WHY WOMEN REBEL: UNDERSTANDING FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN INTRASTATE CONFLICT

by
Alexis Leanna Henshaw

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WITH A MAJOR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2013
As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Alexis Leanna Henshaw entitled Why Women Rebel: Understanding Female Participation in Intrastate Conflict and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date: 3/4/13

Faten Ghosn

Date: 3/4/13

Gary Goertz

Date: 3/4/13

V. Spike Peterson

Date: 3/4/13

Miranda Joseph

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College. I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Date: 3/4/13

Dissertation Director: Gary Goertz

Date: 3/4/13

Dissertation Director: Faten Ghosn
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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SIGNED: Alexis Leanna Henshaw
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the preparation of this manuscript, I am indebted to a great many individuals across locations and disciplines. Each member of my dissertation committee brought a unique contribution to this work. I credit Gary Goertz for pushing me to carefully consider my concepts and methods, as well as for his encouragement in developing this as a mixed-methods project. Faten Ghosn was one of the earliest supporters of this work, and her influence is seen in my attempt to create dialogue between mainstream and feminist international relations, and between quantitative and qualitative methods. V. Spike Peterson is the reason why economic theories—and a critical interpretation of such views—feature so prominently in my discussions. Miranda Joseph provided valuable commentary on my interpretations of feminist theory, epistemology, and ontology.

Aside from my committee, I am also indebted to all of the faculty and graduate students I have worked with in the School of Government and Public Policy at the University of Arizona. Tom Volgy was an early advisor and commentator on my research. Chad Westerland greatly influenced my training in research methods. Numerous graduate students have provided insightful commentary and moral support in my years of work on this project. They are too many to name here, but my most heartfelt thanks go to Ruth Alminas, Kara Ellerby, Liz Faucett, Sabrina Cotta, Naomi Oliviae, Aakriti Tandon, Jay Wendland, and Mike Ryckman and Kirsse Cline Ryckman.

From the Gender and Women’s Studies Department, Laura Briggs’ course was a tremendous influence on Chapter 2 of this dissertation and several of the graduate students with whom I studied in that course pointed me toward valuable resources. The contribution of staff at the University of Arizona libraries is also immeasurable. Cheryl Cullier assisted me with the archival resources used in this project. Dean Carla Stoffle and Robyn Huff-Eibl are true champions of graduate students on the University of Arizona campus, and their advocacy makes many things possible. I must also express my gratitude to the University of Arizona’s Association for Women Faculty, to Katheryne B. Willock, and to the Feminist Theory and Gender Studies section of the International Studies Association, for kindly recognizing my research with awards and honorable mentions. This encouragement kept me motivated even in the most difficult times.

Outside of the University of Arizona, special thanks to Colin Ellman, David Coller, and all those affiliated with the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research at Syracuse University. The lessons and discussions at the 2011 sessions were of great help to me in developing this work.

Finally, I would like to thank the greatest and most enduring influences in my life. My parents, Mark and Sandra Henshaw, instilled the value of education in my life early on. My grandmother, Barbara Cuthbert, has been a constant source of encouragement. My brother, Matthew Henshaw, and my dear friends Dana Ross, Elena Hyman Renner, and Nicholas Waddy never doubted my ability to achieve what I set out to do. And Rico, who always patiently waits for the laptop to be put away. Thank you for being a part of this journey.
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ABSTRACT

Studies indicating that women as leaders and negotiators have a pacifying effect on interstate conflict stand in contrast to the reality of women's active involvement in civil conflict through armed rebel groups and insurgencies. This dissertation seeks to provide insight into this apparent paradox by analyzing how and why women become involved in rebel groups, drawing on insights from feminist and IR theories to create a gendered theory of rebellion. Hypotheses developed from this theory are examined using new data on women's participation in rebel groups from 1990-2008. These tests are supplemented with qualitative analysis focusing on the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador. Among the findings, data on rebel organizations in the post-Cold War era show that women are active in over half of all armed insurgencies, a level of activity much greater than what is recognized by current scholarship in international relations. The analysis also indicates that economic and ethnic- or religious-based grievance motivates women’s participation, but disputes theories that portray rebels as profit- or power-seekers.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This work started with a deceptively simple research question: Why do women decide to join rebel groups and what factors explain why some groups appear to attract such large numbers of female fighters, while other appear to attract almost none? I call this question “deceptive” in its simplicity, because in the course of this study it becomes evident that the lack of understanding about women in civil wars is indicative of larger issues within the field of international relations generally, and the study of civil wars and rebel behavior in particular. One problem is that scholarly research tends to perpetuate—in a manner either outright or implied—the stereotype that conflict is the domain of men. Consider these examples of statements from recent scholarship on armed rebellion:

“The [surveyed] noncombatant group overrepresents men…relative to the general population” (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008, 444).

“Kadogos [boy fighters] ‘make very good soldiers… they are not concerned with getting back to their wife and family’” (Gates 2002).

“Our second proxy [variable]… has the advantage of being focused on young males—the group from whom rebels are recruited” (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008, 569).

These studies, and others in the same vein, portray war as an exclusively masculine realm. Where women are mentioned in accounts of conflict, they are often confined to the status of victims or characterized as peacemakers. Such conceptualizations, in the words of feminist conflict scholars, “den[y] women agency” and “serve to define violence as the preserve of masculinity” (Shepherd 2008). Indeed, this trend toward minimizing women’s contributions stands in contrast to a number of case studies detailing the active
involvement of women in rebel groups and intrastate conflicts. From Chiapas to Northern Ireland to Palestine, women have played a variety of roles in armed resistance movements. Research has indicated that a number of insurgencies in the 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st} centuries have benefited from significant female membership, as shown in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1. Reported Percentages of Women in Selected Rebel Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>% Women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LTTE Black Tigers (Sri Lanka)</td>
<td>30-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigitte Rosse (Italy)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rote Armee Fraktion (W. Germany)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) (Nepal)</td>
<td>30-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Colombia)</td>
<td>30-45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandinistas/FSLN (Nicaragua)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contras (Nicaragua)</td>
<td>7-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Eager 2008; Luciak 2001; McDermott 2002; BBC News 2004; Molyneux 1985; Xaykaothao 2006)

There are a number of reasons why rebel groups may encourage women to join. Women may be seen as a valuable resource when movements have tapped out all of the willing or available male population. They may also be strategically valuable, if they are less likely to be suspected of revolutionary activity than their male counterparts. For women too,
participation in armed rebellion may bring benefits. Periods of conflict may offer women a rare chance to break out of their traditional gender roles, presenting an opportunity that can be both liberating and intimidating (Eisenstein 2007).

Still, these “violent women,” despite their appearance in movements throughout the world, are largely viewed as aberrations in academic and popular discourse. Being perceived as such a “novelty,” the significance of their contributions is in danger of being missed altogether. Sjoberg and Gentry point out that narratives on violent women tend to put them in the framework of mother, monster, or whore narratives. Each of these narratives in some way diminishes the female subject as an agent or a rational decision-maker, either because she is seen as manipulated by outside forces (like family members, lovers, or an organization), or because she is viewed as suffering from some psychological defect. In addition to rendering agency invisible, these discourses also serve to reinforce gender norms that situate women in a nonconflictual role, arguing in favor of the idea that female violence is a “rare” or abnormal phenomenon (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007).

In approaching this topic, I have been influenced by recent works in the area of feminist security studies, as well as by some excellent comparative pieces on women in rebel groups. The latter category includes the works of Luciak and Kampwirth, who look specifically at women in Latin American rebel movements and who emphasize the economic and political factors driving women to rebellion, including some discussion of political terror. Their assessment of women’s transformative impact on these movements is also a particular point of interest to me (Kampwirth 2004; Kampwirth 2003; Luciak
2001). Eager, Gonzalez-Perez, and Cragin and Daly have also conducted some smaller, cross-national comparative analysis of women in rebel groups, noting some distinction among groups based on ideology. Their findings are addressed more at-length in Chapters 5 and 6 (Cragin and Daly 2009; Gonzalez-Perez 2008; Eager 2008; Gonzalez-Perez 2006). Finally, from the field of international relations, Joshua Goldstein’s *War and Gender* was an extremely valuable resource, both in its discussion of women as combatants and in its attempts to connect theory and research in international relations to the use and presence of women in armed conflict (Goldstein 2001).

I further owe a great debt to the emergent canon of feminist security studies literature and other feminist scholarship in international relations. Eriksson Baaz and Stern’s remarkable article on violence, masculinity, and sexuality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) shows that women as well as men are capable of perpetrating large-scale violence. In particular, their finding that female combatants often condone and sometimes participate in sexual violence highlights a role in which women in conflict are rarely discussed (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009). Sjoberg and Gentry’s work on women as agents of violence in Chechnya, Palestine, and the former Yugoslavia further highlights the way in which many observers’ essentialist perceptions of women shape both reporting and scholarship (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007).

Chapter 2, which examines the historical marginalization of women and highlights the various roles they play in war, was greatly influenced by Cynthia Enloe’s book *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives*. As with Joshua Goldstein’s book, she re-examines the history of women in combat with a critical
eye and finds many women in unexpected places, doing unexpected things. While she finds women to be active in combat and leadership roles in many modern militaries, she also finds wives and lovers doing many important tasks that enable the success of military operations. Her emphasis on the contribution of women outside the ranks—those who don’t receive titles or membership cards—is especially influential to me as I examine the question, “who fights?” (Enloe 1999). Likewise, V. Spike Peterson’s work on women in the global political economy sheds light on trends in female labor force participation—including household labor, participation in the informal economy, and the devaluation of women’s work in the formal market—that complicates the calculus of rebellion presented by the economic theories I discuss in Chapter 3 (Peterson 2010; Peterson 2006; Peterson 2003).

Linking the roles of women in wartime and post-war, Megan MacKenzie’s work on women in Sierra Leone illustrates patterns of exclusion in official statistics and disarmament programs that may be generalizable to other cases. Among her findings is the notion that women are often pressured (by family, by male superiors, and by a post-war climate of mistrust) into not being “counted.” A fear of violence or social rejection leads many women to deny their participation, both immediately after the war and in the years following. This enforced exclusion has resulted in a tendency to underestimate women’s participation in the conflict, especially among RUF rebels. It has also resulted in a post-war society where women face significant challenges to economic and political participation (MacKenzie 2012; MacKenzie 2009). Sandra McEvoy’s discussion of Loyalist women in Northern Ireland also exposes the consequences of women’s
exclusion from the peace process, specifically noting that women’s feelings of
disenfranchisement have resulted in lasting feelings of hostility, which have sometimes
boiled over into the public acts of participating in strikes and demonstrations (McEvoy
2009). Especially as I assess the transformative impact of women in times of conflict, the
works of MacKenzie and McEvoy highlight the danger of ignoring women as
stakeholders.

What these and other studies share in common are a few basic tenets that have
been identified as central to feminist security studies research:

1. A broad conceptualization of “security,” including what counts as a security issue
   and who benefits from the outcome of achieving “security.” This often takes the
   form of addressing so-called “human security” concerns like personal freedom
   from violence, at home and in the public sphere, issues of poverty, and gender
discrimination.

2. An awareness of the diverse roles that gender plays in the theory and practice of
   international security, including the ways that gender shapes and is shaped by the
   choices of actors in the international system.

3. An understanding of the gendered nature of values (and concepts) that are central
to the study of international security, in particular how values associated with
masculinity achieve primacy while the feminine is often devalued or ignored.

4. A belief that “the omission of gender from work on international security does not
make that work gender-neutral or unproblematic” (Sjoberg 2009, 5–6).
I have attempted to incorporate these principles into the current work. I have already addressed the trend in mainstream international relations toward minimizing the contribution of women to international conflict, and I will return to this topic in later chapters. Additionally, as I formulate a gendered theory of rebellion I take into account both the masculinist goals emphasized by some scholars—including the notion of rebels as seekers of profit and power—and the notion of “security” as a personal issue for many women. I also include some discussion of the transformative impact that women have on rebel organizations, and the way in which rebel activity in turn shapes their goals and ambitions.

I have attempted to conduct this project with sensitivity to the concerns expressed by feminist security studies researchers. Ontologically, there is recognition among feminist researchers that our understanding of the world is shaped by our theories and accessible only through interpretation. The questions we ask and the research we conduct are influenced by and tend to reinforce existing power relationships, rendering some things visible and others invisible (Wibben 2011; Ackerly, Stern, and True 2006; Weldon 2006). As a site of social relations and knowledge production, the academy is a part of this shaping process (Wibben 2011; Tickner 2006). By asking new questions and exploring new theories I attempt to avoid reinforcing dominant narratives, though I am aware of the skepticism with which some feminist researchers may view a cross-national project that attempts to categorize and quantify women’s participation in conflict.

Past skepticism among feminists about quantitative research has been motivated by the quality of data and the underlying assumption that “scientific” processes produce
authoritative accounts (Wibben 2011; Tickner 2006; Caprioli 2004). Quality of data issues often center around the project of data gathering in a world where women’s contributions and experiences are less visible. The operationalization of important concepts like “combatants,” “democracy,” and “battle deaths” are often developed without regard to how these concepts are viewed and experienced by women. By approaching the issue of participation with an epistemology that emphasizes the lived experience of women in conflict, I hope to at least create a better quality of data on the issue; but by relying on the accounts and observations of others, I also recognize that I am limited in the ability to fully actualize that vision. It should be noted, though, that I conceive of this as a mixed-methods project and, by developing it as such, I hope to both minimize the potential inaccuracies of the quantitative analysis and to avoid the impression that I view quantitative analysis as conveying a stamp of ultimate truth or authoritative knowledge. Likewise, I hope to avoid the impression that I seek to essentialize women’s experience. Some of the differences highlighted in this study are as relevant as the similarities that women in various parts of the world share.

The purpose of this introduction is to present my central research question and to outline why such an inquiry is necessary to advance our understanding of how women contribute to civil wars as well as increasing our knowledge of intrastate conflict more generally. Chapters 2 and 3 continue this theme with a conceptual and theoretical discussion of women in conflict. In Chapter 2, I create a clear concept of participation and various participant roles that draws upon historical examples and the first-person experience of women in conflict. The typology developed here will be used in later
chapters for data collection and coding purposes. In Chapter 3, I develop a “gendered theory of rebellion” that aims to explain women’s participation. To develop this theory, I start from a discussion of mainstream literature on rebel behavior from political science and economics. After discussing the theories of greed and grievance that most recent literature draws upon, I introduce the insights of feminist theory—creating a dialogue between mainstream and critical approaches that highlights why women may fight, and how their motivations may differ from those of their male counterparts. Chapter 3 concludes with an overall presentation of my gendered theory of rebellion that offers some preliminary insights on why women fight and what factors might explain differentiation in joining behavior and roles between groups.

Chapter 4 is an initial application of my theory to the study of a single case over time, that of the FMLN in El Salvador. Using data gathered from news reports over the duration of the conflict, archival material—including communiqués, official statements, and other primary documents—and other secondary sources, I assess the utility of my theory in explaining this specific case. Among the findings in this chapter, I find that the use of political terror by government troops appears frequently in women’s discussions of why they joined the FMLN. This fits with my concept of a human security grievance, as developed in Chapter 3. I also find that economic factors, such as the FMLN’s promises of land redistribution, poverty relief, and reduced inequality appealed to many women. In a further confirmation of my expectations, selective incentives or the promise of personal benefits in the form of money, loot, etc., do not appear as motivators in the accounts of these women. However, I also do not find that women expressed a particular desire for
political rights or gender equality, at least not until the latter days of the war when this became a point of contention between the FMLN and its female members.

Chapters 5 and 6 broaden the scope of the study by approaching the question from a cross-national perspective. In Chapter 5, I introduce a new data set with cross-national information on women’s participation in a random sample of 72 rebel groups active between 1990 and 2008. This data provides an unprecedented view of both the extent to which women have been active in rebel movements generally, and the extent to which women have participated in the various roles defined in Chapter 2: noncombatant, combatant, and leadership. Chapter 5 relies mostly on descriptive statistics to present a global view of women’s involvement in insurgencies, with some discussion of selected cases to illustrate general patterns or specific examples of interest. This chapter serves to illustrate that women are active in armed rebel groups to a much greater extent than what was previously envisioned, with more than half of all armed groups employing women in some capacity. I also find that women are active combatants (taking place in direct armed attacks) in nearly a third of all groups active in this period, and are leaders in over one-quarter of the groups I examine. Though there is some regional variation, women’s participation occurs to some extent in every region of the world. Additionally, much of women’s participation also occurs in groups that rely primarily on voluntary recruitment techniques. While many women (as well as men and children) have been forced into the service of rebel groups, this by no means accounts for the majority of women’s participation.
Chapter 6 applies my gendered theory of rebellion to the data introduced in Chapter 5. This chapter develops and tests hypotheses about women’s activity in rank-and-file roles. Using quantitative analysis as well as examples from selected cases, I find initial support for several aspects of my gendered theory of rebellion. The role of economic grievance as a motivating factor finds further support here, with those movements focused on economic redistribution more likely to include women in both combat and noncombat roles. Addressing the role of ethno-religious grievance, I also find some difference between membership patterns in Islamist and non-Islamist groups. While Islamist groups are less likely to include women in rank-and-file roles, other ethnoreligious groups are more likely to include women, at least in a support capacity. While the analysis in Chapter 6 should be considered exploratory due to the small sample size, I believe these findings also cast doubt on the explanatory value of some widely accepted theories of rebellion. In particular the idea of rebels as profit-seekers, concerned more with the capacity for private gains than with social grievances, is not supported by my analysis. Nor is the idea of political grievance supported as it has traditionally been defined in political science—with a focus on access to the political system being key.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by summarizing my findings and addressing opportunities for further research. While the expansion of my data beyond the 72 cases examined here is one clear opportunity for future research, I also discuss how understanding women’s roles in conflict can help us understand how conflicts are settled and how post-conflict societies are shaped. The difficulties that women experience in
post-conflict societies have been the focus of much scholarship,¹ but the ways in which women’s exclusion from disarmament activities, reintegration programs, and post-conflict state building reflects their involvement in the conflict itself is under-examined.

Knowledge that excludes the experience of women is knowledge that is partial at best. I believe that scholarship on intrastate conflict to date has either implicitly or explicitly ignored the roles women have played in modern conflicts, as well as in conflicts throughout history. The present work aims to fill an important gap in the literature by looking at why women rebel worldwide.

CHAPTER 2
A COMBATANT BY ANY OTHER NAME: ASSESSING WHAT WOMEN DO IN WAR

Any attempt to understand and compare the roles that women play in rebel groups and other armed insurgencies must first confront the issue of what “participation” truly means. This is a problem that is evident throughout literature on rebel groups and social movements more generally, but it is rarely addressed head-on. A consistent, well-specified conceptualization of participation is necessary for any examination of what women do in wartime. Especially when discussing rebel groups, there are three issues to be considered when attempting to define who is a participant:

1. *Differences in nature between national militaries and rebel groups.* In many (though not all) cases, rebel groups are expected to be smaller and have fewer resources than national militaries. This means that we may expect to see less differentiation in roles as participants are expected to multi-task, performing multiple functions. Additionally, unlike national militaries, rebel groups have an added incentive to keep their membership structure opaque, making it as difficult as possible to determine who is or is not participating in the movement. This tactic may lead movements to depend on the labor and support of individuals, but without officially recognizing them as “participants.”

2. *Differences in membership models among rebel groups.* Laura Pulido, in her exploration of social movements in Los Angeles in the late 20th century, highlights how even within the same space and time, different movements can have different definitions of who “participates.” Of the social movements she
examines some, including El Centro de Acción Social y Autonomo (CASA), had a rigid membership structure that required aspiring members to study organizational material and pass a test for entry. Others, like the Asian-American movement East Wind, had a more fluid, organic structure with no apparent formal criteria for determining who was or was not a member (Pulido 2006). Relying on a movement’s own applications of the “participant” label, therefore, does not necessarily provide an accurate basis for comparison.

3. Issues specific to women. Many insurgencies and rebel groups, for strategic, ideological, or other reasons, may construct their own participant categories in ways that are specifically designed to marginalize or exclude the contributions of women. This, then, is another caution against relying too heavily on a movement’s own application of labels and assessment of participation. Additionally, forced or coerced participation is another issue that must be considered in a study specifically looking at women. As discussed further below, forced participation is another mechanism by which women may be drawn into participation in an armed movement without receiving full recognition for their efforts.

How does the existing scholarly literature address these debates? Often, it seems the issue is addressed only in passing, if at all. For example, take the case of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador (which will be dealt with further in Chapter 4). Disarmament data from the United Nations Observer Mission in El
Salvador (ONUSAL) attempts to make a categorization of participant roles, but the categories are poorly defined. While ONUSAL’s data classifies participants as “combatants,” “injured noncombatants,” or “political personnel,” the exact definition of these categories is not clear even to researchers who have relied on this data (Luciak 2001). In addition, it has been pointed out that definitions used by ONUSAL and other agencies involved in the post-conflict transition employ the separate and ambiguous category of “tenedores” to describe some individuals who were active supporters of the FMLN, but who were not considered to be members. Complicating matters further, tenedores has also been described as a category that includes displaced persons and possibly civilians who were supporters of the government (Conaway and Martinez 2004; Vargas 2003). This ambiguity is sometimes noted, but rarely discussed in depth.

This example illustrates the shortcomings of one method of classifying participant roles: relying on categories established by official bodies, including peacekeeping and disarmament bodies and national militaries. In contrast to insurgencies and rebel groups, national militaries (i.e., regular forces) typically have a structured categorization of participant roles. Descriptions of ranks and roles are often detailed and publicized to those inside and outside of the service. As noted above, though, any attempt to apply similar categorizations to rebel groups and insurgencies runs up against issues related to gender bias and differences in the nature of the groups in question.

There are some researchers who have attempted to address this problem by discussing and developing more inclusive participant categories. As an example, I will refer to the work of Griset and Mahan throughout the chapter. In their work on women and terrorism,
they advance a four-part typology of women’s participation in rebel groups. Their
categories of Dominant Forces, Warriors, Sympathizers, and Spies represents an advance
over previous work in that indicators for each category are specified, and the
classification of women’s roles relies on what the women are actually doing, rather than
what titles they are given (Griset and Mahan 2002). I will discuss each of their categories
in detail in this chapter. I believe their typology is a good starting point, but I will address
some concerns related to indicators and operationalization. I will also draw upon the
work of Cynthia Enloe, especially in my discussion of women’s participation in roles
outside of the combat arena. Enloe’s work on the roles of women as “camp followers”
and military wives introduces some points highly relevant to a gendered analysis of
participation (Enloe 1999).

To develop a concept of participation, then, I aim to develop a definition of
participant categories that examines: 1) official descriptions of conflict roles, in particular
those used by regular forces; 2) academic work that attempts to create an alternative
framework; and 3) accounts of participants in regular and irregular forces that suggest
ways in which these official descriptions can be refined or better applied. I further view
these categories as falling along two axes: the horizontal and the vertical. The vertical
axis deals primarily with rank or organizational status, looking primarily at how to define
who is in leadership positions versus those in subordinate roles. The horizontal axis looks
at the tasks performed at various levels, particularly in conceptualizing variation among
the roles played by rank-and-file individuals in a rebellion.
In approaching this task, I am guided by feminist principles of empiricism and methodology. My work here reflects an interest in the distinct experiences of women in wartime, and an investment in the value of first-person narratives. Like many feminist scholars, I am interested in incorporating the voices and experiences of women into my definitions wherever possible. This chapter will include several narratives that I believe serve to challenge and refine traditionally accepted definitions of “who participates.” It is hoped that, by use of these first-hand accounts, I can develop a more robust and inclusive idea of what it means to “participate” in conflict.

An Examination of Tasks: A Horizontal Axis

I start here with a discussion of the distinction between combat and noncombat roles, which forms the basis for my horizontal axis of participation. While an examination of the day-to-day tasks performed by rank-and-file members of a rebel group may seem less consequential than an examination of rank, I believe that the distinctions among rank-and-file members—both as they exist on the ground and as they have been classified by regular and irregular forces—provide important insights into the gendered nature of conflict. In particular, some of the stories here show how women are subordinated or made invisible in times of conflict and how women are often defined in relation to their male counterparts (as opposed to being defined as participants in their own right). This discussion centers on the experiences of rank-and-file participants, meaning those who are neither in a leadership role nor a forced participant role as defined further below.
Combat Roles

Regular forces often make a clear distinction between the categories of combat and noncombat. The U.S. Army groups combat roles under four overarching headings:

1. *Armor Branch.* This includes tank and cavalry operations, scouting, and operation of armed vehicles including tanks and amphibious vehicles.

2. *Field Artillery.* Includes the operation of specialized missile systems, the operation of surface weapons equipment, and “target designation” or the set up and operation of computer and radar systems associated with weapons systems.

3. *Infantry.* The “main land combat force,” with wide-ranging training and duties including: operation and mobilization of weaponry, hand-to-hand combat, scouting, communications from the front lines, weapons recovery, and processing captured persons and materials.

4. *Special Forces.* Specializing in areas where “conventional military operations” are inadequate. This includes: direct action/short strike, counterterrorism ops, foreign internal defense, special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare/guerilla warfare. There are four specialties offered within the overall category of special forces.
   a. *Weapons sergeants.* Includes weapons specialists, foreign light and heavy infantry operations, and maintenance.
b. *Engineer sergeants.* Individuals who carry out construction and demolition of fortifications in the field, as well as surveying.


d. *Communications sergeants.* Includes those operating satellite, video, and radio communications, as well as encryption technologies (U.S. Army 2010).

These descriptions by the U.S. military generally seem to align with the descriptions used by many other national armed forces. However, they are not the last word in defining combat roles. Some of the duties outlined here are not roles we might expect a need for in insurgent groups. For example, many rebel groups will not have access to high-tech missile and guidance systems and will therefore not require specialized personnel to operate them. More importantly, though, any attempt to define combat roles according to these descriptions should also take into account how the definition of “combat roles” has changed over time, and specifically how the definition of combat roles has evolved in relation to women and conflict.

In the United States, for example, the 1994 “Aspin policy” on women in combat represents an important moment in the definition of combat roles. The “risk rule” adopted by the Defense Department as part of this policy stated that positions could not be closed to women just because they are dangerous, but this did not end restrictions on combat roles. On the one hand, as a result of these changes, about a quarter of a million new
military jobs were opened to women by re-classifying them as “noncombat”\(^2\) (Willens 1996). On the other hand, though, the policy continued to exclude women from assignment to units “whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground” (Norris 2007).

The result of all this has been widespread confusion, as identified in a Rand Corporation report issued in 2007. The authors of this report found, based on discussions with military personnel, members of Congress, and DoD officials, that many did not understand the “point” of the policy, and that there was no “shared interpretation” of it. They also found that the policy resulted in a strange patchwork in which some jobs within the same Career Management Field (CMF) may be open to women, while others may be closed. For example, within the Mechanical Maintenance CMF, women may hold the position of light-wheel vehicle mechanics, track vehicle repairers, and maintenance supervisors, but they may not be mechanics on vehicles used in combat (Harrell et al. 2007). Likewise, a woman can be a gunner on a Humvee, but not on larger armored fighting vehicles that are commonly used in combat (Alvarez 2009).

The realities on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan have further exposed weaknesses in the way combat roles are currently classified and in the exclusion of women from certain roles. With women comprising over 10% of the personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan, creative classification techniques have been employed to get women into combat zones while skirting the restrictions on having women fill actual combat positions. For instance, regulations allow women to be “attached” to or “embedded” in

\(^2\) Positions that were opened with the policy change included military intelligence (MI) collection, engineer companies, certain reconnaissance positions, and various headquarters positions (Harrell et al. 2007).
units, rather than “assigned” to them. “Attachment” implies that these women’s service is limited to a specific assignment for a specific period of time, but officers can and do frequently extend or renew the attachment once the specified mission or time period has ended. Therefore, while “attachment” may seem like a different type of service on paper, practically there seems to be no difference in the duties being performed by these women and those performed by their male, combat-classified counterparts (Alvarez 2009; Norris 2007; Anderson and Newton 2008).

The case of Monica Brown is one example of the ongoing confusion in the U.S. military surrounding the role of women in combat. In 2007, as an Army medic with only four months of training, Brown was attached to a combat unit in Afghanistan when their convoy was ambushed by insurgents who set off a roadside bomb and opened fire on the group. Brown acted as a human shield in the ensuing fight, making her way through enemy fire to a vehicle full of injured men and throwing herself over the bodies of her badly injured and unconscious companions until they could be transported to safety. For her efforts, she was awarded the Silver Star, the country’s third-highest award for valor. The award also came with controversy, however. Following the attack, Brown was removed from her unit and reassigned to a nearby base. In later interviews with the media, her commanding officer, while praising her actions, admitted that officers bent the rules by having her travel with the combat unit in the first place (Tyson 2008). Her

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3 To further heighten the confusion about women in combat, in 2010 the U.S. Army announced that it was testing its first-ever female combat uniform. This new uniform is designed to have a more comfortable fit for female soldiers and eliminates some “excess material” on the unisex uniform, which female soldiers had complained made the uniform bulky and uncomfortable. While the introduction of this uniform does not represent any official change in Army policy regarding women in combat, it is seen as a tacit recognition that women more often find themselves in combat situations “when having well-fitting clothing… can suddenly prove critical” (Montet 2010).
companions, including some of those whose lives she saved, also questioned whether her actions received special attention because she was a woman. One of the men she saved refused to be interviewed for a televised piece on Brown, reportedly stating that he believed Brown never should have been in a combat setting in the first place (Anderson and Newton 2008). Brown herself, who continues to serve as a medic in the U.S. army, has stated that she did not want to be removed from the combat unit with which she served. In an interview after receiving the Silver Star, when asked for her opinion about the Army’s restrictions on women in the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, she said, “There is no front line… you never know what’s going to happen” (Anderson and Newton 2008). The 2013 decision to lift the U.S. military’s ban on women in combat—a change that will be phased in over several years—will certainly lead to more changes in this area. It remains to be seen whether a true “opening” of combat positions will occur, and how many women will be impacted by this change.

The U.S. is also not the only military that has struggled with issues on women in combat. While many U.S. allies have no legal restrictions in place to keep women from serving in combat, in practice officers in some militaries, such as the Netherlands, maintain a de facto system of separation where women who volunteer for combat roles often find themselves assigned instead to noncombat support roles. In Israel, a quota system is in place that limits how many women get assigned to combat units. Even when those units are deployed, the women often do not go with them (Norris 2007). In the UK, women are legally restricted from Army cavalry, armoured corps, and infantry roles, as well as certain roles with the RAF Regiment and the Royal Marines, a policy that has
come under scrutiny particularly because of EU anti-discrimination laws (UK Ministry of Defence 2009). Canada, on the other hand, opened all of its combat roles to women in 1989. Initially, Canadian forces faced an uphill battle to recruit and train their first women for combat positions, facing little interest from women and a high failure rate on physical tests. By 2006, however, about 2% of Canada’s combat troops were women, with over 1100 women total serving in either the regular or reserve combat forces (CBC News 2006; Moore 1989).

Regarding the role of women in paramilitary groups and insurgencies, similar questions exist regarding how to define who is “in combat.” Luciak (2001) performs a comparative study of women in Latin American insurgencies and notes that various agencies and authors utilize different definitions of “combatant.” While some sources limit the use of the term to arms-bearing combatants, other sources apply the label to those who play roles that are exclusively supportive (Luciak 2001). In their typology of women’s participation in terrorist organizations, Griset and Mahan use the term “Warriors” to apply to those women who engage in direct combat with the enemy. Their conceptualization is also exclusively limited to arms-bearing women (Griset and Mahan 2002).

Overall, I would argue that the discussion here proves that official classifications are not reliable indicators of whether a woman (or a man, for that matter) is serving in combat. Rather, it is an examination of actual duties performed that should be used for classification purposes. A common theme among combat positions, which I propose to include as part of my working definition, is that they represent an individual working in
support of one side in a conflict and being exposed with regularity to a front-line environment, meaning one where they engage in or are directly supporting those who engage in close combat. Close combat, as I define it here, involves hand-to-hand combat or the use of short-range weaponry. Support of those engaged in close combat, based on the foregoing discussion, can include maintenance of weapons and communication equipment in use on the front lines, scouting locations, building and dismantling fortifications, and front-line medical response. These indicators are summarized in Table 2-1 below. While this definition would largely disregard many forces’ official classification of combat vs. noncombat roles, I would argue that this definition is more inclusive and able to better reflect the realities on the ground in most fighting situations.

Table 2-1. Indicators of Combat Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Type</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Combat           | • Regularly engage in a front line environment in support of one side of a conflict  
|                  | • Engage in, are expected to engage in, or directly support those engaged in close combat |

**Noncombat Roles**

The definition of combat roles above leaves us with some idea of how we would define noncombat roles by default. Those individuals who are not regularly exposed to the front-line environment, who are not directly engaged in close combat, or who are not directly supporting those in close combat, can be identified as serving in noncombat roles.

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4 As Monica Brown points out, there may be some conflicts in which there is no literal “front line.” In drafting this definition, I am open to the possibility that there will be some conflicts where all participants could rightly be considered combatants.
roles. Obviously, this definition then contains a large range of tasks. The U.S. Army, in its recruitment materials, identifies nine overarching categories of noncombat roles:

1. Administrative support, which includes human resources, finance specialists, supply specialists, shower and laundry repair specialists, and chaplains and their assistants.

2. Arts and media, which includes graphic designers, broadcast specialists, and musicians.

3. Computers and technology, which includes those who operate and maintain communications systems, including communications analysts.

4. Construction and engineering, including plumbers, electricians, machinists, and other related tasks.

5. Intelligence and combat support, including intelligence collection, analysts, linguists, weapons maintenance personnel, and food service.

6. Legal and law enforcement, including firefighters, military police and investigators, emergency responders, and attorneys.

7. Mechanics, including a variety of aircraft, watercraft, and land vehicle maintenance specialists as well as heating and cooling and building maintenance positions.

8. Medical and Emergency, including medical, dental, and veterinary specialists.

9. Transportation and Aviation, including truck drivers, watercraft operators, parachute riggers, and a variety of maintenance workers (U.S. Army 2010).
There is some overlap in these categories, but this list includes a number of functions that can intuitively be considered necessary to the conduct of warfare. Few would dispute that mechanics, drivers, those who collect and analyze intelligence, and communications operators would be considered “participants” in an armed fighting group, be it one comprised of regular or irregular forces. However, this classification again raises areas where participation as it applies to women is not necessarily clear-cut.

Various authors have discussed the importance of women as “camp followers” (Enloe 1999; Griset and Mahan 2002). Enloe describes these individuals as “women who follow[] male soldiers,” but she emphasizes that “[t]o ‘follow’ is not to be a part of, but to be dependent on, to tag along” (Enloe 1999, 37). These women, present in military campaigns throughout history, would carry out tasks including laundry, tailoring, nursing, cooking, and the allocation of provisions. However, to say they were not recognized as “part of” fighting forces is not necessarily true. In fact, it is quite inconsistent when and how these women have been recognized as participants in conflict.

In the UK, the practice of using “camp followers” to perform support tasks was in place for centuries, traceable back at least to the seventeenth century. In colonial America, an estimated 20,000 women made the Trans-Atlantic voyage to accompany British soldiers. The British Army paid for these women’s passage, and in return they were considered subject to military policies and codes of conduct and could be court-martialed if they were caught in violation of these standards (Enloe 1999). This certainly seems to imply some kind of official recognition of their roles.
Closer to contemporary times, camp followers were also present in the U.S. armed forces. The Mormon Battalion of the U.S. Army patrolled the West during the mid 19th century and the Mexican American War. During their term of service, they marched over 2,000 miles through the Western United States, along the way capturing Tucson from a detachment of Mexican soldiers, establishing settlements in Southern Arizona, and intervening in a conflict between rival Native American tribes in California. The battalion that left Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1846 consisted of over 540 men, but the battalion was accompanied on its march by women as well (California Pioneer Heritage Foundation 2009; Mormon Battalion Association 2010; Esshom 1913). Some of the officers were allowed to bring their wives, and about 20 women were hired to accompany the brigade as “laundresses,” a task for which they received the same pay as Army privates5 (Ricketts 1994). However, these women were not included on any official rosters, and there is no indication that they were subject to court martial in the event of impropriety, as were the colonial-era British camp followers. This seems to imply that whatever recognition the Mormon women might have received, it was not a formalized status such as that enjoyed by their British counterparts.

At the other end of the spectrum, in Sudan, the national military and many rebel groups have not provided official recognition of women’s service. Women who assist the troops are viewed as civilians rather than participants. Even where women are

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5 Melissa Burton Coray, who was 18 at the time, was one of the few women who joined up with the battalion and completed the entire 2,000 mile journey. Though she was an officer’s wife (having married Sgt. William Coray only four days before their departure), she was also paid as a laundress for her husband’s company. She joined up with the Battalion on her own accord, defying her parents’ wishes in order to travel with her new husband. In an interview much later in life, she told a reporter, “I didn’t mind [the journey]. I walked because I wanted to” (Ricketts 1994, 121).
recognized, in some rebel factions in the south of the country, a clear gender hierarchy remains. "A change of the role of man from breadwinner to combatant entitles him to more rights. The change of the role of the woman from a housewife and mother to a combatant causes a further decline in her status" (Abdel Halim 1998, 98).

Then there is the question of how to handle the women who lend support of a more intimate nature, and whether these women should be considered as “participants.” I consider these women here in four different capacities: wives, lovers, prostitutes, and sex slaves.\(^6\)

Camp followers often were or became the wives of soldiers they accompanied. One such case is that of Samuel Hutton, brother of noted English Historian William Hutton and soldier in the Seven Years’ War, who marries the wife of a fallen comrade. In his autobiography, he explains that his new wife had been a camp follower, and had made “a good deal of money” engaging in commerce with the officers. During deployment, her first husband died of unspecified causes. “In such a situation,” Hutton explains, “the woman must not remain a widow” (Jewitt, Cox, and Allen 1872, 223). Within two days following her husband’s death, the widow Kate Keith received “plenty” of proposals, settled on Hutton, and was married to him (Enloe 1999; Jewitt, Cox, and Allen 1872). The implication of the tale is that Ms. Keith was recognized as a figure of some importance to the soldiers, but her role as wife of a soldier was essential to her ability to continue in their service. Had she merely been present in the theater in her own right, as a single woman, it seems her service would not have been possible.

\(^6\) This final category is also discussed in more detail in the section on forced participation below.
Marriage as a form of legitimation and protection is a theme that continues in modern times. Teckla Shikola, forced to flee home during the conflict in present-day Namibia in the 1960s, reports in an autobiographical essay that she encountered and was briefly detained by fighters of the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). These soldiers offered to marry her and the other females she was traveling with as a form of protection, warning them that if they did not marry them, they would probably be kidnapped by and forced to serve a rival militia. Shikola eventually escapes and voluntarily joins the rival forces, the Southwest Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) (Shikola 1998).

Similar issues surround the debate over whether women as lovers or sexual partners can be considered as “participants” in conflict. Rodriguez makes the argument that women as lovers are playing an important support role in revolution. By offering themselves up as what she calls “revolutionary pussy,” she argues that women are indulging male revolutionaries’ needs for affection, self-affirmation, and conquest (Rodriguez 1996). Griset and Mahan point out that women who are mothers, lovers, wives, etc., often play important supporting roles as spies and sympathizers (Griset and Mahan 2002). In her discussions on camp followers, Enloe also points out that the line

7 It is worth noting that Griset and Mahan’s typology differs from mine in that they divide what I refer to as noncombat roles into two distinct categories: Sympathizers and Spies. Sympathizers are identified as camp followers, women who do laundry, cooking, chores, etc., and Spies include decoys, messengers, and those who gather intelligence (Griset and Mahan 2002). I prefer not to make this distinction for a couple of reasons. First, as Griset and Mahan note, Sympathizers and Spies are alike in that these women are often not publicly identified with a movement. They are also frequently not considered to be stakeholders, in that they play no part in decision making and do not expect to share in the spoils of victory. Additionally, I prefer not to distinguish between these two categories because I believe that accounts from women in rebel groups illustrate that these two functions are often performed by the same individuals. A woman who transports supplies may also act as a messenger, and a woman who does chores may also be a decoy or a lookout (See, e.g., Luciak 2001; Hayslip 1993). Even Griset and Mahan note that “Spies” are often wives, sisters, mothers, and female friends, the same women we see participating as camp followers.
between “camp follower” and “prostitute” is unclear. Justly or unjustly, officers often labeled camp followers as prostitutes. In the most cynical sense, labeling these women as “prostitutes” allowed officers to portray them as women with a complete disregard of morality, and allowed them to suggest that such women could equally be guilty of a variety of other moral offenses including passing information to the enemy. Officers often labeled camp followers as prostitutes as a pretext to expel them (Enloe 1999). At other times, however, prostitutes were recognized as a necessary evil. The French army, in times of war, maintained direct military control of brothels. During the Vietnam War, U.S. commanders were given considerable discretion in whether and how to regulate contacts between soldiers and prostitutes, and policies were often permissive (Enloe 1999; Goldstein 2001).

So, should these women be considered “participants” in conflict? I argue that there are two important points to consider here. First, while the argument could certainly be made that emotional support services are just as important for fighters as logistical, administrative, medical, or other forms of support, where do we draw the line? The many wives and lovers throughout history who have stayed on the home front are also providers of emotional support. So are parents, siblings, friends, and even strangers who write letters or send care packages. Expanding the definition of “participants” to include all of these individuals risks broadening the concept to the extent that it loses all meaning.⁸

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⁸ It should be noted, however, that not all authors share this opinion. Griset and Mahan, for example, specify in their definition of “Sympathizers” that women who provide their support to a movement infrequently or even just once should be considered to be participating (Griset and Mahan 2002).
A second important factor to note is that, very often, these women are not serving the troops *only* in their capacities as wives, lovers, etc. While Kate Keith’s status as a military wife clearly lent her legitimacy, she served the men of her husband’s regiment in other ways as well. Melissa Burton Coray, while wife of an officer in the Mormon Battalion, also did laundry for her husband’s company. Likewise, women who provide sex to male revolutionaries as lovers, forced participants, or prostitutes often provide support in other ways as well. “Combat wives,” a concept that will be discussed more in depth in below, also frequently provide services such as cooking, cleaning, and transporting supplies for their “husbands” (Turshen and Twagiramariya 1998a).

With this in mind, I propose a definition of noncombat roles that does not automatically reject the services of these women, but that does not automatically consider them to be participants, either. Noncombatant participants, as I define them for the purposes of this work, are individuals who: 1) clearly identify with the goals, ideology, and/or efforts of one side over another in a conflict; 2) routinely offer support to that side, in the sense of contributing labor, supplies, and assistance; 3) Contribute support to the general effort (as opposed to contributing support only to specific individuals, such as relatives, husbands, etc.); and 4) perform most of their functions away from the front lines of the conflict. This will undoubtedly exclude the contributions of some women who might otherwise be considered participants, but overall I believe this definition addresses many of the shortcomings that would be present in relying solely on a movement’s official classification of participants.
Table 2-2. Indicators of Noncombat Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Type</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Noncombat        | • Clearly identify with the goals, ideology, and/or efforts of one side in a conflict  
|                   | • Routinely offer support to that side, contributing labor, supplies, and assistance  
|                   | • Provide general support, rather than lending support only to specific individuals (e.g., family members)  
|                   | • Conduct the majority of their duties outside of a front line or close combat environment |

Rank and Status: A Vertical Axis

From my definition of combat/noncombat roles, which forms a horizontal axis to participation, I move into a discussion of vertical roles. The distinction between leadership and nonleadership roles is the most obvious aspect here, but I will also address the concept of forced participation as a classification that is particularly relevant to women, and discuss whether it also forms a part of this spectrum.

Leaders and Officers

In national militaries, those who are officers or who are serving in leadership roles are not too hard to spot. Ranks are usually clearly defined and insignia, titles, and ceremonies denote those who have advanced into positions of authority. Titles and recognition can be equally important indicators of who is a leader in an insurgency or rebel group. In the 1910 revolution in Mexico, numerous women held titles of rank in the revolutionary army (Jaquette 1973). These women were also commanders of battalions or
groups of soldiers, much like those women who have been recognized as being leaders in Cuba and Nicaragua (Luciak 2001; Reif 1986; Jaquette 1973; Gonzalez-Perez 2006).

The connection between combat and leadership in a rebel group is worth noting here. While it is possible in many national militaries to advance in rank without serving directly in combat, in rebel groups there seems to be some link between combat engagement and advancement to leadership positions. It has been noted by a couple of authors that the three females most frequently identified as leaders in the Cuban Revolution, Celia Sanchez, Haydee Santamaria, and Vilma Espin, were all unique in that they had also served in combat (i.e., direct engagement with the enemy) and were among the few Cuban women to do so (Reif 1986; Gonzalez-Perez 2006). Likewise, the discussion by Griset and Mahan seems to suggest that women who become part of the Dominant Forces (their term for leadership roles) are most likely to be selected from among the Warriors. While noncombatants like Sympathizers and Spies may only be sporadic participants and are frequently not seen as stakeholders or true “members” of the movement, Warriors enjoy more recognition and more equality with their male counterparts, which suggests greater opportunity for advancement (Griset and Mahan 2002). There is a certain logic to the idea that those who excel in combat would be those most likely to advance to command positions, but command is only one possible dimension of leadership. I argue that while being a combatant may increase one’s probability of becoming a leader, it is also not the only avenue to becoming a leader.

Other factors can identify leadership in a rebel group as well. Griset and Mahan’s definition of Dominant Forces also includes strategy, ideology, and motivation as
leadership functions (Griset and Mahan 2002). Policymaking is an important function of leaders in a rebel group, especially given the expectation that, if a revolution is successful, many of these individuals will transition into official positions in a new government (Gonzalez-Perez 2006; Griset and Mahan 2002). This expanded definition of leadership means that we may need to broaden our identification of leaders to include those who do not hold an official rank or title. In Guatemala, for example, the wives of commanders could be classified as having some leadership role in the rebellion. While they did not hold any title or any official capacity, some wielded a great deal of influence over policies and decision making (Luciak 2001). In the Cuban and Mexican Revolutions, personal secretaries were also influential. Celia Sanchez, Fidel Castro’s personal secretary, organized attacks and exercised direct command of combatants (Jaquette 1973; Reif 1986). Venustianzo Carranza’s secretary, Hermilo Galinda de Topote, was also a noted feminist who allegedly played a significant role in shaping her boss’s attitudes on women’s issues during and after the Mexican Revolution (Jaquette 1973).

In identifying those cases where women are leaders, then, I will hold to the broad definition used by Griset and Mahan. This means looking beyond just those women who are commanders and also including the contributions of women who develop policies and strategies, or those who play a role in shaping the ideology of the movement.
Table 2-3. Indicators of Participation in a Leadership Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Type</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader or Officer</td>
<td>• Exercise direct control over and provides oversight of other participants, or &lt;br&gt;• Exercise direct control over the strategy, policies, and/or ideology of the movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Forced or Coerced Participants**

The incidence of forced participation in conflict is also a necessary aspect to consider. Forced participation is certainly not a new phenomenon, nor is it one that specifically targets women. The practice of impressment in militaries in the early modern era is well documented. In Britain, where the practice began in Elizabethan times, adult dockworkers, minors, vagrants, and even foreigners could be pressed into service by the military. Though a body of law eventually developed surrounding the practice, military personnel in need of manpower often ignored these regulations. An individual who was seized and pressed into service was offered a choice: remain a pressed man and receive nothing, or sign up as a volunteer and receive salary and benefits. This practice finally ended in the UK in the early 1800s (Royal Naval Museum 2001).

Conscription would also become a popular means of nonvoluntary recruitment for armed forces, especially in wartime. The system of “quotas” was first used by the British in the Napoleonic Wars, and was seen as a supplemental tactic to impressment. Under this system, each county was asked to produce a certain number of men for military service. While some of those who filled the quotas were voluntary recruits, in other cases counties offered up convicted criminals for service (Royal Naval Museum 2001). Conscription, in particular by European colonial powers, became more common in the
The conquest of large parts of West Africa by the French was made possible with the labor of thousands of conscripted black soldiers and laborers, referred to by the French as “auxiliaries.” The incorporation of Africans into the French army began in 1857, and many of those who entered the service were offered up by local elites (Echenberg 1975). As of 2010, 77 countries have some form of conscription in place, while eight more have standing “emergency conscription” provisions that can be invoked by the government. Of the 77 countries with conscript militaries, 15 allow for the conscription of women (CIA 2010). More interesting for the topic of this study, however, is examining the ways in which the practice of forced recruitment takes place for rebel groups. While conscription provides an identifiable, legal framework in which compulsory participation occurs, rebel groups and even some national militaries follow practices that operate outside of legal frameworks. To understand what some of these tactics are and how we can recognize who is a forced or coerced participant, examining individual examples is helpful.

Ishmael Beah was forced into service with the Sierra Leone army at the age of 13. His story is told in his memoir, A Long Way Gone. Following an attack on his hometown that left him separated from his family, he wandered the countryside with a group of his friends, all young men. They were coerced into joining up with the army when a lieutenant arrived at the town where he and his friends were staying. The officer showed the boys, and other townspeople, the dead bodies of adults and children they claimed were killed by rebels. After this speech, Beah says, ’All women and girls were asked to report to the kitchen; men and boys to the ammunition depot, where the soldiers watched
their movies and smoked marijuana" (Beah 2008, 108). The men and women are escorted to their respective destinations, and there is no indication that anyone was allowed to “opt-out” of participation. The boys are then further intimidated by soldiers who discharge firearms to scare them and who seize and destroy all of their belongings and civilian clothes (Beah 2008).

Physical assaults and intimidation are used to keep the young men in line throughout their training and when they are on the march. Drugging is also common. Beah says, "We walked for long hours and stopped only to eat sardines and corned beef with gari [a dish made from cassava], sniff cocaine, brown brown [a slang term that may refer to cocaine or a specific type of heroin], and take some white capsules. The combination of these drugs gave us a lot of energy and made us fierce" (Beah 2008, 122).

Beah’s story presents examples of forced or coerced participation in several different ways. First, the recruitment of children Beah’s age to armed conflict is illegal under international law. Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) forbids the recruitment of children under the age of 15 to armed conflict, limits the ability of parties to recruit children between 15 and 18 years of age, and calls upon states to “take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities” (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007). While the provisions of the CRC apply specifically to state parties, its near-universal ratification suggests a sense of *opinio juris* in the international community regarding its provisions. The International Criminal Court has also established precedent in this area by applying these provisions in the indictment of
Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, former leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots militia group (Human Rights Watch 2009).

Additionally, the use of intimidation tactics is clear in the way in which Beah and the others were brought into service. None of the townspeople were given the opportunity to opt out of service, and armed personnel made sure that they were “escorted” to training. By burning and destroying their personal property and civilian clothes, the armed forces further ensured that they would not be able to leave and return to their former lives. Once in the service and receiving training, different tactics were used to ensure that they remained active. Physical assaults deterred rebellion, and druggings ensure that they would remain complacent and not attempt to escape from the officers who were the source of the drugs to which they became addicted.

Similar themes appear in the stories of other child soldiers and forced participants. In her memoir, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*, Le Ly Hayslip tells of her experience as a child soldier with the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. At the age of twelve, she began working for the Viet Cong laying traps for Republican soldiers and acting as a sentinel. Though she was at first happy to be included in the war effort, local Viet Cong leaders came to suspect that she was a Republican spy because of her family connections. At 15, she was subjected to a trial and mock execution, and then she was raped. These actions were to serve as a warning to her and others to stay in line (Hayslip and Wurts 1993).

For many women, and for some men, forced participation commonly equates with some form of sex slavery. In Mozambique, women were commonly kidnapped from their
homes and forced to carry loads on marches, do domestic work, and have sex with male rebels (Antonio de Abreu 1998). In Sudan, women of all ranks in the rebel forces report that sex was a function they were routinely expected to provide (Abdel Halim 1998). In Rwanda and Liberia, kidnapped girls and women commonly became “wives,” forced to perform sexual and domestic tasks (Turshen and Twagiramariya 1998b; Turshen, Twagiramariya, and Ass’n of Female Lawyers of Liberia 1998).

Raping a victim not only represents an act of conquest designed to make the victim submit, similar to the use of beatings and assaults, but in many cases it also makes it impossible to go home. While burning Ishmael Beah’s clothes and belongings made it impossible for him to return to normal life, the destruction of a woman’s honor, in many countries, makes it impossible to return to her home or her family and represents a more extreme form of the same dynamic used to keep vulnerable individuals in the conflict (Turshen and Twagiramariya 1998b; Abdel Halim 1998).

From these examples, then, we have seen a few examples of indicators that forced or coerced participation is occurring on some level in a group:

1. Use of combatants under 15 years of age.
2. Use of physical assault, including sexual assault.
3. Use of threats against an individual’s life or the lives of those close to them.
4. Administration of drugs to participants.
5. Incorporation of individuals into the group without providing any opportunity to opt-out.
6. Confiscation of personal items or other acts that make it impossible for an individual to return to their previous home life.

These indicators will be used to assess whether forced participation has taken place. Of course, in considering this category alongside those discussed above, there are two other points to keep in mind. First, forced participation is a tactic that can be employed in two ways: to recruit individuals and to ensure their continued service once they are in the group. A participant may join an armed insurgency voluntarily, then be forced to stay. On the other hand, an individual who is initially coerced into the group could, conceivably, make the choice to continue voluntarily once coercive forces are removed. Both of these caveats will be important to keep in mind when examining women’s participation.

The second point involves forced participation in its location along the vertical axis of participation, and how it may act alongside the horizontal axis described above. A forced participant may act in a combat or noncombat capacity, by the definition that I have laid out here. This may also be an area in which gender plays a role. While Beah, for example, was sent into combat as a young male and fought alongside other underage boys, his story and that of Hayslip show how women and girls who are brought into combat often play the roles of domestic servants and sex slaves. As to where I have positioned forced participation, along the vertical axis of participant roles, I am aware that there is a certain level of fluidity here. As I have already alluded to, forced participants may well move into the role of voluntary, rank-and-file participants at some point.

9 For further examples of this, consider the case of Mali where, as of late 2012, it is estimated that as many as 1000 child soldiers may have been recruited by Islamic militants. Associated Press reports on this practice do not specifically address the gendered nature of their participation, but while these reports refer to the recruitment of “children,” all of those interviewed and pictured in the report are boys who are undergoing combat training (Ahmed and Larson 2012).
point in the conflict. Participants who come of age or have the conditions of coercion removed may move into a different point on the spectrum, perhaps even advancing into leadership roles. It is also possible that those who voluntarily join a rebellion can become forced participants when they are prevented from leaving. In this sense, forced participation is probably the murkiest of the concepts outlined in this chapter—hard to spot and fluid in nature. This conceptualization illustrates how I am constructing a categorical classification out of what can be conceived as an underlying, continuous scale—and how I am likely condensing a considerable gray zone (see Fig. 2-1 below). I am also receptive to the argument that it may be more accurate to think of forced participation as a tactic, rather than a “rank” *per se*, but the detailed analysis of present-day rebel groups undertaken in Chapter 5 and beyond will provide further opportunity for critique of this model.

**Table 2-4. Indicators of Forced Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Type</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forced/Coerced Participant</td>
<td>• Are under 15 years of age, <em>or</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are the target of physical assault, <em>or</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are the target of threats against self or family, <em>or</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are the target of forced administration of drugs, <em>or</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have not been provided an opt-out opportunity, <em>or</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have been the victim of acts designed to make return to former life impossible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**
In the previous pages, I have explored various conflict roles, utilizing both official descriptions of conflict roles from national militaries and cases illustrating the reality of how operations are conducted and the roles are performed. In doing this, I have produced what I believe to be reasoned, robust definitions of such roles that can be used going forward to conduct cross-national analysis. The results of this inquiry are summarized in Table 2-5 below, and Figure 2-1 shows how these roles align on the horizontal and the vertical.

Table 2-5. Summary of Participant Types and Criteria for Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Type</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Horizontal Axis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Combat                        | • Regularly engage in a front line environment in support of one side of a conflict  
                              | • Engage in, are expected to engage in, or directly support those engaged in close combat |
| Noncombat                     | • Clearly identify with the goals, ideology, and/or efforts one side in a conflict  
                              | • Routinely offer support to that side, contributing labor, supplies, and assistance  
                              | • Provide general support, rather than lending support only to specific individuals (e.g., family members)  
                              | • Conduct the majority of their duties outside of a front line or close combat environment |
| **Vertical Axis**             |                                                                           |
| Leader or Officer             | • Exercise direct control over and provides oversight of other participants, or  
                              | • Exercise direct control over the strategy, policies, and/or ideology of the movement |
| Forced/Coerced Participant    | • Are under 15 years of age, or  
                              | • Are the target of physical assault, or  
                              | • Are the target of threats against self or family, or  
                              | • Are the target of forced administration of drugs, or |
| • Have not been provided an opt-out opportunity,  
  or  
• Have been the victim of acts designed to make return to former life impossible |
I suspect, based on some of the cases discussed here, that some of the participant categories defined here will be subsets of one another. Since leadership implies some kind of formal or informal advancement into a position of responsibility, I would expect that any movement with women in leadership roles would also have women in combat and/or noncombat roles. A similar relationship may exist between the combat and noncombat categories, though that is not necessarily as clear-cut. Do participants need to “prove” themselves by service in supporting roles before they are allowed to take up arms? Are female participants expected to perform double duty, working to support other
fighters even as they take up arms themselves? These are, again, questions I will return to in the empirical chapters.

On the whole, I believe these definitions address a number of shortcomings in current literature in that they: 1) Specify clear indicators to be used in defining different roles; and 2) are not overly broad to the point that it becomes impossible to determine who is not a participant. Even with these broad definitions, there is still a “negative pole” to the concept of participation. For example, nonparticipation could include the many individuals in a society who only offer occasional or intermittent support to a rebellion, those who support whichever side is dominant at any one time without clearly identifying with one side over another, those who support only certain individuals (lovers, friends, etc.), or those who abstain from involvement entirely.

On the other hand, I am sensitive to the criticism that developing any kind of typology or set of “rules” to define who is or is not involved in conflict may reinforce a overall dichotomization of “participant” vs. “nonparticipant” that creates a rigid notion of “experience” which is not allowed to vary over time and space. As Jaggar points out in her discussion of feminist empiricism, “data supposedly provided by [ ] experience are not indisputable… first-person accounts of experience, even when the informant is telling the truth to the best of her ability, are not necessarily reliable… These reports also have to be heard, read, understood, and interpreted” (Jaggar 2008, 270-271). In this sense, I acknowledge that there is an element of “fuzziness” to the concept of participation. Throughout these definitions, and particularly in defining leadership roles and forced participation, I recognize some substitutability amongst my indicators as indicated by the
logical “or.” While these definitions overall tend toward a necessary and sufficient condition framework, the inclusion of some substitutable conditions makes the framework a bit more liberal and flexible (Goertz 2006). In a future chapter, I will discuss how I operationalize these definitions in gathering my data.

These definitions are my attempt to improve on the conceptualization (or lack thereof) employed by many authors. I believe that the findings of this chapter should at least move us toward a conceptualization of participation in conflict as a range or spectrum, rather than a binary. In the empirical chapters, I will apply this typology to a population of rebel groups in an attempt to further explore the dimensions of why and how women become involved in civil conflict. Before doing that, however, I turn to a theoretical discussion to develop hypotheses on why women fight.
CHAPTER 3
COMPARING MAINSTREAM AND FEMINIST THEORIES ON REBELLION

Feminist scholarship has the potential to provide insight into a variety of political phenomena, but rarely do we see mainstream political science and feminist studies engaged in a two-way conversation. Far from being a unified approach, feminist theory is an active and varied genre encompassing different factions and numerous areas for debate. Many of these feminisms also share a heritage with other established traditions in political theory, for instance Marxist feminism’s link to the Marxist tradition and liberal feminism’s connection to Enlightenment thought.

In this chapter, I hope to create a dialogue between theories from mainstream international relations and economics literature and various schools of feminism.\(^\text{10}\) While literature in the social sciences has devoted significant attention to the question of “why men rebel,” these theories often don’t ask the same question of women, assuming either that women are absent or that motivations are the same. Here, I examine how theorists in each tradition might approach the question of “why women fight.” Ultimately, I seek to create a gendered theory of rebellion that will draw upon mainstream theories from political science and economics, looking in particular at literature on grievance and “greed” or selective incentives, while also incorporating insights from various feminist

\(^\text{10}\) With respect to authors who question the distinctions among feminism and rightly argue that there is no bright-line distinction between these “schools,” (See, e.g., Kensinger 1997). I follow what seems to be the consensus among most authors in drawing these distinctions and identifying the most well-defined varieties of feminist thought. At the same time, I recognize that this analysis does not engage with postmodern feminism, but in doing so I believe I follow a general trend in the literature on women in conflict. Much of the work in feminist security studies is concerned with notions of gender, but does not enter into a discussion on the fluidity of sex. Generally, the category of women in this literature is presented as uncomplicated and biologically based.
traditions. Table 3-1 summarizes my arguments, which will be explored further in the following pages.
Table 3-1. Gendered Theory of Rebellion Summarized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grievances</th>
<th>Economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements with a focus on economic redistribution, such as Marxist and socialist movements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be active at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-Religious</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements in support of greater rights for their own ethnic or religious group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be less active in combat and leadership roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements promising greater access for women in the political system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be active at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Security</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements promising enhanced personal security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements may be less active at leadership levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>• Women will not tend to join movements based on the potential for financial/material gain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theories of Grievance Through a Feminist Lens

International relations theory has produced different literatures suggesting alternative reasons for joining rebel groups and, specifically, how rebel groups are able to overcome the collective action problem. The reasoning(s) suggested by feminist theory, to be discussed further below, seem to align most closely with the so-called grievance literature. This model argues that grievances are the driving factor that push individuals into rebel groups, implying that once a certain threshold of grievance or tolerability is passed, individuals will be driven to participate in a rebellion. This model is one that
departs from rationalist thought, instead focusing on feelings of frustration, deprivation, and the aggregate effect of these feelings across a particular class or group (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). Three main sources of grievance have been identified by those studying mobilization: political, economic, and ethnoreligious. I have added a fourth dimension of grievance based on human security issues, which I will describe further below.¹¹

**Economic Grievance**

The theory of class difference as an impetus for rebellion has been in existence since Marx. However, more recent works in political science have suggested that land rights, income inequality, and poverty are significant factors in motivating armed rebellion (Muller and Seligson 1987; Wickham-Crowley 1992; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008).

A link between mainstream and feminist theories on this point is easy to establish. Marx and Engels wrote openly on issues regarding women and the family in *The Communist Manifesto*, speculating on the oppression faced by women in the family structure and likening the system of bourgeois marriage to one of private prostitution. Communism, they said, has as one of its goals “do[ing] away with the status of women as mere instruments of production” (Marx and Engels 2010 [1848]). Later Marxist theorists also built upon this theme; Engels wrote extensively on “the woman question” in *Origin*

¹¹ Readers will note that these sources of grievance are not mutually exclusive; I believe that is consistent with the existing literature on the subject. Work on the subject of rebellion in political science has found support for all of these sources of grievance, a topic I will return to at the end of the chapter.
of the Family, Private Property and the State, and 20th century Marxist thinkers like Althusser would continue to link private and public sources of oppression (Althusser 1971).

Marxist feminists view the public-private divide in modern society as a creation of the capitalist system. As technological advances created a need for fewer and fewer workers, a sexual division of labor was created. Men, by virtue of their physical strength, became more valued as laborers, squeezing women out of the workplace and into the home, where their domestic labor was viewed as less productive or less valuable (Friedman, Metelerkamp, and Posel 1987; Gimenez 1975). This phenomenon also created two oppositional dynamics which worked against women: first was the competition between men and women in the proletariat for labor, and second was the oppositional dynamic between proletariat and bourgeois women. Marxist feminists viewed this latter dynamic as particularly insidious, because it created a condition in which bourgeois women were unaware that they were being oppressed in ways similar to the proletariat (Gimenez 1975).

Once in the private sphere, women became subject to a special kind of oppression and alienation, especially bourgeois women who had no “productive” work other than reproduction, and who became completely dependent on their husbands in exchange for their fealty and sexual performance. For classical Marxist feminists, therefore, the private as well as the public sphere was an appropriate site for activism, and the “enemy” was the capitalist system, not the patriarchy per se. As opposed to liberal feminists, who believed in working for change through the existing state system, Marxist feminists ascribed to the
Marxist belief that alleviating the problems of capitalism would require a complete overthrow and transformation of the existing political and economic structures. These feminists had an understanding that once capitalism fell, the system of patriarchy that it upheld would crumble with it, allowing men and women to work together to create a new society free of alienation and oppression (Tong 2008).

The events of the 20th century proved a challenge for Marxist feminists—particularly in the ways that communist governments failed to change or abolish the system of patriarchy as they had hoped. In response to this, Marxist feminists evolved more toward a new variety of socialist feminism. Characteristic of this new feminism was the recognition that feminists should be working toward the liberation not only of women as a class, but also women as a gender. Classical Marxist feminism, as illustrated by the realities in the Soviet Bloc and elsewhere, had neglected to appreciate the historical development of patriarchy alongside capitalism and the particular role that patriarchy played in the oppression of women, often interacting with capitalism. Women were viewed as subject to special forms of alienation. While alienation for the working class meant alienation from the products of their labor, women were further subjected to sexual alienation through the commodification of their bodies, reproductive alienation in the form of state reproductive policies, and alienation from their intellectual capacities in the

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12 For example, in the USSR, women were able to participate in the new workforce, but still often found themselves driven toward gender-stereotyped positions such as care-givers and secretaries (Tong 2008). In Eastern Europe and China, state-driven reproductive policies further curtailed women’s freedoms, and in all of these places women found that entering the workforce did not change the societal expectations that they should also be the primary care-givers at home. This created a reality where women in socialist societies, rather than being liberated, found themselves working double-duty (Bryson 1999; Tong 2008). Goldstein (2001) points out that even in WWII, the Soviet Union maintained gender divisions in its military structure. Childless women were the first to be drafted, and even then only when the USSR was faced with a critical shortage of manpower, and most women who did enter the military were kept out of combat roles.
public sphere, where they were made to feel second-class to men (Jaggar 1988). Marxist-socialist feminists also began to introduce the concept of “gender” as distinct from “sex” at around this time. Emphasizing “gender” over the biological category of “sex” stressed the “historically contingent and socially constructed character” of male-female difference (Randall 2002, 111). For socialist feminists, then, the home also becomes an important site of struggle against capitalist-patriarchy. Wage disparities in the workforce, the valuation of work in the home, and the feminization of poverty have all been topics of socialist feminist activism in the 20th and 21st centuries (Tong 2008).

What might this tell us, then, about the reasons why women fight? I believe the classical Marxist perspective suggests that women will be motivated to fight alongside males because of an interest in overcoming class struggle, improvement of working conditions, overthrow of the capitalist system, and the institution of socialist or communist government. In addition to this, I believe Marxist/socialist feminism suggests that women have additional reasons to rebel, reasons that may be distinct from those of their male counterparts. These would be goals focusing on the overthrow of patriarchal relations, institutions, etc., as well as the overthrow of capitalism. Movements in pursuit of equal wages, more diverse participation by women in the workforce, greater reproductive freedoms, and expanded welfare state policies that facilitate women’s entry into the workforce are all examples of movements where, according to socialist feminists, we may expect to see greater female participation. Movements promising greater marital freedoms or equality in family law, including for example more equitable divorce laws,
may also be classified as having the anti-patriarchal agenda that we might expect socialist feminists to support.

Eager (2008) notes that during the 20th century women were more frequently active in left-wing than right-wing movements, and for this reason hints that Marxist-socialist thinking may provide important clues as to why women become active in certain movements, but not others. I suggest that Marxist-socialist movements will be more likely to motivate women to take up arms for the reasons discussed above, and I further suggest that we will be more likely to see female participants at all levels of such movements including noncombat, combat, and leadership roles. I believe that the Marxist/socialist concern with gender issues—a concern implied in the works of Marxist theorists, if not directly addressed by the movement itself—will contribute to the creation of an environment in which women have mobility in the rebel organization, and in which they are less restricted by gender roles that might normally confine them to low ranks and steer them away from direct fighting or from decision-making positions.

**Ethnoreligious Grievance**

In mainstream political science, ethnic or religious grievances are believed to incite mobilization, particularly where there is a history of rivalry or marginalization between cultural groups (Horowitz 2000). One obvious link between this type of grievance and feminist thought can be seen in multicultural and postcolonial feminisms, which often emphasize cultural differences between women and the different issues they face. Here, ethnicity and gender—in addition to factors like class, sexual identity,
religion, etc.—intersect, producing many and varied experiences for women around the world (Tong 2008). While I cannot possibly do justice to all of these perspectives here, I point to the example of feminisms arising from the Native American and Chicana communities. Native feminists have criticized liberal feminists for failing to understand that Native women’s power originates inside the home and that gender-specific tasks like preparing food, harvesting, and caring for children are a primary means of expressing empowerment. Native feminists seek to preserve these traditionally feminine roles, and view them as a means of restoring female authority in Native societies (Mann 2006; Mankiller 2004; Allen 1992). Similarly, Chicana feminism highlights women’s place within and importance to a community, critiquing Western thought’s focus on the individual and drawing on broader concepts of who produces knowledge and who wields authority. (Martinez-Cruz 2011). For some Chicana feminists, there is no distinction between Chicana and Native feminisms, as both share the goals of retribalizing, reconnecting to the Earth, and returning to the traditions of communal life and inclusiveness (Broyles-González N.D.). These theories provide some insight into why women might be motivated in defense of culture, viewing traditional female roles as a site of authority worth protecting.

Difference or care-based feminisms may also relate to ethnoreligious grievance. These theories arise as an outgrowth of radical feminism.13 While Marxist-socialist feminism is concerned with the dual nature of oppression by class and gender, radical

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13 Many different labels have been used to describe this particular vein of feminist theory. Other terms include maternal feminism, radical-cultural feminism, and care-focused feminism. I use the various terms interchangeably in this section.
feminism focuses specifically on the oppression of women by patriarchy. Radical feminism emerges as a coherent ideology in the U.S. and Europe around the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century, but the basic principles behind it had appeared sporadically in writings across cultures throughout history (Friedman, Metelerkamp, and Posel 1987). Even in the Western tradition, radical notions show up as early as the first wave of feminism in the U.S. Elizabeth Cady Stanton is considered an early radical feminist because of her critiques of the all-reaching nature of the patriarchal system, as well as her calls for more permissive attitudes to correct the sexual double-standards women faced (Shulman 1980; Bryson 1999).

Difference feminism arises out of radical feminism as an opposition to so-called radical libertarian feminists, who believed that women should aspire to cultivate an identity that is androgynous, including both traits gendered as masculine and others gendered as feminine. Difference feminists countered that women had a distinct and superior nature and, rather than becoming more like men, women should take pride in the special qualities that make them unique as women. These qualities included women’s nurturing, caring tendencies and their ability to bear and raise children. Difference feminists viewed these qualities as superior to male qualities, which led to violence and oppression (Tong 2008). Some feminists in this tradition have gone so far as to advocate for the creation of women-only spaces, schools, bars, businesses, etc. where women can fully achieve self-actualization in an environment free from the violence and influence of men (Friedman, Metelerkamp, and Posel 1987; Goldstein 2001). The technique of consciousness-raising, in which women come together to share their personal experiences
and their connection to political issues, became an important tool for the radical feminist movement (Shulman 1980; Evans 1980).

So can difference feminism offer any insight into why women would choose violent advocacy or why they would tend toward certain social movements as opposed to others? While, at first glance, the difference feminist emphasis on women as care-givers and nurturers may seem at odds with the reality of violent women, this theory does offer some insights. I believe that essentialist feminism’s celebration of motherhood and caregiving roles could suggest that women are more likely to mobilize in defense of these roles, such as where the traditional family structure or traditional roles of women are threatened. This could also suggest that women will engage in violence only temporarily and under exceptional circumstances, and will then return to their previous lives (Eager 2008).

In addition to providing insight on why women mobilize, I also believe care-based feminisms present some argument about what roles women might play once they have joined a rebel group. Because such movements aim to preserve rather than to transform tradition, I believe that traditional gender roles will shape women’s positions within the movement. I believe this theory suggests that women will be most likely to

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14 While this is my interpretation of how essentialist feminism may apply to the question of rebel women, I acknowledge that some difference feminists would be at odds with my assertion. Sara Ruddick, for example, seems conflicted on the issue of violent women. While her work discusses the myth of maternal peacefulness and the ways in which women offer resistance, she also believes that the maternal thinking of women must ultimately lead them to work toward peace (Ruddick 1995; Robinson 1999; Tong 2008).

15 There is another dimension to this as well. Difference and radical feminisms also emphasize the connectedness of women and the importance of social relationships (Goldstein 2001). This, combined with the aforementioned emphasis on consciousness raising, could indicate that social movements, violent or nonviolent, are the ideal sites for women to band together, recognize their common struggle, and advocate the re-valuation of the feminine. From this standpoint, women may be most likely to be attracted to movements with more women, creating a snowball effect where the number of women in a movement steadily increases over time. I will return to this point later in my case study of the FMLN in El Salvador.
appear in a noncombatant role, performing “camp follower” or domestic-type tasks similar to those they might perform in peacetime. At the same time, this implies that women would be less likely to fill roles that mark a significant departure from these norms—such as engagement in direct combat, or the exercise of power in leadership positions. Approaching the issue from a supply-side perspective, women themselves may not wish to be active in these capacities because it would move them farther outside their traditional roles. On the demand-side, the leadership of these movements may also be less likely to embrace women’s engagement in these roles for fear of offending a traditional populace or upsetting traditional gender roles.

**Political Grievance**

Political grievance is, in some ways, the least clearly defined category of all the sources of grievance identified in mainstream literature. Descriptions of this grievance often include a focus on the marginalization or alienation of an individual from the political process. Achieving access to the system or the ability to express one’s self through “normal” political channels is perceived to be the goal (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). There has been some recognition that political grievance can take different forms, but definitions are murky. “Political exclusion” is a term that has been used to represent membership in an ethnic group or political party that is excluded from or in danger of being excluded from the political system (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). Other variants include “political repression,” a term that has been used to represent a less-clearly defined collection of political rights, and
“alienation,” which refers to an individual’s belief that they have no representation in the system (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008).

In terms of feminist thought, liberal feminism is the “school” of feminism most closely associated with the idea of political rights, narrowly defined. While liberal feminism is often examined in an historical context, perhaps dated in light of feminism’s overall movement toward a more complex understanding of gender and politics, it still provides a theoretically useful starting point for inquiry. Liberal feminism is often cited as starting in the 18th century, with the work of Mary Wollstonecraft, who drew on Enlightenment ideals to argue for the equality of women. Other influential writers recognized as liberal feminists include John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor, and Mary Astell. Overall, the core tenants of liberal feminism have been recognized to include:

1. Women should be recognized as individuals in their own right, rather than “accessories” to men and children.

2. Women are equal to men in their rational and mental capacities.

3. Women should be free to define their own social roles.

4. Women should have equality with men in the educational system and the workforce.

5. Equality and rights can be achieved working within the existing framework of the state (Bryson 1999; Kensinger 1997; Wendell 1987).

Indeed, liberal feminist activism has often focused on working within the political system to secure rights for women. The suffrage movement in the United States, efforts to secure property rights for women, more equitable divorce laws, and the elimination of de jure
and *de facto* employment discrimination have all been goals of liberal feminism. In the 20th century, classical and welfare feminists debated within the context of liberal feminism about the most appropriate ways of securing economic equality, namely whether the removal of legal barriers was alone sufficient or whether greater state intervention through the welfare system should be a focus of advocacy.

Liberal feminists have also been criticized by other schools of feminism for their focus on the public sphere. Getting women out of the home and securing for them the ability to fully participate in public political and economic life is a primary focus of liberal feminism, but is this simply tantamount to asking women to succeed in a man’s world? Are liberal feminists asking women to “become” men or to abandon their femininity without asking men to, correspondingly, abandon their masculinity? (Tong 2008; Goldstein 2001) Certainly, liberal feminism’s confidence in the state as a mechanism for redress, as well as its focus on developing and promoting women’s capacity for mental and rational equality with men, put it at odds with other genres of feminism. However, these distinguishing features can also illustrate some of the unique insights that liberal feminism offers regarding why women might choose to take up arms.

Goldstein (2001) surmises that, given liberal feminism’s focus on the essential equality between men and women, liberal feminists would assume that the participation of women in conflict would essentially change nothing about the way conflict happens. From this perspective, getting women into combat, either as regular or irregular combatants, is little different than securing opportunities for women to participate in sports, medicine, or the legal field: it is a pursuit of equality, and is not meant to overhaul
or drastically change the system. Likewise, Eager (2008) points out that liberal feminists would argue that women should not be expected to be any less violent than men in the first place, therefore all else being equal we should expect females to be just as likely as males to turn to violence, and for the same reasons.

For the Enlightenment thinkers who inspired liberal feminism, rebellion or revolution was justified where the government was not able to provide the basic functions of providing and protecting the rights of citizens. Therefore, we may expect women to be willing to take up arms on behalf of movements that promise rights, but also particularly where movements offer women a greater guarantee of access and the protection of their equality in the workforce and in society. In other words, referring back to the idea of political grievance advanced by mainstream political science, women would join movements that promise them access—not just as members of a revolutionary group, but also in their status as women. In the sense that these movements promote egalitarian gender relations, I believe one might also expect to see women active at all levels of such a movement—from rank-and-file positions up into leadership roles. In contrast to movements centered on religious or ethnic tradition, movements that include discourse on women’s rights are by definition transformative with relation to gender roles. For this reason, as with Marxist movements, I believe the mobility of women within groups promising women more rights will be unrestrained, allowing and perhaps encouraging the engagement of women in noncombat, combat, and leadership roles.

**Human Security Grievance**
In advancing the concept of a human security grievance, I argue that the various feminisms above suggest another dimension to political grievance that has heretofore not been examined in work on the subject. While political scientists tend to conceptualize political grievance as something power-driven and transformative, seeking a significant reform or overhaul in the political system and in the role of the group petitioning for change, some feminisms suggest that not all women are seeking transformation or repudiation of their traditional roles. Difference or care-based feminisms, as discussed above, suggest that women may mobilize in defense of a traditional role. Liberal feminism also conceptualizes political rights in a way that is broader than just a discussion of access, taking into account issues like education and the freedom to engage in social life outside the home.

Political grievance, then, may also be about personal security and autonomy, including rights like due process, freedom to assemble, freedom from torture and arbitrary detention, and other rights associated with security and survival. To distinguish this from the type of access grievance described above, I will refer to this as a Human Security Grievance. Where human security issues are at stake, rebellion may not only appeal to women as individuals, it may also be of particular concern to women as mothers and caregivers. If personal security is a more salient component of political grievance than access to political power, then, we may find women mobilizing in movements even where there is no promise of rights for women, specifically. If this is the case we may also see women less active at leadership levels in these movements, as there
is not necessarily a desire for women to have greater decision-making or policymaking power.

**Selective Incentives Through a Gendered Lens**

While grievance theory has been widely employed and has found support in various studies, a second literature also exists. This has been referred to by authors as the “greed” or “selective incentive” literature (Collier and Hoeffler 2002; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Collier 2000; Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Weinstein 2005; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). This theory is rationalist in nature, and has been addressed and expanded upon by scholars of political science and economics. First advanced by Olson (1965), this theory posits that the promise of social goods alone will not be enough to overcome the collective action problem and push individuals into rebellion. There also needs to be some selective incentive that accrues in order to motivate action. Certainly, this is a theory that can be applied to the motivations of women as well. Interesting to consider are the models proposed in economics literature by Hirshleifer (1991; 1995) and Grossman (1991; 1995; 1999). Hirshleifer models the individual’s choice in revolution as a dichotomous one: devote resources to fighting or to productive activity. In relating this choice to the “paradox of power,” he points out that in a struggle between two sides with a disparate amount of resources, this model actually favors the weaker party and inspires them to fight harder. The logic is that as both sides fight, and particularly where the initially advantaged class is able to capture a greater share of the income generated by production, the weaker class is more likely to achieve profitable returns by devoting
resources to fighting rather than productive activity, which is increasingly taxed by the system (Hirshleifer 1991; Hirshleifer 1995).

The paradox of power theory has an interesting application when the battle is one of the sexes as well as the classes. Where women are doubly disadvantaged both as members of a lower economic class and through gender discrimination, we could extend this theory to say that they will also be motivated to “fight harder.” If they, as individuals, seek to maximize their own profits, and if the choice is a dichotomous one between production and rebellion, we could expect women to be more likely to rebel especially where they are denied access to full participation in the labor market, or where their labor is compensated at a level lesser than that of their male counterparts. In such a case, there is at least the perception that any gains that can be achieved through rebel participation, be that through a paycheck or through banditry, would be greater than those that could be attained through participation in the market, especially where a woman’s ability to access the market approaches zero.

Grossman’s take on this model offers even more insight into “greed” as a potential motivator for women. Grossman offers a more inclusive model that posits the maximization of benefits to the family as a goal, and presents a more complex calculus in the decision-making process (Grossman 1991; Grossman 1995; Grossman 1999; Grossman and Noh 1990).

\[ E = (1 - t)L^a + w_sS + w_lI + \gamma H, \quad 0 < a < 1, \quad \gamma > 0 \]

In the model depicted above, \( L \) represents the time allocated to market production, \( t \) is the fraction of market production taken by the ruler and his clientele, \( S \) is the time
allocated to soldiering, I is the time allocated to insurgency, $w_s$ and $w_i$ are the expected wages of soldiers and insurgents, respectively, and H is the time allocated to home production. The $a$ term represents “the elasticity of the marginal product of time allocated to home production,” and $\gamma$ represents the marginal return to time allocated to home production which, notably, is assumed here to be greater than zero (Grossman 1999, 271).

The addition of household income to the model is a relevant one, especially where women are concerned. Many women have little to no engagement with or income from market production, but may instead rely on less public avenues of generating income. Home-based industries or unreported forms of labor (i.e. informal income-generating activities) may, in some places, be a more likely and more substantial source of women’s income than market production. Peterson introduces the dilemma that while women worldwide are increasingly driven to enter the economy as a result of the forces of globalization and downward pressures on wages, they are also more likely to enter a sphere where their labor is undervalued. In the productive economy, there is a trend toward the feminization of part-time and “flex” work positions, with fewer hours (or, at least, fewer paid and documented hours) and lower wages. Outside the sphere of the market, there is the option of informal activity available to women (and men), but this typically decreases the power of the worker and yields unequal and inconsistent returns. Indeed, the very classification of “informal activity” as a unitary term belies the
extraordinarily wide range of behaviors that can be included, from domestic work to the sex trade to international level trafficking (Peterson 2003; Peterson 2006; Peterson 2010).

Where Grossman characterizes household production as an activity with a constant marginal return greater than zero, the consideration of unpaid work in the household and untaxed, unreported work introduces a new element of complexity. The expected marginal return (in purely economic terms) of the unpaid housework of raising children and keeping house may be constant, but it is a constant value of zero. The marginal return of work in the submerged economy may be constant, where it is not taxed, but this is a questionable assumption. It may be “taxed” by another sort of clientele, like traffickers or cartels, or the rate of return may fluctuate. It also involves a greater element of risk than productive work. It is possible to suggest that as the risk associated with this work increases, which can occur particularly in a time of conflict or increased government repressiveness, and the perception of benefits decreases, the potential rewards of conflict activity (also an activity with inherent risk) become at least equally attractive and may be perceived to be a better choice. While Grossman’s model abstracts from the risk aversion of the individual decision maker, the consideration of these risks is also important, as Kalyvas and Kocher have noted that even noncombatants face an elevated level of risk in a time of combat (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). If this theory is truly applicable to women and men equally, one could argue that where the maximization of economic benefits is the primary motivator, women may actually have more motivation than men to fight, or at least less to lose.
Is this a model that can also be supported by feminist theory? On the one hand, this is not necessarily an individual-centered model of value maximization, as some have portrayed it. While the use of value-laden terms like “greed” and “kleptocracy” lends itself to a view of this theory as essentially self-interested, it is useful to note again that Grossman consistently portrays the unit of analysis as the family and the goal as maximization of the expected family income (Grossman 1991; Grossman 1999; Grossman and Noh 1990). From this perspective, selective incentive theory could dovetail with those feminist theories that suggest a “defense of the family or culture” motivation.

On the other hand, some schools of feminist theory would express skepticism at the idea of women being motivated by “greed,” especially those schools that view women as inherently more moral and pacific. I believe that care-focused or maternal feminisms, discussed earlier in the chapter, would argue that women’s roles as care-givers, role models, and their connectedness to the community make them less likely to engage in activities like looting, robbery, etc. Likewise, the utility of this model hinges on whether one truly believes that risk acceptance or risk aversion is relevant in making the choice to join a rebel movement. The critique of rational actor models has been a central theme for some feminist academics. Feminists have raised a critique not only of whether women behave as rational actors, but whether it is even possible for individuals to behave and make choices in the absence of emotional considerations (Tong 2008). Where women are primary caregivers to children, single mothers, and/or play other essential roles in the home and family, will they choose to enter the sphere of rebel activity based on the
potential for economic advantage alone? For the reasons outlined above, I believe this is a dubious proposition. Therefore, while I do take the potential for selective incentives into account in my analysis, I believe a closer examination will ultimately show that this theory is not effective in explaining why women rebel.

Conclusion: A Gendered Theory of Rebellion

Taken together, mainstream international relations theory and feminist theory provide the framework for a gendered theory of rebellion. The two schools of thought align closely when it comes to the conceptualization of grievance. These grievances may also apply to women in particular ways. To recap:

- As shown by Marxist/socialist feminist activism, Economic Grievance can be an important rallying point for women. Marxism and socialism have historically appealed to women both because such movements deal with “private sphere” problems that relate to “women’s work” and because of the implied, built-in promise of ending gender inequality and improving the lives of women. For this reason, I expect that movements embracing such policies will be more successful in mobilizing women. I believe such movements will also open up space for women throughout the ranks.

- Both theoretical traditions discussed here show some basis for arguing that Ethnic or Religious Grievances can motivate women. Looking at feminist theory in particular, essentialist and difference feminisms suggest that women’s investments in social relationships and in their roles as mothers and caregivers
would make them likely to mobilize in defense of their families and traditional beliefs. However, these same theories also cast doubt on whether women’s mobilization would be comprehensive—in particular, whether women would take on violent roles—and whether it would be transformational. Women in these movements would be mobilized in defense of their traditional roles, implying that such mobilizations may be short-term (thereby preventing women from gaining experience or access to leadership positions) or that women would be unwilling to move into positions that would require a departure from traditional roles, such as combat or leadership positions. In such movements, women may also face pressure from men to limit the scale of their involvement to those activities deemed “acceptable” in the confines of their society.

- While mainstream IR theory has an indistinct understanding of “Political Grievance,” I argue that feminist theory suggests that two very different dynamics may be at work. On the one hand, a political grievance has normally been conceptualized to include a desire for access to the political system (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). As demonstrated by liberal feminism, if the heart of political motivation is to gain access to office or to policymaking power, we would expect to see women seeking rights both as members of a group and as women. If political grievance operates in the manner expected by mainstream political scientists, then, we would only expect to see large numbers of women mobilized when a rebel group promises increased rights
and access for women. We would also expect to see women present at all levels of such movements, given the promise of gender equality.

- On the other hand, though, various feminisms suggest another dimension to “political” grievance. Essentialist and difference feminisms as discussed here suggest that not all women want such a radical departure from their traditional roles; it may be that not all women are seeking political power. Liberal feminism also conceptualizes political rights in a way that is broader than just a discussion of access, taking into account issues like education and the freedom to engage in social life outside the home. Political grievance, then, may also be about personal security and autonomy, including rights like due process, freedom to assemble, freedom from torture and arbitrary detention, and other rights associated with security and survival. To distinguish this from the type of access grievance described above, I will refer to this as a Human Security Grievance. Where human security issues are at stake, rebellion may not only appeal to women as individuals, it may also be of particular concern to women as mothers and caregivers. If personal security is a more salient component of political grievance than access to political power, then, we may find women mobilizing in movements even where there is no promise of rights for women, specifically. If this is the case we may also see women less active at leadership levels in these movements, as there is not necessarily a desire for women to have greater decision-making or policymaking power.
As regards the second school of political thought related to rebellion, that of Selective Incentives, economic and political work related to selective incentives claims to be gender neutral and may even suggest that women are more likely than men to fight because they have less to lose. However, difference and essentialist feminisms again give cause for skepticism about this theory. If social ties are truly more important to women than they are to men, this may represent a disincentive to looting or the pursuit of personal gains, particularly in civil conflict where the “opposition” may be a woman’s own friends or neighbors. Likewise, if women are attached to the maternal role, there may be a greater moral pressure on women to avoid seeking illicit gains for fear of being perceived of as a poor role model. For this reason, I do not expect to see selective incentives having a significant impact on the decision of whether or not to join a rebellion.

To conclude my theoretical discussion, it is worth noting that the theories of greed and grievance as presented here are not mutually exclusive. Both literatures have found some support in empirical analysis and testing (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Collier and Hoeffler 2002; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Kalyvas 2008; Gates 2002). For example, primary commodity exports—a measure associated with resources like drugs or diamonds that can be exploited by rebels for financial gain—are associated with higher risk of rebellion, as are male secondary education rates, poverty, and per capita income (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). However, low incomes may be associated either with greed (i.e., individuals will
rebel to improve their own wealth) or grievance (widespread poverty and inequality, where such problems are not adequately addressed by the national government). Furthermore, some indicators of grievance are also predictors of the likelihood of rebellion. Ethnic dominance and a dispersed population are also related to rebel activity, and population size (another factor that may be related to greed or grievance) is likewise related to civil war onset (Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

Some authors have advocated for the inclusion and study of interaction among both models, or for a mixed-method or at least mixed-level-of-analysis approach. For example, Gates (2002) proposes a complementarity between material benefits and non-tangible benefits like ethnic solidarity. Even where the potential for material benefits are low, group homogeneity can potentially aid groups in recruitment and minimize defection. There is also the suggestion that the findings from the emerging microdynamics literature (which utilizes data analyzed within a single case, often aggregated on the local level) may provide different insights than what is offered by cross-national, large-N analyses (Gates 2002; Kalyvas 2008).

Nonetheless, in spite of the growing literature on this subject in political science, none of the mainstream authors cited above have specifically discussed the issue of women’s participation or speculated on the ways in which women’s participation or motivations to participate may differ from men’s. As mentioned in Chapter 1, feminist scholars have noted this tendency and assert that the omission of women from theories of violence, or the presentation of such theories as “gender-neutral,” exclude women’s distinct experiences from the analysis and result in a body of work that is incomplete,
inadequate, and which makes women’s contributions invisible (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Eager 2008). By examining the insights of feminist theory alongside these mainstream approaches, I hope I have presented a more complete theory of rebellion as it relates to joining behavior.
CHAPTER 4
RHETORIC AND EXPERIENCE: TRACING WOMEN’S INVOLVEMENT IN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN EL SALVADOR

Among the various regions of the world, Latin America appears to be an outlier in the sense that modern revolutionary movements in Central and South America have benefited from extensive and voluntary female participation at all levels. The six movements active for at least two consecutive years since 1990 have all had significant numbers of women active in combatant and noncombatant roles, and most have also shown at least some female involvement in leadership roles as well. These cases will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 5.\textsuperscript{16} As mentioned in Chapter 2, there is also evidence that this is part of a broader historical trend in the region. The participation of female revolutionaries and leaders was a force in earlier revolutions in Mexico, Cuba, and Nicaragua, among others.

In this chapter, I conduct an examination of women’s involvement in the FMLN during the Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992). Drawing on the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter 3, my intent is to use this case to explore the salience of greed- and grievance-related factors in this particular case over time. In doing so, I employ a combination of qualitative, process-tracing techniques and quantitative analysis to test the relevance of these factors. Before beginning this investigation, though, I will engage in a brief overview of case selection techniques and discuss why I have selected this particular case for analysis.

\textsuperscript{16} These cases are: FMLN (El Salvador), UNRG (Guatemala), MRTA (Peru), Sendero Luminoso (Peru), ELN (Colombia), FARC (Colombia).
Recent works in political science have increasingly called into question traditional methodological “best practices.” In the past, some of the biggest names in the discipline admonished researchers who relied on case study analysis, and they have reserved special criticism for those who select cases on the dependent variable. Researchers are warned that the results of such selection techniques are biased results, findings that cannot be generalized to the larger population of cases, and the potential for omitted variable bias (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Geddes 2003). These concerns, and the implicit statement about what researchers’ goals should be in conducting research, tend to elevate quantitative research as the highest standard and minimize the values of the qualitative research tradition.

In recent years, however, the qualitative tradition has begun to strike back against this conventional wisdom. Touting the value of within-case analysis, advocates of qualitative methods point out that most of our knowledge in the social sciences seeks to examine and describe within-case processes and is context-dependent in nature (Flyvbjerg 2006; Goertz and Mahoney 2012). The goal of representativeness in case selection has also been called into question. It has been suggested that how representative a case is may be less relevant than the substantive importance of a case, the opportunity it affords to analyze a pattern or phenomenon of interest, and the depth of knowledge a researcher can gain about the case, due either to prior knowledge or to the extent that information is available and accessible (Brady and Collier 2010; Goertz and Mahoney
So-called deviant cases, those that “demonstrate a surprising value” and are likely to be inadequately explained by a multivariate model, can be particularly useful in hypothesis generating (Gerring 2006). The most interesting cases are often those that provide insight into “an otherwise mysterious empirical regularity,” which by nature sets them apart from the average observation (Brady and Collier 2010, 97).

Feminist methodologists likewise share a skeptical view toward the goal of representativeness in case selection, though their objections stem from a suspicion toward what is considered “representative” knowledge. Feminists point out that a good deal of supposedly “universal” knowledge draws primarily on the lives and experiences of men. To create work that is truly “feminist” in nature requires revisiting and deconstructing previous assumptions, replacing partial knowledge with understandings that are more inclusive of other experiences (Tickner 2006; Jayaratne and Stewart 2008). This is itself a qualitative enterprise and requires entering into conversations with subjects and sources. Personal factors, including skills and experiences, to some extent drive all researchers in their decisions on what questions to ask and where to look for answers. Transparency, including understanding and acknowledging how we identify with our own research, is encouraged (Tickner 2006; Jaggar 2007).

In my own case selection, I have been guided by the advice of these researchers. In focusing on Latin America, as mentioned above, I am intrigued by the “mysterious regularity” of women’s participation and leadership in the region, a fact that appears to set this area of the world apart from all others.17 Choosing a case where all of the

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17 This will be discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.
outcomes of interest (widespread participation in combatant, noncombatant, and leadership roles) are present allows for an inquiry into what conditions are necessary for women’s participation, and likewise may provide insight into the relative salience of different conditions. Availability of information on this case is also a factor, as primary and secondary documents from the civil war era are available both online and off-line in archival collections. Therefore, in addition to viewing the case of El Salvador and the FMLN as an outlier in a global context, I believe this case also has a strong potential as a pathway case, one where causal mechanisms can be studied closely.\textsuperscript{18} Here, I rely extensively on the work of previous researchers as well as data in the form of archival documents and news articles published during the civil war period. Finally, my own linguistic skills also factor into my case selection, as the materials I am relying upon in this research are a mixture of English- and Spanish-language documents, and some of the translations appearing here are my own.

**Theories on Women and Participation**

In Chapter 3, I surveyed and summarized mainstream and feminist literatures on rebellion and provided an overview of theoretical insights on why women may choose to fight. A recap of this discussion appears below.

\textsuperscript{18} Gerring seems to view “Pathway” cases as building on cross-case analysis and valid only where “cross-case covariational patterns are well-studied but where the mechanism linking X1 and Y remains dim.” By this definition, I may be putting the cart before the horse in referring to this as a pathway case, but I believe that other qualitative researchers would disagree with this assessment; the kind of process tracing used in an exploration of causal mechanisms need not necessarily follow or supplement a quantitative analysis (D. Collier 2011; Gerring 2006).
Table 4-1 Insights from Feminist and Mainstream Theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grievances</th>
<th>Economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements with a focus on economic redistribution, such as Marxist and socialist movements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be active at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-Religious</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements in support of greater rights for their own ethnic or religious group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be less active in combat and leadership roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements promising greater access for women in the political system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be active at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Security</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements promising enhanced personal security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements may be less active at leadership levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective Incentives</td>
<td>• Women will not tend to join movements based on the potential for financial/material gain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I noted in that chapter, many of these explanations are not mutually exclusive and there is significant overlap between the reasons put forth by mainstream scholars and those suggested by feminist scholars.

Utilizing process tracing in an examination of this case will reveal the extent to which each of these factors was present or absent in the case of the FMLN. Such an examination will be particularly well-suited to making determinations about necessary conditions,
performing so-called “hoop tests.” Since necessary conditions are those needed to produce an outcome, and since we know that the outcome of female participation is already present in this case, we can safely determine that any conditions that are not present are not necessary conditions. Regarding sufficient conditions, those guaranteed to produce a certain outcome, this single case study will not conclusively determine which conditions are sufficient, but this information may help identify conditions which may be sufficient. That information, as well as any information about the relative salience of factors, can be carried forward into future chapters.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will proceed as follows: After a brief introduction to and overview of the FMLN and the historical context of the Salvadoran Civil War, I present general information on patterns of women’s participation in the FMLN and then examine each of the above-mentioned factors in turn, relying upon primary and secondary materials to determine the presence or absence of each factor and to make observations about each condition’s relative contribution as a potential motivator for female rebels. My analysis will be supplemented with an analysis of data coded from English-language news articles on women in the FMLN from 1980-1992. This data includes coded statements from 589 news articles from U.S. and foreign sources related to the roles of women in the FMLN and women’s own statements about why they joined the movement. This data will be discussed further below.

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19 See, e.g., Goertz and Mahoney (2012), Collier (forthcoming).
20 For primary source materials, I have relied upon the online archive of the Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados (CeDeMA), a nonprofit organization which has compiled documentation from revolutionary movements throughout Central and South America. Most of these documents are in Spanish, and the translations appearing here are my own.
Historical Background

The Salvadoran Civil War began in 1980 and lasted 12 years, with conflict between the government and the leftist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) ending in 1992 with a UN-brokered peace agreement. The FMLN itself was an organization consisting of five smaller left-wing organizations that unified in 1980 to fight the government: Fuerzas Populares de Liberación Farabundo Marti, Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo, Resistencia Nacional, Partido Comunista Salvadoreño, and Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos. Upon unification, the groups were brought together under a single directorate and agreed to share a single command structure (FMLN 1980). Unification was not only a sensible tactical move for these organizations, it also enabled them to attract more support from sympathetic governments abroad, particularly in Cuba and Nicaragua (Phillips 1997).

Various factors contributed to the outbreak of war in 1980. The brutality of the military regime was one factor, including the assassination of prominent opposition figures leading up to the war and sustained violence and human rights abuses throughout the conflict. Large-scale human rights abuses began with the 1979 coup against General Carlos Humberto Romero. Following the coup, so-called “death squads” were deployed to seek out enemies of the regime. Government forces committed an estimated 34,000 politically motivated killings between 1979 and 1981 (Phillips 1997; Carter et al. 1999). Post-conflict reporting by the UN indicates that more than 95% of the reported human rights abuses occurring between 1980 and 1992 were carried out by the armed forces.
(Kampwirth 2003). Leading up to the start of the war, economic inequality was also a factor. By 1980, the poorest 20% of Salvadorans shared only 2% of the country’s income while the top 20% held 66%. These stark numbers were the result of years of government policies aimed at concentrating land and resources in the hands of the wealthy, and investment in export crops (e.g., coffee) rather than food crops (Vilas 1995).

The emergence of liberation theology in the Catholic Church may have also played a role. An outcome of both the Vatican II Council in the 1960s and a meeting of Latin American bishops in Medellín in 1968, liberation theology contended that the church and its members had a responsibility to confront and engage with social justice issues. Klaiber (1989) points out, however, that there were two distinct phases in the development of liberation theology. On the one hand, the liberation theology that grew out of the Vatican II Council was very much influenced by the European elite of the Catholic Church, and was actually an attempt to create some level of dialogue between Marxists and the Catholic Church. Here, the ideas espoused by the church to some extent echoed those of dependency theory, i.e., that there was a “cause-and-effect link between the development of the first world and the underdevelopment of the third world” (Klaiber 1989, 4). This led to an acknowledgement that the Church should be more active in fighting social injustice, autocratic governments, etc. Father Gustavo Gutiérrez of Peru is largely credited with popularizing the liberation theology movement in Latin America. One of the notable tenants of his work was to redefine the traditional idea of “sin” in the Catholic Church. This redefinition of “sin” would include not just individual acts, but the
larger exploitative practices of entire societies, economic systems, and oppressive
governments (Herndl and Bauer 2003).

Ultimately, the effect of this was to create a new position of empowerment for the
Catholic poor, which leads to the second phase of liberation theology’s development. As
a result of both the Church’s new social consciousness and the shortage of priests in Latin
America, community involvement became increasingly more important to the Latin
American church. New roles were opened up for laypeople (both men and women) to
participate in religious practices, in particular through the foundation of Christian “base
communities” throughout rural Latin America. In these communities, volunteers and
community leaders would offer not only religious instruction to the poor, but often they
also taught basic math and literacy skills to an undereducated populace. With the advent
of literacy, the people were increasingly able to read and interpret the Bible for
themselves, an interpretation that in turn became seen as supporting the church’s
solidarity with the poor.

Local religious leaders within the church also supported this new form of agency
by encouraging Catholics to openly discuss their views and concerns about society in the
venue of the Church (Herndl and Bauer 2003; Dodson 1986). Ultimately, this led to a
more populist orientation for the Catholic Church, and one that moved away from the
European roots that had started the theological change in the first place. Nonetheless, at

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21 This move away from the hierarchy is illustrated by the fact that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger
(subsequently Pope Benedict XVI) launched an inquiry into the “orthodoxy” of liberation theology in 1984
and accused its Latin American leaders of being too close with Marxism. In response to this reaction
against the Latin American church, some influential leaders of the movement, like Leonardo Boff of Brazil,
were silenced for a period by the Catholic hierarchy (Klaiber 1989).
the time war broke out in El Salvador, liberation theology had firmly taken hold in Latin America including among influential clergy in El Salvador.

The combination of widespread poverty, a repressive military dictatorship, and a Church oriented toward social activism lays out an overview of Salvadoran society in 1980. But how do these elements tie into the revolution itself? Specifically, to what extent are these causal factors present and contributing to the decision by women to join the FMLN in such large numbers? In the following sections, I undertake a deeper analysis of each of the causal factors outlined in the opening section of this chapter. First, though, I present some general information on the roles and patterns of women’s participation in the FMLN.

**Women’s Participation in the FMLN—An Analysis of Roles**

Data gathered by the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) makes some attempt to disaggregate among the different roles played by women in the conflict. The table below depicts the number of women who participated in demobilization and how they were classified.

**Table 4-2 FMLN Membership by Demobilization Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combatants</td>
<td>2,485</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>6,067</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>8,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injured Noncombatants</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1,925</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>2,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Personnel</td>
<td>1,458</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>2,525</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>3,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,492</strong></td>
<td><strong>37%</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,517</strong></td>
<td><strong>63%</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,009</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Luciak 2001; Conaway and Martinez 2004)
While these statistics give a general view of the extent to which women participated in the conflict, they also highlight areas of ambiguity. For example, it is unclear who counts as “political personnel.” While this may include some men and women in leadership positions, not all of these individuals are necessarily leaders. Furthermore, while these statistics include some “injured noncombatants,” they do not take into account thousands of *tenedores* whose role in the conflict was primarily that of support. *Tenedores* offered support to the FMLN by cooking and feeding the rebels, acting as couriers, and providing various other services (Conaway and Martinez 2004; Vargas 2003; Cohen and Wali 1991). However, it is important to note that the *tenedores* did not regard themselves as FMLN members, nor were they regarded by the FMLN or international observers as a part of the FMLN. This is illustrated by their limited and distinct participation in reintegration and disarmament programs (Conaway and Martinez 2004).

While the *tenedores* were not included in the demobilization statistics, they were allowed to participate in the PTT land redistribution program after the conflict. The table below gives gender disaggregated figures based on participation in this program up to 1996:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,203</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>9,449</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>14,652</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Conaway and Martinez 2004)

Of course, not all *tenedores* participated in the PTT program, and it is worth noting that not all those labeled as “*tenedores*” were supporters of the FMLN.\(^{22}\) However, using

\(^{22}\) Here, for example, it is noted in the PTT program that the *tenedores* category also included displaced persons, generally.
these figures as a guide it seems safe to conclude that female *tendedoras* working with the FMLN numbered in the thousands. Conaway and Martinez also estimate that 40% of all *tenedores* were women, a greater proportion than that of women in combatant roles as notes by ONUSAL (Conaway and Martinez 2004).

While these data do not provide much insight into the number of women in leadership roles, the data do confirm that women were participating, as expected, in noncombatant and combatant roles in large numbers. Especially for those women in combatant and noncombatant roles who were considered members of the FMLN, the opportunity for advancement existed. Other statistics suggest that women were, in fact, moving into leadership roles in large numbers. Mason states that women comprised 40% of the revolutionary council of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, the political arm of the FMLN; 40% of the commanders in the People’s Revolutionary Army, and between one-third and one-half of the *comandantes* in the Popular Forces for Liberation and the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (Mason 1992).

Using my own definitions of noncombatant, combatant, and leadership roles, I analyzed 589 English-language newspaper and newswire articles on the Salvadoran Civil War that mention women, published between 1981 and 1992. These articles were taken from a query in the Lexis-Nexis All News (English) database and represent news on the war from 43 different English language publications including materials published in the U.S., Canada, the UK, Australia, and other English-language foreign press. The graphs below show, first, the total number of stories mentioning women in each of the three roles.

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23 Though most sources cite 1980 as the start of the war, there are no English-language news articles on the war that mention women prior to 1981.
participant roles identified in Chapter 3: noncombat, combat, and leadership and, second, the number of stories mentioning women in each role as a percentage of all articles that year discussing women in the war.
Figure 4-1

Women's Roles in the FMLN, by Total Number of Mentions

These data do not seem to yield any clear patterns of membership over time, other than showing that women did exist in all these roles throughout the conflict. Aside from that, however, I found that English-language articles on the conflict overwhelmingly focus on women as civilians and/or victims, and the reporting that appears in these sources tends to focus heavily on isolated events in the conflict, rather than representing women’s experiences on a broader scale.24

24 For example, consider the year 1985. There were 59 articles total on the conflict in that year, a sharp jump over totals from 1984 (29 articles) and 1986 (13 articles). However, a majority of these articles...
Overall, what conclusions can we draw about the roles women played in the FMLN? In terms of support, it is likely that thousands of women over the course of the conflict acted as FMLN supporters, falling into the category of tenedores. These women (and many men as well) meet my definition of noncombat or support roles insofar as they offered general and consistent support to FMLN forces including cooking and feeding the rebels, acting as couriers, and providing other services (Conaway and Martinez 2004; Vargas 2003; Cohen and Wali 1991). Yet, it is important to note that the tenedores did not regard themselves as FMLN members, nor were they regarded by the FMLN or international observers as a part of the FMLN (Conaway and Martinez 2004).

As combatants, women were also present and active. Based on information from UN programs discussed above, it would appear that women represented about one-third of the total fighting forces at the end of the conflict. Spotty reporting throughout the conflict makes it difficult to determine whether the number of women combatants during the war was constant, or if this number rose or fell over time. It is clear, though, that there were women combatants from very early on in the war. As early as 1982, there are reports of women fighting and dying in service to the FMLN, and women were also acting as commanders in combat very early on, a point I will discuss further below.

In leadership roles, some women were also present early in the conflict. The participation of some women in leadership roles even predated the FMLN. Several

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focused on the kidnapping of Ines Guadalupe Duarte Duran, the eldest daughter of President Jose Napoleon Duarte. Forty-seven of the 59 articles (79.7% of all articles published that year) were published in September and October, during the period of Duarte’s sequestration, and make reference to the kidnapping or the negotiations. Compare that to 18.6% of all articles that year depicting women in leadership roles in the FMLN, 1.6% depicting women in support roles for the FMLN, and 3.4% depicting women as combatants.
women held leadership positions in the component organizations that came together to form the FMLN (Mason 1992; Phillips 1997). Again, though, while we can determine that women were present and active in this capacity at the beginning and end of the conflict, trends in advancement during the conflict are difficult to determine.

The following sections propose to analyze women’s participation further by examining the motivations of women who joined the FMLN, looking specifically at the factors laid out in Table 4-1 above.

**Political Grievance, Human Security, and Feminist Ideology in the FMLN**

As noted in Chapter 3, political grievance is often defined as a grievance surrounding lack of access to the system. However, I argue that threats to human security may also be a motivating factor for those joining rebellion, a factor that is separate from any desire for access to power or institutional change. With regard to human security, it is clear that both men and women were impacted by the authoritarian actions of the Salvadoran dictatorship. As mentioned above, government forces committed an estimated 34,000 politically motivated killings between 1979 and 1981 (Phillips 1997; Carter et al. 1999). Post-conflict reporting by the UN also indicates that more than 95% of the reported human rights abuses occurring between 1980 and 1992 were carried out by the armed forces (Kampwirth 2003). The use of repressive and violent tactics against citizens, especially the rural poor, who attempted to demonstrate peacefully against food shortages and poor working conditions was cited as a motivating factor by some women who joined the rebellion (Cohen and Wali 1991).
But what role did feminist ideology play in the conflict? Multiple sources suggest that feminist ideology was notably absent in the FMLN during much of the war. The FMLN had no history of advocacy for feminist goals similar to that of the FSLN or Sandinista Front in neighboring Nicaragua. While the FSLN explicitly advocated for women’s issues as early as 1969 with its Historic Program, women’s rights were not mentioned in FMLN documents, including the 1980 communiqué on the state of the nation (an early document outlining specific goals of the FMLN) or subsequent documents outlining organizational goals.\(^{25}\) Kampwirth (2004, 76) goes so far as to state that the goals of the FMLN at the start of the war “had little or nothing to do with gender equality in an explicit sense.”

In spite of this, women were present in the FMLN from the very beginning. The FMLN’s call to arms in Order Number 1 specifically summoned both women and men to the battlefield, and women were also present in the leadership ranks early on\(^ {26}\) (FMLN 1981). While some (though not all) women who participated in the FMLN described relations in the forces as relatively egalitarian, others experienced sexual harassment and discrimination (Vázquez 1997; Phillips 1997). Women’s organizations within the

\(^{25}\) See, e.g., FMLN 1980; FMLN 1984.

\(^{26}\) Comandante Ana María, a.k.a. Mélida Anaya Montes, and Comandante Eva, a.k.a. Clara Elizabeth Ramírez, were in fact founding members of the Fuerzas Populares de Liberación Farabundo Martí (FPL) and became early leaders of the FMLN upon the unification of the FPL and other leftist groups. Ramírez was killed in combat early in the war, and a commando unit was named in her honor. Montes was acting as a spokeswoman for the FMLN as early as 1982 and was appointed to pursue negotiations with the government in the early years of the war (Reuters 1983). She was dramatically assassinated in 1983 in Nicaragua, with reports stating that a team of masked assassins burst into her home, stabbed her 80 times, and slit her throat. Nicaraguan police later found the attackers to be linked to rival leaders within the FMLN (Rettie 1983). FMLN commander Nidia Díaz, a.k.a. María Marta Valladares, was an early leader in the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP) and was promoted to the FMLN’s national leadership after participating valiantly in the FMLN offensive of January 1981 while she was four months pregnant. She was participating in peace negotiations with the government as early as 1984 and helped negotiate the Chapultepec Accords that brought an end to the conflict (IPS 1992; Phillips 1997).
movement did not emerge until the middle of the war. In fact, some of the leadership (including female leaders) initially discouraged women from organizing along gender lines. When such organization did occur among combatants, it was primarily encouraged with the goal of separating couples or avoiding distractions between the sexes (Luciak 2001; Kampwirth 2003). After the first women’s organizations were formed within the FMLN around 1984 or 1985, some changes began to occur that resulted in a greater focus on gender issues. However, a change in military strategy later in the war broke up many of the women’s networks. Some female guerillas believed that this was not so much a tactical change as it was because they had become a nuisance to the organization (Kampwirth 2003).

Feminist organizing continued throughout the latter half of the war, with a plethora of women’s groups emerging up to and beyond the adoption of the 1992 peace accords. While many of these groups were “linked” somehow to the FMLN and its constituent organizations, the women’s groups often reached a point where they sought autonomy from those organizations. The growing frustration of women with their position in the FMLN and the larger armed struggle drove many women into these organizations (Vázquez 1997). Of the 13 women’s groups with ties to the FMLN identified by Kampwirth (2004), none were established and dealing with women’s issues before 1986. Feminist groups were especially vocal in 1992 as the peace accords were

27 In particular, the widespread distribution of feminine hygiene supplies appears to have been viewed by female revolutionaries as a major achievement (Kampwirth 2003; Phillips 1997).
28 The Consejo de Comunidades Marginales (Council of Poor Communities) was founded in 1984 with a substantially female membership, but Kampwirth notes that this organization did not engage in advocacy surrounding women’s issues until the 1990s. Many of the earliest women’s meetings occurred among
being negotiated. While a female revolutionary leader (Nidia Diaz) participated in the negotiations, many women on the outside expressed dissatisfaction at the omission of women’s issues from the Chapultepec Accords (IPS 1992). Speaking specifically of her experiences in the negotiations, Diaz explains:

In negotiating, when the time came to discuss the concept of beneficiaries [of the reintegration programs], it was understood in our heads that the women would participate, but that wasn’t [written] specifically. And we had problems because when the lists of beneficiaries were formulated, members of the [negotiating] team did not specifically put down the names of women (Diaz, quoted in Conaway and Martinez 2004, 3).

It was also reported that, after the accords in 1992, many guerilla women were pressured to return to their traditional, pre-war roles in the household (Qingyan 1992; Luciak 2001; Conaway and Martinez 2004). Women’s issues would become a major rallying point in the closing days of the war and beyond, something which will be discussed more in the section on selective benefits below.

From the framework of process tracing, I argue that the example of the FMLN shows that feminist advocacy is not a necessary condition for female participation. While feminist ideology and advocacy may have appealed to some women in the second half of the war, a feminist platform only emerged after women were participating in the movement in significant numbers and, in fact, after many women had already moved into leadership positions. This casts doubt upon theories of political grievance advocated by mainstream IR scholars and focusing on a desire for access to the political system. On the other hand, concerns about human security issues such as freedom from torture, access to women who wanted to discuss social problems, particularly the challenges faced by poor mothers, but they did not focus on the oppression of women along gender lines (Vázquez 1997).
due process, and freedom of assembly, were referenced by women in interviews discussing their reasons for joining the rebellion. This provides some support for the broader idea of human security grievance that I developed in Chapter 3.

**Economic Grievance and Advocacy for Redistributive Policies**

Advocacy for redistribution of wealth and the use of economic inequality as a rallying point was central to the work of the FMLN. Even before the foundation of the unified group, all of the constituent groups of the FMLN to some degree rallied around the goal of justice for the poor and working classes. Three of the groups, Fuerzas Populares de Liberación Farabundo Marti (FPL), Partido Comunista Salvadoreño, and Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos (PRTC) clearly identified themselves as Marxist. The other two, Ejército Revolutionario del Pueblo (ERP) and Resistencia Nacional (RN), were more militaristic in nature, but had strong ties to Marxist youth organizations in El Salvador and to the Chinese Communist Party.\(^{29}\) (FMLN).

Upon the unification of the FMLN, the focus on inequality and the desire for redistribution of wealth and economic reform was more clearly expressed. Passages from several FMLN documents demonstrate this. One of the earliest communiqués issued by the FMLN after its creation calls for a just distribution of wealth in the society, and

\(^{29}\) The RN was formed in 1975 as an offshoot of the ERP following an ideological dispute within the organization. The founders of the RN were somewhat more concerned with conducting social/political action in addition to military action, while the ERP had a history of focusing primarily on armed struggle. Still, the ERP did draw many of its members from Marxist youth organizations, and from the work of the RN after the split, it is safe to say that both organizations demonstrated Marxist influence and had ties to Marxism (FMLN N.D.).
promises support for private enterprise as long as it supports economic growth and the
goal of social justice (FMLN 1980). A 1984 statement from the organization outlining its
goals called for a specific program of economic reforms including agrarian reforms,
stabilization of the price of basic commodities, suspension of debts, nationalization of the
banking sector, the adoption of emergency measures to meet basic needs, and
representation for the working class and rural poor in government bodies (FMLN 1984).
The urban and rural poor were also placed at the center of the organization’s discourse
throughout the conflict. Fighters were urged to draw their inspiration from the working
class, to “stand beside your working class brothers,” and strikes and demonstrations were
called for in a show of solidarity between the FMLN, unions, and workers (FMLN 1980;

The presence of a class-based discourse and a call for redistribution of wealth is
clear. But to what extent did this motivate women? It has been noted that the disruption
of the traditional family structure, with rural men being forced to migrate to urban areas
or to locations abroad for work, was a potential motivator for many women. Men who
left their families sometimes did not return, and even those who sent remittances left their
wives in a new position as head of the household. Having taken on this role in addition to
the traditional roles of mother and caregiver, women may have been uniquely situated to
acquire a new awareness of economic inequality (Kampwirth 2004; Kampwirth 2003).
As the war drew on, young men and women in rural areas especially became more likely
to join rebel forces; there were few other options available, especially for those who had
lost their parents and homes. Many of these young men and women seized upon the
FMLN’s message of social justice and the promise of equality, and described the war as a class struggle (Larmer 1989; Benesch 1989; Cabrera Rivas 1984).

For urban women, exposure to inequality was also a motivator. Nidia Diaz began her work with the rural poor in literacy campaigns and social outreach at the age of 13. She later cited this work as an important formative moment, when she became aware of social injustice and began a career of political activism (Phillips 1997). With the rise in liberation theology in the Catholic church (to be addressed further in the following section) and the accompanying push toward outreach and activism, many urban women had similar experiences. Participation in Christian “base communities” brought many urban and middle-class women into rural communities to lead Bible discussions and to perform services like sewing, teaching literacy skills, and offering health advice. This both made them aware of poverty and offered an insight into repressive government policies: Women who helped organize collective farming projects reported that government soldiers would disrupt their efforts, and nonviolent protests against the lack of access to basic commodities and services were often met with violent resistance (Hibblethwaite 1989).

Based on this discussion, it is reasonable to conclude that in the case of the FMLN, class struggle and the desire for economic redistribution was both present and was a motivating factor for many women who took up arms. Urban and rural women alike, and both leaders and rank-and-file members (combatants and those in noncombat

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30 This was also true of Sandinista women in Nicaragua; many who were interviewed after the conflict discussed how outreach work through the church made them aware of the issues of poverty in the society and inspired them to activism (Randall 1994; Cabestrero 1986).
roles) cited economic factors as a key issue. A discussion of inequality also highlights another potentially relevant factor, though, which is the role of the church. Liberation theology combined social activism with religious beliefs, producing an interactive effect.

The role of religion and liberation theology will be discussed further below.

**Role of Religion and the Defense of Traditional Roles**

As mentioned above, liberation theology was entrenched in the Latin American Catholic Church by the start of the war in 1980. In El Salvador, the ideology spread both through the church elite and at the community level, with Christian base communities existing from the late 1960s (Hibblethwaite 1989). A pivotal figure leading up to the revolution was Oscar Romero, who became bishop of San Salvador in 1977. As violence by the military government increased, particularly where members of the clergy were killed or arrested, Romero became active in speaking out from the pulpit. At the end of his nationally transmitted Sunday mass, he would speak of and denounce both left- and right-wing killings, although the examples of right-wing violence (presumably by supporters of the state) were always more numerous and received greater emphasis. Ultimately, Romero was assassinated during mass in 1980, a killing that a UN truth commission later attributed to government forces (Kampwirth 2003).

Regarding the overall influence of liberation theology on the growth of the FMLN, a direct relationship between the two institutions was not present. The Marxist orientation of the FMLN seems to have produced some tension, as evidenced by Bishop Romero’s condemnation of violence on the left as well as the right. But the FMLN
appears to have viewed the religious establishment as an ally or, at least, a potential ally in its struggle. FMLN documents throughout the conflict call for the participation of religious leaders in peace negotiations, and the participation of Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas, Archbishop of San Salvador, as a negotiator was requested in a 1989 proposal (FMLN 1980; FMLN 1989). Grenier (1998) sees a distinction in the role that liberation theology played among the upper and lower classes. He argues that evidence is “scant” that liberation theology played any direct role in mobilizing the poor, but he acknowledges that religious institutions were instrumental in encouraging activism among students of the upper- and middle classes. In particular, the religious Central American University “José Simeón Cañas” moved from being initially cautious about allowing student activism to becoming openly political, advocating a desire to “transform society” and publishing statements in support of agrarian reform and democratic government\(^3\) (Grenier 1998).

\(^3\) The issue of class consciousness and liberation theology is indeed troublesome. Herndl and Bauer (2003) discuss liberation theology in light of Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988). They point out that, prior to this shift in thinking within the church, the poor in particular had existed in the position of the subaltern in much of Latin America, unable to enter public discourse either through participation in politics or through literary/artistic expression. By empowering them through literacy and creating space for them to speak in the public arena of the church, liberation theology created for them a new subject position and avenues for agency, giving the subaltern, in one sense, the opportunity to “speak.” However, there is the question of subject construction through liberation theology. While the poor were certainly involved in liberation theology, intellectuals and middle-class university students were also active as leaders in the base communities and outreach programs. This raises some questions about representation and to what degree the subaltern actually “speaks” in this situation, or, as Spivak says, whether there is a “pure, retrievable form of consciousness” being expressed for the urban and rural poor (Spivak 1988, 81). Such concerns may apply doubly to poor women by virtue of their lack of privilege along class and gender lines. The patchwork nature of the movement and interactions between church hierarchy, intellectuals, middle-class youth, women, and the poor, echoes the patchwork of classes that Spivak discusses in Indian society, raising questions about potential “ambiguities and contradictions in attitudes and alliances” among these groups. In other words, whose interests are being represented in this situation, and are groups really finding their “own” voices? (Spivak 1988, 79-80) Some of this is beyond the scope of the present inquiry, but it is worth noting that there is a troubled engagement, and I am not
As regards the issue of women specifically, there is evidence that religion was a motivating factor for many women who joined the rebels. For her 2003 book, Kampwirth interviewed 35 women who were part of the FMLN. Of these, 10 cited some kind of organizing experience in the church prior to joining the FMLN. While this is smaller than the number of women who attributed their participation to the influence of family members or to student activism, it still indicates some significant influence. These women also discussed their participation in base communities and doing charity work, similar to their counterparts in the FSLN in Nicaragua. Several women who became active in the FMLN also cited the death of Bishop Romero as a turning point that led them to support the revolution (Kampwirth 2003). Luciak (2001) states that many of the women he interviewed, including elites as well as lower-prestige women, joined out of a sense of social justice. FMLN Commander Nidia Diaz has said that she also came to revolutionary work through her activism in Christian groups motivated by liberation theology. Diaz was active in literacy campaigns organized by the Church and by Christian student groups, and this work brought her into rural areas where she was exposed to conditions of severe impoverishment. She was 18 when she was recruited by the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), who came to know of her through her work in those groups. She said of her experience, “as one who was outstanding in the student movement, or in the spirit of service in reading and writing brigades, etc., being highly visible, they would discover you” (Phillips 1997).

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attempting to argue that liberation theology could have or did allow for a “pure” expression by poor women of their grievances.
Other evidence exists of Christian influence within the FMLN, even absent any formal connection to the Church. Lay preachers sometimes worked within the FMLN, spreading the message of liberation theology as a means of attracting support and winning sympathy from outsiders (Hibblethwaite 1989). One woman serving in this role said of her work:

When we went to a new area, we began by visiting people in their homes and listening to them. You could not know what message to give to a people unless you knew their problems. The next stage was to start little groups, with each week a reflection on scripture and the planning of some concrete action (Hibblethwaite 1989).

Vasquez (1997) reports that traditional, Christian values also persisted in military camps, where female sexuality was discouraged. It has also been suggested that this focus on Christian morality created an atmosphere of hostility toward, or at least fear of, feminist organizing. Kampwirth (2004) points out that a similar dynamic was at work in the FSLN in Nicaragua, where liberation theology may have had the effect of promoting feminine over feminist rights, i.e. open support for women’s rights related to family, adoption law, and the rights of children. It may not be a leap to suggest that the same theological orientation resulted in the complete lack of discourse on women’s rights in El Salvador.

Overall, the relationship between religion and rebellion in the case of El Salvador is a complex one. Though the Catholic Church did not offer clear support for the FMLN, it did offer clear condemnation of the government’s repressive actions and of the status quo in El Salvador leading up to the war. Projects related to liberation theology also offered the means for women in particular to become involved in political activism, as illustrated in this section and the section relating to redistributive policies above.
Furthermore, the FMLN also actively sought the support and assistance of the Catholic Church, as illustrated in several of their own documents. This shows that there was at least a desire on the part of the movement to establish relations, even if formal ties did not exist. On the whole, then, it can be concluded that although the FMLN was not itself a “religious” movement, religion played a role in bringing women into the movement. Furthermore, the FMLN seems to have recognized this on some level and sought to encourage such activity by seeking an alliance with the religious community.

**Selective Benefits**

The examination of selective benefits marks a departure from past examinations of women in the Salvadoran conflict and in other conflicts as well. To recap the discussion of Chapter 3, selective benefits theories can be distinguished from so-called “grievance” theory by a focus on the desire for private gain as a result of participation in conflict, rather than the pursuit of social goods. In the analysis of these theories in Chapter 3, I acknowledge that they are not entirely incompatible with feminist theory. At the same time, though, I believe that the feminist skepticism toward rational actor models as well as the emphasis on women’s roles in social relations and the perpetuation of social norms cast significant doubt on the idea that women will be motivated by the desire for private goods.

Actually testing this theory, however, presents some challenges. In the mainstream international relations literature, selective benefits theories are often empirically tested using proxies. Weinstein discusses the connection between natural
resources and selective incentives. He argues that greed is likely to be a stronger motivator for rebel movements existing in a resource-rich environment, as this provokes a flood of opportunistic joiners seeking short-term benefits, who will likely defect if the conflict becomes prolonged or costs outweigh benefits. His analysis finds some support for this (Weinstein 2005). Collier and Hoeffler also focus on resources, modeling for potential gains using taxable capacity of a country’s economy and the natural resource endowment (P. Collier and Hoeffler 1998). In a later study, they modify this slightly by examining primary commodity exports and whether there is a significant émigré population financing the rebellion (P. Collier and Hoeffler 2004). These are all cross-national studies, and none of them are able to make reference to individual-level data in a specific case.

Some case studies drawing upon the selective benefits literature do exist. Among these, there continues to be an emphasis on measuring the potential for money and property (including natural resources) as an indicator of selective benefits (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Lichbach 1998). In addition to this, Lichbach sees positions of authority as a private good that may motivate individuals to rebellion (Lichbach 1998). Humphreys and Weinstein, using survey data from combatants and noncombatants in Sierra Leone, further argue that a general “sense of safety” in a group can also be a private good (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008).

Based on this literature, I propose to look for three types of selective incentives as motivators: land/resources, money, and the promise of authority. I will leave aside the “sense of safety” discussion, as I believe this is a dubious example of conceptual
stretching. While Humphreys and Weinstein do find that “sense of safety” is a motivator for those joining rebel groups, I do not believe this fits under the heading of “selective benefits for three reasons: First, the theories outlined above are fairly specific in making reference to material benefits, as evidenced through a discussion of maximizing income; second, reference to safety within a group appears to indicate something that is by nature a collective good, rather than an individual or single-family benefit; finally, the idea of “sense of safety” is difficult in terms of both concept and measurement. As such, I have left this element of the discussion aside.

Land/Resources

As mentioned above, a concern for the distribution of land and resources was certainly present in this conflict. As a result of the shift toward export farming, the Salvadoran government pursued years of policies aimed at restricting the use of land (i.e., dictating what crops were to be planted), abolishing communal land, and stripping land from small and peasant farmers (Mason 1992; Montgomery 1994; Kampwirth 2003). By 1971 it was estimated that 60% of farmers in El Salvador had little or no land of their own (Kampwirth 2003). Between 1961 and 1980, the number of landless households increased ten-fold, and by 1980 the largest 1.5% of all farms controlled about half of all the country’s farmland (Mason 1992). Even among landowners, an overwhelming 92.7% were considered “land poor,” farming on plots of 10 hectares or less (Mason 1992).

32 In this sense, the “sense of safety” may also be more accurately classified as a human security issue.
Furthermore, the FMLN noted this situation and included various references to the inequality in land distribution in its statements. The 1984 proposed platform for a provisional government called for a suspension of debts on small- and medium-businesses in the industrial and agricultural sectors\(^{33}\) as well as agrarian reforms and export reforms to keep more primary materials, supplies, and technology in the country (FMLN 1984).

After the conflict, as part of the reintegration process, land reforms did take place. The Programa de Transferencia de Tierras (PTT) stipulated that about 165,350 hectares of land (12.5% of the country’s agricultural land) would be redistributed among FMLN combatants, landless poor, and the *tenedores*, those who provided support to either the military or the FMLN, but were not officially considered members of either group\(^{34}\) (Vargas 2003). While about 47,500 individuals were initially listed at beneficiaries of the PTT, it has been estimated that only 36,000-36,500 actually received land through the program, with almost two-thirds of those being noncombatants (Conaway and Martinez 2004). Women also reported discrimination in the PTT program. Women represented only about 1/3 of beneficiaries overall, and some women reported that they were required to register property in their husbands’ names or that literacy tests were imposed on them as a condition of receiving benefits (Conaway and Martinez 2004). Analysts have also pointed out that there was a lack of assessment related to this program, making it difficult to determine its overall impact. However, given the number of beneficiaries and the

\(^{33}\) Seizure of land for debts unpaid was one mechanism by which the government removed small farmers from their lands (Kampwirth 2003; Mason 1992).

\(^{34}\) As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a strong likelihood that at least some of those classified as *tenedores* would fall under my definition of noncombatant participants.
amount of land available for distribution, even simple math would determine that the majority of beneficiaries would still be considered land poor (Vargas 2003).

In addition to the dubious impact of post-conflict land reform, there are also convincing reasons why land and control of natural resources cannot be viewed as a selective incentive for revolutionaries in this case. One obstacle to considering land as a selective benefit for those joining the FMLN is that land was often not viewed as a private good, either before the revolution or by the FMLN. Prior to the 1880s, when the government began to decree the consolidation of land and require the cultivation of export crops, there was a significant communal farming sector in the country. Even after the government abolished communal lands and established the latifundo system in 1882, a variety of different “statuses” existed vis a vis agricultural production. There were poor farmers, tenant farmers, and those who were considered to have “permanent access” to the land even though they did not own it (Mason 1992; Vargas 2003). For the Salvadoran people, land reform need not necessarily imply the conversion of land to private ownership, because that was not the status quo ante. Indeed, the FMLN specifically advocated for land reform in the form of “the development of a program of cooperative organization” among small farmers and the rural poor (FMLN 1984). In all, the argument can be made that anyone motivated to join the rebellion in the hopes of achieving private land ownership would be misguided. Indeed, my analysis of news articles over the course of the conflict does not yield any evidence that private land ownership was an aspiration of any females in the FMLN.
Money/Loot

Money or the promise of monetary income is another type of selective incentive that a rebellion could offer. Certainly, many women seemed to appreciate the opportunities offered by the FMLN, which allowed them to move beyond the limitations of their pre-war lives (See, e.g., Vázquez 1997; Mason 1992). However, I have found no evidence of money being used by the FMLN as a recruiting tool. There were also no specific statements by women in the 589 news articles I reviewed indicating that they joined the rebellion specifically for money. In terms of “compensation,” it appears that any benefits rebels received from the FMLN often came in the form of commodities, rather than cash. The FMLN provided rebels with clothing and shoes, arms (which were often stolen or illegally purchased from government troops), and food (Cohen and Wali 1991). Food and clothing were also supplied by tenedores, supporters who were not considered FMLN members. The majority of support offered by tenedores also appears to have been voluntary. There is little to no evidence that supporters were forced or coerced, and in many cases the support was a mutually beneficial exchange: Services to the FMLN in exchange for protection by the rebels if government troops arrived (Cohen and Wali 1991; Vargas 2003; Conaway and Martinez 2004). This “loot” could be viewed as a selective incentive to participants, but it does not appear that rebels were “getting rich” off these benefits, or that they were acquiring any benefits that wouldn’t have been available to the general population. In fact, it seems that FMLN members and civilians often lived in approximately equal conditions of poverty, the main difference being that
civilians at least got to live in a home and have a roof over their heads, and were not continually on the run (Cohen and Wali 1991).

If anything, there is some suggestion that the youngest revolutionaries of both sexes may have joined in part for financial reasons. Stories focusing on the role of young rebels in the last half of the war especially (including those under 18 and those under the internationally recognized recruiting age of 15\(^{35}\)) highlight the limited choices these young people faced. Many joined the FMLN after losing all or most of their families. Statements from young rebels in two 1989 stories include statements like the following:

"Many of our parents have died or left the struggle… The children are left fighting." (Yesenia, Age 16)

“Nothing is left for us but to fight.” (Susana, Age 21\(^{36}\))

“I’ve always lived on the move because if we stayed in the house, [government soldiers would] come and kill us.” (Minita, Age 13) (Larmer 1989; Benesch 1989; Cohen and Wali 1991)

These fatalistic statements are echoed in the sentiments of other young rebels. However, if it is true that these youths joined because they saw few other options, it is equally true that they are also motivated by ideological factors. Almost every young person interviewed in these two articles also made mention of factors like the desire for social justice, violence by government forces, or a general desire to create a better society.

\(^{35}\) The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which established this benchmark, entered into force during the conflict in 1990.

\(^{36}\) The story notes that she joined the FMLN at age 14.
Overall, it is difficult to assess the salience of this factor as a motivator for women. It appears there is some evidence that women, especially young women, joined the FMLN and stayed in the FMLN because it offered a way to make a living at a time when other options were limited. However, this is never expressed as the sole reason for joining. Discussions of the individual struggle are always accompanied by discussion of the collective struggle. One can certainly argue that there is a political element here. For those living among the rebels, it is possible that social pressures may have prevented them from openly discussing their desire for personal gain, especially in front of foreign journalists.

It is also worth considering, though, that any income or goods received by the FMLN were not unavailable to the population at large. In fact, FMLN rebels seemed highly dependent on the voluntary support offered by tenedores and civilians who offered more intermittent support. Some rebels also viewed their lives as more difficult than that of nonparticipants, pointing out that they could not have homes, they were constantly on the move, and they rarely even had access to water to shower or bathe (Cohen and Wali 1991). While the FMLN may have offered its members the opportunity for a better life in the long term, it is difficult to believe that many of its recruits joined because they believed they would get rich off the conflict.

Positions of Authority

While I find that the promise of income via money or loot did not seem to be a motivator for many FMLN rebels, it is possible that the promise of authority was
attractive to some. As outlined earlier in the chapter, women were active in leadership roles in the FMLN from the very early days of the conflict. But there is inconclusive evidence as to whether the number of women advancing in the FMLN increased over time.

In spite of this lack of quantitative evidence, though, I would suggest that the information on the conflict laid out in the other sections of this chapter indicates that authority was not a motivator for women for two important reasons: First, although some women did advance, there were also dynamics within the FMLN that acted as a barrier to women; second, even among those women who did advance, their ability to exercise their authority was limited.

The barriers to advancement that women faced have already been alluded to above. The tenedoras, who comprised an estimated 40% of tenedores (male and female), were not considered members of the FMLN (Conaway and Martinez 2004). As such, the opportunity for advancement in the ranks was not open to them, unless they chose to join the organization and take a more risk-acceptant role. The story of Maria Serrano, subject of the documentary *Maria’s Story*, illustrates this. She describes how, as displaced persons living in the countryside, she and her family existed alongside FMLN rebels in a condition of mutual support. Several years into the conflict, though, she describes making a conscious decision to join the FMLN. Only after that did she become involved as a combatant and, four years later, part of the strategic command (Cohen and Wali 1991). This suggests that, for men and women who existed outside the formal membership structure, the benefits and opportunities for advancement were limited. Even within the
FMLN, though, some women reported discrimination that may have acted as a barrier to advancement. For example, the following statements are from interviews with women in the closing days of the conflict and after the war:

“It was not like they would say, since you are a woman you can’t do that… But perhaps women did not rise up to the same leadership positions… If a man was punished they would not send him to the kitchen and in a woman’s case they would.” (Lucita)

“I always felt a lot of camaraderie, ‘equality,’ in quotation marks. In fact my first bosses were women. Later on I felt things had changed, especially when the militarized all the structures.” (Marianela)

“I felt like the first years were the best [for gender equality in the ranks].” (Marianela)

“[The party] made up stories to undermine our reputations, they closed off our access to the former war zones and to material and financial support…” (Statement by the Dignas women’s group, in response to their attempts to organize for women’s rights)

“There was sexual discrimination but I didn’t see it that way at the time. The sexual rudeness was terrible. In the armed group where I was there was never a woman commander.” (Yamilet)

"We know many women feel that their interests are not represented in present discussions and in the peace treaty.” (Nidia Diaz)

“If a woman spoke, [those she led] were very alert to see if she would make a mistake.” (Nidia Diaz)

(Kampwirth 2003; Anon. 1992; Kampwirth 2004; Phillips 1997)
All of this suggests the following: 1) There was discrimination which, in some areas, appears to have prevented women’s advancement; 2) Many women became conscious of this discrimination at some point during the conflict; 3) Discrimination against women seems to have become more pronounced as the conflict went on, as evidenced by the statements here and by the upswing in feminist organizing noted earlier in this chapter. Figure 4-3 illustrates the growth in the number of organizations founded over the course of and immediately after the war, and the growth in the total number of women’s organizations active during the years indicated.
Most revealing is the jump in the number of organizations established in the latter half of the war. Nine women’s organizations were established nationally between 1985 and 1989, and eleven were established in just the last three years of the war, from 1990 to the end of 1992. This is a convincing illustration of the frustrations women were facing and of the feeling among women that existing organizations and power structures were not adequately addressing their needs, necessitating the development of external and parallel organizations. 

Kampwirth includes in her analysis organizations that were founded by or alongside organizations other than the FMLN, for example women’s organizations with links to the government or the Catholic Church. However, the majority of all organizations she lists had some linkage to the FMLN.
Even women in positions of authority were not immune to these frustrations. Some of the quotes above were made by and reflect the difficulties of women in positions of authority. By the end of the war Nidia Diaz was arguably the most visible and influential female leader in the FMLN, but she also experienced the ways in which her gender limited her freedom and authority and struggled to be heard as a woman in the peace negotiations (Conaway and Martinez 2004; Phillips 1997).

Did women join the FMLN because they were seduced by authority and aspired to the type of personal gain that might be associated with power? I find no evidence of that. In fact, the evidence suggests that by the end of the war there was widespread awareness of the discrimination that women in the FMLN faced, both in terms of their access to leadership positions and the limits they faced within those positions. Over the course of the war, women steadily began to break away from the FMLN because of this. Taking this information into account, it is hard to believe that any woman with reasonably accurate information about the movement would have taken up arms based on this motivation.

**Conclusions**

In this chapter, I have applied theoretical insights about why women fight to the case of the FMLN in El Salvador. The hypothesized motivators, suggested by mainstream IR theory and feminist theories, have been examined in a necessary conditions framework. Given that the known outcome in this case is that women were present and active in large numbers at all levels (including noncombat, combat, and leadership roles),
any factor that is not present or that is present but which did not act as a motivator can be ruled out as a necessary condition. Table 4-4 summarizes the results of the analyses presented in this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Motivators and Outcomes in the Case of the FMLN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Security Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistributive Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional/Religious Motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective Benefits (Measured as promise of:)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Money/Loot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Positions of Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grievance-based motivators find the strongest support here, with class grievances and religious grievances most strongly represented among the motivators. Notably, even though ties between the Catholic Church and the FMLN were weak at best, many women appear to have been mobilized through religious work and teachings based in liberation theology. My concept of human security grievance also finds some support, as threats to the physical security of citizens were present, widely recognized, and were cited by women as a motivating factor for joining the FMLN. Political grievance or the desire for women’s rights is the only type of grievance not supported here, and the evidence shows that while an awareness of discrimination and activism on behalf of women’s rights grew over time, this was most relevant for women who were already fighting for the FMLN,
and in fact it was a factor that created considerable tension for some women within the movement. For some, their awareness of these issues was a factor that drove them away from—rather than toward—the movement.

Selective incentives theories also fail to find traction in this case. While poverty and inequality were certainly issues in the conflict, the FMLN did not use the promise of financial incentives or private property as a recruiting tool. There is also very little evidence that women hoped to gain these types of incentives—if anything, young women (and men) were more likely to view revolutionary activity as a way to make a living, but mostly because there were few alternative options available. The promise of authority also does not appear to have been a motivator, which may be due to the fact that discrimination against women was widespread and well-known, especially in the latter part of the war.

The most convincing argument this chapter presents to contradict selective incentive theory is the idea that there were few “benefits” available to FMLN members (aside from positions of authority) that were not also available to nonmembers, and members and nonmembers often existed in a symbiotic relationship, with FMLN members often dependent upon the voluntary support of civilians to obtain basic items like food and temporary shelter. While I have left aside the issue of protection, suggested by Humphreys and Weinstein as a selective benefit, it is hard to ignore that matter entirely (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). Protection was a significant factor in the relationship between civilian nonparticipants, tenedores, and FMLN members, but it was a collective—not a selective—incentive and may in fact be more accurately classified as
a human security issue. Additionally, both sides may have had something to offer: While the FMLN could provide an armed defense of civilians in the event of a government attack, civilians and tenedores may also have protected the FMLN by allowing them to move freely without informing on them to government troops.

This chapter offers an initial application of the theories of Chapter 3 to a case of women in revolution. In this case, class-based and religious-driven grievance appear to be the most salient forces in mobilizing women. In the following chapters, I expand the analysis to include a much broader range of rebel groups, spanning regions and active from 1990 to 2008. These upcoming chapters will offer a further test of the theories outlined earlier, and will show to what extent the findings in the Salvadoran case are typical of women and rebellion generally.
Table 4-5. Women’s Roles in the FMLN, by Total Number of Mentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Noncombat</th>
<th>Combat</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4-6. Women’s Roles in the FMLN, by Mentions as a Percentage of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Noncombat</th>
<th>Combat</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Period</th>
<th>Organizations Established</th>
<th>Total Organizations Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1980</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1989</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1992</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1996</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Kampwirth 2004. Omits two organizations whose date of establishment was unknown.
CHAPTER 5
WHERE WOMEN REBEL: A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN ARMED REBEL GROUPS

In previous chapters I have explored the question of what motivates women to participate in armed rebel groups. Chapter 2 relies upon traditional notions of participation and historical examples of women in conflict to construct what I believe to be a better, more inclusive typology of participation that addresses some of the factors that have in the past led to women’s contributions being misunderstood and overlooked. In Chapter 3, I proposed a theoretical framework that draws on both mainstream and feminist social science to propose factors that might influence women in making the choice to fight.

These empirical chapters seek to utilize the theory and concepts developed earlier to conduct a cross-national analysis of where and why women fight. Chapter 4 has already provided some insight into this phenomenon, looking at the experience of women in a single movement over time. The qualitative work in that chapter provides support for some aspects of the gendered theory of rebellion advanced in Chapter 3, but leaves questions about others.

As mentioned earlier, one of the problems with past literature exploring women’s roles in armed insurgencies is that there is a lack of truly cross-national investigation of this phenomenon. To date, the few studies on the subject that are international in nature (as opposed to regional) analyze generally less than 30 groups, often draw cases from a long time horizon—sometimes covering post-Cold War, Cold War, and even pre-WWII era movements without much regard to differences in historical context—and these
studies tend to focus on only positive cases, looking at where women are instead of where they are not.\footnote{Eager (2008) examines historical and current cases ranging from pre-WWII fascist groups to Cold War-era communist insurgencies to post-Cold War Islamic rebellions; Cunningham (2003) looks at movements active from the 1950s to the present day. Given the vastly differing historical conditions, I argue that making meaningful generalizations from such a population are difficult.}

Earlier cross-national work on the topic also tends to be atheoretical in nature, with some authors hesitant to advance a theoretical framework of women’s participation, and others proposing only the most basic explanations. For example, Cragin and Daly very briefly discuss grievance as a motivator for women, but they more or less accept this as an established fact and do not distinguish among various grievances as I have done here (Cragin and Daly 2009). Cunningham only distinguishes between leftist and non-leftist insurgencies, concluding that leftist movements are probably more successful at attracting women, but arguing that women are becoming more active in right-wing or Islamic movements as well (Cunningham 2003). Gonzalez-Perez proposes to explain women’s participation by distinguishing only between movements with a “domestic” vs. “international” agenda. These concepts, however, are very broadly defined. Her conceptualization of “international” movements includes Marxist, ethnonational, and Islamist or other religious movements without much attempt to distinguish among the impact of these different ideologies on women. There is also some notable conceptual stretching. For example, while she defines “international” movements to include those opposing U.S. influence and capitalist expansion, she classifies the FMLN and the FSLN of Nicaragua (among others) as “domestic” movements, despite the fact that these movements contained significant discourse surrounding U.S. investment and
manipulation and the development of the capitalist system (Gonzalez-Perez 2006; Gonzalez-Perez 2008). On the other hand, Eager openly states that she does not intend to “posit a general theory of why women engage in political violence,” a stance that other authors on the topic seem to share (Eager 2008, 1).

In this chapter, I first attempt to shed light on the extent of women’s involvement in civil conflict by presenting the findings of my cross-national examination of a random sample of over 70 rebel movements active worldwide since 1990. This data offers some preliminary insights into the impact or influence of differing ideologies on women, but more importantly it presents a clearer picture of where and how women are contributing to insurgencies than we have had to date. In presenting the data, I will also investigate how this data reinforces or challenges conventional wisdom on women and conflict, presented in the form of several descriptive hypotheses. Among the relevant findings, this data shows that women are active participants in well over half of the world’s rebel groups—casting doubt on the conventional notions about women making peace, not war. Additionally, while women tend to be more active in supporting or noncombat roles, I find that women are also taking part in armed attacks in nearly one third of all rebel movements and play leadership roles in over one quarter of all movements. The historical trend of gendered roles does continue in many modern insurgencies, with women taking on many tasks traditionally associated with wives or mothers, but there is some indication of changes and developments where women are becoming more powerful and strategically important.
An important starting point in assessing women’s motivations for joining rebel groups is understanding the extent to which women actually participate in such activities. As discussed in Chapter 2, attempts to explore women’s participation are often complicated by the ways in which women are marginalized in many movements or through which they are deprived of official status. Existing literature on civil wars and rebel recruitment often perpetuates assumptions about women and conflict that have acquired a taken-for-granted quality in the literature, but which have not been fully investigated through a cross-national analysis such as this. I present some of this conventional wisdom here in the form of descriptive hypotheses.

First, much of the work on civil wars in the mainstream political science tradition either under-represents or completely ignores the experience of women. For example, in their survey data collection in Sierra Leone, Humphreys and Weinstein admit that males are over-represented in their sample relative to the general population (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). In discussing the microfoundations of rebellion in the DRC, Gates discusses the importance of child soldiers, but generalizes the experience of child soldiers to that of boy soldiers, implying that girl soldiers are either absent entirely or that they are at home in the sphere of “wife and family.” At the far end of the spectrum, some researchers have eliminated women and girls from the conflict environment entirely. In a cross-national analysis of civil wars 1960-1999, Collier and Hoeffler justify the use of selected proxy variables in their models by stating that these values are “focused on young males—the group from whom rebels are recruited” (Collier and Hoeffler 1998,
The work of feminist security scholars has started to chip away at these gendered assumptions, showing how the projection of traditional gender roles onto wartime interactions minimizes the very-present contributions of women. While these insights have often been focused on particular cases of interest, I believe they represent a more general trend in underestimating women’s participation. Taken together, these statements that implicitly or explicitly minimize women’s experience in civil war lead to my first two descriptive hypotheses.

**H1: Women’s participation in armed conflict is minimal.**

**H2: Women’s contributions as combatants and leaders in rebel groups is infrequent or nonexistent.**

Additionally, I will explore a hypothesis related to geographic patterns of female participation. The fact that so much of the scholarly literature on women’s participation in civil wars is single-case or regionally focused creates the impression that female activity is a localized phenomenon, rather than a global one. It is likely that this is in part a consequence of the qualitative, comparative orientation of many scholars writing on the topic, but this focus may also serve to enable the tendency of quantitative, internationally focused scholars to ignore women’s roles in conflict. In fact, what little literature exists examining female participation across time and space seems to challenge the assumption of regional difference.

**H3: Levels of female participation in rebel groups vary across regions.**

Finally, I will examine the role of forced recruitment with respect to female involvement. As mentioned in Chapter 2, forced recruitment has certainly been a part of
the wartime experience for both male and female fighters throughout history. With regard to women, though, particular emphasis is placed on the use of force or coercion as a recruitment/retention tool. Research on suicide bombers has focused on the ways in which widowhood and rape allegedly drive women to rebellion, leaving them with no alternative for income or “rehabilitation” beyond martyrdom (Bloom 2007; Eager 2008). In Sierra Leone the assumption of participation by force was incorporated into the international community’s DDR efforts, as reports by the UN and UN agencies repeatedly presented females as victims and assumed all female participants in the conflict were abductees who participated involuntarily (MacKenzie 2012). This notion is further reinforced by widely circulated accounts of women who, after being apprehended participating in rebel activity, claim they were kidnapped or forced into committing such acts. The fact that such accounts are so widely reported and readily accepted indicates the difficulty that many researchers, reporters, and the public at large have reconciling embodied, female individuals and violent activity. But to what extent is this true on a global scale? Are women forced into political violence, or do they more often make the conscious choice to rebel? I presume to investigate and challenge this assumption through an examination of the data.

39 For example, a would-be female suicide bomber apprehended in Chechnya after her device failed to detonate claimed that she had been kidnapped and forced to participate in the bombing plot (Eager 2008). In Vietnam, females working with the ICP and, later, the Viet Minh report being instructed that they should play dumb, feign illiteracy, or otherwise pretend they were not willing participants in the event they were captured (Eager 2008; Hayslip and Wurts 1993). Many in the U.S. are also familiar with the case of Patty Hearst, the heiress who used Stockholm Syndrome as a defense at trial for her participation in criminal acts with the Symbionese Liberation Army. While her account failed to sway a jury, she later won her freedom after being released from jail by President Jimmy Carter and pardoned by President Bill Clinton.
**H4:** Women are more likely to be present where tactics of forced/coerced recruitment are used.

**Women in Armed Rebellion: A Global Overview**

In conducting the present study, I have compiled a cross-national data set on women’s participation in various rebel groups. As a starting point, I consulted the PRIO data set on intrastate armed conflicts from 1990-2008 and, using this data, I identified 140 organizations involved in armed conflict for at least two consecutive years during this time period.\textsuperscript{40} I then chose a random sample of 85 of these groups. Availability of data and organizational changes affecting the coding left me with a final sample of 72 groups.\textsuperscript{41} For each of the groups under examination, I investigated and coded information on the group’s ideology and on the extent, if any, to which women participated in the group.

Ideological factors of interest that I coded as dichotomous variables are the presence of a feminist ideology (meaning one that is explicitly supportive of increased

\textsuperscript{40} My unit of analysis here is the rebel group, not the conflict. Therefore, when multiple groups are indicated to be active in the same country at the same time, such as the CNDD-FDD and the Palipehutu-FNL in Burundi, each group was treated as a separate observation. The exception to this is where groups merged during the time period considered here, which is discussed further infra. Unorganized rebellions, such as those noted by PRIO as “insurgents” or “irregulars” without an associated organization were not counted, nor were coups. As to the decision to work with data from 1990 onward, one of my goals as mentioned above is to narrow the historical field of my inquiry. The post-Cold War period seems appropriate for analysis here, though there may be some minor debate about when this period actually “starts.” Several UCDP data sets, for example, start at 1989 rather than 1990 or 1991.

\textsuperscript{41} “Organizational changes” generally refers to the merger or splitting of groups, which occurs rather frequently. Where my research indicated that a group merged or split during the time period under investigation, I established the date of the merger or split. If a group remained unified for the majority of the period under investigation by PRIO (1990-2008), I coded it as a single group. If the group was operating as multiple organizations or factions, they were coded separately. Overall, this served to reduce rather than increase my number of cases.
rights for women in a legal sense), a platform supporting economic redistribution (such as a Marxist or socialist ideology\textsuperscript{42}), or an ethnic- or religious-based agenda. The most challenging of these variables to code was the presence of a feminist ideology. Unlike Marxism, ethnonationalism, and even religious orientation, feminism is clearly not viewed as a primary or central ideological orientation by many scholars. It is often not noted by authors, even when it is part of a movement’s manifesto. In an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, I consulted a minimum of five sources in coding a group’s ideological orientation. If there was some significant division among these sources on what the group’s goals are/were, I consulted additional sources for verification. This information came mostly from scholarly sources, documentation by governments or international organizations, and—where possible—primary documents from the movement itself.\textsuperscript{43} These ideological variables will be dealt with further in Chapter 6.

In coding the extent of women’s participation in these movements, I again reviewed several sources related to each movement that was sampled, looking specifically at those sources which documented women’s engagement with the rebel

\textsuperscript{42} Generally, all movements that received a score of 1 on this dimension were explicitly Marxist or socialist. However, there were exceptions to this. Most notable is the case of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) which, while not explicitly Marxist or socialist, made the redistribution of wealth a major rallying point (Downer 2009; Jane’s 2009; Anon. 2011; Australian Army 2012).

\textsuperscript{43} The most frequently consulted sources for ideological information were: Terrorist Organization Profiles from the National Consortium for the Study of Terror and Responses to Terrorism, profiles from the Federation of American Scientists’ Intelligence Resource Program and from GlobalSecurity.org, both compiled and maintained by John E. Pike, the Violent Extremism Knowledge Base maintained by the Institute for the Study of Violent Groups, and from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Terrorist Organization Reference Guide (2005 edition). However, due to the differing scope and time periods covered by these sources, not all organizations were noted in all of these sites. See Table 5-6 for a complete list of cases.
Although women’s participation in some rebel groups has been widespread enough to warrant significant scholarly attention, most of the movements included here have received little or no attention from scholars—especially as it concerns women’s roles in the conflict. The sources I used to code women’s participation were therefore a combination of scholarly works, NGO reports, and journalistic sources. A minimum of five sources was consulted for each movement, and at least three sources indicating women’s participation in a combat, noncombat, or leadership role (as defined in Chapter 2) were needed to yield a score of “1” on the corresponding variable. Table 5-1 presents an overview of the data, particularly as it concerns rates of female participation in rank-and-file roles.

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44 “Engagement” should not be read to indicate that I looked only at sources where women were identified as working with the rebel groups. Sources documenting women’s engagement with the group also includes those sources where women were victims of attacks by a group, where women were working within civil society groups engaged with the rebels, etc. Thus these sources offer an opportunity for “positive” as well as “negative” observations.

45 The requirement of at least three sources ensures not only a higher level of accuracy in scoring, but it also introduces an element of unimportant variation. Under these coding rules, for example, a single woman acting as a combatant in a movement is not sufficient to give the group a score of “1” for women in combat roles.
Table 5-1. Participation in Rank-and-File (Non-Leadership) Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total No. of Organizations</th>
<th>Noncombat Only</th>
<th>Combat Only</th>
<th>Noncombat and Combat</th>
<th>No Female Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid. East/ North Africa</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern and Western Europe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46 Of all rebel groups identified by PRIO as being active for two consecutive years in the period 1990-2008, 22 are in the Middle East/North Africa, 41 are in Asia, 61 are in Sub-Saharan Africa, 9 are in Eastern and Western Europe, 6 are in Latin America, and 1 is in North America. This sample under-represents Sub-Saharan Africa overall, which largely reflects a higher rate of missing data for this region due to lack of information and group fluidity. More so than any other region, rebel groups in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to arise, become active, and dissolve within a short period of time. This also only notes the primary state of activity recognized by PRIO. For example, Al-Qaeda is classified as the lone North American group here because PRIO notes it as primarily engaged in conflict with the U.S.
What these data reveal is that women’s participation in armed rebel groups is far from being a rarity or a novelty, as it is so often portrayed. The majority of all organizations active in this period enjoyed support from women in noncombat roles. In combat roles, those associated with direct armed attacks, women clearly participate at a lower level than their male counterparts but they are active and participating in this capacity in nearly a third of all rebel groups in this time period. Therefore, while this data shows that women are participating in armed rebellion less frequently than men overall, they are present and active in the majority of all groups, and they are acting as combatants in rebel organizations far more often than scholarship currently recognizes.

Furthermore, returning to a topic addressed in Chapter 2, it also appears that there is a “stacked” element to participation in combat and noncombat roles. With only one exception, all of the movements that employ women in combat roles also utilize women in noncombat roles. Likewise, every movement that employed women in leadership roles (a topic that will be addressed further below) also employed women in noncombat roles. This may imply that noncombat roles are entry-level tasks, and that participation in combat role represents an advancement or a more formalized status not always available to women. This would be consistent with the case study of the FMLN in the previous chapter; recall that anyone could be a tenedor/a, but becoming a combatant or living in the camps meant truly becoming an FMLN “member.” An interesting question

47 This relationship does not fit as neatly, however, in comparing combat and leadership roles. Four movements where I observed women in leadership roles did not appear to use women in combat. This implies multiple available channels to leadership; I will return to this topic in my discussion of leadership in Chapter 7.
for further investigation--but one outside the scope of this study--would be to see, in movements where women are both combatants and noncombatants, whether the same individuals are performing both roles simultaneously. If so, are men performing these roles simultaneously as well or does life in the rebel camp mirror life in many peacetime societies, where women are expected to perform double duty: engaging in the “work” of rebellion without relinquishing domestic tasks?

I have yet to address the role of women as rebel leaders. Table 5-2 shows where women were observed as rebel leaders in the period under investigation.

**Table 5-2. Women in Leadership Roles, by Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. of Organizations²⁸</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusive²⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East/North Africa</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern and Western Europe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data show that there is a clear gendering of leadership roles overall. Fewer rebel movements include women in leadership roles (26.4%) than in combat (31.9%) or noncombat roles (58.3%). At first glance, it may not seem odd that fewer individuals move up the ranks compared to the overall pool of participants. However, none of these movements have female-only leadership. In other words, *every* movement that includes

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²⁸ See note 9, above.
²⁹ Represents the number of organizations where women are in rank-and-file positions.
men has men in leadership roles, but less than half of all movements including women give women a voice in leadership.\textsuperscript{50} I will address the role of women in leadership further in Chapter 7, and discuss this as an area for future research. For now, these data reinforce the statistics presented in Table 5-1: Women are less active in leadership roles overall than men, but are active much more often than the literature seems to imply.

\textbf{Regional Patterns of Female Engagement}

Tables 5-1 and 5-2 show some regional patterns of engagement, including the number of groups and the percentage of total groups sampled in each region that employed women in combat and noncombat roles. These tables show that women’s participation in armed rebellion is truly a global phenomenon, with women active in combat and noncombat roles in organizations throughout the world. There is, however, the suggestion of some patterns of regional engagement. Regional differences seem to be more pronounced in the areas of combat and leadership than in noncombat roles. Table 5-3 includes information on women’s participation in noncombat roles, by region.

\textsuperscript{50} To be exact, 43 total movements include women and 19 have women in leadership positions, a percentage of 44.2%.
Table 5-3. Female Participation in Noncombat Roles, by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total No. of Organizations</th>
<th>Noncombat Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid. East/ North Africa</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern and Western Europe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information presented here shows some variation, with most regions hovering close to the overall mean and the Americas as outliers, though the small sample size should be noted.

Moving beyond the numbers, some of the historical patterns of gendered participation discussed in Chapter 2 are still relevant in post-Cold War rebellions and are evident across regions. While women frequently perform tasks like cooking, cleaning, teaching, and other domestic work similar to the historical role of “camp followers,” they often do not receive the full recognition or status of membership in groups they support. Again, as with the role of tenedores in El Salvador (discussed in Chapter 4), women have in some places been excluded from formal membership despite their role in providing crucial services like cooking, propaganda, espionage, and even riskier activities like recruitment and running safe houses. I found this to be the case in movements within

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51 See note 9, above.
Latin America, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Women have sometimes used these roles to lobby for status or expanded responsibilities within a group, but in other places women seem content to remain unrecognized and/or uncompensated for their efforts (Angeles 1996; Wilson 1991; Ngangoue 1996).

Sexual practices are also linked to the roles of women in armed rebellion worldwide. The phenomenon of “combat wives,” kidnapped women and girls being used for domestic work and sex, was quite commonly reported in Sub-Saharan African rebel movements. This practice was widespread in movements that were active in Angola, Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Uganda in particular. However, these practices were also reported in other parts of the world as well. In North Africa, Islamist groups reportedly encouraged forced marriages after religious officials issued a *fatwa* to make these unions legal (IWHR Law Clinic 1997). While not included in this sample, the experience of combat wives in Africa is also similar to experiences reported by Bosnian women in testimony at the ICTY (Mumba, Hunt, and Pocar 2001). The role of combat wife or girlfriend is often one based on force or coercion, but is sometimes a voluntary role. Some women have made the conscious choice to seek out these relationships, either to ensure their own protection or to gain access to privileges and

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53 Wives, of course, are frequently active in these movements in a voluntary capacity as well. Sometimes wives may even perform services to a movement without knowing it. In at least two groups, the AQIM in Algeria and the AIAI in Ethiopia, rebel commanders encouraged cadres to marry local women in order to establish “cover” or strengthen their ties to the community. However, there is no indication that the wives were active supporters of the rebel movement or that they even knew their husbands were involved in insurgent activities. Since there is no indication that women here provided any support beyond what may have been given to their own husbands I coded both of these movements as having no female participation, but these cases do shed a light on how women can be strategically important even where they are not “participating” as I define it here (Abu al-Ma’ali 2012; Smith 2009; Shinn 2004; Shinn 2009).
goods. Utas (2005) shows how women in times of conflict could move from relationship to relationship, sometimes between men on different sides, seeking out a new “boyfriend” when an old one is killed or apprehended. This suggests some validity to the greed or selective incentives-based theories discussed in Chapter 3.

Women’s bodies and sexuality have been deployed in other ways as well. In India, female fighters in the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) were told that part of their job would be to act as “honey traps” for leaders of rival organizations (SATP 2001). Members of the ATTF and its rival, the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), also confessed to using female cadres for prostitution, human trafficking, and the making/distributing of pornographic films to raise money for the organization. While some of the women involved in these projects were allegedly kidnapped and used as forced labor, women who voluntarily joined these organizations also reported being asked to take part in these projects (Kumar 2005; Azizur Rahman 2005). In other instances, the strategic use of women as embodied women is implied, if not stated outright. The use of women in intelligence gathering and in smuggling people, arms, and goods is a recurrent theme and suggests a perception that women are more likely than men to evade suspicion and capture. This perception has also been widely discussed and speculated upon in relation to the phenomenon of female suicide bombers.54

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54 Among the many who have written on the topic, Bloom (2007) and Eager (2008) each devote an entire chapter to discussing women and suicide attacks. In a discussion of Palestinian suicide bombers, Bloom points out that “[s]ince the mid 1990s, it has been almost impossible for unmarried men under the age of 40 to get legitimate permits to cross the border into Israel—for any reason.” Women have therefore become a valuable asset not only because they can “pass,” but because they can blend in by wearing “modern hairstyles and short skirts” to suggest that they belong (Bloom 2007, 143–144).
The patterns of female service in leadership and combat roles shows more cross-regional variation than what was seen among noncombat roles. While in Europe and Latin America, every movement that included women in rank-and-file roles also included women in leadership positions, this was not the case in Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the MENA region. The difference in Sub-Saharan Africa is especially stark—out of 27 active movements in that region about half included women in support roles, but just over 10% include women in a leadership capacity. Regarding female participation in combat (shown in Table 5-1 above and Figure 5-1 below), rates are again highest in Europe and the Western Hemisphere, while women are combatants in nearly half of all movements in the Middle East/North Africa, and well less than half of all movements in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 5-1
As discussed above, these regional differences have partially been masked in the past by studies on women in armed conflict that are case-study or regionally focused. Among the existing cross-national literature, though, the findings on regional trends are mixed. One possible reason for the regional differences among these post-Cold War movements is the overlap between regional and ideological difference. For example, insurgencies active in Latin America during this time period overwhelmingly adhere to Marxist ideology, and as illustrated in Chapter 4 some of these groups appear to have cooperated or at least influenced one another. Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, are more likely to be “cult of personality”-type movements, led by warlords and lacking a clear ideological focus. While the effect of ideology will be examined further elsewhere,\(^{55}\) at present these data offer mixed support for hypothesis 3, indicating that there is apparent regional difference with respect to leadership and combat roles, but that there is less of a distinction when it comes to female participation in a noncombat capacity. From a qualitative perspective, it seems that not only are women active as supporters in movements worldwide, but they also share many of the same experiences regardless of where they are—including tasks defined by gender roles, barriers to advancement, and sexual exploitation.

**Forced Participation and the Role of Women**

As mentioned in Chapter 2, forced participation is a phenomenon that often affects women and girls. Because forced participation practices are so often used to target

\(^{55}\) Ideological differences and their effects will be discussed further in Chapter 6.
females, it is tempting to conclude that this phenomenon accounts for much of women’s activities in armed movements. To contradict this argument, Table 5-4 summarizes the breakdown of voluntary vs. forced participation in various rebel groups. I coded forced participation in a manner similar to what was outlined above in assessing combat, noncombat, and leadership roles. Based on the criteria in Chapter 2, a minimum of three sources had to indicate that forced participation tactics were being used. Unlike the other categories, however, I looked for evidence of forced participation techniques being used against participants of either gender—men, women, or children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Forced Participation</th>
<th>No Forced Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women Present</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women Absent</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data show that impressment or coercion does not account for the widespread nature of women’s participation. While movements that use forced participation techniques, as outlined in Chapter 2, include women and girls more often than not, most of the movements where women are active are those that did not appear to use these techniques on a large scale. It is also worth noting that even where organizations do kidnap or force women to participate, women may also be joining the same movement voluntarily. These practices are not mutually exclusive. To further illustrate the variety of movements that use forced participation, Table 5-5 breaks out these movements by ideology.
Table 5-5. Composition of Movements Using Forced Participation by Ideology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Forced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistributive</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnoreligious</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamist</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Islamist</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated above, movements of all ideological leanings employ forced participation tactics. Rates are highest among “other” movements, those that do not fit into any of my ideological categories. This is perhaps unsurprising; while some of these movements do have political goals, many of these groups are factions supporting various warlords or other movements with no clear ideological focus. Without well-defined goals to unite fighters, it may be logical that these groups would rely heavily on coercion to accrue members. The majority of these “other” groups are also in Sub-Saharan Africa, which may partially account for why the overwhelming majority (all but two) of the movements using forced participation were in that region.

It is also interesting to note that half of the groups in the “feminist” category also use forced participation techniques, but of these two movements one (the Kurdistan Worker’s Party or PKK in Turkey) did not officially endorse this practice and claimed to have abandoned the use of these techniques (Ozcan 2007; Gonzalez-Perez 2008). The

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56 Since movements may fall under one or more ideological categories, the “total” here exceeds the actual sample total of 72 movements.
57 Sources document that kidnapping was, at one time, a tool used by the PKK to “recruit” fighters. The use of kidnapping was later disavowed by the organization, but it apparently still continued to use some
other, the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army in Sudan, had rhetoric supporting
women’s rights but did not appear to have a significant number of female participants, as
noted above. Based on the data here, I find a lack of support for hypothesis 4. While
forced participation tactics do clearly target women, it appears that such practices do not
account for the majority of female participation in organized rebel groups.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced a new data set on women’s participation in armed
rebel groups since 1990, drawing on a cross-national, random sample of groups active
two or more years during that time period. In presenting this data, I have also used it to
explore a number of descriptive hypotheses drawn from literature on women and conflict
and representing widely held views about how and where women participate in political
violence. This analysis shows that women are present more frequently than is often
recognized by analysts, especially scholars of political science who often seem to view
men and boys as the default agents of rebellion. In fact, I find here that women are
actively involved in nearly 60% of all rebel groups I examine, that they are combatants in
nearly one-third of all groups, and that women hold leadership positions in over one-
quarter of all groups. Additionally, my findings related to the role of forced participation
in the recruitment of women shows that most movements where women are active rely
primarily on the voluntary solicitation of recruits, refuting accounts that primarily paint

fighters under the age of 15—another factor that fits into my definition of forced participation (Ozcan
2007; Gonzalez-Perez 2008; Damon 2006).
female participants as victims and instead suggesting that the decision to rebel is often a conscious choice.

Finally, my analysis also raises questions about regional variations in female participation. While much work on this topic has implied a regional difference, suggesting for example that women are less active in rebellions in Islamic countries or more active in Latin America, I again find that the story is somewhat more complicated. While there is significant regional variation in women’s participation in leadership and combat roles, participation by women in a noncombat capacity is relatively high in all regions. Furthermore, women appear to share similar experiences in rebellion on a global scale, particularly insofar as their experiences are shaped by gender roles, sexuality, and barriers to advancement in the ranks.

These data offer an unprecedented view into women’s roles in civil wars in the post-Cold War era. The findings in this chapter help to demystify the phenomenon of women in political violence, showing that a female presence in armed rebel groups is not atypical, nor can we easily write off women’s role in these conflicts as scholars and policymakers in the past have done. In the following chapters, I expand this analysis further by returning to the gendered theory of rebellion developed in earlier chapters, exploring why women rebel and what factors may shape the capacities in which they engage.
Table 5-6. List of Rebel Groups Analyzed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party of Free Life of Kurdistan</td>
<td>PJAK</td>
<td>Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Mahdi Army</td>
<td>AMA</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ansar al-Islam</td>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic Union of Kurdistan</td>
<td>PUK</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformation and Jihad Front</td>
<td>RJF</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq</td>
<td>SCIRI</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade</td>
<td>AMB</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td>FAT</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hezbollah</td>
<td>HEZ</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devrimci Sol</td>
<td>DEVS</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdistan Worker's Party</td>
<td>PKK</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan</td>
<td>HIA</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jam'iyyat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan</td>
<td>JIA</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junbish-i Milli-yi Islami</td>
<td>JMI</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbayata Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity/Shanti Bahini</td>
<td>JSSSB</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer People's National Liberation Front</td>
<td>KPNLF</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer Rouge</td>
<td>KR</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Tripura Tiger Force</td>
<td>ATTF</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of India-Maoist</td>
<td>CPIM</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Democratic Front of Bodoland</td>
<td>NDFB</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Liberation Front of Tripura</td>
<td>NLFT</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang</td>
<td>NSCNK</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Liberation Front of Asom</td>
<td>ULFA</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People's Liberation Army Manipur</td>
<td>UNLF</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fretilin</td>
<td>FRET</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerakan Aceh Merdeka</td>
<td>GAM</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachin Independence Army/Organization</td>
<td>KIO</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen National Union</td>
<td>KNU</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Papua New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bougainville Revolutionary Army</td>
<td>BRA</td>
<td>Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist People's Party of the Philippines</td>
<td>CPPP</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moro Islamic Liberation Front</td>
<td>MILF</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moro National Liberation Front</td>
<td>MNLF</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Tajik Opposition</td>
<td>UTO</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Salvation Army</td>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat</td>
<td>AQIM</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcas Armadas de Cabinda</td>
<td>FAC</td>
<td>Angola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union for the Total Independence of Angola</td>
<td>UNITA</td>
<td>Angola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conseil National Pour la Defense de la Democratie</td>
<td>FDD</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palipehutu-FNL</td>
<td>FNL</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee for Action for Peace and Democracy</td>
<td>CSNPD</td>
<td>Chad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad</td>
<td>MDJT</td>
<td>Chad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of Forces for Democracy and Development</td>
<td>UFDD</td>
<td>Chad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces Nouvelles</td>
<td>MPIGO</td>
<td>Cote d'Ivoire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy</td>
<td>FRUD</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement for the Liberation of the Congo</td>
<td>MLC</td>
<td>DR Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally for Congolese Democracy-ML</td>
<td>RCDML</td>
<td>DR Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya</td>
<td>GAI</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ittahad al-Islamiyya</td>
<td>AIA</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrean People's Liberation Front</td>
<td>EPLF</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oromo Liberation Front</td>
<td>OLF</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia</td>
<td>INPFL</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Patriotic Front of Liberia</td>
<td>NPFL</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda</td>
<td>FDLR</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of Democratic Forces in the Cascamance</td>
<td>MFDC</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary United Front</td>
<td>RUF</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Somali Congress</td>
<td>USC</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Courts Union</td>
<td>UIC</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice and Equality Movement</td>
<td>JEM</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan Liberation Movement/Army</td>
<td>SLMA</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army</td>
<td>SPLMA</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Democratic Forces</td>
<td>ADF</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord's Resistance Army</td>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congres National Pour la Defense du People</td>
<td>CNDP</td>
<td>Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euskadi Ta Askatasuna</td>
<td>ETA</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prvisional Irish Republican Army</td>
<td>PIRA</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo Liberation Army</td>
<td>KLA</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Liberation Army</td>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces</td>
<td>FARC</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity</td>
<td>UNRG</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement</td>
<td>MRTA</td>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sendero Luminoso</td>
<td>SEND</td>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qaeda</td>
<td>ALQ</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6
WHY WOMEN REBEL: AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN RANK-AND-FILE ROLES

In the previous chapter, I introduced a new data set on women’s participation in 72 armed rebel groups active 1990-2008. This data showed that women have been active participants in over half of all insurgencies active since the end of the Cold War, with women playing support roles in 58.3% of these movements and playing combat roles (engaged in direct fighting) in 31.9% of these movements.

In this chapter, I return to the gendered theory of rebellion developed in Chapter 3 to identify and test hypotheses on why women fight. While the previous chapter discussed geographical patterns of participation, the focus here is on the relationship between ideology and participation. This chapter assesses the impact of ideology on women’s participation in rank-and-file or non-leadership roles. As mentioned in Chapter 5, women are far more often represented in rank-and-file roles than they are in leadership roles. I also noted that there was a “stacked” dimension to non-leadership roles: With only one exception, every movement where women were active as combatants also featured women in noncombat roles, implying that these movements represent a subset of the larger category. Using statistical analysis as well as descriptive statistics and an exploration of selected cases, this chapter will show that my theory of rebellion has some explanatory power, particularly with regard to economic and ethnoreligious grievances as motivating factors that drive women to take up arms. At the same time, these findings cast doubt on the salience of other motivating factors, such as political grievance as it is traditionally defined and selective incentives. A commentary on the difference between
Islamist and non-Islamist ethnoreligious groups also forms an important part of the chapter, as I further explore the different dynamics and composition of these two sets of groups.

**Testing a Gendered Theory of Rebellion**

Table 6-1 summarizes the gendered theory of rebellion developed in Chapter 2. In this section, I will focus particularly on testing those hypotheses that purport to explain women’s engagement in combat and noncombat roles.

Table 6-1. Gendered Theory of Rebellion Summarized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grievances</th>
<th>Political</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements promising greater access for women in the political system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be active at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Security</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements promising enhanced personal security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements may be less active at leadership levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements with a focus on economic redistribution, such as Marxist and socialist movements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be active at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-Religious</td>
<td>• Women will tend to join movements in support of greater rights for their own ethnic or religious group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women in such movements will be less active in combat and leadership roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>• Women will not tend to join movements based on the potential for financial/material gain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of political grievance, I sought to improve upon previous work by suggesting two distinct types of grievances. What mainstream political science most commonly considers political grievance refers to access to the system in terms of decision-making power or representation. I argued in Chapter 3 that, if this hypothesis holds true, we would expect to see women most involved in those movements that specifically promise greater rights for women, thus offering the promise of access in post-revolutionary society. I also hypothesized that the promise of equality would create opportunities for women in all roles within the movement.

**H1A:** Movements that explicitly promise greater rights for women will see higher rates of female activity in noncombat roles.

**H1B:** Movements that explicitly promise greater rights for women will see higher rates of female activity in combat roles.

As an alternative hypothesis, I developed the concept of a human security grievance. Inspired by feminist theory’s expansive understanding of “political” rights, I argued that women may be more concerned with a broader class of civil rights including free movement, assembly, freedom from torture, etc., without regard to promises of political “access” or power. I further argued that, if this was the case, we would see greater female activity in movements dealing with these issues, but that we would not necessarily expect to see women highly involved in all capacities. Since these movements are not necessarily addressing or seeking to reform the status of women, it may be that we are more likely to see women active only in noncombatant roles, which require less training and less of a departure from traditional gender roles.
**H2:** Movements that exist in a climate of severe government repression will see higher rates of female activity in noncombat roles.

Regarding economic grievances, both mainstream and feminist theory suggest that movements promising economic redistribution will attract female members. Furthermore, I suggest that the implied promise of gender equality in Marxist/socialist movements in particular will lead to widespread female participation in combat as well as noncombat roles.

**H3A:** Movements that promise economic redistribution will see higher rates of female activity in noncombat roles.

**H3B:** Movements that promise economic redistribution will see higher rates of female activity in combat roles.

As regards the final type of grievance, I believe the theoretical approaches in Chapter 3 suggest that women will engage in movements that are focused on ethnic or religious grievances. However, because such movements are often focused on defense of traditional roles I hypothesize that women will only show greater activity in noncombat roles, again based on the premise that these movements are not seeking to transform or change traditional gender roles.

**H4:** Movements that are focused on ethnic or religious issues will see higher rates of female activity in noncombat roles.

As regards the selective incentive theories introduced in Chapter 3, I argued that feminist theory casts skepticism on the idea that women will engage in rebellion because of a desire for loot or private goods. Women’s ties to community and social life may make
them less likely than men to engage in acts for which they would receive social sanction. The case study of the FMLN in Chapter 4 further suggests that selective incentives are not a relevant motivator.

_H5: The potential for selective incentives will not show a significant relationship to rates of female activity._

As an initial exploration of these hypotheses, Table 6-2 presents the composition of the various movements in the sample by ideology. The “Total” column represents the total number of movements analyzed in that region, while the “Combat” and “Noncombat” columns indicate how many of those movements included women, by number and percentage.

**Table 6-2. Composition of Movements by Ideology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Noncombat</th>
<th>Combat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 (75.0%)</td>
<td>3 (75.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistributive</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16 (84.2%)</td>
<td>10 (52.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnoreligious</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29 (56.8%)</td>
<td>14 (27.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamist</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5 (27.8%)</td>
<td>2 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Islamist</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24 (72.7%)</td>
<td>12 (36.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5 (45.5%)</td>
<td>3 (27.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first three rows, representing feminist, redistributive, and ethnoreligious ideologies, were coded as noted in Chapter 5. Many of these orientations are non-mutually exclusive, thus resulting in a total count higher than my overall number of cases. I have also divided ethnoreligious movements into Islamist and non-Islamist categories. As noted in the
previous chapter, several scholars writing on the topic have hypothesized differing patterns of participation related to women in Islamist movements, including the speculation that women’s overall involvement in these movements is lower (Bloom 2007; Eager 2008; Cunningham 2003). Finally, the “other” category is a catch-all for those movements that do not fall into any of the above categories. This includes some movements seeking political liberalization generally, others that are cults of personality or factions of various warlords. Nearly all of these were movements within Sub-Saharan Africa.

What initial insights do these cases provide with relation to the hypotheses noted above? Regarding H1A and H1B, where movements adopt a platform of gender equality it does seem that women are more likely to be involved in combat and noncombat roles. Only one such movement, the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLM/A), did not appear to have significant female involvement. However, the very small sample size—with only four movements openly adopting a platform of gender equality—is problematic. This was an area of difficulty in the coding process and this may have contributed to the very small number of positive observations.\(^{58}\) Even among these four movements themselves, though, the impact of gendered discourse is less clear than the descriptive statistics would lead us to believe. For example, in the case of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) it appears that the movement’s feminist ideology may have been a *product* of female involvement, rather than a motivator of such engagement. Female members of the EPLF have described how they initially faced barriers to

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\(^{58}\) See also the discussion on these points in Chapter 5.
participation in the movement. Early female members were denied official status as “registered” EPLF members, even as they were participating in crucial activities such as arms procurement and storage, recruitment, and espionage (Wilson 1991). In later years, the organization adopted gender quotas to guarantee that women held positions of leadership. Women were, at one point, more than half of the organization’s constitutional committee and by the late 1970s representation in local EPLF assemblies was “inevitably tilted in favor of women and poor peasants” (Zerai 1994; Wilson 1991, 50). Some chroniclers and EPLF veterans clearly argue that the organization changed in response to female pressure as it became increasingly dependent on women’s labor. As with the case of the FMLN in El Salvador, women’s organizations developed within the EPLF during the war of independence (Johnson and Johnson 1981). While the EPLF itself was supportive and indeed encouraged the formation of these organizations, there was some resistance to the growing power of women within the ranks, and women-to-women discussions—which resemble the consciousness-raising techniques employed by radical feminists in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s—are credited with playing a significant part in the organization’s evolution (Zerai 1994).

Additionally, it is worth noting that three of the four movements in the data set that espouse a feminist agenda are also ideologically Marxist/Socialist. This includes the EPLF, as well as the Party for Freedom and Life in Kurdistan (PJAK) and the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK). This presents a significant problem in that the descriptive statistics in Table 6-2 alone cannot reliably assess whether women’s participation is due

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59 The EPLF was founded in 1961 and is recognized by PRIO as a group active in armed rebellion through 1991.
to these movements’ pro-women discourse or to the appeal of their redistributive ideology, which ties in to my third set of hypotheses.\textsuperscript{60}

Regarding H3A and H3B, Table 6-2 offers initial support for the idea that redistributive movements are more likely to attract women at both combatant and noncombatant levels. Recall from Chapter 5 that among all movements in the sample, 58.3\% employed women in noncombat roles and 31.9\% employed women in combat roles. The numbers for redistributive movements, at 84.2\% and 52.6\% respectively, are significantly higher than the averages and appear to confirm earlier observations that women appear to be more active in leftist movements (Eager 2008; Cunningham 2003).

Finally, in H4 I hypothesized that movements based on ethnic or religious grievance would be more likely to employ women in noncombat roles only. Table 6-2 suggests this hypothesis may only be half true. Note that when such movements are taken as a whole, rates of participation are very close to the overall average.\textsuperscript{61} Comparing the makeup of Islamist and non-Islamist movements, though, there is a marked difference. Islamist movements are less likely overall to employ women in combat or noncombat roles, comparing these rates to the overall sample average. Among non-Islamist

\textsuperscript{60} Even the case of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement/Army, which is the anomalous case here, does not offer clear insight with regard to the impact of women’s rights as a rallying tool. While the SPLM/A’s constitution does include support for “the emancipation of women” as well as promises “to combat sexism” and ensure that “women are properly represented at all levels” of government and the party, it seems that this ideology may have been a relatively recent development. While the movement has been in existence since 1983, I was only able to find discussions of women’s rights issues in documents from the late 1990s onward (SPLM 2008; SPLM 1998). Given that the onset of this ideological focus seems to follow the National Islamic Front’s rise to power in Sudan in 1989, it is entirely possible that these two events are related and that the SPLM/A adopted this platform either to distance itself from the Islamists or to strategically appeal to a portion of the populace that it saw being marginalized under Islamist rule.

\textsuperscript{61} This is probably unsurprising, given that 2/3 of the movements in the sample were ethnically or religiously motivated.
movements, though, 72.7% employ women in noncombat roles (higher than the overall average of 58.3%) while only 36.4% employ women in combat roles, a number close to the overall average of 31.9%. Again, this appears to confirm the observations of the above-cited literature suggesting that Islamist movements handle female participation differently. Excepting these movements, there does appear to be some support for the hypothesis that ethnic or religious-based movements attract more women in a supporting capacity.

To further test these hypotheses, I have conducted separate logit analyses using noncombat and combat participation as the dependent variables. In each analysis, the first model examines only the effects of the three ideological factors contained in my data set: advocacy for women’s rights, economic redistribution, and ethnoreligious grievance.

In the second model, I introduce external variables to proxy for human security and the availability of selective incentives. Inspired by the example of El Salvador, I propose that where human security issues act as a motivator for women, the ideology of the movement is less important than the overall climate in which the struggle is taking place. As shown in Chapter 4, many FMLN women whose stories centered around human security issues discussed the actions of government forces, including executions and torture, as a motivator rather than the ideology of the FMLN itself. As such, I am using scores from the Political Terror Scale as an indicator of human security grievance. The Political Terror Scale uses a 5-point system to measure rates of physical integrity rights violations within a state, including torture, beatings, disappearances, and murder
perpetrated by the ruling regime. A 5 represents the most serious and widespread violations, including widespread disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and ethnic-based violence, while a 1 represents the lowest levels of violence. The scores used here will represent the average of scores from U.S. State Department Reports and Amnesty International Reports on Human Rights (Wood and Gibney 2012). Since my level of analysis here is the rebel group, without any time-series element, I am using only the Political Terror Score from the year the rebel group is first noted as active in the data. While this is not a perfect measurement, the lack of more fine-grained information on women’s participation over time makes a time-series analysis impossible at this point. This model will at least provide some sense of the impact of human security issues on women’s participation.

Modeling for selective incentives presents similarly difficult choices. Notably, some previous tests of this theory use proxy variables for selective incentives that are inherently gendered. For example, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) use three variables that are meant to proxy the opportunity costs of rebel labor. One, levels of male secondary schooling, clearly excludes the potential incentives of women. The authors even tout this, saying the measure “has the advantage of being focused on young males—the group from whom rebels are recruited”62 (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 569). As the data above makes evident, this statement is not something researchers should accept as a given. Their second variable, mean per capita income, also reflects some gender bias albeit on a less obvious level. Mean incomes in most countries likely mask large differentials between

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62 Emphasis added.
men and women, and in many countries it is likely that this figure would overestimate the earnings of the average woman in the labor force and underestimate her incentives for joining a rebellion. The final proxy variable, percentage annual GDP growth, also does not fully address the gender issue. Problematically, availability of this data for many countries is spotty and also raises endogeneity questions: Where growth is low or negative, is it a cause or effect of the conflict itself?

Because of these concerns, I have departed from the measures used by earlier tests of selective incentive theories and I instead use a measure of female labor force participation from the World Bank. This measure represents the percentage of all females 15 and older who are economically active, i.e. “supply[ing] labor for the production of goods and services” (World Bank 2012). This measure has the advantages of being widely available, female-focused, and a representation of the kind of choices discussed in selective incentives theory—which posits the individual choice as being between wage-earning work and rebel activity. Undoubtedly this measure continues to underestimate undocumented labor and does not take household labor into account, but it is superior for my purposes to other variables used to test this phenomenon in the past.

The third and final model that I have run for each dependent variable adds two additional controls that, based on the literature and findings already presented, I believe may also impact women’s participation. One is a dichotomous measure of whether each movement has an Islamist focus, something that for reasons discussed above I believe will demonstrate a significant negative impact on women’s participation in all capacities. The second is a dichotomous measure of whether each movement used forced
participation tactics on a broad scale. As with the other participation variables already discussed, a minimum of three sources documenting forced participation tactics (as defined in Chapter 2) was necessary to receive a positive score on this variable. Recalling Chapter 5, movements that use forced participation often target women (and girls), so I expect this to be a variable that has a positive and significant relationship to women’s participation. The results of all three models for each dependent variable are presented in Table 6-3 and Table 6-4 below.
Table 6-3. Factors Influencing Participation in Noncombat Roles--Results of Logit Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>.502 (1.263)</td>
<td>.508 (1.337)</td>
<td>-.750 (1.358)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistributive</td>
<td>1.731** (.710)</td>
<td>1.843** (.730)</td>
<td>2.032** (.884)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnoreligious</td>
<td>.163 (.584)</td>
<td>.255 (.635)</td>
<td>1.383* (.809)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Terror</td>
<td>-- -.324 (.311)</td>
<td>-.420 (.365)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Labor Force</td>
<td>-- .010 (.013)</td>
<td>-0.015 (.016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced Participation</td>
<td>-- --</td>
<td>1.752** (.871)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Movement</td>
<td>-- --</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.857** (.788)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.183 (.533)</td>
<td>.653 (1.762)</td>
<td>1.519 (2.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-R2</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
Table 6-4. Factors Influencing Participation in Combat Roles--Results of Logit Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>1.837 (1.211)</td>
<td>1.436 (1.219)</td>
<td>1.536 (1.299)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistributive</td>
<td>1.037* (.591)</td>
<td>1.200* (.624)</td>
<td>.611 (.691)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnoreligious</td>
<td>-.498 (.582)</td>
<td>-.878 (.653)</td>
<td>-.940 (.724)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Terror</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.773** (.345)</td>
<td>-.720** (.367)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Labor Force</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.013 (.015)</td>
<td>-.016 (.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced Participation</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.962 (.879)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Movement</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-1.344 (.956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.838 (.538)</td>
<td>3.144 (1.930)</td>
<td>3.783* (2.010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-R2</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
To begin with a discussion of noncombat participation, presented in Table 6-3, redistributive ideologies are significant in all models. Odds ratios show that these movements are approximately seven and a half times more likely to include women in noncombat roles, ceteris paribus. Movements where forced participation is widespread are also significantly more likely to include women. But the difference among ethnoreligious movements is perhaps the most interesting feature here. While this variable has no significant impact in the first two models, introducing a control for Islamist ideology not only suggests that Islamist movements are significantly less likely to include women in noncombat roles; it also produces the finding that non-Islamic ethnoreligious movements are nearly four times more likely to include women in support roles, as predicted in the hypotheses above. Other variables, though, including support for women’s rights issues, the presence of threats to human security, and women’s labor force participation, have no impact.

The story for combat roles is somewhat less clear. While the first two models suggest that women are more likely to take on combat roles in movements with a redistributive focus, this relationship drops out when the control variables in Model 3 are introduced (though these variables themselves have no significant impact). The variable from the Political Terror Scale is significant and negative where it is introduced in Model 2 and Model 3, which has interesting implications for my hypothesis regarding human security grievances. While the prediction that women would be more likely to take on supporting roles in movements where a threat to human security exists was not borne out
by testing on the noncombat variable, these results suggest that women are less likely to serve a combat role in movements where the threat to human security is high. Calculating the discrete change based on Model 3, as a country’s PTS score varies from 1 (“secure rule of law”) to 5 (“widespread political terror”), the probability of women being in combat roles in an armed opposition movement declines by .62, from .79 to .17, holding all other variables constant. While this finding should be taken with a grain of salt, given that the PTS score represents only a single year of data on a given government’s human rights record, it does suggest that the concept of a human security grievance has some relationship to women’s participation.

To further bolster these findings, I also created a combined participation score and performed an ordered logit on the data, with results in Table 6-5 below. As noted in Chapter 5, there is convincing evidence that participation in these rank-and-file roles is structured. Given that all but one movement where women were active as combatants also used women in support roles, it can be argued that participation in noncombat roles is a necessary condition for women’s progression into combat activity. While the “distance” between these concepts is difficult to quantify—i.e., does action in combat and noncombat roles really represent double the level of commitment or activity of acting in noncombat roles alone?—an ordered model creates a better representation of these different combination of roles than the standard logit analyses above.\(^{63}\)

\(^{63}\) Because of limitations on the degrees of freedom, for example, I am unable to repeat the analysis in Table 6-4 on only those cases where noncombat participation equals 1.
Table 6-5. Factors Influencing Participation in Rank-and-File Roles—Results of Ordered Logit Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>1.508 (1.236)</td>
<td>1.257 (1.245)</td>
<td>.691 (1.272)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistributive</td>
<td>1.332** (.539)</td>
<td>1.400** (.554)</td>
<td>1.138* (.614)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnoreligious</td>
<td>-.166 (.521)</td>
<td>-.245 (.553)</td>
<td>.223 (.603)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Terror</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.517* (.284)</td>
<td>-.541* (.303)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Labor Force</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.001 (.011)</td>
<td>-.014 (.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced Participation</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.534 (.653)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Movement</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-1.539** (.689)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-R2</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 6-5 shows results that are again similar to those in Tables 6-3 and 6-4 above. In a model where noncombat and combat participation are combined into a single, trichotomous dependent variable, a redistributive ideology is significant and positive across all models, indicating that movements focused on economic grievance are significantly more likely to attract women. Political terror measures, where present in Models 2 and 3, are significant and negative, indicating that the presence of threats to human security actually decreases the likelihood of women being involved in multiple capacities.

Islamist ideology in Model 3 is also significant and negative, adding to the earlier suggestion that Islamism is a limiting factor on the participation of women. Because the difference between Islamist groups and non-Islamist ethnoreligious groups is of particular
interest here, I also performed a T-test comparing the means of noncombat participation and overall rank-and-file participation between the two groups. Table 6.5 below shows the results of these tests, offering further confirmation that there is a statistically significant difference between levels of participation in Islamist vs. non-Islamist ethnoreligious groups.

Table 6.6. Difference of Means Testing on Islamist vs. Non-Islamist Ethnoreligious Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Noncombat Only</th>
<th>All Rank-and-File</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-statistic</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>.002***</td>
<td>.001***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Discussion

In this chapter, I have presented and tested various hypotheses about women’s involvement in combat and noncombat roles drawn from my gendered theory of rebellion. Overall, I find no support for my first set of hypotheses—those based on political grievance as it is usually defined. Very few rebel movements in the post-Cold War era include women’s rights issues in their platform to begin with, and whether or not they address these issues seems to have little impact on whether or not women join. In fact, examining these cases more closely, I would suggest that the directionality arrow may actually be reversed from what grievance-based theories would suggest. That is, it is possible that the participation of women drives the production of gendered ideology, rather than the other way around. This to some extent dovetails with my earlier case study
of the FMLN, which suggested that participation had a consciousness-raising effect for women, ultimately leading to a push for gender equality in post-conflict society.

Regarding H2 above, the presence of threats to human security, proxied by the Political Terror Scale, appears to have no impact on women’s participation in support roles. In a finding not specifically related to this hypothesis, though, it does appear that women are less likely to be active in combat where threats are greater. This is a finding that warrants closer examination in the future, given the measurement limitations on this factor. If this finding were to bear out when different measures or time periods are examined, it could represent an interesting compliment to earlier work on women and interstate conflict that suggests an inverse relationship between gender equality and state bellicosity (Caprioli 2000; Caprioli and Boyer 2001).

As predicted by my third hypothesis, economic grievances have an unambiguously positive impact on female participation. The tests here indicate that a leftist, redistributive ideology along Marxist or socialist lines has a strong, positive relationship to rates of female participation. This offers confirmation of the earlier work by Eager (2008), Cunningham (2003), and others who suggested that leftist movements incorporate women more.

Regarding ethnic and/or religious motivations, these results highlight the difference between Islamist movements and all other ethnoreligious movements with respect to female participation. While women are significantly less likely to participate in Islamist movements in a noncombat role, women are more likely to play a supporting role in all other movements motivated by ethnic or religious grievances. A difference-of-
means test on these two groups, examining participation in noncombat and rank-and-file roles generally, further supports the finding that there is a difference between how Islamist and non-Islamist ethnoreligious groups incorporate women. Additionally, the tests in this chapter find no discernable relationship between ethnoreligious focus and women in combat roles, suggesting as predicted that women will rally in defense of tradition and culture—but in a manner circumscribed by gender roles.

Finally, also supporting the prediction of my gendered theory of conflict, selective incentives appear to have no impact on women’s decisions to participate or not participate in conflict. In introducing this element into my models, I addressed ways in which prior literature on selective incentives operationalized income potential in ways that explicitly or implicitly excluded the earnings potential of women. One of my goals in this analysis was to account for this factor in a more gender-conscious way. Departing from previous work, I used a measure of adult female labor force participation from the World Bank. While economic theory suggests that women would be more likely to take up arms where their ability to earn income from the labor market is low, I find that rates of female participation in the labor force seem to have no relationship to levels of rebel activity. While the labor force indicator here was specifically chosen because it is female-focused and widely available, I also explored the use of alternative indicators not reported here. The inclusion of percent annual GDP growth as reported by the World Bank for the first year a conflict involving the group is present in the data did also did not impact the model. More interesting was the inclusion of female secondary school enrollment, a variable that the World Bank has reported for only about half of my total cases. Rates of
female secondary school enrollment as an indication of earning potential appeared to have no impact on women’s engagement in noncombat roles. However, I did find some indication of women’s level of education having a significant and positive relationship to engagement in combat roles. If true, this finding would rebuke the predictions of selective incentive theory—implying that women with greater income potential are not only more likely to forgo labor force earnings in favor of rebel activity, they are also more likely to place themselves in risky, front-line roles. Of course, given the limited amount of data available on women in higher education, that finding should be taken with a grain of salt. Overall, though, it reinforces the suggestion that selective incentive theory does not adequately explain why women rebel.

Some shortcomings of this analysis should be noted. Chief among these is that, due to limitations on the data, a time-series analysis of these cases is impossible. This means that the effects of some variables that might change over the course of a conflict, such as the levels of women’s involvement, threats to human security, etc., cannot be fully explored. I did make some attempt to introduce a time element into these models using a time counter variable representing total years of activity in the period 1990-2008, and that variable was not significant in models using combat, noncombat, or combined levels of participation as the dependent variable. Given the lack of significant findings, I have not reported those models here. I have also made no attempt to determine precisely how many women are involved in each rebel group I analyzed—a task that would be
similarly implausible—though I have imposed a minimal burden of proof by requiring at least three sources documenting women’s presence in a given participant role.

Overall, this study represents a significant contribution to our understanding of where, how, and why women participate in insurgencies. Especially taking into account the finding that women are involved in more than half of all rebel groups active in the post-Cold War period, it is hoped that the data discussed here will inspire more thorough data gathering and analysis that can strengthen future studies.

The gendered theory of conflict advanced in Chapter 3 also shows some explanatory power here, offering insight into why women participate in combat and noncombat roles. Confirming the findings of earlier authors, the presence of a redistributive ideology along the lines of Marxism or socialism and focused on economic grievance creates a situation where women are more likely to participate in both combat and noncombat roles. Apart from Islamic movements, which show less female participation overall, women do appear more likely to join ethnically or religiously inspired movements, but as my theory predicted this relationship only holds true for support-type roles. While predictions regarding a feminist ideology as a motivator (conceptualized as promises of gender equality by a movement) were unsupported by the current analysis, threats to personal security operationalized by the Political Terror Scale did have an effect, although not of the kind I envisioned. The finding that state-sponsored human rights abuses seem to deter women from combat activity raises questions worthy of future study. Is it a conscious choice by women in these cases to not participate in
combat, or do rebel groups keep women from harm’s way when violence is at its worst? Finally, as expected, I found that the theory of selective incentives drawn from economic literature holds no explanatory power in examining women’s behavior.

While this chapter has focused on women’s participation in rank-and-file roles, these insights can be carried forward in examining other dimensions of participation. As shown in Table 6-3 above, forced participation including sexual slavery and forced labor is an unfortunate reality for many women. Though Chapter 5 indicated that much of women’s participation occurs outside of movements that use coercive techniques, movements where these abuses happen are more likely to include women than not. On the other hand, I have yet to examine those situations where women are reaching greater levels of influence and empowerment—those areas where women are active in leadership roles. Chapter 4 has already hinted at some factors influencing women’s advancement into positions of leadership. While a more detailed exploration of that topic will be left to a further study, I will offer some further commentary on this point in my concluding chapter.
CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation started off with a basic research question: What motivates women to participate in armed rebel groups? Accompanying that question was the puzzle of wide cross-national variation among rebel groups in terms of female participation. While some insurgent groups, like the FMLN in El Salvador, integrated women completely at all levels of the movement, even including women as negotiators in international peace talks, other movements appeared to have little or no involvement from women at all.

Prior to this work, literature on women in armed rebellion was inadequate for making any broad generalizations about how and why women rebel. Most academic work on women in rebel movements was conducted at the single-case or small-N level, and studies often grouped a small number of movements based on ideology or with a regional focus. While such work certainly has value, the limitations of these studies created an incomplete patchwork. Individual points of female participation were visible, but not joined into a whole. The few cross-national studies that existed were still in a “mid-N” range, and often dealt very little or not at all with theoretical explanations as to why women fight in one movement but not another, and why all rebel movements include men and boys, but only some include women and girls.

I have attempted to create a work that addresses many of these limitations and yields new insights about why women fight. In Chapter 2, I presented a conceptualization of “participation” in rebel movements that addresses some of the factors contributing to the omission of women from official statistics and historical records of conflict. In
Chapter 3, I presented a feminist critique of mainstream theories on rebel behavior drawn from literature on political science and economics. Central to my argument is that while mainstream theories claim to be gender-neutral in nature, the reality of these conflicts show that there must be some differences between men and women that these theories fail to address. An examination of feminist theory provided some refinements to mainstream theories (as well as an outright rebuttal of some points), and resulted in the formation of what I have called a gendered theory of rebellion. The theory attempts to explain both differences in why individuals of either sex rebel and how they participate when they decide to join the fight. The concepts and theories developed in Chapters 2 and 3 are carried forward into the data and analysis employed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

Chapter 4 is a study of a single case, that of the FMLN in El Salvador. While the widespread participation of women at even the highest levels of the movement has led to much prior scholarship related to women’s participation in the organization, I attempt to review and add to this literature by employing the gendered theory of rebellion advanced in Chapter 3. I rely upon secondary source material drawn from academic works and news stories and primary source material including documents and communiqués from the movement itself, and some elements of my theory are supported in this case study. In opposition to mainstream literature that posits individuals rebel out of a desire for access to the political system, I find that women in the FMLN did not—initially—express a collective desire for increased representation, quotas, or the like. In fact, rhetoric that might have promised increased access for women to the political system was completely absent from the FMLN platform. Over time, I find evidence that women’s participation in
the movement was transformational, leading to a boom in civil society groups dealing
with women’s issues after the war. In terms of motivating factors, though, it seems
women were more likely to be pushed toward rebellion out of a concern for personal
security rights, a desire to address economic inequality, and through the influence of the
Catholic Church’s liberation theology. Likewise, I find that the so-called “greed”
motivations advanced in selective incentive theories are also absent. I find no evidence
that women joined the movement seeking loot or personal gain. If anything, the desire for
personal gain may have been present among the youngest members of the FMLN, but
overall there is little to no evidence to support this as a primary motivator.

Chapter 5 is primarily devoted to a presentation of my cross-national data, but it
also offers an analysis of some descriptive hypotheses on women in conflict. Most
notable among my findings here are that women participate in armed conflict more often
than some might expect. While much of mainstream political science literature assumes
men and boys to be the default recruitment pool, in fact women are participating in more
than half (about 60%) of all post-Cold War insurgencies that I have looked at. While the
bulk of this participation comes in the form of support roles—including but not limited to
tasks like cooking, cleaning, espionage, and provisioning—women are playing active
combat roles in nearly one-third of all movements, and are leaders in more than one
quarter. The analysis in Chapter 5 also shows that many women join rebel movements
voluntarily. While movements that “recruit” through kidnapping, coercion, or the use of
child soldiers are more likely than not to include women, the bulk of women’s
participation comes in movements where these tactics are not widely used.
Chapter 6 further explores this data, using quantitative analysis and examples from selected cases to test hypotheses drawn from the gendered theory of rebellion. Among the hypotheses that are supported, I find that economic grievances seem to play a significant role in motivating women. Those movements that include redistributive ideologies are about seven and a half times more likely to include women in noncombat roles, and are also significantly more likely to include women as combatants. My expectations about women’s participation in ethnoreligious movements also received some confirmation, with women more likely to contribute to these movements as supporters, but not as combatants—a dynamic that suggests these movements are appealing to women in the context of (rather than in opposition to) traditional gender roles. It is also worth noting that this chapter finds statistically significant differences between Islamist movements and all other ethnoreligious movements, with Islamist movements less likely overall to include women.

The explanations which fared most poorly here are those that were derived from “rational actor” models. In particular, selective benefits theory found no support among women. As with the case of the FMLN, cross-national analysis found no indication that women were profit seekers looking to join a rebellion for personal gain. Given that much of the extant literature on selective incentives is heavily masculinist (employing analytical techniques that minimize or exclude women’s roles as economic and political actors), scholars examining the topic of rebellion should particularly note this finding. Likewise, it also appears that women are not power seekers. Based on my analysis, I would go so far as to argue that women’s empowerment is more frequently a product of,
rather than a factor contributing to, women’s involvement in armed rebellion. The vast majority of all movements that include women offer no promise of political gender equality at all, yet women often find that their participation in these movements have a consciousness-raising effect, as in the cases of Ethiopia/Eritrea (ELPF) and El Salvador (FMLN).

Finally, I developed the concept of a human security grievance in part to address the narrow way in which “political grievance” is often defined, but the impact of this factor remains unclear. Chapter 4 clearly indicates that political terror—including torture, disappearances, and threats to the freedom of assembly and association—made some women choose to join the FMLN. However, Chapter 6 shows that cross-nationally the use of political terror may make women less likely to join movements in a combat capacity. This is a finding I hope to explore more in the future. Certainly, societies experiencing civil war tend to skew heavily toward higher levels of political terror.64 However, my inability to assess the impact of this measure over time may be impacting my findings.

Extension of Research and Future Directions

A greater understanding of how and why women participate in armed rebellion can inform political science and international policies in several important ways.

64 For example, the mean PTS score for all countries in the data is 4.1, meaning conceptually that the bulk of movements I have explored here exist in a climate somewhere between “large-scale” (4.0) and wholly pervasive (5.0) political torture (Wood and Gibney 2012).
First, understanding how and why women participate may provide insight into how a conflict unfolds. Research on the relationship between women in state governments and a state’s conflict behavior has shown that gender does make a difference. States where women have had suffrage longer, hold office at the national level, and participate in the workforce at higher rates have been shown to be more peaceful (Caprioli 2000). An increase of as little as 5% in the number of women in national office makes a country significantly less likely to go to war (Caprioli and Boyer 2001). It has also been suggested that states are more peaceful where women are physically secure and have greater equality to men, and that the status of women is linked to the likelihood of countries committing human rights abuses when they go to war (Hudson et al. 2008; Caprioli and Trumbore 2006). A logical extension of my research is to explore whether the contributions of women in rebel groups has similar impacts. Now that we have a picture of where and how women are participating in rebellion, does their participation make conflicts shorter or less severe? What impact does women’s participation have on levels of sexual violence in civil wars, a major issue in conflicts like those in the DRC, Liberia, Libya, and elsewhere? Does women’s participation influence how conflicts come to an end, given findings that suggest that women are more likely to negotiate in crisis situations and that mixed-gender negotiating teams are more successful at reaching agreements? (Boyer et al. 2009; McDermott and Cowden 2001) My assessment of women in leadership roles here has been limited, but the data I have collected show that these questions are worth exploring. Table 7-1, for example, looks at

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65 See, for example, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.
the movements where women played leadership roles between 1990 and 2008 (where my
data collection ends). In about half of these cases, a negotiated settlement of some sort
was reached. What is more notable, however, is that the vast majority—all but one—of
the resultant agreements include some gender-specific clauses.
Table 7-1. Conflict Resolution, for Rebel Groups With Women in Positions of Leadership, 1990-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negotiated Settlement*</th>
<th>Conflict Ended Without Settlement</th>
<th>Conflict Ongoing as of 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basque Homeland and Freedom (Spain)</td>
<td>Devrimci Sol (Turkey)</td>
<td>Communist Party of India—Maoist (India)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador)</td>
<td>People’s Liberation Army Manipur (India)</td>
<td>Communist People’s Party of the Philippines (Philippines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (Guatemala)</td>
<td>Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (Peru)</td>
<td>Karen National Union (Myanmar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moro National Liberation Front (Philippines)</td>
<td>Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (Ethiopia/Eritrea)</td>
<td>Kurdistan Worker’s Party (Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Angola)</td>
<td></td>
<td>National Liberation Army (Colombia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Irish Republican Army (UK)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Party of Free Life Kurdistan (Iran)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces (Colombia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanti Bahini (Bangladesh)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sendero Luminoso (Peru)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Italics indicates the inclusion of one or more gender-specific clauses in the peace agreement (Ellerby 2011).

It is entirely possible to link the prevalence of such gender-specific clauses to the emergence of a “gendered security” norm in the international community, as specified by Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000. However several of these agreements were negotiated prior to the year 2000. The 1994 accords ending the conflict in Guatemala been called avant-garde in their inclusion of gender clauses. While it is true that Guatemala, like El Salvador, experienced a flowering of women’s groups as the conflict

66 In the case of the EPLF, the Eritrea/Ethiopia conflict was “settled” by means of an internationally supervised referendum leading to Eritrean independence. While I don’t include that as a negotiated peace agreement, it is worth noting that the 1997 constitution of Eritrea (which has yet to reach full implementation) guarantees gender rights and its preamble specifically recognizes the role of women in the independence struggle.
proceeded and that these groups were putting pressure on negotiating parties to create a “gendered” peace, the number of civil society groups participating in the actual peace talks was limited. Ranking UNRG women also exercised influence here, and they played a significant role in putting gender issues on the table (Ellerby 2011; Luciak 2001). While exploratory, I believe this discussion shows the merit of further research on the relationship between women in rebel movement and conflict management/resolution.

The research conducted in this dissertation may also have implications for the way post-conflict transition programs are conducted. In an area that illustrates the difference between the legal promises and the practice of gender equality, women have often been excluded from full participation in disarmament and demobilization programs because their roles in the conflict are not adequately recognized or understood. In the case of El Salvador, information in Chapter 4 suggests that women benefited from land distribution and demobilization in a manner disproportionate to their actual contributions to the war effort. While it was estimated that 40% of tenedores (supporters of the FMLN who were not recognized as combatants) were women, women only represented about 35% of direct beneficiaries from land redistribution programs and only about 30% of personnel participating in internationally supervised disarmament programs (Conaway and Martinez 2004). Only about one in five “injured noncombatants” participating in official demobilization were women, a figure that by most estimates under-represents the true number of women who played a noncombatant role in the movement (Conaway and Martinez 2004; Luciak 2001).
The phenomenon of ignoring or downplaying the role of women in armed conflict in order to exclude them from post-conflict benefits is not just limited to this case. In Sierra Leone, where DDR programs required individuals to turn in a firearm in order to receive benefits, most RUF women did not participate. Women who had been armed combatants during the war reported that male commanders took their arms from them so that they could not participate, and many women were given the understanding that the DDR program was for men only (MacKenzie 2012; MacKenzie 2009; Mazurana and Carlson 2004). Though women and girls may have comprised up to 50% of RUF fighters by the end of the war, women and girls only represented 6.5% of demobilization participants (Mazurana and Carlson 2004). In Burundi as of 2006, UNICEF-led programs had only demobilized 26 girl soldiers from the CNDD-FDD, a number that does not adequately reflect the extent to which girls were used by the movement (Dilworth 2006).

In some areas, the special needs of women and girls who have been forced into participation with rebel groups are also not met. Services to deal with these issues would include mental health counseling as well as treatment for complications from brutal rapes, STDs, and births as a result of rape. These services are often unavailable or are under-utilized, due to inadequate promotion or their location outside or rural areas and conflict zones (Human Rights Watch 2008; Human Rights Watch 2007; Amnesty International 2004).

Where women are excluded from demobilization and disarmament programs, the long-term success of such programs may be in jeopardy. In the case of the RUF, women reported feelings of mistrust and suspicion toward the international community in the
years after the conflict. Some of this mistrust extended to fear, where women believed they would be retaliated against or stigmatized by representatives of the international community or other actors in post-conflict Sierra Leone (MacKenzie 2012; MacKenzie 2009). Can peace truly flourish in such an environment? In Northern Ireland, where Loyalist paramilitary women had little or no input into the drafting of major peace agreements like the Good Friday Agreement, anger and mistrust led women to become more vocal in their activism—including participation in strikes and protests (MacEvoy 2009).

Aside from these visible consequences, there is also the more difficult-to-measure influence that dissatisfied or mistrustful revolutionary women may have on the next generation, potentially shaping future views on war and peace for years to come. Whether or not we believe that women are the primary bearers of cultural beliefs and practices, mothers undoubtedly play some role in shaping the worldviews of their children. Given my findings here, particularly the knowledge that women are active in more than half of all rebel movements and that women have grievances distinct from those of their male comrades, there is no excuse for women to be ignored in such programs going forward. The road to lasting peace cannot be complete without taking into account the views and needs of women.

Finally, I believe this research also represents a starting point in understanding the processes that lead to gender equality in post-conflict societies. While my findings here show that a desire for access to the system, including gender equality and positions in
government, is not a primary motivation for women who join rebel movements, the case of El Salvador suggests that women’s presence in a movement can be transformative. The FMLN shows that women do rise to leadership positions in rebel movements even when women’s rights are not on the agenda. This case also suggests that a consciousness-raising process can take place when women reach a certain mass within a movement.

While the FMLN was accused of discrimination by some of the women in its ranks, many women did find a voice and allies during the war. The boom in civil society groups dealing with women’s issues in the closing years of the war and directly following the war ensured that women were heard in the new government and resulted in several reforms aimed at improving the lives of women (Kampwirth 2004).

Table 7-1 offers the suggestion that conflicts where women are participating in rebel groups at high levels may be more likely to end in gender-sensitive peace agreements. Among the types of gender issues addressed in these settlements are the representation of women in law enforcement bodies (El Salvador), the guarantee of universal suffrage (Angola), and gender quotas for local or national government (Bangladesh).

If it is true that the presence of women influences revolutionary movements and post-revolution governments to grant such rights to women, the consequences could be far-reaching. Though this dissertation does not include an examination of any of the rebel movements associated with the Arab Spring, many commentators have noted both the extent of women’s participation in these rebellions and the disappointing outcomes in countries like Egypt and Tunisia, where the promise of more rights and representation for
women has yet to be fulfilled. Perhaps a more open society created in part with the contributions of women will in turn create more space for women to organize and build upon the ties formed during rebellion. While the situation of women after the Arab Spring may seem disappointing now, in 10 to 20 years the situation could look very different as women translate their newfound experience into political activism.

I believe this work represents an advancement in our understanding of why women rebel and how they participate in armed rebel movements. Beyond that, this work contributes to our understanding of conflict overall by suggesting refinements to theories of conflict that are supposedly gender-neutral, but which have so far failed to explain why rebel movements vary so greatly in female participation. The data and findings created here can hopefully create a new dialogue among mainstream and feminist security scholars about gender and civil conflict. With implications for our understanding of how war is conducted, how post-conflict programs should be organized, and how gender equality can be achieved, there is a great deal at stake.

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67 For example, see Alami 2013; United Nations News Service 2013; Walt 2012.
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