Civil Wartime Political Parties: Evidence from Four Rebellions in India *

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Abstract

Elections frequently occur during civil wars. Yet, existing research does not adequately conceptualize the political parties contesting them nor, in particular, the party organizations which are ideologically aligned with insurgents but opposed to overthrowing the state. This study conceptualizes such non-revisionist parties as *aligned status quo* party organizations and situates them in a novel typology of civil wartime political parties. Regression discontinuity and qualitative analyses of four civil wars in India find that in localities where aligned status quo parties won elections, overall voter turnout significantly declined in subsequent election cycles and can be explained by rebels and state security forces intensifying their operations in these areas. The results illustrate that aligned status quo parties uniquely face counterinsurgent and insurgent coercion, reinforce the typology's utility, and contribute to our understanding of political parties and civil wartime democratic institutions.

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1 Introduction

Scholars recognize that democratic and other political institutions are central components of civil wars (e.g. Arjona, 2016; Staniland, 2012; Matanock and Staniland, 2018), and some demonstrate that election outcomes can affect armed group violence (Steele and Schubiger, 2018; Querubin et al., 2020). However, political parties contesting wartime elections remain insufficiently understood. Parties across the ideological spectrum competed in Peru’s elections in 1985 and 1990 amid the Shining Path rebellion (Riding, 1985; Treaster, 1989). Relations between Sinn Féin and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) illustrate how organizations sometimes straddle the fine line between revisionist and mainstream politics (Feeney, 2003). While some parties exhibit high degrees of ideological alignment with insurgents, existing research overlooks the fact that many of these high-alignment parties oppose overthrowing the state, contradicting rebels’ revisionist aims. A singular focus on ideological alignment elides the adversarial relationships that can exist between rebels and parties expressing such overlap.

Diverse political party-insurgent group relations and the inadequacy of focusing solely on group ideology motivate the present study. Specifically, the study asks: how do parties’ preferences relate to insurgent groups’ political objectives? A novel typology of civil wartime political parties (WPPs) addresses this question, conceptualizing party organizations based on (1) their ideological alignment with insurgents, and (2) whether they view extant state institutions as legitimate in the long run. This typology accounts for high-alignment political parties supportive of the status quo, and illustrates how such high-alignment parties uniquely attract hostility by counterinsurgents *and* insurgents, a claim validated through empirical evidence from India.

Regression discontinuity and qualitative analyses of four civil wars in India — the Naga rebellion, the Kashmir-based separatist insurgency, the Naxalite rebellion in West Bengal, and the

Sikh insurgency in Punjab — demonstrate the typology’s utility and the importance of distinguishing aligned status quo parties from other parties. All four conflict settings show that aligned status quo parties attract state security apparatus and rebel activity; counterinsurgents and insurgents escalated patrols, threats, and attacks in the localities where aligned status quo political parties won elections. This intensified activity operated as a mechanism linking aligned status quo party victories to lower voter turnout in subsequent elections. The empirical results justify the typology’s departure from prior scholarship by considering, along with ideology, a party’s support for status quo institutions.

The typology of civil WPPs developed here draws upon a recognition that dominant social cleavages play pivotal roles in civil wars and electoral settings. Scholars of democracy have pointed to the importance of social divisions in structuring political party systems (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), such as ethnic cleavages upon which some parties encourage riots (Wilkinson, 2004). Civil wars are similarly contested along a “master cleavage,” the overarching division (e.g. ethnic) between opposing groups in a violent, extra-systemic conflict (Kalyvas, 2003). When civil wars coincide with democracy, the conflict’s master cleavage and the ideological divisions between the disputants closely mirror the cleavages defining party politics.

Empirical analyses validate the wartime party typology’s utility, showing that aligned status quo parties uniquely attract hostility by both sides in the civil war. First, such political parties struggle to prove their loyalty to the state due to the overlap with insurgent ideology, and face persistent threats from insurgents who seek to monopolize support from civilians forming the party’s core voting bloc. When an aligned status quo party wins a constituency, the state escalates operations there due to the growing strength of potentially disloyal actors. Rebels simultaneously threaten party functionaries and voters in these regions, fearing civilian support shifting from rebels to the

“mainstream” political party. These intensified insurgent and counterinsurgent operations increase civilians’ risk of exposure to physical harm, likely explaining the reduction in voter turnout in subsequent elections.

This study first presents cross-national data demonstrating that electoral processes and political party competition frequently occur during civil wars, and then introduces the typology of civil wartime political parties. The study then theorizes why aligned status quo WPPs’ electoral victories cause heightened activity by the conflict’s belligerents and, as a downstream effect, reduce overall voter turnout in subsequent elections. Regression discontinuity and qualitative analyses of four different civil war settings in India support these claims and validate the typology’s utility.

2 Global Evidence of Civil Wartime Elections and Democracy

Practitioners and scholars view civil wartime democratic institutions as strengthening the state and increasing government legitimacy (Petraeus and Amos, 2006; Kalyvas, 2008). Research on institutional design suggests that inclusive institutions minimize extra-systemic conflict (Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2001). Along with scholarly and policy analyses linking democracy and civil war, cross-national descriptive statistics demonstrate that elections and political party competition commonly occur during civil wars and warrant systematic inquiry.

Two data sources illustrate how frequently democratic institutions and civil wars have coincided since 1946. First, the Varieties of Democracy Project publishes granular cross-national data on states’ democratic characteristics (Coppedge et al., 2019). The V-Dem dataset’s “clean elections index,” in particular, incorporates multiple indicators into a composite measure between one and zero expressing the extent to which a country’s elections were free and fair in a particular year. A score of one indicates the absence of registration fraud, systematic irregularities, government intimidation of the opposition, vote buying, and election violence (Coppedge et al., 2019, p. 58-

59). Second, the UCDP-PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset includes all intra-state conflicts since 1946 where at least 25 battle-related deaths occurred in a given year (Allansson, Melander and Themnér, 2017). Combined, these datasets convey the year-by-year frequency with which civil wars occur alongside democracy.

Figure 1 presents descriptive statistics from the merged datasets. Figure 1a shows that the annual count of civil war dyads in states with a minimum of 0.5 on the V-Dem “clean elections index” — i.e. settings more democratic than not — steadily grew in the post-WWII era and typically stayed above ten from 1985 onward. Figure 1b presents a histogram of all civil war-years based on V-Dem scores. 949 conflict-year observations exceed 0.25 on the V-Dem metric (54.4%), 572 clear the 0.5 threshold (32.8%), and 319 eclipse the 0.75 mark (18.3%). The substantial number of civil war-year observations above a score of 0.25 (54.4%) indicates that a majority of civil war-year observations occurred in settings where the state exhibited at least the trappings of democracy, albeit with varying levels of consolidation.

Figure 1: Descriptive Statistics on Civil Wars and Levels of Democracy

Table 1 illustrates the diversity of civil wartime democratic contexts by listing the twelve

countries, among those scoring 0.5 or higher on the V-Dem metric, with the largest number of civil war-year observations. Examples include the Colombian government’s civil war against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the Government of Mali’s conflict with Tuareg rebels, and the civil war against leftist Hukbalahap insurgents in the Philippines during the 1940s. A wide range of political parties contested elections in these settings — e.g. Kurdish political parties in Turkey (Watts, 2010), and socialist/conservative parties in Colombia (Bushnell, 1993) — suggesting that partisan electoral competition during civil war is widespread.

Table 1: Civil Wartime Democratic Contexts (minimum 0.5 on V-Dem index)

	Location	Government/Incumbent	Rebel Group Examples
1	India	Govt. of India	KYKL, ULFA, JKLF
2	Israel	Govt. of Israel	PLO, Hamas
3	Colombia	Govt. of Colombia	FARC, ELN
4	Philippines	Govt. of Philippines	Huk, MILF
5	Turkey	Govt. of Turkey	PKK, Devrimci Sol
6	Sri Lanka	Govt. of Sri Lanka	LTTE, TELO
7	United Kingdom	Govt. of UK	IRA
8	Peru	Govt. of Peru	Sendero Luminoso
9	Russia	Govt. of Russia	Chechen rebels
10	Indonesia	Govt. of Indonesia	Darul Islam, GAM
11	Senegal	Govt. of Senegal	MFDC
12	Mali	Govt. of Mali	ATNMC, CMA

3 Civil Wartime Political Parties

Civil wartime electoral systems feature political parties with wide-ranging preferences. Generically, political parties are organizations which aggregate voters’ preferences and coordinate behavior among elites to win elections (Aldrich, 1995). Parties often forge strategic partnerships with like-minded religious and social organizations (Thachil, 2014). Similarly, Matanock and Staniland (2018) briefly, but not systematically, note that alliances emerge between political parties and insurgent groups.

Two variables effectively describe civil wartime political parties and their varied relationships with insurgent groups: (1) the political party and insurgent group’s ideological alignment

(i.e. alignment along the civil war's main cleavage), and (2) whether the political party expresses support for the long-term persistence of status quo democratic institutions. Combined, these factors yield a novel typology of four civil WPPs illuminating how hostile relations can exist between insurgents and political parties with similar ideological proclivities.

One might contend that an ideal typology would instead account for political parties' relations with all non-state armed groups (e.g. insurgents, militias, and gangs), rather than exclusively focus on political party-insurgent group relations. This critique is misplaced. Insurgents have fundamentally revisionist aims vis-à-vis the state, unlike other armed groups uninterested in seceding from or overthrowing the state. Rebel groups' anti-state objectives constitute a central characteristic against which parties' preferences should be compared.

Civil wars are typically contested at the macro-level along overarching social divisions, engendering characterizations of these conflicts as "ethnic," "religious," or "ideological" civil wars. As Kalyvas (2003, p. 474) notes, local interests and rivalries in civil wars often usurp macro-level divisions, encouraging local actors to use violence in ways that may contradict the conflict's master cleavage. Existing research, however, indicates that dominant social cleavages can be particularly important for elite-level actors' strategic considerations in civil wars ranging from Colombia's conflict against leftist rebels (Steele, 2017), the Spanish civil war (Balcells, 2017), and the civil war between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) (Staniland, 2014, p. 141-178). While local patterns of civilian victimization may run counter to macro-level dimensions of a civil war (Kalyvas, 2006), the preferences and motivations of elites and organizations often adhere to these overarching cleavages.

In civil wars, rebels' and incumbent governments' political preferences are often expressed through ideological programs, which can be understood as:

"...a set of more or less systematic ideas that identify a constituency, the challenges that the

group confronts, the objectives to pursue on behalf of that group, and a (perhaps vague) program of action. Moreover, some ideologies prescribe strategies and institutions for the realization of those objectives” (Sanín and Wood, 2014, p. 214).

The central political dispute in a civil war typically relates to a key societal division, and the opposing sides in such a conflict make sense of this division through ideological frameworks. For instance, when separatist civil wars are fought on the basis of a salient ethnic cleavage, rebels’ ideologies centralize this ethnic division and establish a broader ideological program (e.g. ideal institutions) around that cleavage. Therefore, the central role of ideology and master cleavages suggests a logical step in describing wartime parties’ salient characteristics entails situating parties’ ideologies in the context of the conflict’s primary macro-level divisions and combatant ideologies.

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) asserted in their seminal study that only a sub-set of all social divisions in a state will characterize that country’s political party system. The authors derive a two-axis schema and articulate the conditions under which each of four social divisions will define a political party system (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 10). Related quantitative studies find, for example, that ethnic fragmentation in a democracy corresponds to larger numbers of political parties formed along ethnic lines (Neto and Cox, 1997). When civil wars coincide with democracy, political parties’ ideologies and positions along central cleavages overlap to varying degrees with insurgent organizations’ ideological programs.

Recent studies on elections and violence primarily emphasize whether armed groups and political parties share similarly conservative religious, leftist, or right-wing ideologies. For instance, work on Pakistan examines whether secular party victories affect Islamist and sectarian violence (Nellis and Siddiqui, 2018), and whether electing Islamist parties in Indonesia affects right wing religious violence (Kuipers, Nellis and Weaver, 2019) . Querubin et al. (2020) focus on the left-right cleavage in the Colombian civil war and find that electing previously-excluded left wing political parties in mayoral races increases subsequent right-wing paramilitary violence. Others study the

Colombian and Spanish civil war contexts and evaluate how election results affect civilian victimization and displacement (Balcells and Steele, 2016; Balcells, 2017; Steele, 2017). This body of scholarship identifies how electoral outcomes affect certain non-state armed groups' violence, but these studies typically elide the antagonism that can characterize relations among ideologically like-minded political parties and insurgent groups.

Ideological overlap should not imply homophily between insurgent groups and political parties. In civil wars, the legitimacy of extant state institutions remains a paramount point of contention among macro-level actors, including political party elites, counterinsurgents, and rebel leaders. Legitimacy refers to "the degree to which institutions are valued for themselves, and considered right and proper" (Lipset, 1959, p. 71). Not all civil wartime political parties view the status quo democratic state's elections as "right and proper" in the long run. Some parties may support the elections' persistence, but others' participation in elections instead reflects a calculus of short-term expediency wedded with support for those institutions' elimination in the long-run. If a political party supports the long-term legitimacy of the state's elections, then doing so directly contradicts an insurgent group's goal of toppling or seceding from these institutions.

Combining support for extant state institutions with the degree of ideological alignment generates the typology of four wartime political parties outlined in Table 2. The typology includes: (1) aligned status quo parties, (2) aligned revisionist parties, (3) unaligned status quo parties, and (4) unaligned revisionist parties. The cells in Table 2 include examples of each political party type, and the discussion below further elaborates upon each type.

Table 2: Typology of Wartime Political Parties (pertinent insurgent organizations listed in parentheses)

	<i>Party's Perceptions of Elections' Long-Term Legitimacy</i>	
	<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
<i>High Ideological Alignment with Rebel Group</i>	Aligned Status Quo Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPI-M in West Bengal (Naxalites) • Leftist parties in Peru (Sendero Luminoso) • JUI in Pakistan (TTP) 	Aligned Revisionist Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinn Fein in Ireland (PIRA) • Unión Patriótica in Colombia (FARC)
<i>Low Ideological Alignment with Rebel Group</i>	Unaligned Status Quo Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right wing parties in Peru (Sendero Luminoso) • Colombian Conservative Party in Colombia (FARC) 	Unaligned Revisionist Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balochistan National Party in Pakistan (AI Qaeda)

3.0.1 Aligned status quo parties

Aligned status quo WPPs support the long-term persistence of the state's democratic institutions, but also exhibit high alignment with rebels' ideological programs. For instance, the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) contested elections in the Indian state of West Bengal during the leftist Naxalite rebellion in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The CPM publicly supported the Indian constitution and explicitly disavowed the revisionist Naxalites, while also espousing an anti-feudal and anti-capitalist ideology. As described later, the CPM disavowing the Naxalites drew West Bengal-based rebels' ire, but failed to garner sympathy from Indian counterinsurgents. India's security forces regularly threatened, jailed, and attacked CPM party functionaries during this period.

3.0.2 Aligned revisionist parties

Aligned revisionist parties participate in elections while expressing high alignment with insurgent ideology and supporting the overthrow of status quo state institutions. The Irish political party Sinn Féin contested elections in Northern Ireland for most of the 20th century while also calling for region's separation from Great Britain (Krause, 2017, p. 135-136). This outright call for independence and the party's support for Irish nationalism aligned it with the Irish Republican Army and Provisional Irish Republican Army's ideological programs.

3.0.3 Unaligned status quo parties

Other parties express relatively low ideological alignment with insurgents. Unaligned status quo parties, in particular, support the long-term legitimacy of the state's institutions while demonstrating little overlap with insurgents' ideological programs. Examples include the non-leftist Indian National Congress in West Bengal during the Naxalite uprising. Additionally, the Popular Action party and the Christian People's Party competed as conservative parties in Peru's elections in the 1980s during the leftist Shining Path rebellion (Stokes, 1995, p. 56-57).

3.0.4 Unaligned revisionist parties

In contrast, unaligned revisionist parties oppose the long term legitimacy of the state's democratic institutions while not expressing high ideological alignment with an insurgent group operating in the same context. For instance, the Balochistan National Party (BNP) in Pakistan in the mid-2000s withdrew all of its representatives from Pakistan's electoral institutions and strongly argued against the legitimacy of status quo democratic institutions following a series of Pakistan Army-perpetrated assassinations of the party's officials (Kasi, 2006; *DAWN*, 2007). At the same time, Al Qaeda operated in the region and carried out violent attacks against civilians and security forces.

Unaligned revisionist parties demonstrate how, in settings with multiple rebel groups fighting along different cleavages (e.g. leftist and ethnic rebel organizations), parties can be simultaneously classified as more than one civil WPP type, depending upon which insurgent organization the party is being compared against. In the Balochistan context, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) was founded in 2000 and regularly attacked Pakistan's security force organizations in its ethnic separatist conflict at the same time as Al Qaeda conducted its revisionist operations in the region. When considering the BNP's position relative to the BLA, the BNP can instead be classified as an aligned revisionist party.

4 Beyond preference description: the civil WPP typology's utility

Does the civil WPP typology have utility beyond simply describing parties' ideological overlap with rebels and support for extant state institutions? In particular, does empirical evidence justify the departure from prior scholarship by considering, along with ideology, a party's support for status quo institutions? This section articulates how aligned status quo parties uniquely face hostility from rebels and counterinsurgents such that distinguishing these parties from others facilitates a more nuanced understanding of wartime democracy. Subsequent theory and empirical analyses show how, in settings where a civil war is fought along a single dominant cleavage, aligned status quo parties face distinct challenges during wartime democratic politics. Specifically, insurgents and counterinsurgents intensify their operations in areas where these parties win elections, which undermines civil wartime democracy by reducing overall voter turnout in subsequent election cycles.

4.1 Implications of aligned status quo electoral victories

This article proposes that insurgents and counterinsurgents intensify operations in localities where aligned status quo parties win electoral contests, which in turn reduces voter turnout in sub-

sequent election cycles. Civil wartime election results can provide valuable information to combatants by indicating the distribution of civilian preferences and political parties' electoral strength across localities. Insurgents view aligned status quo parties as rivals opposed to rebels' central goal of overthrowing the state and, by extension, as opponents competing for scarce civilian support. For counterinsurgents, aligned status quo parties and their supporters are potentially disloyal partisans, given their ideological overlap with rebels. Given their mutual hostility toward aligned status quo parties, state security forces and insurgents intensify their threats and operations against aligned status quo party functionaries and the broader electorate in areas where these parties win local races.

During civil wars, armed groups seek information indicating civilians' loyalties in the order to discern the distribution of preferences across localities (Kalyvas, 2006). For instance, Balcells (2017) finds that in conventional civil wars armed groups extract information from local elites regarding the public's prewar political mobilization in order to identify potential threats among civilians (Balcells, 2017, p. 29). In asymmetric civil wars, armed groups collectively target civilians based on their group affiliations (Steele, 2017, p. 24); combatants discern these collective affiliations from election outcomes (Steele, 2017, p. 42-43).

Civil wartime elections reveal the spatial distribution of civilian political preferences and also indicate where aligned status quo parties wield electoral strength. Rebels recognize that growth in aligned status quo parties' popular support indicates where civilians are increasingly amenable to a "mainstream" non-revisionist version of their ideology; in order to deter these voters' future participation in democratic politics, rebels will collectively threaten voters with violence in these areas if they turn out to vote in subsequent elections. Insurgents also threaten and directly attack aligned status quo party functionaries given that election results reveal the growing strength of a

party organization that represents a non-revisionist ideological alternative to voters.

Victorious aligned status quo parties additionally garner suspicion from state security forces. Counterinsurgents repress aligned status quo parties and voters in areas where such parties win elections, fearful of the growing strength and numbers of potentially disloyal partisans and civilians. Specifically, state security forces will escalate direct coercive activities against aligned status quo parties —e.g., intensified monitoring and arrests of local party leaders—along with threats against collective groups of individuals who disproportionately supported aligned status quo parties in previous elections.

Given the theorized increase in operations (e.g. threats, patrols, and attacks) by rebels *and* counterinsurgents in localities where aligned status quo parties win elections, this collective coercive activity will operate as a mechanism significantly reducing voter turnout in subsequent elections. Specifically, intensified coercive activity by combatants on both sides will reduce overall voter turnout in later elections because the voters in these areas recognize that they run a higher risk of experiencing physical harm—both indirectly *and* directly—if they travel to the polls on election day. *Overall* voter turnout will decline, rather than among a specific subgroup of civilians, because the identification problem inherent in civil wars implies that armed groups will not be able to deduce the loyalties of individual civilians from vote shares (Kalyvas, 2006; Berman and Matanock, 2015). Instead, combatants will intensify threats and operations against the collective populace along with aligned status quo party functionaries.

A secondary implication of this theoretical discussion is that as insurgents and counterinsurgents simultaneously intensify their operations in constituencies where aligned status quo parties win, the likelihood that such constituencies will experience direct clashes between combatants increases. Armed groups' increased scrutiny over constituencies where aligned status quo parties

win intensifies the strategic importance of such areas and, when combined with opposing armed groups increased physical proximity resulting from escalated operations in these localities, violence between these armed groups will increase as well. Qualitative evidence and multiple regression discontinuity analyses support these theoretical claims and validate the importance of moving beyond ideology when studying civil wartime political parties.

5 Case selection: four civil wars in India

The primary empirical analyses center on four rebellions in India: the separatist insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir (late-1980s to the present), the Sikh rebellion in the state of Punjab (late 1970s to the early 1990s), the Naga insurgency in northeast India (late 1950s to the late 1990s), and the Naxalite uprising in the state of West Bengal (mid-1960s to the early 1970s).¹ Substantive and methodological concerns justify studying these conflict settings. First, these civil wars feature distinct master-cleavages and disputes against the state — i.e. ethnic secessionist insurgency (Nagaland and Punjab), non-ethnic secessionist conflict (Jammu & Kashmir), and a revolutionary leftist rebellion (West Bengal). Similar within-conflict RD estimates and qualitative evidence will demonstrate the theory’s consistency across settings with distinct master-cleavages. Methodologically, local linear regression discontinuity estimators rely on truncated samples, and so drawing upon data from four civil wars mitigates statistical power concerns. After outlining the historical background for these four conflict settings, subsequent discussion details the research design for the empirical analyses.

5.1 Naga Rebellion

Shortly after India’s independence in 1947, the Naga National Council (NNC) and its armed wing undertook a secessionist civil war in northeast India lasting nearly two decades (Bhaumik, 2009). The NNC and Indian government signed a peace deal in 1975, but a substantial portion of

¹Appendix C lists details on the elections classified as civil wartime contests.

Naga fighters and commanders broke away and formed the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), two leading factions of which would spearhead intense insurgent operations against the Indian state. In 1997, the conflict substantially subsided when the NSCN-IM signed a relatively durable ceasefire deal with the Government of India, followed shortly thereafter by a ceasefire deal between the Indian government and the NSCN-K.

Numerous political parties contested elections in this conflict setting, especially after a distinct Nagaland state was formed within the Indian Union in 1963. Two relatively cohesive aligned status quo political parties explicitly ran on a platform to advance the Naga ethnic group's interests in India and to ensure the northeast region's autonomy within the Indian Union: (1) the Naga National Democratic Party (NNDP), which contested elections in 1982 and 1987, and (2) the Nagaland People's Conference (NPC), which competed in elections in 1989 and 1993. These political parties overtly supported Indian political institutions' long-term persistence and staunchly promoted pro-Naga ethnic group agendas, as extensive qualitative evidence in Appendix A.1 indicates. The Indian National Congress (INC) contested elections in the state from the 1970s onward as an unaligned status quo WPP.

5.2 Insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) took up arms in 1987, carrying out attacks against Indian security forces in India-administered Kashmir (Bose, 2007, p. 233). The JKLF sought *azadi* (freedom) for J&K — i.e. a country independent from India and Pakistan (Puri, 1995, p. 4). The JKLF fragmented in the early 1990s (Bose, 2003, p. 126), after which other insurgent organizations more sympathetic to Pakistan filled the void and fought against the Indian state (Staniland, 2014, p. 76–77). These irredentist insurgent groups killed thousands of Kashmiri civilians and Indian security forces in the disputed territory well into the 2000s.

State assembly elections occurred with regularity in J&K during the civil war of the 1990s and 2000s. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) contested elections, demanding that J&K be granted unique status in the Indian Union, including substantial autonomy from the Indian central government in Delhi. The NC made bargains with the Government of India which may have, at times, compromised the region's autonomy (Staniland, 2013), but it persisted in its assertion that the former princely state has a unique and important history, necessitating substantial autonomy for the region within the Indian constitution (Bose, 2003, p. 244-246). The party's demand for autonomy and emphasis on the region's distinctiveness indicates substantial alignment with insurgents' J&K-specific separatist interests, especially relative to the lack of alignment exhibited by its main electoral competitor (the Indian National Congress). Therefore, the NC is an aligned status quo WPP (for more qualitative information on this coding decision, see Appendix A.2), and the INC contested elections in J&K as an unaligned status quo political party.

5.3 The Naxalite Rebellion in West Bengal

The Naxalite uprising began in India when hardliners within the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) organized a peasants' conference in March 1967 in the northern West Bengal town of Naxalbari and openly called for armed rebellion against the Indian state. The armed uprising escalated throughout 1967 until the West Bengal state government arrested numerous Naxalite leaders (Franda, 1971, p. 157-162). Shortly after this initial crackdown, the leftist hardliners and insurgents formed a rebel organization known as the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist (CPI-ML) (Franda, 1971, p. 168-169). During the next several years, mobilization into this rebel group surged among the peasantry and tribal populations of West Bengal (Duyker, 1987). Eventually, the group fragmented in 1972 following its leader Charu Mazumdar's death in prison and amid intractable disputes between other rebel leaders (Banerjee, 1984, p. 215-264). This fragmentation

marked the end of a nearly five-year leftist uprising against the Indian state in West Bengal.

Elections regularly occurred in West Bengal during the Naxalite rebellion. Leftist political parties contested these races, including the Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM), the latter of which emerged as the predominant left-wing political party in the state during the 1960s and 1970s (Franda, 1971, p. 82-113). The CPM and the Naxalites largely agreed over numerous aspects of leftist ideology. Both sought to disempower bourgeoisie and capitalist Indians, abolish feudalism in the countryside, and advance the interests of agricultural and industrial workers through highly-organized peasant organizations and trade unions (Banerjee, 1984, p. 6-28, 31-50, and 72-74; Franda, 1971, p. 172-175, 182-207). Given the staunch leftist orientation of the CPM and their interest in enacting an agenda through India's electoral process in the long run, rather than through rebellion (Franda, 1971, p. 39-40), the CPM is classified as an aligned status quo political party (see Appendix A.3 for more details). In contrast, its main opponent, the INC, contested elections in West Bengal as an unaligned status quo WPP.

5.4 Sikh Rebellion in Punjab

Unrest escalated in Punjab, India during the 1970s as the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) party organized protests and other civil disobedience against the central government in its push for greater regional autonomy. Eventually, Sikh militant groups and hard line civil society organizations such as Babbar Khalsa and the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) called for Punjab's complete independence from India. These groups physically attacked civilians and Indian security forces from the late 1970s onward, with the conflict escalating in 1984 after Indian security forces raided the Golden Temple — the foremost spiritual site in Sikhism — in order to wipe out Sikh militants taking shelter in the temple complex. The insurgency continued until the early 1990s, abruptly subsiding in 1994 after the Indian government implemented a ruthless

counterinsurgency campaign.

The Shiromani Akali Dal formed in 1920 in order to advance Sikh interests in Punjab province and in colonial India more broadly. The SAD contested elections primarily in Punjab province after India gained independence in 1947. The party sought to break up Punjab — composed then of a majority Hindi-speaking population — in order to form a distinct Punjabi-speaking state within the Indian union (Kumar and Sieberer, 1991, p. 171-188). In 1966, the central government granted this concession (along with others) to the SAD (Brass, 1990, p. 169-173). The SAD raised additional demands throughout the 1970s and 1980s, including a call for more autonomy for Punjab state (Chima, 1994). The SAD and Sikh militants exhibited substantial ideological overlap given their shared preference for advancing Sikh interests and conception of Sikhs as members of a distinct political community in the subcontinent. Yet, the SAD disavowed insurgents' goal of complete independence. In Appendix A.4 numerous qualitative sources justify coding the entire SAD as an aligned status quo party despite the existence of some SAD members who expressed sympathy for certain Sikh militant factions. In contrast, the study classifies the non-ethnic INC in Punjab as an unaligned status quo party.

6 Research Design

The prior theoretical discussion asserted that an aligned status quo party's victory will reduce overall voter turnout in subsequent elections through intensified combatant operations — e.g. patrols, coordinated threats, and outright attacks. Whether an aligned status quo victory affects future voter turnout is directly testable through a regression discontinuity (RD) design where treatment effects can be identified under relatively weak assumptions. In an RD design, all units have a score, and those units whose score exceeds a discrete cut point receive treatment. When treated and untreated units near this assignment threshold are comparable with respect to their background

characteristics and potential outcomes, the RD design can identify the causal effect of treatment at the cut point.

The unit of observation in this study is the state legislative assembly constituency. For all i legislative assembly constituencies, an aligned status quo party winning an election (the treatment), depends on that party’s margin of victory (the score). Formally, R_i — also known as the “running variable” — indicates the aligned status quo WPP’s margin of victory/defeat and, by extension, whether a constituency becomes “treated” with an aligned status quo WPP victory. When assembly constituencies are not abruptly different on each side of the cut point, the RD design can assess whether voter turnout in election $t + 1$ declines after aligned status quo WPP victories in election t .²

The study implements the RD design through the `rdrobust` package, which utilizes triangular kernel-weighted, local linear regression within the neighborhood of the cut point determined by an automated bandwidth selection procedure (Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik, 2020). This estimator regresses an outcome variable Y_i on a treatment indicator D_i , the running variable R_i , and an interaction of the two:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 R_i + \beta_3 D_i R_i + \varepsilon_i$$

In estimating the effect of treatment, $\hat{\beta}_1$, `rdrobust` incorporates a bias-correction whose variability is also accounted for when deriving robust standard errors.³

In addition to the RD design, qualitative analyses across the four civil war settings provide compelling evidence that insurgent and security forces escalated operations in areas where aligned status quo parties win and provide a plausible explanation for the RD results regarding voter turnout. Complementary RD analysis leverages a granular dataset of insurgent attacks against

²Appendix B articulates the requisite sharp RD identification assumptions and estimand.

³Appendix C presents details on which elections qualify as civil wartime elections.

counterinsurgents in the Punjab conflict to lend greater support for the secondary implication of the theory presented earlier — i.e. more clashes between insurgents and counterinsurgents in localities with aligned status quo party victories.

7 Data

The Indian state assembly elections data used for the RD analyses come from an online repository maintained by the Trivedi Centre for Political Data at Ashoka University (Bhogale et al., 2019). These data facilitate estimating aligned status quo parties' margins of victory/defeat, as well as overall voter turnout in each constituency for the subsequent election. Qualitative evidence from a range of primary and secondary sources related to each conflict zone sheds light on how intensified insurgent and counterinsurgent patrols, attacks, and threats explain the RD treatment effect estimates.

8 Evaluating RD Identification Assumptions

RD designs must validate two critical assumptions, in particular, in order to identify treatment effects. First, a continuity assumption asserts that the treatment and control units near the cut point must not be abruptly different in terms of their pre-treatment characteristics and potential outcomes. In Appendix D, results from pre-treatment covariate balance tests strongly support this assumption.

Second, RD designs hinge upon the assumption that units cannot directly and precisely manipulate their score on the running variable — in this case, it assumes that parties cannot directly and precisely manipulate their vote shares. Qualitative evidence regarding the conduct of Indian state assembly elections and vote-counting procedures, in particular, demonstrates that political parties could not directly manipulate their vote shares and margins due to stringent measures implemented by the Election Commission of India (ECI). Specifically, in state assembly elections,

votes are cast at the booth-level (typically equivalent to a neighborhood or village), and then under extraordinarily tight security measures, independent officials from the ECI aggregate the booth-level results to the constituency level in a carefully-controlled manner, even in the conflict settings of interest (e.g. TOI (1993, 1996c); Shivadekar (2009)). Appendix E elaborates on the ECI’s institutional independence and vote-counting procedures. Density test results in Appendix F — derived from the `rddensity` package produced by Cattaneo, Jansson and Ma (2018, 2020) — demonstrate that there is not a statistically significant difference in the density of treated and control units at the cut point. This evidence is strongly supportive of the assumption that political parties could not (and did not) precisely manipulate their vote shares.

9 Voter turnout RD results

Do aligned status quo WPPs’ electoral victories affect overall voter turnout in subsequent elections? The RD results in Table 3 indicate that an aligned status quo political party’s victory in a constituency during civil war causes a striking decline in voter turnout (measured from 0–100) of approximately 13.6 percentage points in the next assembly election. In contrast, these parties’ victories do not affect subsequent voter turnout during peacetime. Appendix I presents formal tests of treatment effect heterogeneity across peacetime and civil wartime elections, indicating that the two RD estimates are statistically distinguishable from each other. Furthermore, results in Appendix M indicate that a converse set of RD analyses — i.e., determining if INC victories (many of which involved an aligned status quo defeat) are associated with higher voter turnout — are consistent with the results presented here.

While these results indicate a sharp decline in voter turnout after an aligned status quo victory, they say little about which civilians refrained from voting. For instance, they do not indicate whether the aligned status quo party’s supporters, in particular, decided to refrain from voting or

Table 3: Aligned Status Quo WPPs (effect of incumbency on voter turnout at election $t + 1$)

Peacetime Estimates						
State	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
JKNC (J&K)	12.646	[-16.935, 42.228]	0.402	112	30	17.58
NPF (Nagaland)	2.653	[-4.144, 9.450]	0.444	171	92	13.60
SAD (Punjab)	-1.244	[-5.259, 2.771]	0.544	470	279	10.90
CPM (West Bengal)	-0.519	[-3.828, 2.790]	0.758	1,666	889	13.74
Pooled RD estimate	-0.714	[-3.524, 2.095]	0.618	2,419	1,272	13.14
Civil Wartime Estimates						
State	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
JKNC (J&K)	-25.947	[-39.408, -12.487]	0.000	290	134	14.19
NND (Nagaland)	-7.734	[-15.699, 0.231]	0.057	121	46	6.08
NPC (Nagaland)	-15.171	[-22.971, -7.372]	0.000	60	31	8.30
SAD (Punjab)	-12.105	[-32.420, 8.210]	0.243	231	108	12.56
CPM (West Bengal)	-4.004	[-10.645, 2.637]	0.237	468	168	9.21
Pooled RD estimate	-13.562	[-21.328, -5.796]	0.001	1,170	546	12.35

whether there was an overall decline in turnout. Additional RD analyses indirectly evaluate this by assessing whether incumbency (dis)advantages are fundamentally different for aligned status quo parties during civil wars. If the civil wartime drop in voter turnout were a product of *only* the aligned status quo party's supporters refusing to turn out and vote, then the party's incumbency disadvantage should be more pronounced amid civil wars.

Results in Appendix G indicate that incumbency dynamics are consistent for these parties across civil war and peacetime. This evidence suggests that voters *in general* decline to turn out after an aligned status quo party wins a constituency. Qualitative analyses of these civil wars in the next section further interrogate these voter turnout effects and indicate that intensified insurgent and counterinsurgent activity after an aligned status quo party's victory can explain the overall drop in voter turnout.

9.1 Robustness checks for RD estimates

Multiple robustness checks assess the reliability of the RD estimates presented above. Appendix J presents RD results using alternative bandwidths wider and narrower than the MSE-optimal bandwidth selected through `rdrobust`. Second, Appendix K presents treatment effect estimates using uniform and Epanechnikov kernel weights as opposed to triangular ones. All results derived from these robustness checks are consistent with those discussed in the main body of the paper.

10 Empirically evaluating the proposed mechanism

10.1 Qualitative evidence

The RD results indicate that aligned status quo victories caused a decline in voter turnout. Qualitative evidence drawn from primary and secondary sources from the four conflicts of interest indicate that the decline in turnout can be explained by combatants' intensified operations; insurgents and counterinsurgents carried out threats, increased patrols, and committed overt violence against aligned status quo political parties and voters, often in regions where these parties were electorally successful. Rebels coerced elected politicians and political party workers from the aligned status quo parties, and threatened violence against voters in aligned status quo party strongholds who sought to turn out and vote. Furthermore, counterinsurgents similarly applied coercive force and threats against party functionaries and voters in these areas.⁴ While the ratio of counterinsurgent and insurgent coercion may vary across conflict zones, together they comprise a bundle of coercion and explain the subsequent drop in voter turnout.

⁴The qualitative discussion in this section presents a broad range of evidence illustrating the myriad coercive means—threats, patrols, boycotts, and lethal/non-lethal armed action—which jointly reduce voter turnout.

10.1.1 Jammu & Kashmir

Qualitative evidence from J&K illustrates how the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) uniquely attracted coercion by insurgents and counterinsurgents, typically in areas where it achieved electoral success, a dynamic which also put civilians in these regions at greater risk and provides a plausible explanation for the estimated decline in voter turnout. The party's candidates, politicians, and workers faced an extraordinarily high number of threats and attacks by Kashmir-based militant groups along with coercion from Indian state security forces. These threats to the NC — an aligned status quo party — were particularly pronounced in areas of the Kashmir Valley where the party was often electorally-successful. For instance, consider the heavy security force deployments and militant attacks against NC members prior to the 2002 assembly election in Pulwama and Anantnag districts, strongholds of the National Conference:

“The recent escalation in violence in Pulwama and Anantnag districts of south Kashmir is likely to cripple the voter turnout in 16 assembly constituencies there...Militants have made several attempts on the life of Sakina Itoo, tourism minister in the Farooq Abdullah [National Conference] government. Ms Itoo is seeking re-election from Noorabad constituency. Nearly a dozen people were wounded in several attacks on her motorcade during electioneering. A militant attack on the [NC] candidate Khalida Mushtaq's motorcade on Saturday left four persons, including her father, dead.” (TOI, 2002*d*).

Press reports indicate that throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Kashmiri militants swiftly responded to any signs of the NC gaining electoral strength, fearing that the NC and Indian democracy were growing more popular among Kashmiri civilians who might otherwise support the insurgency (TOI, 1995). In addition to violence against high-level leaders, insurgents threatened and killed dozens of NC members prior to the 1996 and 2002 state assembly elections in the party's strongholds (TOI, 1996*b*, 2002*b*).

The NC's leader Farooq Abdullah repeatedly expressed in the mid-1990s that NC workers and leaders, unlike those from the INC, disproportionately bore the brunt of coercion and threats

meted out by insurgents and Indian state security forces (Inderjit, 1995; TOI, 1996a). In 1993, a press report quoted Abdullah:

“‘When the proxy war was on, everyone wanted to destroy the National Conference even though we were the only party that stood for unity with India — when our [elected members of legislative assembly] and workers were assassinated and their houses burnt, nobody shed a tear,’ [Abdullah] regrets. Dr Abdullah admits that, for all practical purposes, his party workers are lying low in the Valley — ‘They will be killed by the boys [insurgents] in Kashmir straight away’” (Sehgal, 1993).

Omar Abdullah eventually took the reins as the NC’s leader and echoed these sentiments in the early 2000s:

“If any party should have been scared to contest elections, it should have been the National Conference (NC). Our workers and leaders have been targeted all the time and we have lost over 3,000 workers since militancy first erupted in the Valley...but let us recognise the sacrifices we have made to keep the Indian flag flying in Srinagar...The NC is the prime target because we are the only party which has roots in all three regions [of J&K]. The militants are wiping us out in order to fulfill their agenda” (TOI, 2002a).

Rebels also threatened voters in the Kashmir Valley with violence if they turned out to vote (Puri, 1996; TOI, 2002c). These threats against voters along with rebel and state security force deployments and threats against the NC are consistent with the RD estimates indicating a subsequent decline in voter turnout after an NC election victory.

10.1.2 Punjab

Similar to insurgents in J&K, Sikh militants in Punjab regularly threatened voters and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) candidates and elected officials. Indian state security forces also heavily-patrolled sensitive areas during pre-election periods, often arresting SAD functionaries. During the two-year period before the 1992 assembly elections, for which the SAD was an incumbent in a vast majority of seats, Sikh militants attacked, oftentimes killing, dozens of SAD elected officials, party workers, and supporters (e.g. TOI (1991a,b,c,d)). Press reports of targeting against INC workers and leaders are relatively scant. An article from *The Times of India* in the days prior to

Punjab's 1992 assembly elections vividly describes the escalation in threats and patrolling carried out by Sikh militants and counterinsurgents:

"It looked as if [Punjab] was in mourning. Barring some areas of Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur and Ferozepore districts, the entire state presented a curfew-like image, especially in the rural areas [i.e. SAD strongholds]...Unprecedented security arrangements have been made and the entire police force (53,000), 700 companies of para-military forces, and about 40,000 special police officers and home guards and over 100,000 armymen have been asked to continue strict vigil on for the next two days. The troops are conducting flag-marches during the day and patrolling rural areas at night to infuse a sense of security in the terror-stricken rural folk. The militants have pasted hundreds of posters warning the people against voting. Primarily three categories of people — the campaigners, polling agents and political parties and those leading the voters, that is those voting first — have been specifically warned of dire consequences and liquidation" (Kumar, 1992).

This qualitative evidence outlining security force patrols and insurgent coercion in SAD strongholds, on the one hand, and subsequent decline in voter turnout in these areas is consistent with the findings from J&K.

10.1.3 Nagaland

Naga insurgents frequently coerced and threatened "moderate" Naga elected officials, and Indian state security forces often patrolled, harassed, and limited the movements of aligned status quo party officials and the broader electorate. For instance, counterinsurgents coerced Nagaland's aligned status quo parties and voters in their regional strongholds in the 1980s and 1990s. The Naga People's Council (NPC) party and its leaders explicitly noted in an affidavit in 1996 that Indian security forces frequently harassed the party's members and leaders, restricted their movements, and undermined their political activities just prior to elections in the state (Sakia, 1996). Earlier in the 1990s, Indian state security forces intensified their patrols in aligned status quo strongholds prior to state assembly elections (Munshi, 1993). Press reports indicate that during the 1980s, only one region in Nagaland remained relatively spared from state security force operations and Naga insurgent patrols prior to and during elections: the city of Dimapur, typically an INC stronghold (Phanjoubam, 1989).

While comparatively rarer than in Punjab and J&K, there are documented cases of NSCN-IM rebels threatening and killing aligned status quo party workers and officials in Nagaland (Dev, 2003, p. 1638). The NSCN-IM and its predecessor organizations also called for boycotting assembly elections in the state, threatening voters in order to discourage them from turning out to vote, especially in election cycles where aligned status quo parties were incumbents in a plurality of seats (TOI, 1998). While the mixture of overt insurgent versus state security force violence against aligned status quo parties was different in Nagaland compared to J&K and Punjab, these armed groups' intensified activity similarly operated as a coercion mechanism and reduced overall voter turnout where aligned status quo parties previously emerged victorious.

10.1.4 West Bengal

The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) faced pressure from Naxalite insurgents and India's security apparatus amid the leftist rebellion in West Bengal during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Naxalites fighters regularly attacked CPM workers in rural and urban regions throughout the state (Basu, 1974). Banerjee (1984, p. 197) contends that violent clashes between Naxalites and the CPM brought in its wake wide-scale police repression and turmoil in social life, discouraging swathes of Bengalis from participating in democratic politics. According to an internal CPM report, over 400 of its workers were killed by insurgents between March 1969 and June 1972 (Mohanty, 1977, p. 170), and Naxalite leader Charu Mazumdar emphasized that the CPM party apparatus should be targeted in its local strongholds (Banerjee, 1984, p. 256). Press reports from this period illustrate how the Naxalites in West Bengal often employed and threatened to employ violence against civilians in the state who sought to turn out and vote in the state's elections, particularly in localities where the CPM had previously achieved electoral success (TOI, 1969; Mukerjee, 1971).

The Indian central government also cracked down against the CPM. According to Banerjee, “Although by the time the elections [in 1971] began, the government had managed to put a large number of CPI(M) activists behind bars and hounded out the remaining from their areas of influence, thus immobilizing the [CPM]” (Banerjee, 1984, p. 252). Banerjee (1984 p. 252) also details Indian security forces’ efforts to destroy the CPM’s base among the rural peasantry and industrial workers, raiding villages and urban centers to arrest CPM followers, alleged supporters, and workers.

Insurgents and state security forces consistently pressured the CPM and civilians through threats and direct attacks, consistent with qualitative evidence from J&K, Punjab, and Nagaland, that the coercion mechanism occurred in areas where aligned status quo political parties had been electorally successful and ultimately reduced overall voter turnout.

10.2 RD analysis of insurgent attacks in Punjab

Qualitative evidence suggests that insurgent and state security force activities intensified after aligned status quo party victories and likely can explain the reduced voter turnout in subsequent election cycles. In this section, supplemental RD analysis from Punjab assesses whether aligned status quo party victories affected the frequency of insurgent-security force clashes, a secondary implication of the theory presented earlier. Specifically, if insurgents *and* counterinsurgents intensified their operations in constituencies where aligned status quo parties were electorally-successful — through targeting voters and aligned status quo party functionaries — then we can expect an increase in the frequency of clashes between combatants given the combatants’ increased proximity. Fatality data collected from official Indian security force documents indicate insurgent violence against counterinsurgents during the Punjab conflict (Staniland and Stommes, 2019). The data from Punjab are sufficiently granular for supplemental RD analyses; latitude and longitude indi-

cators for each fatality facilitate determining the constituency within which each fatality occurred. In contrast, data for other states covered in Staniland and Stommes (2019) — e.g. Jammu and Kashmir — lack these geospatial details.

The running variable for this RD analysis is the SAD’s margin of victory — i.e. aligned status quo party’s margin — in each constituency. A constituency is treated with a SAD victory when the party’s margin is above zero. The outcome measure is the number of insurgent-perpetrated security force fatalities in each constituency during the years after an assembly election, but prior to the next cycle. The analysis is implemented through `rdrobust` and includes pre-treatment covariates (constituency fixed effects) for precision gains in this small sample setting, as recommended by Calonico et al. (2019). Results in Table 4 indicate that SAD victories in Punjab caused a significant increase in insurgent attacks against security forces, consistent with the theory presented earlier.

Table 4: Aligned Status Quo WPP Victory Effect on Insurgent Violence (SAD in Punjab)

State	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
Punjab	4.707	[1.932, 7.482]	0.001	231	84	9.55

11 Alternative Explanations for Voter Turnout Results

Alternative mechanisms might more adequately explain the voter turnout findings. Further RD analyses utilize data collected by Asher et al. (2020) on different socioeconomic measures at the assembly constituency-level. Temporal coverage of these data begins in the 1980s and is scarce for Nagaland during this period, and so the supplementary analyses focus on Punjab and J&K. These analyses specifically assess whether the civil wartime reduction in voter turnout can be explained by socioeconomic or demographic changes. Declines in local economic conditions resulting from an aligned status quo victory might increase voters’ discontent with government,

thereby reducing turnout.⁵ Alternatively, changes in demographics — such as increases in the proportion of minority voters — might instead explain the decline in voter turnout, consistent with prior research associating disadvantaged group membership and lower voter turnout (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Verba and Brady, 1995). The null results presented in Appendix L indicate that the reduction of voter turnout in aligned status quo areas cannot be explained by these other factors.

12 Discussion

The typology and evidence in this study indicate the value of distinguishing civil wartime political parties by their ideological alignment with rebels and support for extant democratic institutions. The findings illuminate how existing scholarship overlooks political parties which might simultaneously agree with core tenets of rebel ideology, yet support the long-term legitimacy of the state's institutions. The typology's utility is reinforced by the results suggesting that aligned status quo parties uniquely face pressure from the state and insurgents. Evidence from four civil war zones in India demonstrates that when these political parties win elections, voter turnout in the next election consistently drops and can be explained by a mechanism composed of rebel and counterinsurgent threats, operations, and attacks. The results are consistent with findings from Condra et al. (2018, 2019) that insurgent attacks and security force patrols reduced voter turnout in Afghanistan.

This study demonstrates that ideology should be considered alongside, rather than in isolation from, other group characteristics and preferences during civil war. While recent studies introduce much-needed nuance to our understanding of ideology during civil war (Sanín and Wood, 2014), others simplistically place all organizations and political parties, in particular, along a one-

⁵While some research finds a link between economic well-being and voter turnout (Rosenstone, 1982), others contest that the evidence is more ambiguous (see: Fornos, Power and Garand (2004)).

dimensional ideological spectrum. Considering civil wartime political parties' support for extant democratic institutions alongside their ideology yields important insights into political parties' unique strategic environments.

Furthermore, the study shows that longstanding conceptions of civil war environments as being constituted by insurgents and counterinsurgents should be expanded to include political parties as consequential organizations in their own right. Rebels and state security apparatuses typically view aligned status quo parties, in particular, as potential threats to their "competitive state-building" projects (Kalyvas, 2006), and as such, investigating how aligned status quo parties navigate these unique threats and maintain viable organizations will be a fruitful avenue for future research on wartime political parties.

The findings in this study also suggest that future research should investigate voters' preferences in civil wars and disentangle the different elements of the coercion mechanism to discern the precise impact of each on voter turnout. This paper's primary aim was to introduce the coercion mechanism more broadly to show how this intensified activity is consistent with the overall reduction in voter turnout following an aligned status quo party victory. However, future research should decompose the mechanism and assess the extent to which the decline in voter turnout is determined by, for example, intensified counterinsurgent patrols versus insurgent threats.

Furthermore, while the study focused primarily on aligned status quo parties, future efforts should interrogate the role of aligned revisionist parties in civil wars. Specifically, to what extent do such parties' electoral victories matter for certain conflict outcomes and wartime democracy dynamics like voter turnout? Also, are certain prewar characteristics predictive of whether a party will support rebels' revisionist aims or disavow insurgents' anti-state objectives? Answers to these questions will complement the initial conceptual and empirical results in this paper.

Finally, scholars should also investigate the extent to which civil wartime party systems persist or evolve over time and whether, in post-war settlements, certain WPP types face differential electoral prospects. While numerous salient questions remain unanswered, the novel concepts and empirical results outlined in this study provide compelling evidence that parties matter during civil wars and that scholars can gain important insights into civil war dynamics by considering other factors in tandem with armed group ideology.

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Appendix: Civil Wartime Political Parties

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Global Evidence of Civil Wartime Elections and Democracy	3
3	Civil Wartime Political Parties	5
3.0.1	Aligned status quo parties	9
3.0.2	Aligned revisionist parties	10
3.0.3	Unaligned status quo parties	10
3.0.4	Unaligned revisionist parties	10
4	Beyond preference description: the civil WPP typology's utility	11
4.1	Implications of aligned status quo electoral victories	11
5	Case selection: four civil wars in India	14
5.1	Naga Rebellion	14
5.2	Insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir	15
5.3	The Naxalite Rebellion in West Bengal	16
5.4	Sikh Rebellion in Punjab	17
6	Research Design	18
7	Data	20
8	Evaluating RD Identification Assumptions	20

9	Voter turnout RD results	21
9.1	Robustness checks for RD estimates	23
10	Empirically evaluating the proposed mechanism	23
10.1	Qualitative evidence	23
10.1.1	Jammu & Kashmir	24
10.1.2	Punjab	25
10.1.3	Nagaland	26
10.1.4	West Bengal	27
10.2	RD analysis of insurgent attacks in Punjab	28
11	Alternative Explanations for Voter Turnout Results	29
12	Discussion	30
A	Classifying Political Parties as WPP types	1
A.1	Nagaland	1
A.2	Jammu and Kashmir	2
A.3	West Bengal	3
A.4	Punjab	4
B	Sharp RD estimand and assumptions	6
C	Civil Wartime Elections in Each State	7
C.1	Nagaland	7
C.2	Jammu and Kashmir	7
C.3	Punjab	8

C.4 West Bengal	8
D Balance Test Results	8
E India's Election Commission and the non-Manipulation of Running Variable Scores	10
F Density Test Results	10
G WPP Electoral Performance and Incumbency (Dis)Advantages	11
H Test Results for Incumbency Heterogeneity (peace vs. civil war)	11
I Test Results for Turnout Heterogeneity (peace vs. civil war)	13
I.1 Aligned Status Quo Parties	13
I.2 Indian National Congress (INC)	14
J RD Estimates using Alternative Bandwidths	15
K RD Estimates using Alternative Kernels	17
K.1 Incumbency and voter turnout	17
L Mechanisms Analyses	18
L.1 Employment	18
L.2 Manufacturing Employment	18
L.3 Electrification	19
L.4 Demographics	19
M INC victories and voter turnout	19

A Classifying Political Parties as WPP types

This section provides detailed information regarding the policy platforms and ideologies of the different political parties I consider in my RD analyses. Specifically, I present evidence to justify coding these various political parties classified as *aligned status quo parties*. As noted throughout the main text of the paper, the establishment, centrist Indian National Congress (INC) in each wartime context is classified as an unaligned status quo party given its insistence to preserve Indian democracy and relative lack of ideological alignment with insurgent groups.

A.1 Nagaland

The analysis of Nagaland includes two *aligned status quo* WPPs, the Naga National Democratic Party (NNDP) and the Nagaland People's Conference (NPC). The NNDP contested state assembly elections in 1982 and 1987, and the NPC contested Nagaland's assembly elections in 1989 and 1993. Qualitative evidence presented below supports classifying these wartime political parties as *aligned status quo* parties.

The NNDP was formed in the early 1980s by a breakaway faction of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and sought to advance the Naga ethnic group's interests while also affirming its support for the Indian constitution. Statements from NNDP leaders and press reports reflect the party's Naga-centric outlook. For instance, NNDP president T. Alib Imtl in 1986 said, "I and the Naga people fully believe in the unity, integrity, and cultural diversity of India, but we cannot forget our regional identity" (TOI, 1986). According to the press report quoting Imtl, the NNDP leader emphasized the necessity of regional groups like the Nagas of keeping their identities in tact (TOI, 1986). According to a 1987 press report prior to the Nagaland assembly elections that year, the NNDP "thrives on Naga sub-nationalism" (TOI, 1987). Furthermore, "NNDP leadership says the party would continue to give top priority to 'restoration' of the Naga homeland through a peaceful

and amicable solution of the Naga problem” (Gupta, 1987).

The Nagaland People’s Conference formed in the late 1980s and sought to advance a similar Naga-centric ideology. The NPC’s origin indicates the importance of this ideology from its beginning; the party grew out of a merger between the NNDP and various marginal political actors in the state who sought to advance Nagas’ interests (Sonwalkar, 1988). A press report from 1989 noted how the NPC’s strong Naga regional sentiment made it a favored party where popular opinion aligned with this general viewpoint (Phanjoubam, 1989). These press reports indicate that the NPC overtly sought to advance Nagas’ political and regional interests in a manner similar to the NNDP, and justifies classifying the NPC as an *aligned status quo* wartime political party.

The peacetime analysis for Nagaland after 1998 includes the Nagaland People’s Front (NPF) as the aligned status quo political party. The party officially started in 2002 when the NPC changed its name in an effort to be more inclusive of Nagas living in neighboring northeast Indian states. The party’s Naga-centric was on display in the run up to the 2003 state assembly elections when the “NPF urged the ‘Naga citizens’ to realise that mere statehood was not the final solution to the Naga problem...[and] requested a mandate from the people to go deeper in achieving the desired goals of the people” (Dev, 2003). As such, I have included the NPF as the peacetime counterpart for examining whether WPP effects strictly occur during war or peace.

A.2 Jammu and Kashmir

The National Conference (NC) party in Jammu and Kashmir formed in 1932 as the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (MC) and in 1939 renamed itself the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) to make the party more inclusive of Hindu and Sikh Kashmiris in its ranks (Bose, 2003, p. 20–21). In 1944, the NC adopted a manifesto entitled “Naya Kashmir” (New Kashmir), seeking to transform Jammu and Kashmir from a monarchy to an in-

dependent constitutional democracy (Bose, 2003, p. 24-25), though this part of the NC's platform was soon abandoned after India achieved independence in 1947. While independence for JK remained off the party's platform, substantial autonomy for JK from the Indian central government remained central to its ideology from the 1950s onward. As Bose notes, "The core issue in the New Delhi-Srinagar relationship can be summarized in one word: *khudmukhtari* (self-rule). In the Valley and some other parts of IJK, such is the historical legitimacy and popular appeal of the idea of self-government, free of malign control and interference from New Delhi, that even the NC, a subordinate satellite of New Delhi, raises the issue periodically. Prior to the 1996 elections that restored it to office in Srinagar, the NC demanded the reinstatement of IJK's 'pre-1953' autonomous regime—that is, the regime in which New Delhi had exclusive jurisdiction only over matters relating to foreign policy, defense, currency, and communications" (Bose, 2003, p. 244). Even prior to the 2002 elections, the NC forcefully advocated for substantial autonomy from the central Indian government for JK (Bose, 2003, p. 245). Press reports indicate that NC leaders have consistently advocated for autonomy within the Indian union (TOI, 2002a). As such, this evidence suggests that the NC can be classified as a *aligned status quo* political party.

A.3 West Bengal

Two decades of contentious leftist politics in West Bengal — including the Communist Party of India-Marxist's (CPM) emergence — preceded the Naxalite uprising. In the decade after India's independence, the Communist Party of India (CPI) remained the primary leftist political organization in the country's mainstream politics. Despite these early electoral success and assembly seat gains, intra-party feuding plagued the CPI during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Eventually, Left ("radical") and Right ("moderate") factions consolidated inside the party. The Left faction tended to support the Chinese Communist Party and a more confrontational stance towards the ruling

Indian National Congress (INC) party, but the Right stridently opposed these positions and typically welcomed cooperation with the INC. This schism reached a breaking point in 1964 when the Left faction broke away from the CPI and formed the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) (Banerjee, 1984, p. 73; Franda, 1971, p. 82-113).

The CPM and the Naxalites largely agreed over numerous aspects of leftist ideology. Both sought to overthrow “bourgeoisie” and capitalist Indians, abolish feudalism in the countryside, and advance the interests of agricultural and industrial workers through highly-organized peasant organizations and trade unions, respectively (Banerjee, 1984, p. 6-28, 31-50, and 72-74; Franda, 1971, p. 172-175, 182-207). Given the staunch leftist orientation of the CPM and its interest in enacting an agenda through India’s electoral process, rather than through rebellion (Franda, 1971, p. 39-40), the CPM is considered to be the Naxalites’ *aligned status quo* WPPS.

A.4 Punjab

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) formed in 1920 during British rule over India in order to advance Sikh interests in Punjab province and in colonial India more broadly. The SAD subsequently sought to influence the Indian central government’s policies towards Punjab after India gained independence in 1947. Specifically, it sought to break up Punjab province — comprised of a majority Hindi-speaking population at the time — in order to form a separate Punjabi-speaking state within the Indian union (Brass, 1990, p. 172; Kumar and Sieberer, 1991, p. 171-188). In 1966, the central government made numerous concessions to the SAD, including a promise to form a state primarily comprised of native Punjabi speakers (Brass, 1990, p. 169-173). The SAD, which regularly contested elections, demanded further concessions throughout the 1970s and 1980s, such as those articulated in the 1973 Anandpur Sahib Resolution urging the Indian government to grant the newly-formed Punjab state greater autonomy and to cede control to the state government over vital

water resources in northwest India (Chima, 1994). Politics in Punjab grew increasingly contentious during this time as the SAD organized protests, civil disobedience, and other agitations against the central government, fanning the flames of communal tensions in Punjab between the Sikh, Hindu, and Nirankari communities (Major, 1987, p. 52). This unrest escalated alongside calls by budding Sikh militant groups and hard line civil society organizations for Punjab's complete independence from India.

As the protests and communal violence grew more intense in Punjab, groups like Babbar Khalsa, the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), and the Damdami Taksal clerics led by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale took a more extreme stance, outright independence from India and the formation of a Sikh-majority country. These groups physically attacked civilians and Indian security forces in Punjab during the early 1980s.

Chima (2010) provides an account of the Sikh militancy and Akali Dal relying on interviews with participants in the insurgency and Punjabi politics, press reports, and other secondary sources. Throughout the book, Chima codes each of the separate Akali Dal factions as either "moderate" or "extremist" for every six-month period during the conflict (Chima, 2010). This scholarly account, along with Singh (2000), suggests that while certain factions of the SAD were a bit accommodating towards certain factions of Sikh militants for brief periods of time, all largely supported the legitimacy of Punjab and India's democratic institutions. In an interview with *India Today* in 1989, Simranjit Singh Mann, widely seen as the most hard line of SAD faction leaders, repeatedly insisted his belief in the possibility of addressing Sikh grievances within the Indian constitution (Sandhu, 1989). Finally, numerous press reports show how Sikh militants regularly attacked members from even the supposed "radical" factions of the SAD (e.g. TOI, 1991*e*). Therefore, I code the SAD as an *aligned status quo* WPP.

B Sharp RD estimand and assumptions

Identifying treatment effects in sharp RD settings requires relatively straightforward and weak assumptions. Formally, each unit i in a sharp RD set-up receives a score on a continuous running variable R_i . A discrete cut point within the support of R_i is denoted by c . A binary variable Z_i indicates whether unit i is assigned to treatment. If $R_i \geq c$, i is assigned to the treatment group ($Z_i = 1$), and when $R_i < c$, unit i is assigned to control ($Z_i = 0$). Following Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik (2020, p. 5), I define this treatment assignment rule as $Z_i = \mathbb{1}(R_i \geq c)$ where $\mathbb{1}(\cdot)$ is an indicator function implying that assignment to treatment changes discontinuously at c .

The treatment assigned, Z_i , is identical to the treatment received, D_i , for all units in a sharp RD setting. Let $Y_i(D_i = 1)$ and $Y_i(D_i = 0)$ correspond to unit i 's treatment and control potential outcomes, respectively—I abbreviate this notation with $Y_i(1)$ and $Y_i(0)$. A unit's observed outcome is

$$Y_i = (1 - D_i) \cdot Y_i(0) + D_i \cdot Y_i(1) = \begin{cases} Y_i(0) & \text{if } R_i < c \\ Y_i(1) & \text{if } R_i \geq c \end{cases}$$

The treatment effect identified in a sharp RD setting is the difference between the expected treated and control potential outcomes at c . I define this estimand as

$$\tau_{SRD} = \mathbb{E}[Y_i(1) - Y_i(0) | R_i = c]$$

Identification requires a continuity assumption which asserts the comparability between units which have very similar running variable scores but lie on opposite sides of the cut point:

$$\lim_{r \downarrow c} \mathbb{E}[Y_i(d) | R_i = r] = \lim_{r \uparrow c} \mathbb{E}[Y_i(d) | R_i = r],$$

for $d \in \{0, 1\}$. Under this assumption, the only systematic difference between units just to the left and right of the cut point is the administration of a treatment. Therefore, the average treatment effect at the cut point c is identified:

$$\mathbb{E}[Y_i(1) - Y_i(0)|R_i = c] = \lim_{r \downarrow c} \mathbb{E}[Y_i|R_i = r] - \lim_{r \uparrow c} \mathbb{E}[Y_i|R_i = r]$$

C Civil Wartime Elections in Each State

C.1 Nagaland

I include the following civil wartime assembly elections in Nagaland in my analysis: 1964, 1969, 1974, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1989, 1993. The insurgency began in the 1950s and escalated through the 1960s during which time Nagaland achieved statehood within the Indian union. After a very brief lull in the 1970s due to a peace deal between Phizo, the Naga insurgent leader, and the Indian government, the insurgency escalated in the late 1970s and into the 1980s as the NSCN intensified its operations in the region. The NSCN-IM signed a ceasefire deal with the Indian government in 1997, after which hostilities between insurgents and security forces declined dramatically. Therefore, all elections after 1997 are considered peacetime elections.

C.2 Jammu and Kashmir

I include the following civil wartime assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir in my analysis: 1987, 1996, 2002, 2008, 2014. The insurgency began in the mid- to late-1980s when JKLF insurgents crossed the Line of Control between Pakistan Administered Kashmir and Indian Administered Kashmir. Since then, hostilities between Indian counterinsurgents and separatists have ebbed and flowed, and numerous insurgent groups are currently active, though weakened, in the state. The pre-1987 elections are considered peacetime elections.

C.3 Punjab

I include the following civil wartime assembly elections in Punjab in my analysis: 1980, 1985, 1992. The Sikh rebellion began in the late 1970s and escalated in the early to mid 1980s after an Indian Army raid (termed “Operation Bluestar”) in 1984 on the Sikh Golden Temple against insurgents who were allegedly holed up on the temple complex. Insurgent attacks and counterinsurgent operations imposed brutal costs on thousands of civilians throughout the second half of the 1980s. A brutal counterinsurgency campaign beginning in 1992 gradually brought the rebellion under the state’s control. The pre-1980 elections are considered peacetime elections.

C.4 West Bengal

I include the following civil wartime assembly elections in West Bengal in my analysis: 1967, 1969, 1971, 1972. The Naxalite uprising began in 1967 in West Bengal and spread throughout the state during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Ultimately, the insurgency fragmented and dissipated beginning in 1972 after the arrest of Charu Mazumdar (the Naxalite leader), intense counterinsurgency operations, and infighting within the rebel movement. The pre-1967 and post-1972 elections are considered peacetime elections.

D Balance Test Results

I evaluate covariate balance by estimating the “effect” of the treatment on a range of pre-treatment covariates for each constituency at election $t - 1$, including: (1) Scheduled Caste (SC) reserved constituency, (2) Scheduled Tribe (ST) reserved constituency, (3) previous number of electors in the constituency, (4) previous number of candidates, (5) previous number of total votes cast, (6) the previous voter turnout percentage in the constituency, and (7) whether the INC won the previous race at $t - 1$. I present the results in four separate tables. Tables 5 and 6 assess pre-treatment covariate balance for the pooled INC peacetime and civil wartime observations, respectively. Tables 7 and 8 assess pre-treatment covariate balance for the pooled aligned status quo peacetime and civil wartime observations, respectively. None of the coefficients from these tests are statistically significant, strongly supporting the continuity assumption central to the RD design.

Table 5: Balance Test: INC Peacetime Margin as Running Variable

Pre-Treatment Covariate	Estimate	P-Value	95% CI
AC Type (SC)	-0.041	0.341	[-0.126, 0.044]
AC Type (ST)	0.001	0.982	[-0.055, 0.056]
Prev. # of Electors	-4877.776	0.453	[-17607.061, 7851.510]
Prev. # of Candidates	-0.056	0.869	[-0.721, 0.609]
Prev. Total Votes	-3545.204	0.540	[-14887.429, 7797.021]
Prev. Turnout Perc.	0.284	0.894	[-3.894, 4.461]
INC Prev. First Place Party	-0.096	0.136	[-0.222, 0.030]

Table 6: Balance Test: INC Civil Wartime Margin as Running Variable

Pre-Treatment Covariate	Estimate	P-Value	95% CI
AC Type (SC)	-0.051	0.267	[-0.141, 0.039]
AC Type (ST)	-0.0470	0.412	[-0.159, 0.065]
Prev. # of Electors	1165.419	0.810	[-8326.910, 10657.748]
Prev. # of Candidates	-0.043	0.922	[-0.909, 0.822]
Prev. Total Votes	313.966	0.914	[-5367.219, 5995.151]
Prev. Turnout Perc.	1.788	0.490	[-3.294, 6.870]
INC Prev. First Place Party	0.064	0.368	[-0.076, 0.204]

Table 7: Balance Test: Aligned Status Quo Party Peacetime Margin as Running Variable

Pre-Treatment Covariate	Estimate	P-Value	95% CI
AC Type (SC)	0.008	0.853	[-0.079, 0.095]
AC Type (ST)	0.011	0.772	[-0.066, 0.088]
Prev. # of Electors	5747.175	0.394	[-7474.210, 18968.560]
Prev. # of Candidates	-0.136	0.638	[-0.701, 0.429]
Prev. Total Votes	4701.470	0.454	[-7605.863, 17008.803]
Prev. Turnout Perc.	0.602	0.765	[-3.348, 4.552]
INC Prev. First Place Party	0.035	0.510	[-0.069, 0.138]

Table 8: Balance Test: Aligned Status Quo Party Civil Wartime Margin as Running Variable

Pre-Treatment Covariate	Estimate	P-Value	95% CI
AC Type (SC)	0.0498	0.295	[-0.043, 0.143]
AC Type (ST)	0.0342	0.574	[-0.085, 0.153]
Prev. # of Electors	830.441	0.874	[-9471.433, 11132.315]
Prev. # of Candidates	0.584	0.255	[-0.421, 1.589]
Prev. Total Votes	-369.148	0.906	[-6509.942, 5771.645]
Prev. Turnout Perc.	-1.623	0.591	[-7.538, 4.291]
INC Prev. First Place Party	-0.079	0.233	[-0.208, 0.051]

E India’s Election Commission and the non-Manipulation of Running Variable Scores

The Election Commission of India (ECI) conducts India’s state assembly elections, including the elections of interest in this study. Scholars and other experts of India’s democracy have repeatedly lauded the ECI for its independence and strong track record of holding elections without interference from political parties, e.g. at the counting stage (Rudolph and Rudolph, 2002; Sridhara and Vaishnav, 2017). With an independent mandate under India’s constitution, the ECI has been exceptionally well-funded and staffed (Sridhara and Vaishnav, 2017, p. 424). This strong independence enables it to remain outside the influence of political parties when counting votes, which is crucial to the non-manipulation of the running variable assumption underpinning regression discontinuity (RD) design.

A description of how the ECI tabulates votes for state assembly elections illustrates the tight control it retains over that process, and the consequent inability of outside actors, including political parties, to interfere at this crucial phase. Votes are cast at the booth-level (typically equivalent to a neighborhood or village), and then under extraordinarily tight security measures, independent officials from the ECI aggregate the booth-level results to the constituency level in a carefully controlled manner. Numerous press reports indicate the elaborate arrangements put in place in order to ensure the proper counting of votes for assembly elections throughout India (e.g. TOI (1993, 1996c); Shivadekar (2009)). These institutional arrangements ensure that political parties are unable to precisely control their score on the running variable.

F Density Test Results

Cattaneo, Jansson and Ma (2018, 2020) devise a robust, jack knife density test for RD settings which estimates the difference in the density of observations just to the left and right of the cut point, and whether that difference is statistically significant. I implement this test via the `rddensity` package in R on the pooled civil wartime and peacetime datasets. Table 9 reports the t-statistics and p-values for each of the running variables, none of which reach statistical significance. The negligible differences in density to the left and right of the cut point strongly support the assumption that units did not manipulate their score on the running variable.

Table 9: Density/Running Variable Manipulation Test

Running Variable	t-statistic (jackknife)	p-value (jackknife)
INC Margin (Peacetime)	0.483	0.629
INC Margin (Civil Wartime)	-0.931	0.352
Aligned Status Quo Margin (Peacetime)	0.650	0.516
Aligned Status Quo (Civil Wartime)	1.324	0.186

Table 10: Aligned Status Quo WPPs (Incumbency Advantage Estimates)

Peacetime Estimates						
State	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
JKNC (J&K)	-0.371	[-1.324, 0.582]	0.445	110	34	22.34
NPF (Nagaland)	-0.194	[-0.670, 0.283]	0.426	170	112	18.06
SAD (Punjab)	-0.239	[-0.509, 0.030]	0.082	469	292	11.67
CPM (West Bengal)	-0.125	[-0.296, 0.045]	0.150	1,666	791	12.03
Pooled RD estimate	-0.162	[-0.299, -0.026]	0.019	2,415	1,170	11.80
Civil Wartime Estimates						
State	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
JKNC (J&K)	0.077	[-0.355, 0.509]	0.727	290	158	17.92
NND (Nagaland)	0.130	[-0.393, 0.652]	0.627	121	40	5.13
NPC (Nagaland)	-1.322	[-2.012, -0.632]	0.000	59	19	4.97
SAD (Punjab)	-0.362	[-0.924, 0.201]	0.207	229	102	11.99
CPM (West Bengal)	-0.309	[-0.585, -0.033]	0.028	468	215	13.00
Pooled RD estimate	-0.175	[-0.361, 0.011]	0.065	1,167	657	15.35

G WPP Electoral Performance and Incumbency (Dis)Advantages

Appendix H presents results from statistical tests determining whether the peace and wartime RD estimates for WPPs are statistically distinguishable from each another. The first test takes the difference between civil war and peacetime pooled estimates, uses this difference to estimate a Wald-type t -score, and then derives a p -value with that t -score. The resulting p -value indicates whether the difference in civil war and peacetime RD estimates is statistically significant. Another test involves combining the peacetime and civil wartime observations and regressing Y_i on an RD estimator which interacts the treatment variable and a binary indicator of whether an observation occurred during a civil war. The results from these tests confirm that aligned status quo WPPs face similar incumbency dynamics during civil wartime and peacetime.

H Test Results for Incumbency Heterogeneity (peace vs. civil war)

Non-parametric and parametric tests evaluate whether the civil wartime incumbency RD treatment effects on future election performance are distinguishable from the peacetime estimates.

The non-parametric comparison of civil war and peacetime conditional average treatment effects (CATEs) uses the following Wald-type test statistic, which I then leverage for estimating a normal approximation-based, two-tailed p-value:

$$t = \frac{\hat{\beta}_1 - \hat{\beta}_2}{\sqrt{(\hat{V}[\hat{\beta}_1] + \hat{V}[\hat{\beta}_2])}}$$

where $\hat{\beta}_1$ and $\hat{V}[\hat{\beta}_1]$ refer to the estimated civil wartime CATE and estimate of its variance, respectively. $\hat{\beta}_2$ and $\hat{V}[\hat{\beta}_2]$ refer to the estimated peacetime CATE and estimate of its variance, respectively. I estimate this t-statistic with the robust, bias-corrected point estimates and standard errors (squared) derived from the `rdrobust` subgroup analyses.

For the parametric test I combine the civil wartime and peacetime datasets and generate a binary indicator of whether the constituency-year observation took place during a civil war or not. I then implement an RD estimator which interacts the civil war binary indicator with the treatment variable.

Table 11 presents the non-parametric test results of whether incumbency disadvantages are heterogeneous across civil war and peacetime observations for aligned status quo parties. The Wald-type *t*-score of -0.109 and two-tailed p-value of 0.914 indicate that aligned status quo parties do not possess a relative incumbency advantage during civil wars compared to peacetime.

Table 11: Heterogeneous effects of Aligned Status Quo victory on future electoral performance
(Wald-type *t*-score and two-tailed p-value)

Quantity	Estimate
$\hat{\beta}_1$ (Civil War RD CATE)	-0.175 (0.095)
$\hat{\beta}_2$ (Peacetime RD CATE)	-0.162 (0.070)
<i>t</i> -score	-0.109
Two-tailed p-value	0.914

Robust, bias-corrected standard errors in parentheses.

The parametric test results in Table 12 are consistent with the findings from the non-parametric estimator. Specifically, the main coefficient of interest — i.e. the coefficient on “Civil War*Treatment” — indicates that the difference in treatment effects for civil wars versus peacetime on an aligned status quo WPP’s performance in election $t + 1$ is not statistically significant. All regressions include HC2 robust standard errors.

Table 12: Aligned Status Quo Party Incumbency Effect on Future Victory: Heterogeneity by Civil War vs. Peacetime

	Victory in t+1 (Bandwidth 1)	Victory in t+1 (Bandwidth 2)	Victory in t+1 (Bandwidth 3)
Intercept	0.51* (0.04)	0.53* (0.05)	0.54* (0.04)
Treatment	-0.16* (0.05)	-0.16* (0.06)	-0.15* (0.05)
Running	0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
Civil War	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.09 (0.08)	-0.10 (0.06)
Running*Treatment	0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Civil War*Treatment	0.00 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.11)	0.01 (0.09)
Civil War*Running	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
Civil War*Running*Treatment	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
R ²	0.07	0.04	0.10
Adj. R ²	0.07	0.03	0.10
Num. obs.	1696	1354	2027
RMSE	0.48	0.49	0.48

* $p < 0.05$

HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses. Bandwidth used for models: (1) 11.81797, (2) 8.863475, (3) 14.77246.

I Test Results for Turnout Heterogeneity (peace vs. civil war)

I.1 Aligned Status Quo Parties

The main body of the paper noted how an aligned status quo party victory caused a substantial reduction in voter turnout in election $t + 1$ during civil wars but not during peacetime. The non-parametric test results in 13, namely, a t -score of -3.049 and two-tailed p -value of 0.002, indicate that the difference in ATEs across civil wars and peacetime is statistically significant. The parametric test results are presented in Table 14 and the main coefficient of interest — i.e. the coefficient on “Civil War*Treatment” — support these conclusions.

Table 13: Heterogeneous effects of Aligned Status Quo victory on future voter turnout
(Wald-type t-score and two-tailed p-value)

Quantity	Estimate
$\hat{\beta}_1$ (Civil War RD CATE)	-13.562 (3.962)
$\hat{\beta}_2$ (Peacetime RD CATE)	-0.714 (1.433)
<i>t</i> -score	-3.049
Two-tailed p-value	0.002

Robust, bias-corrected standard errors in parentheses.

Table 14: Aligned Status Quo Party Incumbency Effect on Turnout: Heterogeneity by Civil War
vs. Peacetime

	Voter Turnout in t+1 (Bandwidth 1)	Voter Turnout in t+1 (Bandwidth 2)	Voter Turnout in t+1 (Bandwidth 3)
Intercept	79.86* (0.62)	79.45* (0.66)	80.49* (0.62)
Treatment	-0.60 (0.86)	-0.24 (0.95)	-1.42 (0.81)
Running	0.15* (0.08)	0.06 (0.10)	0.27* (0.07)
Civil War	-9.79* (1.85)	-8.53* (2.14)	-11.05* (1.74)
Running*Treatment	-0.23* (0.09)	-0.12 (0.12)	-0.32* (0.08)
Civil War*Treatment	-6.21* (2.87)	-8.03* (3.28)	-5.70* (2.63)
Civil War*Running	0.26 (0.18)	0.51 (0.29)	0.05 (0.15)
Civil War*Running*Treatment	-0.72* (0.29)	-0.85* (0.43)	-0.38 (0.22)
R ²	0.24	0.22	0.24
Adj. R ²	0.24	0.22	0.24
Num. obs.	2450	2009	2761
RMSE	14.22	14.27	14.24

* $p < 0.05$

HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses. Bandwidth used for models: (1) 19.48506, (2) 14.61379, (3) 24.35632.

I.2 Indian National Congress (INC)

Non-parametric test results in Table 15 are marginally insignificant at the 0.10 level, the results presented in Table 16 along with the main coefficient of interest — i.e. the coefficient on “Civil

War*Treatment” — indicating that the difference in the effect of an INC victory on voter turnout across civil wars and peacetime is statistically significant.

Table 15: Heterogeneous effects of INC victory on future voter turnout
(Wald-type t-score and two-tailed p-value)

Quantity	Estimate
$\hat{\beta}_1$ (Civil War RD CATE)	5.355 (2.768)
$\hat{\beta}_2$ (Peacetime RD CATE)	0.340 (1.580)
<i>t</i> -score	1.573
Two-tailed p-value	0.116

Robust, bias-corrected standard errors in parentheses.

Table 16: INC Incumbency Effect on Turnout: Heterogeneity by Civil War vs. Peacetime

	Voter Turnout in t+1 (Bandwidth 1)	Voter Turnout in t+1 (Bandwidth 2)	Voter Turnout in t+1 (Bandwidth 3)
Intercept	77.43* (0.75)	77.71* (0.99)	77.68* (0.66)
Treatment	0.26 (1.12)	0.06 (1.37)	−0.01 (1.02)
Running	−0.02 (0.11)	0.08 (0.21)	0.03 (0.08)
Civil War	−14.24* (2.23)	−16.02* (2.62)	−13.99* (1.97)
Running*Treatment	−0.24 (0.18)	−0.36 (0.31)	−0.29* (0.14)
Civil War*Treatment	6.39* (3.05)	8.17* (3.49)	5.31 (2.75)
Civil War*Running	0.07 (0.34)	−0.44 (0.53)	0.13 (0.24)
Civil War*Running*Treatment	−0.54 (0.48)	0.01 (0.72)	−0.38 (0.36)
R ²	0.18	0.16	0.18
Adj. R ²	0.17	0.16	0.18
Num. obs.	1811	1407	2180
RMSE	13.79	13.78	13.82

**p* < 0.05

HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses. Bandwidth used for models: (1) 11.30227, (2) 8.4767, (3) 14.12783.

J RD Estimates using Alternative Bandwidths

One robustness check entails evaluating whether the main RD estimates of interest are robust to alternative bandwidths. In this section, I present results using four alternative bandwidths wider

and narrower than the default MSE-optimal bandwidth selected through `rdrobust`. These are 2, 1.5, 0.75, and 0.5 times the value of the MSE-optimal bandwidth used for each RD estimator. Tables 17 and 18 present the estimates for the effect of a WPP's victory on voter turnout in election $t + 1$. The results are consistent with the initial estimates.

Table 17: INC (effect of incumbency on voter turnout in election $t + 1$)

Alternative Bandwidths for Pooled Estimate

Peacetime Estimates						
BW Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
2x MSE-Opt. BW	0.056	[-2.634, 2.746]	0.968	2690	1874	23.06
1.5x MSE-Opt. BW	0.298	[-2.840, 3.436]	0.852	2690	1570	17.30
MSE-Opt. BW	0.340	[-2.757, 3.437]	0.830	2690	1153	11.53
0.75x MSE-Opt. BW	0.310	[-4.279, 4.899]	0.895	2690	894	8.65
0.5x MSE-Opt. BW	0.652	[-4.982, 6.286]	0.821	2690	635	5.77
Civil Wartime Estimates						
BW Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
2x MSE-Opt. BW	5.275	[0.190, 10.359]	0.042	1508	1422	44.39
1.5x MSE-Opt. BW	5.797	[0.101, 11.494]	0.046	1508	1320	33.30
MSE-Opt. BW	5.355	[-0.071, 10.781]	0.053	1508	1099	22.20
0.75x MSE-Opt. BW	8.972	[1.309, 16.634]	0.022	1508	924	16.65
0.5x MSE-Opt. BW	7.371	[-1.632, 16.374]	0.109	1508	671	11.10

Table 18: Aligned Status Quo Parties (effect of incumbency on voter turnout in election $t + 1$)

Alternative Bandwidths for Pooled Estimate

Peacetime Estimates						
BW Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
2x MSE-Opt. BW	-0.218	[-2.669, 2.232]	0.861	2419	1950	26.27
1.5x MSE-Opt. BW	-0.753	[-3.624, 2.118]	0.607	2419	1695	19.70
MSE-Opt. BW	-0.714	[-3.524, 2.095]	0.618	2419	1272	13.14
0.75x MSE-Opt. BW	-0.759	[-4.907, 3.389]	0.720	2419	1011	9.85
0.5x MSE-Opt. BW	-0.956	[-5.968, 4.056]	0.709	2419	735	6.57
Civil Wartime Estimates						
BW Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
2x MSE-Opt. BW	-12.191	[-19.470, -4.912]	0.001	1170	891	24.70
1.5x MSE-Opt. BW	-14.258	[-22.357, -6.160]	0.001	1170	742	18.52
MSE-Opt. BW	-13.562	[-21.328, -5.796]	0.001	1170	546	12.35
0.75x MSE-Opt. BW	-12.370	[-22.521, -2.219]	0.017	1170	437	9.26
0.5x MSE-Opt. BW	-10.383	[-21.257, 0.490]	0.061	1170	295	6.17

K RD Estimates using Alternative Kernels

The `rdrobust` package by default incorporates triangular kernel weights when estimating local linear regressions, though reasonable justifications can be made for alternative approaches, including Epanechnikov and uniform kernel weights. In this section, I use these kernel weights in local linear estimators as additional robustness checks of the main RD treatment effect estimates in the paper. Tables 19 and 20 present the estimates of WPP victories on future voter turnout using these alternative kernels. The results are nearly identical to those presented in the main body of the paper.

K.1 Incumbency and voter turnout

Table 19: INC (effect of incumbency on voter turnout in election $t + 1$)

Alternative Kernels for Pooled Estimate

Peacetime Estimates						
Kernel Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
Triangular	0.340	[-2.757, 3.437]	0.830	2690	1153	11.53
Epanechnikov	0.385	[-2.725, 3.496]	0.808	2690	1050	10.45
Uniform	0.586	[-2.352, 3.523]	0.696	2690	979	9.56
Civil Wartime Estimates						
Kernel Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
Triangular	5.355	[-0.071, 10.781]	0.053	1508	1099	22.20
Epanechnikov	6.505	[0.538, 12.472]	0.033	1508	927	16.71
Uniform	4.035	[-1.268, 9.338]	0.136	1508	996	18.90

Table 20: Aligned Status Quo Parties (effect of incumbency on voter turnout in election $t + 1$)

Alternative Kernels for Pooled Estimate

Peacetime Estimates						
Kernel Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
Triangular	-0.714	[-3.524, 2.095]	0.618	2419	1272	13.14
Epanechnikov	-0.835	[-3.603, 1.933]	0.554	2419	1196	12.14
Uniform	-0.591	[-3.124, 1.941]	0.647	2419	1083	10.75
Civil Wartime Estimates						
Kernel Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
Triangular	-13.562	[-21.328, -5.796]	0.001	1170	546	12.35
Epanechnikov	-13.363	[-21.158, -5.567]	0.001	1170	532	11.87
Uniform	-10.528	[-17.993, -3.062]	0.006	1170	582	13.33

L Mechanisms Analyses

I conduct four supplementary RD analyses to determine whether the decline in voter turnout following an aligned status quo party can be explained by socioeconomic or demographic variables. The first three relate to socioeconomic outcomes: (1) the amount of overall employment in a constituency; (2) the amount of manufacturing employment in a constituency; and (3) the degree of electrification in a constituency. These Indian economic census data are curated at the constituency level by Asher et al. (2020) and merged with assembly elections data from Jensenius and Verniers (2017). If an aligned status quo party victory causes a drop in these socioeconomic indicators, it could suggest that a decline in voters' economic conditions might instead be the source of the decline in voter turnout. None of the results (especially the pooled results) in Tables 21, 22, and 23 are statistically significant, and if anything, the direction of many point estimates are in the opposite direction and thus inconsistent with the decline in voter turnout. The final supplementary RD analysis estimates whether an aligned status quo victory increases the share of marginalized Scheduled Caste groups in a constituency, thereby reducing turnout due to an increase in the share of individuals who are disaffected with the political system. The pooled results in Table 24 are not statistically significant either, reinforcing the strength of the argument articulated in the paper regarding security force and rebel activities.

L.1 Employment

Table 21: Aligned Status Quo (effect of incumbency on employment)

Kernel Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
JK (JKNC)	-2502.135	[-17700.24, 12695.97]	0.747	41	16	14.25
Punjab (SAD)	7505.703	[-6752.529, 21763.93]	0.302	68	20	10.63
Pooled	2821.33	[-5643.77, 11286.42]	0.514	109	54	16.63

L.2 Manufacturing Employment

Table 22: Aligned Status Quo (effect of incumbency on manufacturing employment)

Kernel Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
JK (JKNC)	-124.351	[-2561.319, 2312.617]	0.920	41	18	15.99
Punjab (SAD)	2101.379	[-2995.556, 7198.315]	0.419	68	19	10.44
Pooled	1873.841	[-1028.94, 4776.623]	0.206	109	53	16.39

L.3 Electrification

Table 23: Aligned Status Quo (effect of incumbency on electrification)

Kernel Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
JK (JKNC)	0.172	[-1.131, 1.474]	0.796	39	7	7.50
Punjab (SAD)	0.196	[-0.131, 0.522]	0.240	75	24	11.60
Pooled	0.193	[-0.088, 0.474]	0.179	114	35	10.81

L.4 Demographics

Table 24: Aligned Status Quo (effect of incumbency on SC population share)

Kernel Type	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
JK (JKNC)	0.443	[-0.230, 1.115]	0.197	40	7	5.57
Punjab (SAD)	-0.055	[-0.244, 0.134]	0.569	73	21	10.27
Pooled	-0.049	[-0.191, 0.094]	0.504	113	48	14.34

M INC victories and voter turnout

Table 25 presents RD estimates conversely indicating whether Indian National Congress (INC) victories — i.e., unaligned status quo party victories — affected subsequent voter turnout. The results indicate that during civil wars, subsequent voter turnout is 5.36 percentage points higher in election $t + 1$ in constituencies where an INC candidate wins. This is consistent with an even more substantial *decrease* in subsequent voter turnout when an aligned status quo WPP wins a constituency during a civil war; many such cases involve an INC defeat. Formal tests for heterogeneity in treatment effects across peacetime and civil war for the INC are included in Appendix I and indicate that the civil wartime and peacetime RD estimates in Table 25 are statistically distinguishable from each other.

Table 25: Indian National Congress (effect of incumbency on voter turnout at election $t + 1$)

Peacetime Estimates						
State	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
J&K	-6.635	[-18.509, 5.238]	0.273	169	74	25.04
Nagaland	4.971	[-2.294, 12.236]	0.180	194	116	17.18
Punjab	-0.946	[-5.133, 3.241]	0.658	592	307	10.74
West Bengal	1.168	[-3.003, 5.338]	0.583	1,735	677	11.12
Pooled RD estimate	0.340	[-2.757, 3.437]	0.830	2,690	1,153	11.53
Civil Wartime Estimates						
State	Estimate	Robust 95% CI	Robust P-Value	Total Units	Units Inside BW	BW
J&K	16.511	[-0.876, 33.898]	0.063	266	101	15.56
Nagaland	8.396	[0.834, 15.957]	0.030	218	117	9.29
Punjab	14.314	[-4.421, 33.049]	0.134	232	151	17.69
West Bengal	2.164	[-2.915, 7.243]	0.404	792	414	13.14
Pooled RD estimate	5.355	[-0.071, 10.781]	0.053	1,508	1,099	22.20