735	675	769	675

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the .1%, 1%, and 5% level, respectively. Conservation group presence measured as binary. Population and elevation scaled.

Despite the fact that the displacement variable cannot distinguish which party (or other cause) prompted any given person to flee, the association between FCG presence and upper caste flight is clear. In the full country model with full controls (3), each FCG established before 1995 is associated with a 1.5-2.1% decrease in the proportion of the population that is upper caste. Holding all else constant, a one standard deviation shift in the number of FCGs resulted in a 5% decline. This relationship does not hold in the heartland. All signs are negative, but the effect size drops and relationship loses significance. This is perhaps to be expected given the data sources. While the war's intensity across the country rose substantially after the year 2000, the war began substantially earlier in the heartland, with major police offensives displacing civilians even before the start of Maoist hostilities. The offensive described above in Thapa occurred in the Maoist heartland, and resulted in substantial displacement. It seems plausible that, by the time of the 2001 census that serves as the baseline in this test, a substantial portion of the population had already evacuated.

IV. **Discussion**

The results above support the assertion that Maoists paid disproportionate attention to villages with FCGs during the consolidation phase. First and foremost, the pattern in civilian killings shown here matches the expectations of the organizational capital theory, but none of its competitors. The divergence of upper and lower caste casualties grows more acute when controlling (imperfectly) for actual exposure to Maoist forces, and mirrors the differences in displacement trends between the castes. Crucially, this chapter provided a glimpse at evidence from the mechanism itself: that Maoists appear to have taken tips about spies from FCG communities more seriously than non-FCG communities, killing the accused more often where FCGs pre-existed the war. Measures of displacement match the patterns in killing, suggesting that civilians on the ground saw the patterns themselves and reacted accordingly. These relationships survive a number of changes to the regression specification, and match up with descriptions of violence in areas of Maoist consolidation provided by Maoists, civilians, and historians alike.

Could these patterns be the result of a spurious correlation, or have an alternative explanation? Many other examinations of within-case variation in levels of violence use civilian casualties as a proxy for the war's intensity and, by extension, a way to measure the factors that influenced the war's cause. As discussed more fully in Chapter 5, such examinations consider the association between casualties and poverty (Do and Iyer 2010), inequality (Nepal, Bohara, and Gwande 2013); impassible territory (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004), and

repression or grievance (Gulden 2002; Ottman 2015).[129] The models presented below all control for variables commonly associated with these explanations, including controls for demographics, socio-economic indicators, and geography. More directly, because these explanations simply proxy the war's intensity, they neither predict nor measure relative differences in the demographics the combatants victimize.

Explanations of civilian casualties couched in combatants' strategic concerns are thinner on the ground. Some argue simply that the eradication of civilians assumed hostile for demographic reasons weaken the enemy by displacing their base of support (Downes 2011; Azam and Hoeffler 2002) or that such civilians proxy for opposition troops when those troops are out of reach (Fjelde and Hultman 2014; Hultman 2010). Balcells (2010) makes a similar argument applied behind the rebels' own line: Sweeping the rear of enemies decreases the chances of attacks from within the base territory.

The intuition of these theories largely accords with the thrust of the argument presented here. This dissertation exploits variation in <u>when and where</u> opposition civilians are killed, surmising that the cost of abuse and displacement, or of sweeping the rear, are justified in some places but not others. Understanding where rebels prioritize this type of violence provides insight into the strategic considerations and organizational behavior of rebel groups.

Kalyvas (2006) argues that insurgent violence against civilians responds to informational demands; insurgents in the early stages of consolidation have little information on which to base judgments about civilian defection at the same time their fledging control is most vulnerable to it.

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[129] Concerns about controlling for repression and grievance here are particularly acute, as many FCGs saw as their mission to confront the environmental depredations of upper caste jimidars (see Chapter 4). If these abuses led <u>both</u> to the creation or maintenance of FCGs and greater individual-level support for Maoists, the correlations observed below would be spurious on the mere prior presence of jimidars.

I consider this question in greater detail in the conclusion.

At these times, rebels are more likely to act on local misinformation out of desperation, leading to a relationship between local control and violence.

Controlling directly for Kalyvas's explanation would require highly granular data on the level of control Maoists exerted over each village across time. Such data does not, to my knowledge, exist.[130] This inability to control directly for Kalyvas's mechanism is of limited concern for several reasons. As detailed in Chapter 5, the relationship between control and killings does not appear to give rise to a theoretically sound concern of a "backdoor" connection between FCGs and patterns in upper caste killings. It is certainly possible that Maoists killed more civilians in FCG villages because they chose to take those villages over and attempt to assert control. Such an interpretation of the results here would be, of course, perfectly consistent with the argument that the FCGs were a persuasive determinant of where Maoists preferred to settle.

It also bears mention again that Kalyvas does not predict anything about the demographic identity of the victims of violence. In fact, Kalyvas (2006: 339) emphasizes that the personal feuds motivating the tips often run orthogonal to the cleavages urged by the national war. If the patterns observed here are a result such complaints, the likelihood of targeted killings against the upper castes should vary in step with their prevalence in the population, a result we do not observe. If casualties simply mirrored the intensity or relative impact of the war, all demographic groups should have been similarly effected by the presence of forestry groups. Instead, the only violence more associated with lower caste organizational capital was Maoist targeting of the upper castes.

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[130] Kalyvas himself (2006: 239) admits substantial limitations in his own study: "it is difficult to find evidence that clearly differentiates between zones 2 and 4 on one hand and zone 3 on the other hand… Hence the evidence is tentative and indirect."

Kalyvas's informational model similarly fails to explain the overall pattern in the findings of the different tests. Even if casualty rates were determined by informational concerns, causing killings to spike in areas of mixed control, such a mechanism would affect the castes equally as control passed from the state and into Maoist hands. Kalyvas argues that civilian behavior is governed by self-preservation and the balance of power between combatants. If so, defection, false informing, and the other behaviors that lead to the targeting of civilians should not be predicated on ethnicity or caste.

One important concern about possible spurious relationships remains mentioned but undiscussed. It is possible, given the origin story of the forestry groups presented in Chapter 4, that the relationship between forest groups and casualties is endogenous on the prior influence of jimidars. These Brahmins dispatched from Kathmandu to collect taxes often engaged in deforestation opposed by forestry members. If jimidars incensed local anger, VDCs with active jimidar families might be both more likely to support Maoists at the individual level and adopt or maintain FCGs. There are qualitative reasons to doubt this story. Almost all VDCs in the Maoist heartland had jimidar families who came to dominate local politics, yet not all VDCs have forestry groups. The sources of janjati anger are also myriad; development and quality of life failures abound in these districts.

The existing regressions also offer three ways to manage this concern quantitatively. One potential route concerns the conflict's demographics. Jimidar are always upper caste, and so the percentage of a village with upper caste identity might predict the level of grievance among janjatis.[131] Yet, neither diversity measures nor the inclusion of a straight percentage of the

[131] This relationship might plausible obtain in either direction. Villages with higher percentages of upper caste residents may have provoked stronger reactions due to greater presence or amount of abuse. Villages with lower percentages may have presented an obvious target or focal point for resistance.

percentage of each village in the upper caste affects the significance or magnitude of FCG presence.

Second, we can proxy anti-jimidar sentiment in the Maoist heartland using our measure for political homogeneity. In the heartland regions, Maoists resoundingly won post-conflict elections, and even won some offices in the pre-war period. In the heartland, at least, political homogeneity is synonymous with support for Maoists and a rejection of the jimidar system. Yet political homogeneity neither predicts FCG presence, and FCGs are still significantly correlated with the outcomes above when homogeneity is controlled for Finally, the tests include measures for inequality, the direct complaint made by the Maoists and their supporters. Jimidars were opposed in large part because the institution exacerbated inequality. To the extend that neither demographic nor election results controls proxy effectively for the relative capriciousness of individual jimidars,

This chapter would still benefit from more close evidence from individual villages. Few existing studies consider FCGs, or any other type of civic organization, in the Nepali war. Firsthand descriptive evidence of local elite involvement would offer the best evidence of the mechanism in motion, and alleviate some concerns that arise naturally from purely observational studies. In particular, examples of Maoist redistribution from the assets of upper caste civilians targeted for violence or threats would help demonstrate a parallel practice to that used by Chinese revolutionaries (and described in detail in Chapter 3).

Still, it is extremely unlikely that these observations coincide by accident, and none of the variables indicated by competitive theories appears to erode the relationship between FCGs and Maoist intent to consolidate influence in villages that feature them, and even more so when considering the evidence that FCGs drew disproportionate Maoist investment at the contestation

and control phases of the political development project, as well. In sum, the simplest explanation is that Maoist forces abused members of the upper castes more frequently in villages with forestry groups because the lower castes in these villages were more likely to cooperate in support of the rebels and provide reliable intelligence and enforcement. The cooperation lowered the cost of building base areas at the same time as it raised the benefits of control. In the next chapter, we consider the evidence that Maoists concentrated their governance and control efforts is villages with forest groups, as well.

CHAPTER 8 - Control

I. **Introduction**

This chapter concludes the dissertation's empirical examination by considering the hypotheses related to the final stage of revolutionary development: control. When rebels secure territory, they must decide how they will interact with local residents. As detailed in Chapter 3, civilian collaboration is often the combatants' central concern (Mao 1963; Guevara 1968; Ahmad 1982; Laqueur 1976). The notion of revolutionary development meshes well with the existing literature on rebel governance. In summarizing advances in the field, several of its leading students noted that:

> Rebel governance can, therefore, be a crucial factor in shaping the civilian-insurgent relationship. Insurgents who develop effective and legitimate governance systems can reap rewards, while those that fail often weaken their capacity to achieve their larger strategic objectives.
>
> (Arjona, Kasfir, and Mamphilly 2015: 4)

This statement implicates two of the most important elements of revolutionary development. First, rebels seek to invest in governance where they anticipate reaping the greatest reward. Second, in developing the civilian-insurgent relationship, insurgents minimize their own governance costs by delegating responsibility for service provision to civilians who are capable of taking it on. Both of these elements are met where the insurgents' platform constituency is well-organized. Demonstrating this connection, however, requires at the very least controlling for other factors thought to draw rebel efforts in creating governance.

This chapter presents evidence that Nepali Maoists were more likely to develop the trappings of base-area control and governance in villages that featured forestry groups. What does control look like? This chapter operationalizes control in two ways. The first is the establishment of actual service and governance points in each village. As discussed in greater

detail below, a wide range of sources establish that Maoists elected and appointed People's Councils (jan sakar) at the village, district, and regional level. They provided services in the form of health clinics and education, and provided policing and trials of accused criminals. Where did Maoists feel secure enough to engage in these governance activities? Where did they feel the greatest strategic benefit from demonstrating their control in these ways? These questions strike at the heart of the control question.

The second operationalization considers the recruitment success of Maoist forces. This measure of control is less intuitive, as Maoists plainly recruited members before they controlled any villages at all. Yet the historical record makes clear that Maoists staged open recruitment events and used service provision points, such as schools and clinics, to distribute propaganda that urged civilians to join the cause. The overall volume of Maoist recurrent was highest in areas of increasing control; where the insurgents could be certain that holding open events and providing services as a part of recruitment strategy were unlikely to draw destructive reprisal that wiped out their costly investments in base-area development.

This chapter demonstrates a strong connection between the pre-existence of forestry groups in a village, and the Maoists' service provision and recruitment success. After reviewing the available evidence, it considers some potential objections.

II. **Evidence**

The ambition of the Maoists to govern is hardly in dispute. Unlike any number of other movements that professed a desire to better the lives of their platform constituents, the Maoists appear to have acted in a diverse set of service areas: "The revolutionaries substituted themselves

for a state, a state that had never really been present…" (Ghimire 2013: 125). The main and most local organ of this substitute state was the *jan sakar*, described here by Onesto:[132]

> The party led the people to form 3-in-1 committees made up of people from the party, people from the army, and the mass organizations. These committees were given the power to judge and settle various disputes among the people — disputes about land, disputes over debt, cases where a husband is beating his wife, divorce, etc.
>
> -(2003: 161)

According to Onesto, these committees were typically made up of 40% members of the party, 20% members of the military, and 40% village residents. Owing to the difficulties of holding open elections and convincing residents to vote during wartime, civilian *jan sakar* members were often appointed, especially in the earlier phases of the war and in villages near the front (Adkihari 2014: 170). In some cases, the Maoists stacked the villager contingent of the *jan sakar* with member of ethnic groups they saw as likely recruits (Shniderman and Turin 2004: 87).

Maoists tended to leave local schools in operation (Sharma 2004: 44; de Sales 2013: 185). In some cases, they allowed teachers to continue receiving state pay, in others they took over funding as the state withdrew. Testimony from villages in several locations suggests that Maoists replaced old curricula with life skills and classes in local languages that civilians often found more useful that the state-sponsored Nepali education (Shniderman and Turin 2004: 91). Maoist also built and operated clinics and dug latrines. (Sharma 2004: 44; de Sales 2013: 185).

While the value of such events to the villagers is dubious, Maoists also organized cultural and propaganda programming "which included dancing and revolutionary dramas" in villages

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[132] This chapter cites Onesto in several places for descriptions of Maoist service provision. Onesto is a journalist with clear Maoist sympathies who embedded with the People's Army for several years. While many other students of the war in Nepal cite Onesto, and many other histories support his descriptions, his testimony should be taken with a grain of salt when describing the efficacy or generosity of the People's Army.

Subhodh Pyakural, a human rights activist who worked in Western Nepal and became a director at INSEC, told me in an interview that "the *jan sakar* were an illusion, a propaganda tactic" that rarely provided services of value. This view is shared by a substantial portion of Nepal's policy elite. I have written this section of the dissertation intending that it conveys a picture of Maoist services that is realistic given the evidence and perspectives that I heard and read.

under their control, often drawing spectators from more rural areas (Pettigrew 2013: 57). Maoists employed full-time songwriters and dramatists who fused Nepali traditional literature with guerrilla pantomime. One famous number encouraged the audience to croon along:

Like clouds that part and reveal the red sky,
like daylight after darkness,
There is great happiness and greenery in the forest.
That is how happy my heart is.

-Sengupta 2005

Maoists also involved themselves in financial justice, building banks and sponsoring collectives for the sale of agricultural goods and handicrafts (de Sales 2013: 191), and burned bond records of indebted villagers (Guantam, Banskota, and Machanda 2003: 105; Onesto 2003: 161).

By far the most active area of Maoist rebel governance involved law enforcement and the court system. In various places Maoists banned alcohol (Cailmail 2013: 156) and the practice of religion (Shrestha-Schipper 2013: 276) in addition to creating a broad "Public Legal Code" in 2003. Crime prosecuted under the Code included "spying" or assisting the State, posing as Maoists, collecting donations in the name of Maoists, rape, theft, burglary, corruption, incest and disobeying orders.[133]

The importance of courts for consolidating power and obtaining civilian cooperation is clearly captured by the fact that the Maoists in Nepal "regard[ed] their court system as the heart of their 'People's Government' " (Haviland 2006). A UNHR (2012: 199) report noted that "People's Courts" were accessible, swift and inexpensive," but criticized them for a lack of transparency and their frequent use to remove obstacles to the People's War.

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[133] These examples were observed in the exhibits to the UNHR report, specifically Ref. No. 2001-07-00 - incident - Kalikot_5484; Ref. No. 2004-08-00 - incident - Dhankuta_1643; Ref. No. 2006-06-10 - incident - Surkhet_4892; Ref No. 2006-09-07- incident - Lamjung_5720; Ref. No. 2006-03-13 - incident - Rupandehi_5738.

Judges were not normally appointed permanently nor did they work full-time. In most cases, CPN (Maoist) members with political functions served in the judicial sector. According to reports, a judge was nominated and then "endorsed" by the local people through a system of raising hands or nodding heads. Between one and five judges sat on each case. The Public Legal Code does not provide any procedural rules for trails or detentions,[134] and the UNHR noted that many defendants in the courts were not represented. Summons to the court were usually "well-heeded," if only because the alternative to appearance was beating (UNHR 2012: 187).

Yet the Maoist service provision and control sometimes chafed at locals, and was often associated with abuse. The following passage describes this tension in Thabang, a village in the center of the Maoist heartland, which became an exemplar of the Maoist order in the telling of the insurgents' own PR wing:

> Thabang … was an obscure, nondescript place where few outsiders ever came. But the Maoists lent the village a degree of fame, bringing in a steady stream of travelers… Many of them were impressed with the vigorous social and political organization maintained by the rebels.
>
> Maoist soldiers in fatigues could be seen chatting over tea or snacks in eateries that were run as cooperatives [and] in party-run grocery stores buying goods that were likely to come from one of the Maoist-run projects, such as the Jaljala cottage industry cooperative that made shawls, caps, bags, handkerchiefs and bags.
>
> Locals of Thabang were required to carry messages or goods from one place to another within the special district, organize food and shelter for visiting Maoists from other districts, and build trails connecting Thabang to other VDCs.
>
> Adkihari 2014: 171.

Despite these positive descriptions, Maoists had a reputation for pressing locals into unpaid service. Sengupta (2005) details the construction of a mountain road, for which Maoists required local families to each supply a member for a fifteen day "shift" on the road. Conscripts

[134] The code explicitly forbids death or beatings as punishment, but both INSEC and the UNHR reports frequently cite their use.

were required to supply their own food and housing during the shift, which in practice meant hauling their own rice up a mountain and sleeping in the forest near the construction site.

Forced labor was also a common punishment for a conviction before the *jan sakar* (UNHR 2012: 141). The Maoists also engaged in humiliation couched in local religious practices by, for example, shaving the heads of victims and parading them nude through the village,[135] by forcing victims to wear necklaces made of shoes,[136] or by forcing them to handle or live in the same building as livestock seen as unclean (Adkihari 2014: 132).

Locals and experts alike also questioned whether the Maoists and their supporters accurately represented the value or consistency of services. One such debate focuses on the Maoist promise to dispossess landlords and return land to the tiller. Onesto (2000: 197-8) describes the Maoists reclaiming lands in lower-lying villages (holdings at higher altitudes were already very small). Cailmail (2013: 142-3) tells a story of a landlord's eviction at the behest of a local forestry group.

Yet Lecomte-Tilouine (2013: 251) flatly rejects the implication that Maoists returned land to villagers as a policy. Gersony (2003: 98) claims instead that Maoists collectivized agriculture and acted in most ways as an abusive landlord. Guantam and co-authors (2003: 105) describe this process of collectivization, but note that Maoists distributed the resulting products evenly among villagers.

Relatively few students of civil war will be surprised that insurgents engaged in human rights abuses, and the central question of this chapter hardly requires the white-washing of the Maoist record in this regard. Instead, the purpose here is to evidence the Maoist use of services

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[135] UNHR Ref. Nos. 5560, 5983.

[136] UNHR Ref. No. 5917.

and policy to generate a sense of control. It bears mention in this section that the Maoists's successful transition into a political party that frequently governs the country stands as a testament to their service provision relative to the state. Large numbers of Nepalis had the chance to compare Maoist provision to that of the Congress party and elected to support the Maoists.

Histories of the conflict also demonstrate that Maoist service provision and governance deepened as the extent of their control grew. Baburam Battari, the political secretary of the Maoist party during the war, argued that the People's Army would allow greater democracy as the local jan sakar gained power, a process Adkihari (2014: 170) grudgingly admits to observing. According to Thapa (2003: 91) Maoists controlled 51 villages in 1998. By 1999, Maoists held local elections in 87 VDCs (Guantam, et al. 2013: 105). Such elections had spread to hundreds of villages across 22 of Nepals 77 districts by 2001 (UNHR: 43).

Maoists in zones of greater control became increasingly bold in terms of advertising and hosting services, as well. Mahesh Arohi, a Maoist songwriter and performer, detailed to Jha (2014: 60) how Maoist cultural performances were initially held indoors during the day, but eventually moved outside in villages under firm control.

Service provision was also plainly related to recruitment drives. Pettigrew (2013: 112) reports that as the state abandoned villages and discontinued services, Maoists replaced them, becoming the sole party attempting to mobilize Nepali youth. Maoists assiduously placed the members of the least-served local minorities in the jan sakar and implemented programs designed to win over ethnic community leaders.[137] Post-war involvement in the Maoist party is

[137] Lecomte-Timouine 2013: 226 (describing services and recruitment among dalits in the Western foothills; Schiederman and Turin 2004: 87 (describing services and recruitment among Thangmi communities in Dolakha district).

correlated most closely with the presence of Maoist services during the war; Acharya (2009) argues that the Maoist faithful were often drawn in as "policy entrepreneurs" who became wealthier or more powerful by taking on administration of insurgent services. The Maoists evidently did not stop with hearts and minds, they used service provision to win wallets, as well.

This evidence indicates that Nepal's Maoists followed the general Maoist strategy of consolidating control in hinterland base areas, and providing services in order to recruit and persuade the population to embrace their rule. Nothing this historical record, however, bears on the central question of whether civilian social capital influenced the revolutionary decision to invest in service provision and recruitment. For this, we turn to the statistical evidence below. This evidence, like that in previous chapters, is consistent with the dissertation's thesis: Nepali Maoists provided services and were more successful recruiters in villages with forestry groups.

The first and most straightforward test concerns the establishment of Maoist services. At the close of hostilities, UNHR representatives recorded the VDCs in which Maoist rebels had established permanent, parallel government outposts. The UNHR data reports whether the observed government was intended by Maoists to cover the village, area, or region. While the latter two terms are not defined, based upon both the location of area and regional governments and multiple informal conversations with party officials and former cadre workers, "area" refers to the district and "region" to a wider scope. Area governments are most often located in or near the district seat.

Reliance on the UNHR data elides concerns about strategic reporting by Maoist sources that would over-claim the amount of control the insurgents exercised.[138] The UNHR only

[138] In fact, my meetings with CPN-M members in western Nepal did yield a list of *jan sakar* in a similar region. The list claimed that all VDCs had governance by 2001, and the vast majority by 1999; an implausible claim and one which, even if true, would be useless for testing.

gathered this data in the western half of Nepal, where it oversaw demobilization programs attendant to the peace process. This collection strategy could potentially bias the results if the Maoists followed different strategies in the comparably rural west. It also undercounts the provision of Maoist services by privileging "administrative capacity," which, according to interviews with UNHR officials in Kathmandu, referred to posts that directed the activity of the Maoist cadre in nearby villages.

Table 8.1 reports the results of these regressions. Given that most VDCs lacked a verified government office, I report the results of a poisson model as the main result, with OLS results supplied to assure that the effects are not a figment of the poisson specification. The results are consistent with the observable implications of the insurgent development theory. In the poisson models, the presence of forestry groups is associated with around a 50% increase in the likelihood of the village being chosen as a site of Maoist governance.

Table 8.1: Establishment of Maoist Governance in Western Nepal

Dependent Variable: UNHR Verified Maoist Government Offices				
	Poisson		OLS	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Forestry Conservation Group	.511** (.222)	.600** (.261)	.066* (.036)	.110** (.040)
Full Controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
District-Level Fixed Effects	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	679	679	680	680

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively. Population and elevation scaled.

The qualitative section above describes that Maoists provided services in other places, however. Sometimes services such as health clinics or cultural shows were mobile, in other cases, such as road building, the nature of the service was transient. Perhaps more to the point, the

UNHR data specifically declaims any attempt to count the villages in which *jan sakar* or other Maoist services were provided.

No alternative dataset measures the occurrence of stable *jan sakar* in Nepali villages. The term itself reveals the difficulty of such a project: how frequent or consistent a presence would count? In order to provide some insight into this problem, I turn to the measurement of casualties among the Maoist cadre during the war. Maoists engaged in cadre development to administer villages and convince the people that the Maoist cause was viable:

> "The Party's priority was to build a vast organizational apparatus; create trained district and village-level leaders that understood the ideological framework and could convince the rest of the target groups; and build a coercive apparatus — their own militia and subsequently army — that could stand up to the state."
>
> Jha 2014: 157.

INSEC data, described in depth in Chapter 5 and summarized in Chapter 7, included the occupation of each victim. Crucially, the dataset distinguishes between fighters in the People's Army and members of the Maoist cadre, employees or volunteers whose first purpose was to recruit, proselytize the Maoist message, and provide services such as health care, education, and agricultural expertise. Therefore, the relative number of deaths of the cadre in each village offer a picture of the distribution of Maoist recruitment and service efforts across Nepal. As shown in Table 8.2 (following page) the presence of forestry groups is positively associated with cadre deaths, consistent with the observable implications of the theory.

As with many of the outcome variables examined in this dissertation, the distribution of Maoist casualties is zero-inflated rather than normal (about 700 villages had zero cadre deaths, and a further 700 experienced one death). As a result, the main model presented here ((1) and (2)) uses a Poisson rather than OLS specification, although the OLS results are presented as a robustness check (models (5) and (6)).

Table 8.2: Location of Maoist Cadre Battle Deaths

Dependent Variable: Maoist Cadre Casualties						
	Poisson				OLS	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Forestry Conservation Group	.261*** (.029)	.178*** (.033)	.131*** (.028)	.134*** (.033)	.116*** (.033)	.123*** (.037)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District-Level Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Battle Casualty Control	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	3737	3737	3737	3737	3657	3657

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively. Population and elevation scaled.

In these models, forestry groups and cadre casualties are both presented as continuous variables, making the interpretation of the coefficients more intuitive. Model 4, which includes full controls, an extra control for battle deaths, and district-level fixed effects, predicts an additional cadre death for every five to ten forestry groups in a village. Relatively few villages boast so many groups, but we must recall that cadre deaths represent a small slice of total cadre force, and that the number of villages fully in Maoist control pushes the magnitude of the relationship down with respect to what it operationalizes: the presence of cadre members providing governance or services.

This measure has its own weaknesses. Most obviously, areas of total Maoist control likely featured villages with numerous cadre members that were never killed.[139] These areas of heavy investment would register as having zero investment by this measure. If the dissertation's theory is correct, this concern most likely biases against a finding, as villages with forestry groups would more likely be excluded. It could be, however, that we observe a relationship between cadre deaths and forestry groups because forestry groups draw fighting for reasons other than Maoist

[139] More than 90% of the cadre members killed in the INSEC dataset were killed by police or the Nepali Army.

revolutionary investment; similar villages with similar cadre investments but no FCGs were left alone by the state. This concern is plausible given the finding in Chapter 6 that FCG villages experience earlier and high volumes of battle deaths.

I attempt to manage this concern in two ways. First, and most straightforwardly, Models (3) and (4) in Table 8.2 employ a control for deaths in the village caused by cross-fire. If FCG presence and cadre casualties are only related through the state's offensives, the relationship should disappear when controls for the state's offensives are employed. Unsurprisingly, the magnitude of FCG-cadre relationship shrinks using this control. The state killed more cadre members where it also killed civilians or People's Army members during exchange of fire. The theory of revolutionary investment embraces this possibility. Of course the state will look for Maoist forces where they are, and they are more likely to be in villages with forestry groups.

Yet the relationship remains highly significant.

Second, we consider the cadre casualty correlation in the broader context of the other results. If we observed the connection between cadre casualties and forestry groups because the state felt it easier to target Maoists in villages with forestry groups, we would not expect forestry groups to be associated with other signs of permanent Maoist investment, because the state's more consistent attacks would make such investment riskier. Two results discussed so far stand out in this way. The establishment of brick-and-mortar-style governance institutions such as those measured in Table 8.1 are a sure sign of Maoist confidence in excluding the state, and they are also correlated with forestry group presence. The casualty and displacement patterns discussed in Chapter 7 demonstrate selective targeting of the relative minority members of the upper castes in villages with forestry groups also suggests increasing Maoists attempts at control. The conflict history presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 6 in particular highlight that Maoists often abused

members of the upper caste in an effort to redistribute resources to the platform population, and to respond to community tips about state informants.

One more variable bears on the control stage of the revolutionary's investment: successful recruitment. While recruitment can plainly occur in areas under state control, both Maoist revolutionary guidance and the practice of the Nepali Maoist movement link the provision of services to enlistment of community members in support of the revolution. As with other hypotheses, an observable implication of the revolutionary investment theory is that insurgents should be more successful in recruiting from communities where their platform constituencies.

In order to test this hypothesis, I use the home village of Maoist cadre and People's Army members killed during the Nepali civil war. The INSEC dataset recorded the village in which village the deceased resided. I presume that the village of residence reflects, in the majority of cases, the location where the individual was recruited. In the vast majority of non-combat fatalities, civilian conflict victims resided in the village in which they died, or in a neighboring village. In the vast majority of cases, however, combatants died far from home.

Maoists experimented with assigning recruits to People's Liberation Army or cadre posting near their home villages, but found that soldiers often used their power and local knowledge to abuse old rivals and undermine the Maoist message (e.g., Pettigrew 2018). As a result, Maoists tended to station PLA and cadre members farther away (e.g., Gersony and Lindborg 2003). These practices justify the assumption that Maoists who died during the war form a representative sample of the home villages of the entire cadre and People's Army.

Less than 50% of villages account for the Maoist casualties listed in the INSEC data. Since the majority of villages provided zero recruits, the main model specification presented here is again Poisson, with OLS presented as a robustness check.

The main model results again accord with the observable implications of the theory. Forestry groups and recruitment deaths are measured continuously. Each seven to ten forestry groups is correlated with the killing of a Maoist recruit from that village. The effect size is therefore modest.

Table 8.3: Home Village of Maoist Recruits

Dependent Variable: Maoist Recruitment, by Village of Origin				
	Poisson		OLS	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Forestry Conservation Group	.120*** (.029)	.138*** (.032)	.148 (.115)	.244** (.113)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District-Level Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	3737	3738	3729	3657

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively. Elevation and population variables are scaled to facilitate convergence.

Estimates of the size of the People's Army and Maoist cadre range substantially. Gersony and Limborg (2003), estimated the total force at less than 20,000, while the UNHR (2012) suspected the total force around 100,000. For demonstration purposes, take the simple average of 60,000 cadre and Army members versus the roughly 2,000 casualties represented in the regression above. The full pool of Maoists is about thirty times higher If the casualty pool is representative of the broader pool of recruits at the time the peace plan demobilized the Maoists, each forest group is associated with three or four extra recruits, holding all else constant.

Of course, it is not possible to know whether the assumption that casualties represent the Maoist force is true or not. Further, in the third model (OLS without district fixed effects) the

relationship between recruitment and forestry groups is not statistically significant. It is therefore plausible that in this case, the observed relationship depends upon the model's specifications.[140]

III. **Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrated that Maoist forces in Nepal cleaved to the Maoist strategy of using service provision in areas of consolidated control to win hearts and minds and spur on the recruitment effort. In light of documenting this strategy, it considered whether indicators of governance, service provision, and recruitment were correlated with the existence of forestry conservation groups. The consistent association between forestry group presence and indicators of revolutionary investment, in this chapter and others, points to the plausibility of theory that insurgents invest in building base areas most often where their platform constituency is well-organized.

The evidence presented here is not without complications. Nepali Maoists, like most combatants in civil wars, were responsible for human rights abuses attendant to their governance and service provision. These actions contradict the Maoist strategy to which the movement claimed to adhere. Without offering a moral excuse for these failings, however, the balance of Maoist behavior is consistent with a good faith effort to govern in areas of its control. Some discussion of potential objections is required.

With few exceptions, the statistical relationships between forestry group presence and indicators of control were positive and significant. The magnitudes of these relationships ranged from impressive to modest. Could these relationships be spurious on other demographic, economic, or political realities? We might ask, for example, whether FCGs and Maoist

[140] In models with alternate suites of controls and binary measures of forestry groups, the relationship does remain significant.

recruitment success were truly related, or if the pattern in an artifact of some other VDC characteristic that led to both FCG presence and support for Maoists.

Mobilization literature focuses on some common factors. Chief among these are the notion of economic opportunity costs. Azam (2006) shows that mobilization outcomes depend not only on the wages offered to fighters, but on the prevailing wage offered to farm labor in the same area. Similarly, Dube and Vargas (2008) show that changes in local commodity prices affect the strength of local insurgents. Grievance may also play a role in predicting who fights. Citizens are more amenable to violence when they are excluded politically or socially (Huntington 1968; Horowitz 1985) or their economic development is stymied (Gurr 1979; Nepal, Bohara, and Gawande 2014).

These theories point to a now-familiar set of confounding explanations: perhaps Nepalis that are relatively poor or excluded from political life are more likely to join a revolutionary cause that promises to change their position. This may occur either because the movement makes promises erstwhile recruits find worth the risk or because the recruitment target's opportunities outside the rebellion are so poor that the risks of dying in wartime hardly register against the risks of dying in peacetime. Perhaps Maoists, understanding this, chose to invest in services where they felt civilians were demographically most pliable. My examinations of recruitment includes the controls for inequality, poverty, and the relative presence of disenfranchised minorities. The FCG effect survives these controls, suggesting that the effect of FCGs is independent.[141]

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[141] A portion of the rebel governance literature considers the insurgency itself as the unit of analysis. For example, Stewart (2017) argues that secessionist movements are more likely to provide services to the entire population where non-secessionist movements are more likely to provide services selectively as a recruiting tool. Huang and Sullivan (2021) demonstrate that rebel movements that receive outside funding are more likely to provide services. Others argue that insurgents provide services whenever they wish to outbid the state or signal their likelihood of success to the civilian population (Bloom 2004; Grynkewich 2008). This chapter, however, aims at explaining variation in the geographic distribution of services within a movement.

The recruitment literature also considers social explanations very similar to the revolutionary investment argument. These theories argue variously that recruits are moved by issues of emotion or desire for self-efficacy (Wood 2003), the influence of their friends (McAdam 1986; Verkiiak 2004), or the coherence of their communities (Scott 1976). I largely agree with theories. Although I presume that all these factors played a part, I can offer no controls for the influence of friends on recruitment decisions, nor for the coherence of each rural Nepali community, nor for the emotions and desire for self-actualization.

Still, the Maoist heartland was largely populated with linguistic and caste minorities isolated both physically[142] and socially from prosperity and power, and every indication in the ethnography and history of Western Nepal suggests that these communities bonded over the creation of hidden transcripts and foot-dragging resistance. There is little reason to believe that villages across Western Nepal would differ greatly from each other in terms of the population's collective social interest in lifting the boot of brahminocracy.

As a second concern, data on insurgent behavior gathered from a war zone is often incomplete, giving rise to reasonable concerns that some undetected bias in the observation strategy taints the validity of the inferences drawn from it. The data presented in this chapter is no exception. I relied heavily on death records of certain demographic groups to draw conclusions about the behavior of the full, living cohort, about whom no data exists. I relied on partial surveys of Nepali regions to examine patterns when fuller data from the full country would have been preferable.

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[142] Some studies of recruitment operationalize the broad notion of community strength by assuming that physically isolated communities will be stronger (Humphries and Weinstein 2006). I do control for relative isolation of each VDC through population density and altitude.

Still, compared to most conflict zones, the fidelity of data here is remarkable. If we only allow inferences from complete data, we would have to abandon the study of rebel behavior altogether.

As urged at other points in this dissertation, readers should consider these data issues given the confluence of evidence produced from different sources and analyzed using different methods. While it is possible to offer alternative explanations for each of the observations above, these alternative explanations are inconsistent with the evidence as a whole. Why would the Maoist insurgents, a revolutionary movement steeped in values and strategies aligned to challenge state control in the pursuit of a more just policy and polity, recruit more successfully, and engage in service provision and governance more consistently, in places where their platform constituency was better organized? Despite various gaps or imperfections in available data (many of which bias against the conclusions of the theory), why do we observe these relationships in almost all tests?

The next and final chapter of this dissertation argues more fully that the most plausible and simplest answer to these questions is that Nepali Maoists simply preferred to cooperate with civilians who had learned to manage information and coordination problems by participating in forestry groups. This preference shaped in a substantial way the experience of Nepalis who lived through the war, and through the subsequent periods of Maoist control of the government. Whether this process plays out in other places, contextualized to the specific claims of combatants and civic experiences of civilians, is a question that warrants greater study.

CHAPTER 9 - Conclusion

I. **Introduction**

When and where do civil society organizations offer meaningful cooperation to combatants in revolutionary wars? Do revolutionary movements condition their treatment of civilian communities based upon the civic capital in the community? Do revolutions develop hand-in- hand with the civilian populations that make up their platform population? Where, when, and how do these processes of revolutionary development unfold?

The preceding chapters set out the argument that revolutionary movements build pro-social relationships with platform communities when the community can make plausible promises to cooperate fully with rebel aims during the conflict. Strong civilian organizational capital makes performance on platform promises plausible. Civilian communities with a history of managing distributional conflicts and coordination problems in the past make a stronger case for remaining coordinated under the pressure generated in war zones. State security forces frequently attempt to ply members of the platform population away from the rebels with selective incentives, and violent penalties for refusal. Maintaining a united front between rebels and locals in the face of these pressures requires local organizations with experience observing local behaviors and legitimacy enforcing local rules.

The main body of evidence offered in the previous chapters documents the strong association between the presence of forestry conservation groups, a key civil society group in Nepal, with a suite of rebel behaviors during the Maoist insurgency. The suite of behaviors measured in the empirical chapters are all associated with the construction of Maoist base areas, both in theory and in the practice of the Nepali Maoists in particular. In Nepal, at least, strong civic organizations are associated not simply with the intensity of the conflict, but with a very

specific revolutionary development strategy. Despite some remaining concerns, documented with greater specificity below, the main argument of the dissertation is corroborated by the evidence from Nepal: rebels developed stronger and more dependent relationships with platform communities that had been well organized before the war.

In the the next section, I summarize the evidence presented in detail in Chapters 6-8. I then detail a few important remaining concerns with the research question, and discuss the dissertation's contributions and the next steps required to deepen and expand our understanding of these questions.

II. **Summary of Findings**

The findings reported in Chapters 6-8 support the hypothesis that Nepali Maoists built closer relationships with civilians in villages with forestry conservation groups. The statistical relationships between forestry groups and various conflict outcomes are supported by qualitative evidence from the conflict itself, which contextualizes the Maoists' behavior at the macro, strategic level. The sum total of the evidence demonstrates the central theoretical claim that the support of stronger civilian organizations conditions the behavior of insurgent organizations. The argument presented in Chapter 2 has a number of observable implications related to a revolution's developmental strategy. Where revolutionaries seek ultimate control over a territory, they must first contest the state's authority, and then consolidate support among the remaining civilians. This project has military and political dimensions. Eviction of the state, and the ultimate establishment of a new order may require deployment of troops. Developing legitimacy for that new order is more complicated. The revolutionaries must convince civilians both that the new rebel authority brings more beneficial policy, and that the revolution has the administrative capacity to deliver on its promises.

In order to operationalize this process, Chapters 6-8 each considered a different idealized phase of revolutionary development. Chapter 6, which considered contestation, tested several more granular hypotheses. If Nepali Maoists intended to contest the state first in villages with forestry groups, we should expect that attacks on state offices (both physical and human) are more often where forestry groups are present. We might also expect military conflict between Maoists and the state to occur first in those places.

Chapter 7 considered consolidation. Following Petersen (2001), Kalyvas (2006), and Balcells (2017), I consider the selective abuse of civilians as part of the process of rebel consolidation of power, and the consolidation of the civilian community around a preferred combatant. Yet, the rebels must guard against any tendencies for violence to become indiscriminate. During the messy process of consolidation, civilians settle personal scores and change their outward affiliation and preferences as they apprise the balance of local support swing to and fro.

My theory predicts that the transition to rebel support will be swifter and more orderly where platform civilians are better organized. Accordingly, I predict that in Nepali villages with forestry groups, Maoists will engage more quickly in the process of purging or cajoling opposition civilians, trusting the foresters to manage the platform population. This should lead to higher levels of opposition casualties and displacement among upper caste Nepalis, and to higher rates of execution of suspected spies, where forestry groups exist.

Finally, Chapter 8 considers control. In this phase, the presence of Maoist governance becomes permanent--the ultimate object of base area construction. Accompanying this, the density of Maoist political and service officers grows.

In all cases, the presence of forestry groups before the war predicts the signs of revolutionary development during it. Maoists started fighting earlier, burned government buildings, killed and displaced upper caste civilians, prosecuted spies, assigned political officers and built lasting government in places where their platform populations were more organized.

Can we interpret these findings as support for the theory? The answer depends on the extent to which the Nepali Maoist movement actually adopted and adhered to Mao's own tenants of base areas construction. Again, the record is broadly supportive. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the Nepali Maoist general better known by his nom de guerre "Prachanda," declared his intent to "follow the path of People's War with the strategy of encircling the city from the countryside [as] developed by Comrade Mao" (Adkihari 2014 at 33). Strategic analysis of the Maoist combat strategy bears out their dedication. "The party's military strategy adopted Mao's concept of protracted warfare. Prachanda and his comrades-in-arms reverently cited Mao's prescriptions on moving from 'strategic defence, to strategic equilibrium, to strategic offence'" (Sharma 2004 at 51-2).

The details provided in Chapter 4 establish that Nepali Maoists followed Mao's actual revolutionary blueprint. Given this, the list of observable behaviors that signify revolutionary development is clear, and the relationship between forestry groups and these behaviors is demonstrated here.

III. **Concerns**

Two categories of concerns stand out. The first, and perhaps less concerning, is the weak relationship between forestry group presence and the observable implications at the contestation stage. While the vast majority of models showed a statistically significant relationship between FCGs and contestation, the size of the effect was sometimes small. We might interpret this as a

weak preference for well-organized communities at exactly the point the theory argues the preference should be strongest. What might explain this?

Forestry conservation is a central concern in Nepal, and forestry groups in Nepal became an object of scholarly interest across a range of fields for legitimate reason. Their ability to gather local intelligence and impact distributional policy are substantial. Yet they are far from the only form of civil society in Nepal. Nepali villages contain father's groups, mother's groups, parent-teacher associations, irrigation collectives, and myriad others.

Perhaps FCGs are simply a weak operationalization of overall organizational capital among platform constituencies because there are other, equally powerful, civic groups. Perhaps the correlation between forestry group presence and overall civic capital is less than perfect. To manage this problem, it would be helpful to have a count of all the civic organizations that could plausibly serve the role of forestry groups during the conflict. One existing study (Gillagan, Samii, and Pasquale 2014) counted the total number of associational groups in several dozen Nepali villages, offering a plausible check on whether forestry groups predict overall organization.[143] Alas, the authors could not locate a list of the villages in which they conducted their weeks-long field experiment. I am aware of no other study or census of such groups in Nepal more broadly.

Still, the notion that some other civic groups better mobilized the Maoist platform population seems unlikely. No other category of civic group is as extensive in rural Nepal nor as well-known among ordinary Nepalis as forestry organizations. They attract special attention because they play a special role.

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[143] Of course, this would set aside the question of the symmetry of organizational capital among platform and enemy civilian groups. There is no guarantee that father's groups would support the Maoists, for example.

Additionally, if other civic organizations were better predictors of Maoist attention, what explains the stronger effect size of the consolidation and control stages?

One potential and promising explanation of the weak relationship of the contestation variables concerns how widespread Maoist influence had become when the data were collected. The data used in the contestation chapter was gathered at the end of the war, by which time the Maoists had greatly expanded the number of villages in which they sought influence. Perhaps by the later date, the Maoists had expanded base-area regions beyond the most inviting well-organized villages to include the more challenging less-well-organized.

More on-the-ground qualitative research could have addressed this issue. Interviews and village histories could address key questions. Did Maoists know that forestry groups were highly promising? Did they target them consciously? The subjects of several informational interviews remarked to me that the close relationship between forestry groups and the Maoists is known as a stylized fact, but one that has never been theorized or studied in this way. This left little to discover in the desk review of the conflict's history.

The second shortcoming concerns the lack of smoking gun evidence of the proposed mechanism. Despite the strong finding on available tests, this study is observational. The likelihood of experimenting on the variables at play seems distant. Organizational capital takes many years to build; assigning an intervention that builds it randomly among otherwise like villages would require luck and a very long time horizon. Two categories of further evidence seem a more realistic way to address this issue. The first, and more realistic, simply involves more qualitative interviews, particularly with village officials, local foresters, and members of the Maoist cadre working as civilian liaisons. If the theory of revolutionary capital is useful, we might expect a large number of these interviewees to describe the key role of forestry collectives and

other civic organizations in cooperating with Maoist efforts. (We might also expect anecdotes of opposition civilians using civic capital to collaborate with the state.)

A second, and more ambitious, strategy would involve collecting deep histories of villages similar but for the presence of forestry groups. These histories might build off interviews and village records to discuss the development of revolutionary capital in each place. Again, we would broadly expect the relationship between Maoists and civilians to be more cooperative and constructive in villages with forestry collectives. The specific hypotheses that would emerge from this method are both too numerous to discuss here and, by this point in the dissertation, intuitive to readers.

IV. **Contributions**

Aside from the contribution of a more complete account of Maoist organizational development, the focus on the use of grassroots civic capital makes contributions at the confluence of two longstanding debates in the field of civil conflict: the role of conflict in political development and the mechanism by which individual civilians mobilize into collective supporters of a revolutionary cause.

To the first, Tilly and others have argued that states build capacity (and offer civil liberties) as a tactic to reduce the transaction costs associated with maintaining militaries. The less it costs to collect taxes, the greater the share of revenue can be dedicated to actual defense. While a raft of research tends to prove that democracies and states with higher administrative capacity maintain more capable militaries and win wars, the micro-foundational evidence for the notion that war builds states is lacking. When do states engage in reforms that smooth taxation? Do citizens actually respond with less foot-dragging and more support?

To the second, Popkin points out that participation in collective rebellion is substantially riskier than adopting any number of highly individualized strategies for coping with a neglectful or repressive state. Yet successful rebellions convince a swathe of their platform populations to choose the riskier strategy. This involves not only convincing civilians to support the movement, but to do so under the organizational structure proposed by the rebellion. How do individuals come to see participation in a movement with collective goals as the better option? What factors could mitigate the individual's desire to free-ride?

The theory of revolutionary development provides a plausible answer to both questions: civil conflict offers well-organized communities in under-developed states a rare opportunity to exercise agency. Because well-organized communities can credibly commit to punishing free-riders among the platform constituency, they can leverage their ability to provide collective support to make demands for more responsive and less repressive governance.

Combatants in these circumstances can delegate the complicated problem of managing the collective action problems to the communities themselves, and focus instead on building credibility for their promises to win the war and govern in ways their platform communities prefer.

The engine of developmental progress is embedded in the mechanism by which rebellions consolidate real grassroots support. Winning this type of war requires opening up to the collective demands only well-organized civilians can make in order to receive the type of support only well-organized civilians can provide. In some places, at least, long-term political development may be the result of well-organized communities seizing moments of conflict to back the higher-capacity or more progressive potential administration.

V. **Next Steps**

What should be done next to continue this research program? A first project would concern verification of the results here. As discussed above, qualitative research in Nepal would help to confirm or disconfirm my reading of the statistical relationships. If the theory of revolutionary development is correct, village histories and interviews should reveal that Nepali Maoists singled out forestry group members and leaders as liaisons with military officers and for roles in civilian government. Examinations of forestry groups records would reveal the sort of detailed intelligence theorized to make the group valuable to the Maoists. Stories of specific forestry group members sanctioning co-ethnics would emerge.

Evidence from Nepal may also be useful to test the propositions from the other side. Irrigation groups were also common in Nepal, but tended to mobilize and organize landowners. Would such groups serve as civic capital that favored the state? We might expect support for the Maoists, and Maoist interest, to be lowest in such places.[144]

If the results in Nepal appear correct, we might also wonder whether civic capital played a similar role in other conflicts. While the discovery of the FCG records in Nepal was serendipitous, it stands to reason that records of other networks that mobilize specific platform populations in other conflicts might exist. In order to understand the scope conditions and generalizability of the revolutionary development theory, it would be useful to investigate other conflict zones and other civilian-rebel relationships. Even if FCGs aided the Maoists, it may be that such mechanisms rarely obtain elsewhere.

Seeking evidence about the generalizability of the findings in Nepal is important. One might worry that the relatively disciplined behavior of the Maoists presents a strict scope condition on the effectiveness of organizational capital. Civilian testimony in many conflict zones

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[144] An official at the Nepali Department of Water Resources and Irrigation told me that a census of irrigation communities existed, but was lost in a fire in the Department's basement in 2007.

betrays a total lack of trust for all combatants. Civilians should only deploy civic capital to aid combatants they truly prefer, and cruel or arbitrary combatants might know better than to trust civilian promises of mass mobilization in any event. Revolutionary development requires an organic platform population.

These issues largely concern the so-called "Scott-Popkin" debates and the wider mystery of massive social mobilization. Which actors and mechanisms help connect individual concerns to revolutionary movements? Who controls this process, and what are the most effective ways to harness individual grievances or frustrate the rebels that try?

A second extension of this project instead focuses on the theme of war as political development. Tilly (1992) characterized state capacity as a response to violent competition. States provide certain suites of services and civil rights because doing so increases the efficiency of taxation; an advance required to maintain standing armies. While this conception of state services as a route to more efficient control has proven influential (see also, Scott 1998), there are few investigations for micro-foundational evidence of the mechanism (e. g., Sanchez de la Sierra 2020).

This investigation of the Nepali Maoists offers some insight into how Tilly's mechanism might work within a single conflict. Lower caste and ethnic minority Nepalis felt left behind by the party-less panchayat era government. The Maoist movement offered to address many of the most common grievances, and won support from many everyday Nepalis. In order to deliver on a common vision of greater rights and state responsiveness, some rural communities allied with the Maoists to create a higher-capacity bureaucracy. This revolutionary development seems to have created an edge for the Maoists.

For Nepal to provide real evidence of Tilly's mechanism, we should look to the state's capacity and outcomes for the janjatis after the peace negotiation. Maoist parties, including successors to the revolutionaries, have controlled parliament in a more or less equal number of years as Nepali Congress. Has the state or the Maoist parties deepened the state's involvement in rural Nepal? Does the relationship continue to run through forestry groups and other civil society organizations?

Such an investigation would require looking into government outlays on the post-war years as a dependent variable. Did Nepal expand services under the Maoist vision? Which communities benefitted? Does the party in power change patterns in services? While Nepalis frequently complain that government reforms and the inclusion of Maoists have done little to end economic malaise and gridlock, growth and human development indicators in Nepal have improved faster in the past two decades than the five before the war. Closer investigation may show a continued deepening of Maoist — and state — relationships with forestry groups.

These next steps might lead to conclusions about political development as a slow-moving process in which civilians' day-to-day lives and networks in under-developed states are nevertheless critical and empowered. While limited compared to their peers in democratic states, this story opens up the possibility of a more optimistic view of civilian capacity to hold governments accountable in the longer term. Civilians can seize control of their community lives and, in so doing, prepare for the moments that the state needs their capacities.

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