

The Nepali State and the Dynamics of the Maoist Insurgency

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Abstract In contrast to existing quantitative studies of the civil conflict in Nepal, we argue that combinations of motive and opportunity were crucial for the development of the Maoist insurgency and that these conditions stem largely from the nature of the Nepali state. The decade-long insurgency was characterized by two distinct dynamics. In the initiation period of the war (1996–2000), the insurgency was driven largely by newly enabled Maoist organizers capitalizing on the caste, ethnic, and economic divisions that had been codified over time by autocratic state-building efforts. In the more violent and geographically widespread maturation period of the war (2001–2006), the insurgency depended less on historical grievances than on the motivation of rebels and sympathizers by the often-indiscriminate violence perpetrated by the besieged Nepali state. We provide empirical evidence for this argument in a narrative section that contextualizes the Maoist insurgency as well as in a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) of data for the 75 Nepali districts in the two periods of the insurgency. fsQCA allows for the assessment of how combinations of the largely state-generated motivations and opportunities affected the dynamics of the insurgency.

Keywords Nepal · Maoist insurgency · State · Civil war · Fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis

With the Maoists in Nepal currently embracing the relatively pacific realm of electoral politics, a number of retrospective questions have arisen about the nature of their 10-year insurgency (1996–2006). Particularly compelling is the issue of how a small, isolated conflict escalated into a countrywide insurgency that threatened to topple the ruling Nepali regime. The insurgency began with small-scale attacks on

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government outposts in isolated areas. Five years later, it still had a limited geographic scope and had caused relatively few casualties; the vast majority of Nepal's districts remained untouched by the violence. Then, after 2001, the insurgency suddenly blossomed, spread broadly, and caused a spike in violent deaths across the country. What combinations of motivating and enabling conditions account for the rise of the insurgency in the areas where it first developed, while other areas went untouched for so long? What accounts for the dramatic shift in the nature of the insurgency from regional conflict to a challenge to the state itself?

This paper contributes to the understanding of insurgency in general and the Maoist insurgency in particular by making two major modifications to existing subnational studies of the civil war in Nepal. Existing quantitative studies have offered meaningful insights into the conflict, especially with regard to economic and developmental factors that influenced the levels of violence during the conflict. However, they do not adequately address the questions posed here about how combinations of motivations and opportunities generated insurgency over the course of the conflict. We apply fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to identify the conditions necessary and sufficient for high levels of insurgency during the initiation and spread of conflict across the 75 districts of Nepal. We draw heavily upon qualitative sources to situate the rise and spread of the insurgency in historical context and argue that the insurgency's development over time and against the backdrop of the Nepali state is critical to understanding the nature of the civil conflict.

Departing from previous subnational studies of the conflict, we disaggregate the insurgency into two distinct periods based on qualitative accounts of the war: (1) the initiation period, in which only a handful of districts were affected, casualties were relatively low, and the national police force was used to suppress the insurgency, and (2) the maturation period, in which the Royal Nepali Army took over the role of counterinsurgency, casualties spiked, and most districts became affected by violence. By analyzing the periods separately and considering the variation in the nature of the conflict over time, we provide a fuller picture of Nepal's insurgency than that found in existing quantitative research. In both periods, the behavior of the state is central to understanding the dynamics of the insurgency.

Through a systematic analysis of the political history and geography of the war, we find evidence that (1) the initial stages of the insurgency developed in areas with high levels of historical caste- and ethnic-based grievances that were capitalized upon by Maoist organizers during a period of political opening in the early 1990s, and (2) that violence spread to other districts partially as a response to a surge of indiscriminate violence committed by the state. This latter point is consistent with studies finding increased protest activity in the face of heightened repression (Lichbach 1987; Mason and Crane 1989; Khawaja 1987; Francisco 2005) and studies of counterinsurgency that find that a state's use of indiscriminate violence to be counterproductive (Peceny and Stanley 2010; Kocher et al. 2011; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). We argue that subnational variation in enabling and motivating conditions can account for the locations in which insurgency was initiated and to which it spread. Theoretically, we highlight the role of the state in generating its own insurgent movement (see Goodwin 2001; Wickham-Crowley 1992) and challenge strict opportunity- and grievance-based explanations by emphasizing the fact that both opportunities and grievances are logically part of the combined conditions that produce insurgency.

Previous Research on Civil War in Nepal

As recent scholarship has attempted to shed light on the causes and consequences of civil conflict, subnational studies have been particularly important. Whether approached qualitatively (e.g., Wood 2003) or quantitatively, reliable data from combatants, supporters, and victims are difficult to obtain. The Nepali conflict was comparatively closely documented, and the resulting data has spawned a series of quantitative studies. These previous studies of the conflict have tended to test deductively the conclusions of cross-national studies of civil war at a lower level of analysis; this study, by contrast, seeks to examine more inductively how causal conditions combine, which—despite the specificity of the Nepali case—has broader implications for the manners in which scholars both think about and study insurgency.

Much research on the determinants of the onset and level of civil conflict has been framed by opportunity—or “greed”—and “grievance” arguments. Opportunity arguments (Collier and Hoeffler 2004) typically seek to determine what conditions generate low enough costs or high enough benefits to generate rebellion, assuming that grievance of some variety is a constant in all societies. The political sociological literature on social movements has focused in part on the related notion of the “political opportunity structure,” the degree to which mobilization is made possible by “dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action” (Tarrow 1996, 18; see also MacAdam et al. 2001). Grievance arguments, by contrast, focus primarily on the conditions that motivate individuals to take up arms against the government, whether those are economic, ethnic, or religious. Taken strictly by themselves, neither of these perspectives is logically complete: without opportunity, even the most aggrieved individuals will not take up arms against the state, nor will those who have the opportunity to take up arms but no deep grievance against the state. It is troublesome for opportunity-based arguments to assume that all populations experience grievances that would lead to rebellion if low enough opportunity costs presented themselves. It is similarly problematic to assume that all grievances will manifest themselves in civil unrest without consideration of the structure of opportunities facing potential rebels.

The need to establish the presence of both opportunity and motive—or enabling and willingness conditions—recommends the use of a method that is able to consider the effects of combinations of conditions. Quantitative studies of civil conflict typically rely on statistical models to assess the mean effect of variables on either the onset or level of violence. The assessment of the mean effects with all else held equal is an approach that is generally inconsistent with the systematic assessment of how conditions combine to generate an outcome. In order to explicitly assess combinations of conditions sufficient for the presence of high levels of insurgency in Nepal and for insurgency’s spread across a large number of districts, we use fsQCA as described by Ragin for the cross-district analysis (Ragin 2000, 2008). This approach provides a middle way between the specificity of case studies—which consider the interaction of multiple factors and operate on the logic of necessity and sufficiency rather than mean effects—and the breadth of large-n statistical studies by applying the logic of case studies to numerous cases (Ragin 2000: 39, 2008). Several features of case studies differ explicitly from the variable-oriented, statistical

approach to large-n studies: (1) elements of cases are treated not as distinct and independent causes but as necessarily conjunctural elements that must be considered in the context of each other; (2) case studies are often outcome-oriented in the sense that they are designed to begin with an effect and look for the causes, while statistical methods begin with causes and calculate the effects; and (3) causation is treated as multiple, in that there may be numerous causes or combinations that lead to the outcome in question, rather than relying on the assumption of homogeneity across cases (Goertz and Starr 2003). At the same time, QCA uses quantified representations of particular characteristics of the cases in question, making it possible to use the non-homogenizing, outcome-oriented case study logic across a larger number of cases without the extensive narrative that would otherwise be necessary. The method offers the benefit of allowing all possible combinations of causal conditions—both motivating an enabling—to be systematically assessed.

The existing subnational quantitative studies of the Nepali civil conflict have followed the division between opportunity cost and grievance arguments. Murshed and Gates (2006) and Nepal et al. (2011) take the side of grievance-induced conflict, while Bohara et al. (2006) and Do and Iyer (2007, 2010) argue for the importance of conditions that lower the costs of taking up arms. Murshed and Gates (2006) situate economic and development indicators within the context of a history of ethnic- and caste-based exclusion, pointing out that the consequent “horizontal inequality” is a source of grievance against the government. As predictors in their regression models are the extent of deviation from the national norm, their economic indicators are inherently comparative. While they imply that economic and development differences are in part a consequence of ethnic and caste differences, direct measurements of these variables are notably absent from their multivariate analyses. As discussed below, the Maoist insurgency mobilized those from lower castes and ethnic minorities, and, as such, indicators of the sizes of those populations are crucial components. Moreover, there is little suggestion of how these grievances are acted upon. The study of Nepal et al. (2011) using Village Development Committee-level data finds a strong effect of intergroup inequality, but similarly, there is little light shed on how those community grievances were marshaled into an insurgent movement.

By contrast, the studies by Bohara et al. (2006) and Do and Iyer (2007, 2010) rely on the opportunity cost framework to explain civil war onset developed by Collier and Hoeffler (2004). In both cases, the authors argue that levels of violence perpetrated by both the state security forces and the Maoists were higher in districts where conditions created greater opportunity for violence and lower where conditions generally inhibited the perpetration of violence. These subnational studies apply the insights from cross-national studies of predictors of conflict levels and rights violations to a single country in order to correct for problems such as unit homogeneity, yet they fall into many of the same traps as cross-national, opportunity-based arguments, such as Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and Fearon and Laitin (2003). They assume, as other opportunity cost-based models tend to suggest, that grievances are constant across units: “All societies have groups with exaggerated grievances” and are therefore willing to rebel (Collier and Hoeffler 2004: 564). As such, grievances can be assumed to be constant in statistical models, and the key predictors of rebellion are those that provide opportunity for rebellion. In our view, the claim that the degree of grievance is constant across nations or subnational units is an empirical claim to be

tested rather than assumed, particularly given the policy outcomes such an assumption might engender. For example, if led to understand rebels simply as criminals in need of deterrence, states will focus on raising the cost of rebellion through strategies such as strengthening of their security apparatus rather than mitigating grievances. We challenge the assumption of constant grievance made by Bohara et al. (2006) and Do and Iyer (2010) and argue that subnational variation in kinds and levels of grievance can in part account for the location in which insurgency is initiated and spread.

The existing statistical models of civil war onset or the number of combatants killed has inadequately addressed the historical causes of war in Nepal, even if they find violence to be positively associated with particular conditions after its initiation. Bohara et al. (2006), Murshed and Gates (2006), Do and Iyer (2007, 2010), and Nepal et al. (2011) all assess the mean effects of particular variables on the level of violence. As such, they provide assessments of the conditions under which civil violence occurred over the course of the conflict, but these correlative measures are only hints at the historical causes of violence. The majority of conditions that they identify (e.g., poverty, geographic conditions, and ethnic cleavages) change little over time, so why they generated these outcomes in the decade between 1996 and 2006 is left unaddressed. Without a historical understanding of how these more or less stable conditions were set in motion, we are left asking what distinguished the period from 1996 to 2006 from previous decades. In the narrative section below, we identify the democratic opening of 1990 and consequent Maoist organizing among disaffected communities as a key factor that allowed grievances for age-old conditions to be harnessed into an insurgent force in the opening period of the conflict.

We assess the conjunctural causes of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal using systematic subnational data, while placing the rise and spread of the insurgency in historical and geographic context. First, we place the rise of the communist movement and Maoist sympathizing in the historical context of ethnic- and caste-based exclusion, economic marginalization, and poor governance in Nepal and frame the democratic opening of the early 1990s as a key period of political opening that generated the capacity to rebel. We then trace the geographical spread of the insurgency in part to the repressive response of the state when faced by rebellion. The progression of the Maoist insurgency over time resembles what Goodwin (2001: 25) calls a state-centered explanation for the conflict: “Strong revolutionary movements... will emerge only in opposition to states that are configured and that act in certain ways... [T]here is a sense in which certain state structures and practices actively form or ‘construct’ revolutionary movements as effectively as the best professional revolutionaries, by channeling and organizing political dissent along radical lines.” States that incubate revolutionary movements typically have weak infrastructural powers and are exclusive (not inclusive/liberal); those that typically fall to revolutionary movements are also patrimonial/clientelistic rather than bureaucratic/rational (i.e., less able to get rid of unpopular leaders and change policies). In short, states can construct their own opposition movements by leaving citizens no recourse but violent rebellion. In the case of Nepal, autocratic regimes’ efforts to establish a unified state prevented the indigenous population from participation in the country’s political process, while the political opening of the early 1990s allowed for the mobilization of an aggrieved population against an exclusionary state.

In what follows, we discuss the Maoist insurgency in light of the historical development of the Nepali state and the configuration of different castes and ethnic communities, along with their consequent grievances. Following this is an explication of communist organizing within these disadvantaged populations and discussion of the dynamics by which the opening of political opportunities and harsh state responses to the budding insurgency aided the spread of the war. This is followed by fsQCA of the conditions necessary and sufficient for high levels of conflict during the initial period of the war (1996–2000) and for the spread of conflict during the “maturation” period (2001–2006), which formalizes many of findings from the narrative section.

Nepal in Historical Context

Ethnic- and Caste-Based Cleavages

One of the oft-cited causes of the civil war in Nepal is the accumulation of resentments stemming from its feudal past (USIP 2007), uneven development, and a refusal by ruling elites to address socio-economic problems faced by the minority ethnic communities (see Murshed and Gates (2006)). Nepal is a complex territory with over a hundred different castes and ethnic groups that speak more than 90 different languages. However, the dynasties that ruled Nepal—the Shahs (1768–1846, 1960–1990) and Ranas (1846–1950)—attempted to unify and assert central control over the state. When Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered the Kathmandu Valley in 1768 and unified the territory, his government institutionalized two divisive social systems: feudal bureaucracy and the Hindu caste system. The feudal bureaucracy was a patrimonial system under which the state came to be organized as an “extension of the ruler’s household” (Whelpton 2005: 49). For example, the government appointed a chief minister (usually someone from a royal family) who oversaw all state employees (usually members of the Brahmin, Thakuri, and Chetri castes), who were largely paid in land (Whelpton 2005). The dynasty also imposed a variety of administrative and economic systems, such as monetary exaction in the form of gifts, forced labor, free allowances from the treasury, and *Birta* (rent-free land grants) to favorite officials (Joshi and Rose 1966). This model concentrated political power, land, and wealth in the hands of a few high castes who had close ties to the royal family. Geographically, most development activities were confined to the capital of Kathmandu.

The institutionalization of inequality was intensified by the Ranas who made Nepali the national language and linked the Hindu caste system to political governance by establishing a national social code as the basis of their rule. Thereafter, the different ethnic groups and castes were grouped under the four castes: Brahmin, Chettris, Vaishyas, and Sudras. For the next century, official privilege benefitted Nepali-speaking Hindus and marginalized other religious and ethno-linguistic groups.¹ This systematic marginalization deepened the socio-economic inequalities

¹ In spite of this marginalization, many ethnic groups continue to speak their language as well as having knowledge of Nepali. This fact complicates the use of knowledge of the Nepali language as an indicator of ethnic minority status (as in Bohara et al. 2006).

and geographic disparities across the districts. In short, the efforts of the Shahs and the Ranas to consolidate Nepali territory as a unified state under a dominant social and linguistic system generated the institutionalized marginalization of ethnic groups and lower castes. The political opening in 1990 perpetuated the gaps between the rich and the poor, high and low castes, and Kathmandu and the periphery. The governments formed after the 1991 election failed to establish policies that would improve living conditions of the rural masses, governance remained poor as political parties engaged in infighting, corruption and nepotism went unchecked, and the state remained a means of exacting surplus from the countryside (Thapa and Sijapati 2003). For average Nepalis, the political changes in the early 1990s did little to alleviate longstanding grievances.

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

Autocratic rule was briefly interrupted by political liberalization in 1990, which allowed for the organization of political parties and an electoral cycle, marking an opening of the political opportunity structure (Tarrow 1996). This opening provided space for the Maoist party to create an organizational base and capitalize on the historical injustices inflicted on the ethnic and religious minorities (Mahat 2005). Under the new democracy, entrenched historical grievances went largely unaddressed: the framers of the new constitution failed to codify the portions of Nepali society that remained dominated by the caste system. Although the different ethnic minority groups openly demanded the recognition of their languages, opposed the Hindu caste system (Hoftun et al. 1999), and called for secular state, the constitution declared Nepal a Hindu state, perpetuating both the caste and single-language systems. By the time the new constitution was promulgated in November 1990, it had become clear that ethnic minorities would continue to be marginalized and their grievances overlooked. All other political parties celebrated the end of autocratic rule and supported the constitutional monarchy as established in the new constitution. While the CPN (M) was not the only organized political group vying for support, it was alone in viewing the constitution as a betrayal of public demand for a “people’s constitution” (Thapa and Sijapati 2003). In spite of the new political order, marginalized groups appreciated the Maoist opposition to the new constitution and sympathized with the project of dismantling the social system that had been a part of the effort to consolidate the Nepali state since the eighteenth century.

While the party’s political wing [United People’s Front of Nepal (UPFN)] took part in the 1991 election, the party’s revolutionary front, the Unity Center, resolved to organize to bring about revolution and the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on caste, gender, property, and other “social evils.” The group targeted recruitment in marginalized areas dominated by those affected by systematic caste, ethnic, and economic exclusion. The CPN (M) developed a list of demands that appealed explicitly to the experience of marginalized caste and ethnic groups and the impoverished, including demands such as the abolition of caste-, religion-, and gender-based discrimination, the elimination of socio-economic inequalities, and the redistribution of land (Karki and Seddon 2003: 183–187). Appealing specifically to these marginalized groups, the CPN (M) demanded that Nepal be declared a secular state, that the system of “untouchability” be nullified, that equal status be

accorded to all languages spoken in the country, and that education in one's mother tongue be accommodated through the secondary level of education. Numerous interviewees reported that the appeal of insurgency was the possibility of eliminating systematic inequalities. One respondent from Bajura stated, "As a *dalit* I did not want to miss the opportunity to join the Maoists and break the old caste barrier in our society." Another respondent from Ramechhap recounted, "*Dalits* were marginalized even after the *jana andolan* [People's Movement] in 1990. Our children were not allowed to sit with other children in school. So, instead of learning to read books, they learned how to make guns and knives. And when the people's war came, they joined the insurgency."² Perhaps most notably, the CPN (M) proposed abolishing the monarchy, establishing federalism, and granting autonomy to regions where particular ethnic groups were concentrated. The party published maps of Nepal that imagined the country divided into autonomous ethnic areas or nations, and Prachanda, chairman of the CPN (M), claimed that his party would uphold the "right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities" (Karki and Seddon 2003: 82). These latter demands from the CPN (M) were particularly appealing to the historically neglected and marginalized ethnic groups and set the party apart from the rest of the political organizations that embraced constitutional monarchy.

Finally, the CPN (M) sought to address to the dramatic economic disparities across the geographic regions of Nepal. While the eastern and central parts of this small, but topographically varied country are relatively better off, mountainous districts are generally poorer than those in the hills and the plains. Moreover, districts in the mid-west and far-western regions, which are the most rural and isolated in Nepal, are also the poorest. The CPN (M)'s Chairman Prachanda declared that the western region of the country, which is both historically underdeveloped and home to over 20 different minority groups, was the "key region for the People's War" (Prachanda 2003: 84). Not surprisingly, many villagers in the mountainous districts of mid-western and far-western region viewed the Maoist organizing as an opportunity to free themselves from the exploitation of Thakuris and Shahs, the dominant groups in the region. A survey respondent from Rolpa district, for example, reported "I joined the insurgency because our party [Maoist] was fighting for the emancipation of our society from an oppressive regime; I fought for the victory of our great party and for the rights of our people. I joined because I thought that was the only way to free my family from tyranny."

Initiation of Insurgency (1996–2000)

Although the insurgency itself did not begin until 1996, the groundwork for the uprising had begun with Maoist electoral organizing. In districts where there had been

² Individual level data for a random sample of those who participated in the Maoist insurgency is obviously impossible to obtain. We use interview data not as systematic evidence of our claims but to suggest that the link between mobilization and caste and ethnicity that we find at the district level does indeed have a foundation in individual-level behavior. This and similar studies of civil conflict are plagued by the "ecological fallacy," the notion that individual behaviors cannot be inferred from aggregate data (i.e., district-level ethnic concentration). While ultimately the interview data we have studied and offer here are not sufficient to overcome criticism based on the "ecological fallacy," we offer it as anecdotal evidence that these factors did enter into the calculus at the individual level. For details on interview data, see Adhikari 2012. Respondents' names and villages withheld for anonymity.

effective Maoist organizing for the 1991 elections, the network of partisans continued to garner support among the Nepal's disaffected and historically neglected. The party sought to win over these populations through a variety of activities: organizing cultural programs in the villages, mobilizing villagers to build roads and bridges, hanging posters, and conducting door-to-door informational campaigns (Eck 2010). The main objectives of such campaigns were to educate villagers about Maoist ideology and to propagate the notion that violence was the only means to achieve emancipation from caste and ethnic discrimination and economic inequalities. As momentum grew, educating potential supporters gave way to recruiting and training a "People's Liberation Army" (Hutt 2004). Maoists lashed out at landlords, state employees, members of upper castes, and anyone who had oppressed the ethnic minorities through their association with state authority, calling them "enemies of the People's War." When initial violence broke out, violence against landlords and state employees was justified by the Maoists as attacks on the "principal agents" of socio-economic oppression and was often viewed approvingly by villagers (Eck 2010: 40). Again, interview data provide strong evidence for this dynamic. For example, when asked to explain the reason for supporting the Maoists, a respondent from Taplejung replied, "I come from a poor family. My ancestors died working for the landlord. We are poor people and I was told that we would be free from debt if we joined the insurgency. So, I joined."

In September 1995, the party began making preparations to launch the People's War in the mountainous western districts of Rolpa and Rukum. In November, these activities came to the attention of the government, which launched Operation Romeo. In the subsequent sweep conducted by a poorly trained police force, hundreds of villagers were arrested, some tortured and raped, thus aggravating a historical sense of antagonism toward the state, engendering a new urgency to be protected from it, and ultimately helping to ignite the historically combustible class relations in Nepal's countryside (Thapa and Sijapati 2003). On February 13, 1996, Maoist bands attacked a unit of the Agriculture Development Bank of Nepal in the district of Gorkha and stormed police posts in the districts of Rolpa, Rukum, and Sindhuli (Thapa and Sijapati 2003: 49–50). In 1998, the government launched a third operation, Kilo Sierra II, which set out to "crush the insurgency across all the Maoist-affected areas" (Karki and Seddon 2003: 24). Much like Operation Romeo, Kilo Sierra II was conducted with such "blunt force and disregard for human rights that it only strengthened the rebels' recruitment base" (Eck 2010: 38). By design, the areas where Maoist political organizing had been successful during the political opening of 1990 to 1995 were the areas where the insurgency was initiated. Without the organizational space provided by political liberalization, it is doubtful that the Maoists would have been able to build an effective support network. Without an initial network of support, the insurgency is unlikely to have made the progress—however halting—it did during the first period of the conflict.

Maturation of Insurgency (2001–2006)

The second phase of the uprising was characterized by rising levels of violence and the geographic spread of the insurgency beyond its initially modest foothold in the hills of western Nepal. By mid-2001, Maoists in five districts in the mid-western region of the country had limited the presence of the Nepali government in the district headquarters and had established "People's Governments." As a consequence of failed

peace talks with the insurgents in November 2001, King Gyanendra declared a state of emergency. In a departure from the previous period of the conflict where police forces were used, the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) was mobilized to combat the Maoist insurgency. The army quickly earned a reputation for “indiscriminate killings, arbitrary arrests,” torture, and disappearances (Eck 2010: 38). While the RNA viewed villagers across the country with suspicion, killing civilians and harassing suspected Maoist sympathizers, the insurgents were at work convincing the villagers that Maoist rule would provide a “powerful alternative national identity within a modern Nepal for those who have otherwise felt excluded from such national imaginings” throughout history (Pettigrew and Schneiderman 2004: 28). The well-documented excesses of the RNA drove many previously neutral Nepalis “motivated by fear of the security forces or a desire for revenge” into the arms of the Maoists (Eck 2010: 58). Thirty percent of respondents to a nationwide survey conducted in 2001 believed that state violence was to be blamed for the spread in Maoist insurgency (Thapa and Sijapati 2003: 92–93). In the words of a respondent from Jhapa: “When the state itself is engaged in indiscriminately killing and torturing innocent civilians, you either join the rebels or flee to a safer location.” Traditional ethnic, caste, and economic cleavages thus became less important for mobilization and support of the insurgency in this period as broader swaths of Nepali society were terrorized by broad state-led violence.

Further alienating citizens at the national level, the central government took an increasingly personalist-authoritarian bent after 2001. King Gyanendra enacted the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Control and Punishment) Ordinance (TADO), suspending freedoms of speech and peaceful assembly, among other rights, and censoring the media. In May 2002, the King dissolved Parliament and later the same year postponed elections for an indefinite period, handpicking Prime Ministers and cabinet ministers of his choice. For those who favored democracy and electoral solutions to the country's problems, these increasingly authoritarian actions foreclosed the possibility of such a resolution. These policy changes, along with the nationwide use of the army, helped broaden support for the insurgency and drew in all but a few Nepali districts by 2006. This dynamic clearly differs from the first stage of the insurgency, which was, if not unaffected by state-led violence, driven largely by historical grievances and organizational work done by the Maoist political party in the early 1990s.

Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis

We argue that the dynamics that initially fueled the small insurgency in a handful of districts primarily in the mid-west region (a combination of ethnic, caste, and economic grievances coupled with opportunity provided by Maoist organizational structures) and the dynamics that led to its spread across the country (in part a broader reaction to the repression and aggression of the security forces) were distinct. The CPN (M)'s original organizational efforts in the early 1990s were largely concentrated in the heavily impoverished and tribal areas of the mid-west, fertile ground for rebellion because it was marginalized by efforts to unify the Nepali state. While this organizational groundwork was a major factor in initiating insurgency in these districts, as the insurgency gained visibility and momentum during the maturation period, it spread easily into areas that were not necessarily highly impoverished or

neglected and lacked a history of Maoist organization and into areas where the government created its own enemies through indiscriminate repression by the RNA.

As a method, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is designed to (1) assess the association of combinations of causal conditions with an outcome, and (2) express that association in terms of necessity and sufficiency.³ Fuzzy-set (rather than Boolean) QCA involves three separate steps: (1) the “calibration” of raw data into fuzzy set scores, (2) the assessment of the individual conditions necessary for the outcome and the combinations of conditions sufficient for the outcome, and (3) the calculation of the triviality of the conditions found to be necessary or sufficient. Calibration is the transformation of raw data into scores between zero and one that indicate the degree of a case’s membership in the causal conditions or outcome. The transformation is based on the definition of three major cutpoints or anchors: the point in the data at which a case is considered a full member of a condition, the point where a case is considered a full nonmember, and the midpoint. These points are defined with the use of qualitative accounts of the insurgency and Nepali history. In the initiation period of the insurgency, for example, when violence was relatively light, districts with over ten deaths caused by the insurgency were deemed to be heavily affected (i.e., were full members in the set of heavily affected districts), while those with zero deaths were deemed unaffected (i.e., full nonmembers in the same set), and three deaths was defined as the midpoint, after which the districts approach full membership. In the transformation to fuzzy set scores, the midpoint becomes the point of inflection, and the endpoints are the points after which variation in the raw data is deemed to not matter qualitatively. Whether a district had 11 or 25 deaths caused by the insurgency in a year, the outcome is the same: it is considered one of the districts belonging to the group of highly affected areas.⁴ In this process, there is often some loss of variation in the observed values; Verkuilen (2005: 492) argues that “[t]o the extent that conceptual boundaries are... part of [the] theory, they should be represented even at the cost of variation,” and Ragin (2008) posits that a tighter fit between data and theory is one of the strengths of fuzzy-set analysis.

The assessment of necessary conditions involves the examination of the membership of each of the Nepali districts in the set of those highly affected by conflict (i.e., the outcome) in the initiation and maturation periods with their membership in the sets of the causal conditions; conditions are considered necessary when the membership in a condition set is greater than or equal to the membership in the set of high conflict districts (i.e., when Y is a subset of X). This is often depicted visually with a scatterplot of the two membership scores of the cases: for necessary (or nearly necessary), the marks will be clustered below the 45° diagonal that runs from the origin to upper right corner. The proportion of cases in which this relationship holds true is referred to as “consistency,” and falls between zero and one. For sufficient combinations of conditions, the points should be clustered above the 45° line.

³ Because of its relatively light use in social science (compared to statistical methods), we offer an outline of the steps involved in the method, although space limitations require that it be very brief. For fuller description of the method, Ragin (2008) and Schneider and Wagemann (2012) offer a tutorials.

⁴ Due to space limitations, we offer an online Methodological Appendix that provides additional notes on the method, detailed descriptions of the data and calibration, a discussion of stability of fsQCA findings, and the complete raw and calibrated data used in the analysis—available at www.stevensamford.com, see Appendix 1 for an abbreviated list of the outcome and causal conditions, their definitions, the source of the data, and the data cut points used in the fuzzy-set calibration.

In addition to the calculation of consistency, this analysis of these cases takes into account the critique that analysis of necessary and sufficient conditions is deterministic. It does so by adopting a non-deterministic view of the relationship between conditions and outcomes by using a modified, or relaxed, notion of necessity. Ragin (2000) has proposed consistency guidelines for “usually necessary” and “almost always necessary” conditions, 0.65 and 0.80, respectively. While linguistically the notion of a necessary condition that is not always necessary seems paradoxical, it fits the study of most social phenomena better than a strictly deterministic view and accounts for the possibility of measurement error and random effects. It is only after conditions have been determined to be necessary or nearly necessary that their relevance is calculated.

The final element of the analysis—the assessment of triviality—addresses the commonly leveled critique against the examination of necessary conditions that they are often trivial: in a probabilistic world, for a condition to be absolutely necessary for an outcome, it must be essentially constant (i.e., present both in the presence and the absence of the outcome) (Goertz 2006). Ragin’s (2008) concept of “coverage”—defined as “the degree to which a cause or causal combination ‘accounts for’ instances of an outcome”—addresses this concern by providing a measure of empirical relevance. Where the coverage score is very low, it indicates that the causal condition, while fully or nearly necessary, is far from being the only causal pathway to the outcome of interest (i.e., it is not a sufficient condition).

Data and Measurement

The outcomes in question are the extent to which each of the 75 Nepali districts were characterized by high levels of insurgency in the two periods of the conflict, the initiation period (1996–2000) and the maturation period (2001–2006). A brief geographic look at the outcome conditions during the two periods is instructive. The district map in Fig. 1 shows which of the districts were full members of the set of districts affected by high levels of insurgency (i.e., with membership scores greater than 0.90) during the initiation

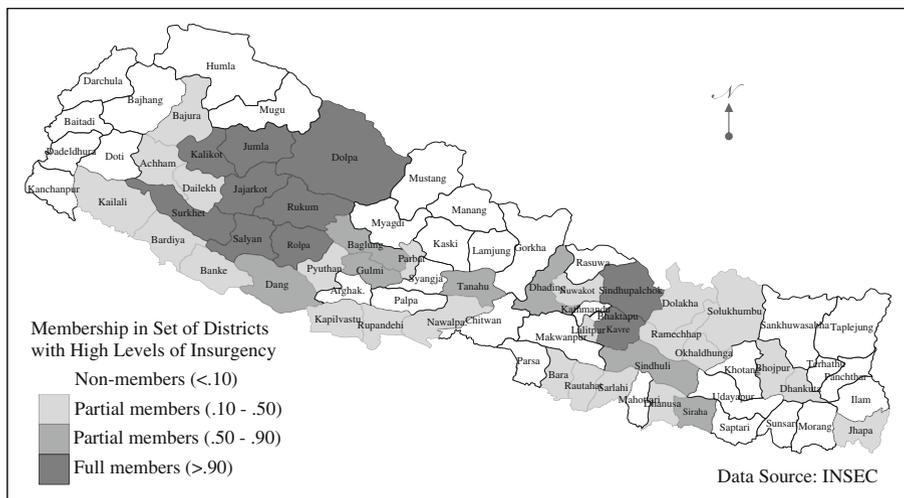


Fig. 1 Map of districts affected by high levels of insurgency in the initiation period

period of the war. A small cluster is visible in the hilly districts of the central development region, just east of Kathmandu, and a larger cluster in contiguous districts in the mid-west region. As full membership in the set of districts experiencing high levels of Maoist insurgency is defined by a low threshold (ten casualties by Maoist insurgents in any of the five initial years), this map demonstrates that the insurgency itself was both relatively modest in level of violence and in geographic scope.

The map in Fig. 2 shows the broad geographic progress of the insurgency, even with the definition of high levels of insurgent behavior raised to 25 casualties by Maoists per year, almost none of the 75 districts qualify as complete nonmembers. Even without further analysis, this suggests that the dynamics of the two periods of the conflict were demonstrably distinct.

The grievance-inducing causal conditions examined in the analysis are those that are recommended by qualitative studies of the conflict and by the narrative section above (see Appendix). Beginning with conditions that have generated historical grievances, both the district-wide concentration of untouchable castes (*dalits*) and the concentration of ethnically non-Nepali speaking tribes are considered, as these were the primary targets of Maoist organizing during the 1990s. The Economic Empowerment Index (EEI) is an UNDP-developed indicator of the economic health of the district, and is connected in part to neglect by the central government in Kathmandu. The level of monetary grants from the central government for local development is, similarly, an indication of the extent to which the central government has actively provided aid (or failed to) for the development of the provincial areas of the country. Finally, the degree of state-led violence in the conflict is captured by the number of deaths inflicted by the state in any year of the respective periods, so long as the peak of state violence occurred in a year prior to the peak of Maoist-induced casualties. In districts where peak Maoist violence preceded or occurred in the same year making the direction of causality unclear, the district was considered to be a complete nonmember of districts with high levels of state-led violence (i.e., coded as zero).

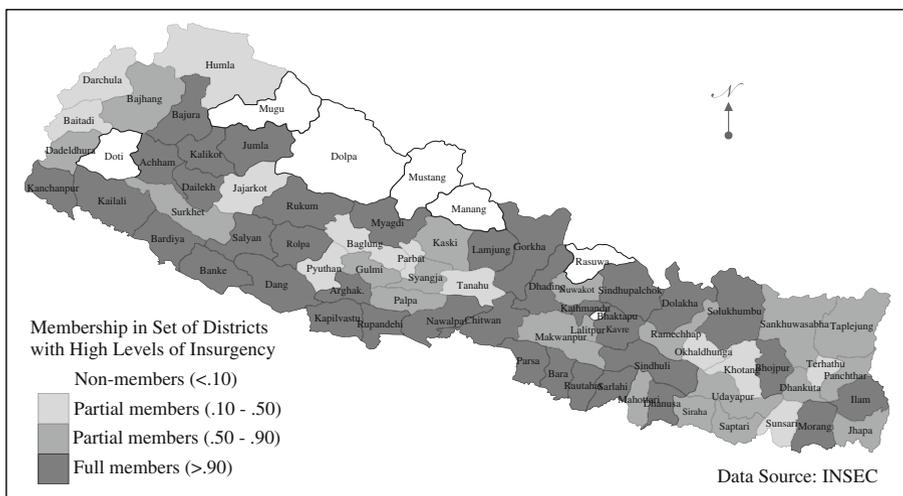


Fig. 2 Map of districts affected by high levels of insurgency in the maturation period

We also consider two conditions that generated opportunity for aggrieved citizens to participate. The first is the density of the road network in each district (kilometer of roadway per square kilometer of area). As an indicator of the extent of effective state penetration into the area in question and the capacity to operate unhindered, scholars of the civil conflict typically interpret low road density as an indicator of the opportunity to rebel. Second, the vote percentage for UPFN in the 1991 elections is used as an indicator of the extent of the network of partisans that the Maoists were able to draw on in preparing the foundation for an insurgency in the mid-1990s. As argued above, the organizational structure produced during the electoral opening of 1990 served as the basis for recruitment as the insurgency began. Each of these measurements is calibrated into conditions (e.g., high road density and strong Maoist organization) based on qualitatively derived cut points or anchors, and each of the 75 districts is assigned no, partial, or whole membership in each condition.

Empirical Results—Initiation Period

Table 1 presents the analysis of the conditions necessary for high levels of insurgency during the initiation period. The analysis reveals five meaningful nearly necessary conditions, three of which we interpret as conditions generating motivation—concentrated population of *dalits*, aggravated economic disempowerment, low levels of economic transfers from the central government—and two of which generate opportunity—sparse road system and strong Maoist party organization. Each of these conditions exceeds the 0.65 benchmark for near necessity, meaning that they are strongly associated with the outcome in question, although they each fail to also be individually sufficient. The right side of the table presents the findings for the opposing outcome: the absence of high levels of insurgency during the initiation period. Both the absence of Maoist organizing prior to the war and the presence of a developed road system were strong conditions for the absence of high levels of insurgency, a finding that further confirms the central role of Maoist organizing in underdeveloped areas.⁵

Analysis of combined conditions finds that three combinations of conditions were almost always sufficient for high levels of insurgency in the initial stages of the war (Table 2). One kind of district—typified by districts like Sindhuli—is characterized by a high non-Nepali tribal population, low levels of central government aid, high levels of poverty, low road density, and successful Maoist organizing. State-led violence did not seem to play a major role in inciting the insurgency in these districts in this period. A second type of district—similar to Baglung or Rolpa—has many of the same conditions but includes the motivating factors associated with concentrated populations of *dalits*. The third type is marked by an absence of concentrated ethnic minorities and has higher levels of central government aid, but is very economically disempowered, has low road density, and saw effective Maoist organizing. These three types encompass the three populations that Maoists appealed to, those

⁵ The absence of state-led violence is found to be associated with both the presence and absence of low levels of insurgency. Although this seems paradoxical, it is simply a result of the fact that our coding of state-led violence is very conservative, counting as zero all cases in which the peak of state violence does not precede the peak of Maoist-led violence for each period. That is, it is an artifact of the relative infrequency of verifiable state-led violence, which likely *underestimates* the role of state-led violence.

Table 1 Analysis of necessary conditions for high insurgency in initiation period

	High insurgency		~High insurgency	
	Consistency	Coverage	Consistency	Coverage
Concentrated dalit population	0.67 ^a	0.41	0.56	
~Concentrated dalit population	0.51		0.52	
Concentrated tribal population	0.61		0.47	
~Concentrated tribal population	0.50		0.58	
Economic disempowerment	0.87 ^b	0.47	0.60	
~Economic disempowerment	0.39		0.52	
High government funding	0.40		0.45	
~High government funding	0.79 ^a	0.41	0.64	
High state-led violence	0.22		0.02	
~High state-led violence	0.81 ^b	0.29	0.99 ^b	0.72
Developed road system	0.24		0.82 ^b	0.69
~Developed road system	0.94 ^b	0.38	0.26	
Strong Maoist party organization	0.67 ^a	0.54	0.35	
~Strong Maoist party organization	0.47		0.72 ^a	0.82

~ indicates the inverse of a condition (1-membership score)

Motivating conditions in bold; enabling conditions in standard font

^a Meets 0.65 consistency benchmark for usually necessary conditions

^b Meets 0.80 consistency benchmark for almost always necessary conditions

marginalized on the basis of ethnicity, caste, and the poor. Essentially, although Maoist organization is a necessary part of each of these sufficient combinations, it was not sufficient by itself for the initiation of armed insurgency. Instead, it was only when the presence of Maoist organizers was accompanied by high levels of economic disempowerment or the presence of a high tribal or *dalit* concentration, as well as low levels of road density and low levels of central government development spending, that Maoist organization led to high levels of insurgent activity in these districts. This provides confirmation for the supposition that historical grievances such as negligence by the state, impoverishment, and ethnic- and caste-based exclusion were at the foundation of the Maoists' capacity to initiate insurgency in these districts. It also underlines the broader theoretical claim that neither grievance nor opportunity will be sufficient alone to result in the onset of violent rebellion. Finally, although in some districts in this period state-led violence did precede the peak of Maoist violence, it does not seem to have contributed in a systematic manner to the initiation of the insurgency across districts.

Table 2 Analysis of sufficient conditions for high insurgency in initiation period

	High conflict in initiation period		Example districts
	Consistency	Coverage	
Concentrated tribal population AND ~High government funding AND Economic disempowerment AND ~State-led violence AND Strong Maoist party organization AND ~Developed road system AND	0.72 ^a	0.31	Sindhuli, Sindhupalchok
Concentrated tribal population AND Concentrated dalit population AND ~High government funding AND Economic disempowerment AND Strong Maoist party organization AND ~Developed road system AND	0.91 ^a	0.27	Baglung, Rolpa
~Concentrated tribal population AND Concentrated dalit population AND High government funding AND Economic disempowerment AND ~State-led violence AND Strong Maoist party organization AND ~Developed road system	0.89 ^b	0.10	Pyuthan, Kalikot
Total solution	0.73 ^a	0.44	

~ indicates the inverse of a condition (1-membership score)

Motivating conditions in bold; enabling conditions in standard font

^a Meets 0.65 consistency benchmark for usually sufficient combination

^b Meets 0.80 consistency benchmark for almost always sufficient combination

Empirical Results—Maturation Period

The assessment of necessary conditions for the presence of high levels of insurgency during the maturation period supports the notion that the insurgency spread to districts that did not exhibit necessarily high concentrations of untouchables, ethnic minorities, or high levels of organization by Maoists in the political opening of the 1990s (Table 3). Several conditions stand out from the analysis. First, low levels of central government funding as a motivating condition for the spread of high levels of insurgency to particular districts is one of the few unambiguous findings. Second, the districts that never experienced high levels of insurgency were also those that experienced very low levels of Maoist organizing in the early 1990s. The obverse, however, is not

Table 3 Analysis of necessary conditions for high insurgency in maturation period

	High insurgency		~High insurgency	
	Consistency	Coverage	Consistency	Coverage
Concentrated dalit population	0.59		0.57	
~Concentrated dalit population	0.47		0.61	
Concentrated tribal population	0.48		0.60	
~Concentrated tribal population	0.57		0.52	
Economic disempowerment	0.65 ^a	0.77	0.72 ^a	0.33
~Economic disempowerment	0.44		0.50	
High government funding	0.33		0.66 ^a	0.49
~High government funding	0.74 ^a	0.85	0.52	
High state violence	0.31		0.84 ^b	0.27
~High state violence	0.71 ^a	0.72	0.32	
Developed road system	0.24		0.26	
~Developed road system	0.82 ^b	0.74	0.90 ^b	0.32
Strong Maoist party organization	0.45		0.40	
~Strong Maoist party organization	0.59		0.69 ^a	0.33

~ indicates the inverse of a condition (1-membership score)

Motivating conditions in bold; enabling conditions in standard font

^a Meets 0.65 consistency benchmark for usually necessary conditions

^b Meets 0.80 consistency benchmark for almost always necessary conditions

true in the maturation period: earlier high levels of Maoist organization were not necessary for insurgency to spread. Several conditions were found to be enabling conditions for both high levels of insurgency and low levels of insurgency: economic disempowerment and the absence of a relatively dense system of roads. Because there is only a small difference in the consistency scores for these conditions and none of the scores are strikingly high, the conservative approach to interpreting them is to conclude that they had little effect on the spread of high levels of insurgency to other districts.⁶ In any case, the distinction between the conditions in the initiation and maturation periods is clear: they were unambiguously key conditions in the first period that are of less importance in the second. The final condition that warrants discussion is that of state perpetrated violence: like in the initiation period, it is not found to

⁶ The scores may be an artifact of the generally high levels of economic disempowerment across the country and widespread absence of dense networks of roads along with the low number of districts not affected by high levels of insurgency.

Table 4 Analysis of sufficient conditions for high insurgency in maturation period

	High conflict in maturation period	
	Consistency	Coverage
~ Concentrated tribal population AND Concentrated dalit population AND ~ High government funding AND ~Developed road system AND ~Strong Maoist party organization	0.95 ^a	0.24
Concentrated tribal population AND ~ Concentrated dalit population AND Economic disempowerment AND Developed road system	0.92 ^a	0.25
~ Concentrated tribal population AND Concentrated dalit population AND Economic disempowerment AND ~ High government funding AND High state-led violence ~Developed road system	0.90 ^a	0.22
Concentrated tribal population AND Economic disempowerment AND ~ High government funding AND ~Developed road system AND ~Strong Maoist party organization AND	0.85 ^a	0.20
Concentrated tribal population AND ~ Concentrated dalit population AND Economic disempowerment AND ~ High state-led violence ~Developed road system AND ~Strong Maoist party organization AND	0.89 ^a	0.11
~ Concentrated tribal population AND Concentrated dalit population AND ~ Economic disempowerment AND High state-led violence ~Developed road system AND ~Strong Maoist party organization AND	0.94 ^a	0.13
~ Concentrated tribal population AND ~ Concentrated dalit population AND	0.90 ^a	0.05

Table 4 (continued)

	High conflict in maturation period	
	Consistency	Coverage
~ Economic disempowerment AND ~ High government funding AND High state-led violence Developed road system AND ~Strong Maoist party organization AND		
~ Concentrated tribal population AND ~ Concentrated dalit population AND ~ Economic disempowerment AND High government funding AND High state-led violence Developed road system AND Strong Maoist party organization AND	0.98 ^a	0.05
Total solution	0.88 ^a	0.65

~ indicates the inverse of a condition (1-membership score)

Motivating conditions in bold; enabling conditions in standard font

^a Meets 0.80 consistency benchmark for almost always sufficient combination

be a key necessary condition; in fact, it appears that it may be dismissed as a necessary condition. Again, part of this is likely to be due to a consequence of the very conservative nature of how this condition is measured.

Table 4 shows the numerous combinations of enabling conditions that were found to be sufficient for the spread of high levels of conflict during the maturation period of the war. The diversity of the combinations of district characteristics compared to the relatively few sufficient combinations in the initiation period underlines the extent to which the insurgency spread to districts *without* the conditions that initially incubated the insurgency. The absence of strong concentrations of *dalits*, ethnic minorities, and economic disempowerment is notable in many of the combinations. The most outstanding feature of the combinations that has replaced these as a motivating factor is the presence of high levels of state violence, appearing in numerous combinations. This confirms the importance of state-perpetrated violence in the spread of the insurgency to areas beyond those that may have been initially very sympathetic toward the insurgency and the broadening of the coalition against the increasingly authoritarian state. This role is especially notable in the last three combinations: even in districts where long-term ethnic and economic grievances were less salient, state-led violence seems to have contributed more support for the Maoist cause. This is not to argue that the historically marginalized ceased to play a role in the insurgency, but instead that the coalition against the state moved beyond areas that were

more easily organized along historical cleavages. Also notable in the combinations is the importance of an underdeveloped system of roads, which takes the place of Maoist organizing as the key opportunity-generating condition. As argued above, the threat of state-led violence drove many out of their villages into the hands of Maoist insurgents, especially notable in areas of little state penetration.⁷

Discussion

The systematic analysis of necessary and sufficient combinations of conditions confirms the qualitative evidence that there were distinct dynamics that fueled the initiation and spread of Maoist insurgency. Pre-existing Maoist party organization was a key enabling element of the initiation of the insurgency in affected districts, where the historical grievances of those disaffected by ethnicity, caste, poverty, and low levels of development support from the central government could be used as recruitment tools. This finding is broadly consistent with studies that argue that state economic or development policy has the possibility of exacerbating social cleavages, such as ethnicity (Fearon 1998; Steinberg and Saideman 2008). The spread of insurgency, by contrast, was motivated in part by the indiscriminate violence perpetrated by the Nepali security forces, which increasingly viewed civilians as valid targets for counterinsurgency, and the opportunity afforded by weak state infrastructure for complicity or participation in the Maoist insurgency. Under these latter conditions, the Maoists were able to make credible promises both of government reform that appealed to a broad swath of the populace in Nepal and of protection in the short term from the violence being visited upon the countryside by the RNA. The dynamic described in this period is consistent with scholarship that emphasizes the role of indiscriminate state violence in producing support for rebel groups (Peceny and Stanley 2010; Allison 2010; Kilcullen 2009; see also Lichbach 1987; Francisco 1995; Kocher et al. 2011; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007).

The consistent story that emerges from both the narrative and the systematic subnational analysis is one that traces the initiation of the insurgency to the manner in which the state sought—ineffectively and in ill-distributed ways—to consolidate territory into a unified Nepali nation-state, combined with the opening of political space in the early 1990s for organized opposition. In Goodwin's (2001) terms, the Nepali state helped generate the conditions for its own rebellion, both by being exclusive/repressive of a variety of groups and by having relatively low infrastructural capacity. The weakness of the state's infrastructural power became increasingly evident as the police struggled to

⁷ In this two period analysis, the two periods are implicitly treated as independent of one another. This is a somewhat artificial way to think about the two periods, as most of those districts that had high levels of insurgency in the initiation period *maintained* high levels in the maturation period. As a check, the level of insurgency in the initiation period was also included in an analysis of the conditions affecting high levels of insurgency in the maturation period. The results indicated a larger number of sufficient combinations with state-led violence playing a slightly smaller role among them; the interpretation of these alternate findings is not substantially different from those reported.

deal with the initially modest insurgency. The third part of Goodwin's (2001; also Wickham-Crowley 1992) prediction—that patrimonial states are more likely to fall to insurgent movements—also fits quite closely with the Nepali civil war. After 2001, the government of King Gyanendra Shah took an increasingly autocratic turn, mobilizing the Royal Nepali Army, eventually dissolving Parliament and bringing democratic reforms to a halt. Buoyed by these measures, the insurgency gained momentum, spread geographically, and generally took advantage of the rising displeasure with the monarchy. During the maturation period of the war, the coalition against the state broadened as the king and his army's harsh actions alienated even people who had little issue with the manner in which the state was historically divided.

Methodologically, this analysis highlights the importance of understanding the interaction of historical and contemporary conditions in the initiation and spread of insurgent violence in the Nepali civil conflict. In contrast to previous systematic subnational analyses of Nepal's conflict, we take into direct consideration the nature of how historical economic, ethnic, and caste structures, and state-led violence in each of the 75 districts interacted with a lack of state presence in some areas and Maoist organizational structures produced during a brief political opening. We are left with a better idea of how motivating and enabling conditions interact to generate and sustain insurgency, a broader point that should be taken into account in studies of civil conflicts. Moreover, following qualitative accounts of the conflict, we disaggregate the different periods of the war and show that, in fact, different conditions were predominant during the initiation and maturation periods of the conflict. For scholars of civil wars, it should not be a controversial claim that the dynamics of conflicts are often transformed over their course as insurgents make new alliances, develop new sources of funding, or expand their sources of recruits. This study, then, represents both a demonstration of one approach to systematically analyzing distinct stages of civil conflicts and an approach that explicitly tests combinations of motivating and enabling conditions, or grievances and opportunities.

The narrative and analysis we present challenges the commonly argued notions that rebels are driven by individual opportunities for rebellion or by grievances alone. The partisans of these approaches tend to understand them as mutually exclusive: either rebellion is driven by the enabling presence of opportunity (or absence of costs) or by the motivating presence of grievances against the state. We argue that they are not mutually exclusive and that, instead, a combination of enabling and motivating factors must be present in order for individuals to take up arms against the state, a perspective that is more logically complete than arguments based strictly on opportunity costs or grievances. As studies look more at the microfoundations of support for insurgency (e.g., Wood 2003), the manner in which grievances and opportunities for rebellion interact should be taken into greater consideration.

Research on the effects of indiscriminate violence against insurgent forces has produced somewhat contradictory findings (Kalyvas 2006). In their studies of Guatemala and Chechnya, Stoll (1993) and Lyall (2009) find that poorly targeted state-led violence had the intended effect of weakening the insurgent forces. The presumed reasoning behind these findings is the calculation of risk: where

indiscriminate violence is visited upon noncombatants, insurgents' ability to make credible claims to protect the populace is undermined and communities withdraw support. In other contexts, such state-led violence is found to increase the control of insurgent forces (Kocher et al. 2011; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007; see also Mason and Krane 1989), or at least to complicate the task of eliminating the insurgency (Peceny and Stanley 2010). There is also a reliance on the rational calculations of the populace to explain why such violence might increase the position of insurgent forces: if one is a potential victim of state violence whether or not participating in the insurgency, active participation against the state is logical, since it increases the chances that the threatening state will be overturned. However, Wood (2003: 225) has demonstrated that support for insurgency is not necessarily based on rational calculation but can be motivated by perceptions of the "injustice of existing social relations and state violence." The case presented here clearly fits closely with the finding that indiscriminate violence is a counterproductive strategy for eliminating an insurgency. While we do not present systematic evidence to this effect, many interviewees (some briefly quoted above) suggested that a sense of outrage and injustice—rather than pure rational calculation—played at least a partial role in rising support for the Maoist insurgents against the state.

As it counsels against the use of indiscriminate violence, the Nepali case also highlights the dangers of uneven political liberalization. We show that the organizational base of the Maoist party established in the political opening of the early 1990s served as the foundation of the insurgency as it became clear that the priorities of lower castes, ethnic minorities, and the poor and landless would not be relieved of the official state caste system, given linguistic rights, or distribute land in a manner that would free them of servile land tenure arrangements. Others have found that transition from autocracy to a liberal political system can generate conflict largely because "governmental institutions, including those regulating political participation, were [are] especially weak" (Mansfield and Snyder 2002: 299). In Nepal, ineffective representative structures clearly prevented popular demands from being manifested in policy. Relatedly, previous scholarship has posited a curvilinear relationship between repression and protest, with low and high levels of repression resulting in lower levels of organization (e.g., Muller and Seligson 1987). Nepal's experience seems to fit these general contours: the opening of a nominal multiparty political system in 1990 brought with it organization, but unfulfilled promises of reform bred frustration, protest, and revolt. The increasingly heavy-handed state response intended to reduce protest activity. Contrary to the predictions of the curvilinear relationship between repression and protest, heightened state violence and movement back from liberal democracy did not curtail anti-state activity but instead contributed to its proliferation. This case suggests that protest and insurgent movements cannot be so easily put back in the bottle once they have taken advantage of openings in the political opportunity structure to organize.

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Appendix 1

Table 5 Description of data and calibration cutpoints

Condition	Definition	Cutpoints for set membership assignment	Source
High insurgency—initiation period (outcome)	Maximum number of conflict deaths by Maoists in district during any year of initiation period (1996–2000)	Full member: 10 Midpoint: 3 Full nonmember: 0	Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), Nepal
High insurgency—maturation period (outcome)	Maximum number of conflict deaths by Maoists in district during any year of maturation period (2001–2006)	Full member: 25 Midpoint: 10 Full nonmember: 3	Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), Nepal
High tribal concentration (motivating)	Percentage of population in district qualified as ethnic tribe	Full member: 35 % Midpoint: 25 % Full nonmember: 10 %	Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal
High <i>dalit</i> concentration (motivating)	Percentage of population in district qualified as <i>dalit</i> caste	Full member: 15 % Midpoint: 10 % Full nonmember: 5 %	Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal
High economic disempowerment (motivating)	Composite index: access to land, electricity, credit, employment structure, per cap. income (0–1)	Full member: 0.50 Midpoint: 0.35 Full nonmember: 0.20	United Nations Development Program, <i>Nepal Human Development Report</i> (2004)
High central government funding (motivating)	Annual per capita development budget allocation by the central government to the district	Full member: 1,000 Midpoint: 500 Full nonmember: 300	Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal
High levels of state-led violence (motivating)	Maximum number of conflict deaths by state in district if this peak preceded the peak of Maoist violence in the period	Full member: 25 Midpoint: 10 Full nonmember: 3	Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), Nepal
High road density (enabling)	Kilometers of road per square kilometer land area in district	Full member: 50 km/km ² Midpoint: 30 km/km ² Full nonmember: 10 km/km ²	Department of Roads, Government of Nepal, <i>Nepal Road Statistics</i> (2001)
Strong Maoist organization (enabling)	Vote percentage for CPN (M) in 1991 general election	Full member: 5 Midpoint: 2 Full nonmember: 0	Election Commission, Government of Nepal 1992

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