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## **A PRELIMINARY RECONNAISSANCE: Female Combatant Participation in Nepal's Maoist People's War**

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## Abstract

Nearly sixteen years since 9-11, the quest to explain individual motivation for participation in “terrorism” has produced a body of gendered work of increasing sophistication. As illustrated by the case of female combatant participation in Nepal’s Maoist people’s war, however, conflation of irregular terminology confuses the issue as to the object of participation, thus the reasons for joining, staying, or leaving. For Nepali women, agency took the form of perceived self-defense enabled by structural deficiencies in Nepal’s democratic polity. Nonetheless, the organizational expression of solution, people’s war, was itself flawed, leading to a mixed legacy of revolutionary impulse.

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(District Map of Nepal)

## Introduction

As commentary on recent attacks (notably in United Kingdom) has highlighted,[1] few subjects challenge existing security analysis as completely as individual motivation for participation in terrorism.[2] The challenge itself is made all the more complex as a consequence of the present proclivity to label nearly any form of political violence as “terrorism” and any form of internal conflict as “civil war.”[3] The result is thus to seek causation from a poisoned data set, as if primary and secondary group phenomena, psychology and sociology, politics and crime, all are one and the same if only they can be shown to include a subset that is violence against the innocent. Put another way, dropping the atomic bomb becomes “terrorism” in the same category as the recent car bomb in the secure zone of Kabul in Afghanistan. This incorrect conflation highlights the difficulty of seeking motivation for participation in what obviously are disparate phenomena.

With this in mind, I have spent three months in Nepal during this academic year (July-September 2016, March-April 2017) examining female combatant motivation in the Maoist insurgency which wracked the country from February 1996 to November 2006.[4] It immediately becomes clear why terminology matters so. *What* was the violent political activity the female combatants were motivated to join – and how should they thus be labelled? Were they “terrorists” or something else?

## Terms of Reference

On the one hand, in Nepal, an insurgency against a democratic state used a people’s war strategy in an effort to seize power and institute a version of Maoism that overtly held – then and (ironically) now – that the pinnacle of political progress was the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.[5] Not only was terrorism integral to the insurgent effort – the most iconic image of the conflict is an executed teacher hanging from a pole after he refused to pay a revolutionary tax[6] – but the objective, Maoism, ranks well ahead of even Nazism as the bloodiest ideological crime ever inflicted upon the human race. The Cultural Revolution, in fact, was itself not only a monstrous episode but is considered to be such even by the Chinese. Surely, it might be argued, any participants in such an endeavor merit any label we care to give them, from terrorists to criminals to murderers.

On the other hand, leaders are not followers.[7] The mass mobilization movement that is an insurgency necessarily uses terrorism, but most participants generally do not. They are busy doing other things. We can make still another step further, given that this is the sixteenth year of what has oft been termed “the long war,” and ask, “Is it correct, as much literature would do, to say that individuals such as I will discuss below have been *radicalized*?[8] Or have they simply been *mobilized*,[9] individuals whom a group has used as means in the execution of ways to achieve its own (evil) ends? And what precisely should we call them? Fellow traveler? Clueless hanger-on? Unindicted co-conspirator?

Neither can it be missed that the focus here is female, thus bringing into play another level of analysis and, certainly, our stereotypes. It is a bit like the surprise that registers when one encounters the prominent role played in the post-World War I revival of the Ku Klux Klan by women[10] or prominent role in the ruthless Maoist movement Shining

Path (*Sendero Luminoso*).<sup>[11]</sup> Men, after all, goes the cliché, are from Mars, women are from Venus.<sup>[12]</sup>

Grappling with such concerns goes to the heart of the subject under consideration. Two issues, therefore, demand focus: subject and object.

If, as it has been in my study, the object of examination is an insurgency, the focus is a political mass mobilization project intent upon forming a new world to challenge with violence the existing world in order to supplant it. Terrorism is but one method among many, and there is limited utility in labelling the subjects involved as “terrorists.”

Necessarily, this also determines that speaking of radicalization is not particularly helpful, unless by the term we mean simply that anyone who moves from nonviolent to violent action has been “radicalized.” This is a stretch, since we would not use such a theoretical approach to describe the indoctrination into combat of those who serve the state.<sup>[13]</sup> In this case, we are examining those who have served a counter-state.

The subject – involvement of women – also demands attention. This can be pursued from two angles, not mutually exclusive but necessarily different.

First, in a violent political mass mobilization effort, why were women targeted and why did they respond eagerly, as evidenced by 20-40 percent of the combatants being female by war’s end? The broad band results from the fact that the 40 percent figure has entered into normal discussion of the insurgency but is supported by no data of which I am aware.<sup>[14]</sup> It is certainly possible, as will be discussed in the text that follows, that in certain areas, 40 percent of Maoist local cadre were women, but this is quite a different matter. Further, it cannot but arouse suspicion that the media typically claims as “40 percent women” groups as diverse as FARC and the PKK. This leads one to surmise that the figure has simply become a default position.<sup>[15]</sup>

Second, what did they actually do in the conflict, for better or for worse, and how did this jibe with their individual objectives for joining, staying, and leaving (certainly in the shift to post-war covert violence by the Maoists)? Though studies of female participation in “terrorism” often begin by highlighting how little work has been done in the area, there is in reality a very large body of research available when one frames correctly the project being examined.<sup>[16]</sup>

### **Engendering People’s War**

First, we must turn to context. Having evolved from a closed polity dominated by a hereditary prime minister to a constitutional monarchy reigning in uneasy partnership with a parliament, Nepal was by the 13 February 1996 outbreak of insurgency a formal democracy. In reality, socio-economic-political issues, complicated less by democratic process than by an exploding population and geographic reality (the country is both landlocked and dominated by rough terrain), resulted in a stratified order defined as much by community (a mix of Hindu caste, linguistic, and ethnic divisions), class (economically, one of the poorest countries on earth and as close to a zero-sum game as can be imagined), dysfunctional politics (near-fatally wounded by corruption and the universal practice of democratic centralism by all major political parties), and patriarchy.

Into this mix was thrown the determination of a small Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) to make a revolution.[17]

Working hand-in-glove with the Maoist parties that were members of RIM, the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, the Nepali Maoists questioned only the timing for the launching of their people's war not the morality or practicality of the endeavor.[18] Though male-dominated, the insurgent organization (a product of the usual infighting and factionalism that is integral to revolutionary politics) always included women. It was also true, though, that from first to last, the organization and its movement remained patriarchal and that no leadership position was entrusted to, or decision of moment eventuated from, a woman. Though a separate Women's Department existed throughout the struggle, headed by Hisila Yami *aka* Parvati, wife of the longtime second figure in the movement, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, it did not play a leadership role; and no woman occupied a position in decision-making.[19]

This should not surprise. Nepali Marxist analysis was never able to look beyond "class" as the fundamental contradiction from which all else derived and revolved. While basic political economy analysis serves to highlight cleavages,[20] and feminist theory today speaks to intersectionality,[21] the numerous fissures present in Nepal were not used in and of themselves as anything but tactical avenues of approach. Rather, they were presented as but symptoms of the economic situation (i.e., class). The poor position of women societally, which included various forms of violence (to include widespread rape[22]), was thus never treated as a theme for mobilization, only as an opportunity to bring individuals into an organizational matrix where indoctrination would reveal the ultimate class (i.e., economic) basis for their alienation and marginalization.

This was a flawed approach, but this did not become clear initially. Intersectionality, used in conjunction with cleavage analysis, was certainly a more powerful tool than a theory of contradictions driven only by class. This completely escaped Nepali Maoist theorists. Still, the fundamental point was that, unlike, say, most violent radical Islamist movements, the Maoists sought manpower wherever they could, even if it was "woman power." [23] Emphasis upon "exploitation" and "injustice," therefore, proved more than sufficient to produce a steady influx of women into the insurgency, a trend which dramatically accelerated once the people's war had moved (in planning as well as in reality) from the defensive to the stalemate and offensive phases of strategic unfolding.

A central point for research emerges from this fact. Maoist strategic approach called for violence to create the space for political organizing, with the Party firmly in control of strategy and operations. Terrorism and guerrilla action by local forces eliminated or neutralized individual resistance as well as the structure and forces of the state. Teachers, for example, more than 300 of whom were victims, were a particular target, as were local government offices at the county and district levels (there were 3,913 of the former, constituted as elected Village Development Committees, under 75 districts, which had appointed officials). Police, the armed local presence of the state, were forced to retreat to the district capitals and several urban centers as their smaller stations in rural areas (where 85 percent of the population lived) proved indefensible against a foe which could pick time and place for attack.

With the November 2001 assault upon the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) barracks in Ghorahi, capital of Dang District, the conflict shifted its emphasis to fielding of regular forces by the insurgents to challenge the military forces of the government.<sup>[24]</sup> Terrorism and guerrilla action continued, as did a variety of nonviolent forms of warfare, such as mobilization through front organizations, extensive use of propaganda (especially through agitprop teams energized through new, revolutionary song and dance), and efforts to neutralize external support for Kathmandu. Yet the focal point of insurgent effort became fielding battalions (constituted as standard squads, platoons, and companies), which themselves were under brigades and finally divisions.

It was only at this point that women began to flow in substantial numbers into the combatant ranks. This is why one can only speak of a 20-40 percent range. Prior to November 2001, most women in the insurgency, as with most manpower in general, were at the local level. Though they took part in terrorism, the numbers in guerrilla units were limited; indeed, so limited that experiments with all-female units were tried to maximize performance and incentives for recruiting. It also appears to be the case that local terrorism was overwhelmingly committed by men, to the near-exclusion (as per the available data) of reports of direct female acts. Women's participation in martial violence, however, was transformed by the widespread flow of women into regular combatant ranks, where they participated on an equal basis with men.

The implications of this brief description for this study should be clear. Combatant units were comparable to Viet Cong main force units and spent nearly all their time preparing for and executing "military" tasks. Though tasking might flow through channels directing a squad to report to local Party authorities for the purpose of executing a convicted "spy," the astonishing abuses that characterized the insurgency – 17,000 dead (victims of both sides) and an order of magnitude higher in terms of brutalized and kidnapped (primarily by the insurgents), with attendant criminality and violence necessary to raise funds and recruit manpower (again, overwhelmingly by the insurgents) – were in the main done by those outside my study's focus.

This division of labor is too often missed in recent studies as a consequence of the present near-universal tendency to dismiss the past in endeavoring to understand the present. Lost in the rush – to see, in particular, violent radical Islamist mobilization as "terrorism" – has been the reality highlighted earlier in citing the work of James C. Scott: insurgencies are complex organizations in which most participants' motives are in some manner divergent from the meta-narratives and even objectives of the political project. Leaders are politicians who assess the imperfections of the world and advance ideological solutions to the reformulation of the political opportunity structure.<sup>[25]</sup> Followers are in essence voters who are motivated by a wide variety of individual concerns,<sup>[26]</sup> now expressed in the "greed versus grievance" shorthand.<sup>[27]</sup> This formulation is often less than entirely useful when it becomes an analytical excuse for indifferent exploration of the complexity attendant to individual recruitment, but it does serve to highlight that only through indoctrination does the former give way to the latter. Certainly a common frame and narrative provided by culture, of which religion is a central component, serve to lower the bar necessary for indoctrination to take place. This has been a central feature of the violent radical Islamist cases (e.g., al-Qaeda and Islamic State) but was also important in Nepal, where the manpower was often, even

when from minority communities, largely a product of Hindu acculturation and caste socialization. Regardless, the point is that leadership, as in any political effort, must find a way to rally the side to the project at hand.[28]



*(Maoist women cadres with their male counterparts, Photo: Marks Collection)*

### **Motivation for Mobilization**

Still, given the realities of the insurgent organizational and strategic model adopted, all Nepali female combatants began as local Maoist party members. This necessarily resulted in a certain level of personal avoidance in post-war grappling with what had been seen and done, but this was no more than to be expected in a brutal conflict. It was, in fact, brutality which was the overwhelming driver creating the link between societal imperfection and the resort to violence to set matters right. The actual mechanism of establishing links with the insurgency was normally achieved through networks of family or friends who already had the desired connections.

In order to examine the counter-state, in-depth interviews were conducted with 45 female People's Liberation Army (PLA) veterans, overwhelmingly officers, with shorter interviews conducted with a dozen more. These were accessed through the PLA female veterans association, which claims some 5,000 members. There are reportedly an equal number of Party members who have not joined any formal organization. Selection of those interviewed was "top-down," in the sense that key female command

personalities were known in advance by name and were located, then interviewed, with subsequent interviews deriving from working down the chain of command.

Particular focus was upon women who had commanded at the battalion or brigade levels, though, in a major finding, it was determined that while the former position was earned through combat attainment, the latter was overwhelmingly *awarded* for PLA organizational reasons once the insurgents had entered regroupment camps, and then only to the second-in-command (2IC) level. A single female earned brigade command rank (of 33 slots under 7 divisions, the latter notionally of 5 brigades each), and she was promoted from a commissar position after the end of overt hostilities. Indeed, the promotion process for women, as will be discussed below, reflected patriarchal norms bending to expediency as much as realization of professional metrics.

Regardless of rank, each individual was engaged in an interview protocol which allowed stories of recruitment and career progression to unfold. All interaction was conducted in Nepali, and no individual *could* be interviewed in English (or even engaged in light conversation), a reality which extended to male combatants who were necessarily encountered in the course of the fieldwork (overwhelmingly, female ex-combatants were married to male ex-combatants). Two experienced female researchers with whom I have had longtime professional association were used simultaneously during each interview to ensure fidelity.<sup>[29]</sup> All contact was arranged through Maoist intermediaries, which allowed access to individuals who now are in rival Maoist factions but nonetheless had fought together in the common cause.

That cause, for the normal combatant, regardless of rank, was a quest for social justice. The perceived injustice attendant to a traditional society that remains in the bottom twenty economically was compounded by a sense of powerlessness stemming from the reality that the promise of democracy and formal ending of social inequities such as untouchability and patriarchy, in reality, had resulted in too little visible change for the overwhelming majority of the population. This was especially true for women, whom data demonstrate not only do the bulk of the work in Nepal but suffer from a high level of structural and personal violence. Being locked in a shed during monthly menstruation (*Chhaupadi*), for example, regardless of time of year, persists in certain areas of the country.<sup>[30]</sup> So, regrettably, does rape.<sup>[31]</sup>

The concept of “intersectionality” speaks to the mutually determinant and reinforcing nature of such “contradictions.” None exists in isolation, with the disadvantaged position of women a natural consequence. This is what positions them to allow particular insight into the insurgent recruiting dynamic. For it was the Maoists who stepped into the void.

Though it could be argued that societal progress was slowly being made, this was in a sense swallowed by several factors. First, there was the unmet expectation that democracy, which had been instituted in 1990, would make a difference more quickly than was the case. Second, there was the continuing patriarchal nature of the dominant political parties, which meant women’s voices were invariably used as tokens of enlightenment but held no power. Finally, there was a mushrooming population that by the 2001 census saw more than half the population 19 and under. For this group, there

was little if any memory of societal improvement, whatever its pace, only of an existing, imperfect world.

Into this void the Maoists interjected their narrative of exploitation, which framed democratic reality as feudal, capitalist exploitation by an internal colonial dynamic controlled by the Nepali-speaking top two Hindu castes, Brahmins and Chhetris, allied with the external imperial forces of America and India. Such a line would likely have remained on the sidelines were it not for the clumsy and brutal state response that interjected itself into areas of what was initially Maoist political as opposed to violent mobilization. The behavior of the unprepared police was a textbook case of creating the very conflict it sought to address. The army (there were no other services) would reinforce this dynamic but was committed only after it was attacked in late 2001. Similarly, a police field force, or Armed Police Force, APF, was only formed the same year. It would also suffer from instances of indiscipline, but it was too small to be a major player until late in the process of counterinsurgency.

As men bore the brunt of repression, it was they who dominated the insurgent profile. Yet as women saw their families and persons violated, they, too, flowed into the rebellion in increasing numbers. At this point in time, it is difficult to discern definitively the boundary between actual and perceived atrocity, but this was in a sense irrelevant as concerned mobilization. The dominant impetus to take up arms was the perceived need for self-defense, and it was this motivation which galvanized linking assessment of societal imperfection to political commitment. From the latter followed quickly the desire to “make a difference” through bearing arms.

Not surprisingly, this surfaced initially amongst minority populations in districts with exceptionally poor development metrics even by Nepali standards. From Rukum and Rolpa in the Mid-Western Development Region, the insurgency rapidly spread. Not only did these districts suffer at the hands of security forces’ indiscipline, but they had an ample number of veterans of military service (overwhelmingly in the Indian Gurkhas) who proved willing to pass on martial skills. Eagerly seeking to learn were recruits who reflected the astonishing youth of the Nepali population in general. Predictably, the Maoists focused upon recruiting the young. Of the 45 (full) interviewees, 17 were recruited when 15 and under, another 24 when between 16 and 18. Thus 91 percent of the total were very young, though most had at least some of what we would term a middle school education (again, I was interviewing overwhelmingly officers).

Whatever may be said as to their “child soldiers” status legally,<sup>[32]</sup> a more salient demographic point was that 33 of the sample, nearly three-quarters, came from families with 5 or more children (with 6 or more being a plurality). As an additional 6 subjects provided unclear data, only 5 of the women came from families with 3 or less children (oddly, there was no family with 4 children in the sample).

Though the conflict was a nationwide phenomenon, its concentration mirrored its violent birth and was concentrated in the western part of the country, with the heartland being in the Mid-Western region (wherein lie Rukum and Rolpa). The sample reflected this reality, though there was no particular dominance of groups that provided the initial impetus for revolt. Magars, for instance, though central to the takeoff of the insurgency, were prominently represented at battalion command level (3 of 5 in the sample) but

provided but one of the 6 brigade level (sample) command positions. As it is known that key commanders were in fact both Magar and male, it is possible that a different result would come from a reversed gender focus.

Regardless, Nepali was indicated in interviews as the movement language of command and interaction, though other ranks spoke whatever worked best in particular circumstances. Eye-witness accounts of Maoist assaults attest to the mix of languages spoken by combatants.[33] There appear to be no extant accounts of dissension in the ranks, and desertion was unusual, among women, very uncommon.



*(Maoist Women fighters, Photo: Marks Collection)*

### **You're in the Army (PLA) Now**

Actual entry into the Maoist movement was always through the Party. It was there that socialization and indoctrination occurred. The youth of recruits, the well-developed framing process inherent to people's war in general and the Nepali version specifically, and the commitment of veterans to the professed goal of societal transformation, all served to facilitate the rapid absorption of a Marxist-Leninist vocabulary and analytical approach to assessment and action. A system of commissars and consultative mechanisms reinforced the communist nature of the endeavor.

The transition to combatant, when it came, was a natural evolution. The desire to "make a difference" combined with the opportunity for direct action to propel most subjects willingly into the ranks of the PLA. The rapid expansion of the organization provided ample opportunity for advancement, and the Maoists demonstrated much greater awareness and flexibility in their utilization of individual skills than the state.

It could hardly have been otherwise given the realities of insurgency. The old-order was defending established prerogatives and procedures and deploying armed manpower as such. There was minimal understanding of the need for a holistic approach through whole-of-government mobilization that addressed the roots of conflict even as it addressed insurgent message and strategy. To be fair, the state had such limited means that it would have been in a difficult position regardless of approach. Still, its rigidity and lack of imagination were to some extent overcome only when a parallel military was in effect created through the formation of a U.S.-sponsored Ranger capability and the simultaneous fielding of officers who were products of Western military education and training, hence counterinsurgency thinking (which remains dominated by nonkinetic aspects in theory if not always in practice).

In contrast, the new-order that was “the revolution” reflected the time-tested principles of people’s war. This meant advancing on lines of effort that brought into play a correct mix of kinetic and nonkinetic campaigns for the purpose of neutralizing state power at the local level. Once the struggle to dominate the rural areas in order to encircle the urban areas had progressed to the effort to impose strategic stalemate through attacking the military head-on, a pronounced process of militarization put recruiting for the PLA into overdrive. It was in this period that female commanders came into their own. A combination of expansion and casualties (in what had been predominantly male-held positions) resulted in numerous women advancing to command even as a larger proportion of the line became female.

Estimates, as noted earlier, tend to throw out a figure of 40 percent, but this seems unlikely when examining the bulk of the conflict. It was only a pronounced surge in manpower recruitment that occurred after the collapse of the conflict’s second ceasefire, which took up the first half of 2003 (and was tactical upon the part of the Maoists), that saw a substantial increase in female numbers, perhaps to a third. Yet most of these saw limited combat.

Neither, though, should this estimate be applied to the movement as a whole, where it is entirely possible that figures for women could have reached 40 percent. It was in the Party organizations, both political and military (i.e., local forces), that manpower was concentrated. And at the local level, female participation, while not as widespread as for males, did not lag substantially behind. Only in the actual implementation of terrorism, as mentioned earlier, do women seem dramatically under-represented; and no woman interviewed admitted to participation or even to witnessing such acts – which were so numerous that they could not be missed – even as they would discuss, as relevant, participation in the structured execution of “spies” (i.e., executions carried out by PLA units responding to orders passed within the chain of command).

Regardless of the precise form of violence, for Nepali women to make the transition to combatant status required a level of commitment and determination that was commensurate with the societal barriers, both physical and mental, that stood in the way to participation as equals in combat operations. At the operational level, few allowances were made for male:female differences, particularly menses and pregnancy, with a proportion of the interviewees having engaged in combat while in advanced stages of pregnancy. The latter stemmed from consensual, officially-sanctioned

relationships only, because the movement maintained absolute control over participants' sexuality.

It was this equality of terms of service and participation in combat which has served to spark a debate concerning the female empowerment involved. One position, particularly those speaking from a radical perspective, lauded the trend and claimed it to be transformative. An opposing position emphasized the tactical and contingent nature of the equality, since the organization and its strategy remained, from first to last, a male-dominated project. Hisila Yami, head of the All Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary) and a Central Committee member, mentioned earlier, has been regularly lauded by foreign commentators for her central position in opening up avenues for women within the Maoist movement; but she in reality appears to have had little or no influence upon decision-making. Her role stemmed principally from her marriage to the longtime second ranking Maoist figure, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai.

Of greater moment were those female combatants who rose to PLA command positions, but they, to a woman, in interviews, were those whose observations most keenly reflected awareness of the limits imposed upon them by patriarchy – a term they used readily (and correctly), though it is hardly one derived from Maoist idiom. As noted earlier, no woman, regardless of combat attainment, was promoted to brigade command during the conflict; and the sole woman to become a brigade commander, Kamala Naharki *aka* Sapana (35 years [34]), was elevated only after the peace process was initiated and the PLA had moved into regroupment camps. This was also the case of important female battalion commanders such as Leela Sharma *aka* Asmita (35), Sushila Kumari Gautam *aka* Sushma (35), Sabrita Dura *aka* Astha (39), and Kushal Rakshya (32), though the latter may have received her promotion just before regroupment.

The one noticeable exception, Lila Mahara Paudel *aka* Kalpana (34), perhaps emphasizes the point. Though she had an exceptional combat record, with command at the intervening levels through brigade, she was but a brigade 2IC when peace came.

A number of explanations for this and other cases can be advanced. Kalpana herself noted in a discussion, "It was because women started participating in the war later than men. This is why there were fewer women in commanders' positions. Women joined later because of their lack of awareness. They needed to be oriented from scratch."

To be sure, actual combat experiences varied, but the Nepali conflict had by November 2002 at Jumla already seen a significant massing of insurgent main force battalions that sought to overrun government reinforced companies in defensive positions. Hence combatants were exposed to both small tactical actions and major engagements consequent to operational art, with converging columns, simultaneous attacks nationwide to confuse and diminish response, and integrated nonkinetic elements such as propaganda and front activity deployed to force-multiply. Women successfully commanded such actions and often had time-in-grade similar to men, so Kalpana's explanation requires further examination.

All major tactical actions embodied in operational art unfolded according to regularly promulgated strategic plans that explicitly sought political effects from the marriage of kinetic and nonkinetic actions. These were carefully explained before operations, then

critiqued in after-action sessions. In interviews, women time and again emphasized the liberating and empowering impact of such consultation.

### **Legacy of War**

The overt phase of conflict was 1996-2006. Thereafter, 2006-2016, a covert effort was waged to seize power using paramilitary forces, notably the Young Communist League (YCL) and student organizations.[35] Most female combatants appear not to have participated in this second decade of strife, though certainly some did, as well as many female Party activists. Leadership of the effort was, as during the overt phase, essentially male. Nonparticipation in the main, however, stemmed from the most prosaic of causes: domesticity.

Even as women advanced in the combatant ranks, profound political changes saw the reigning monarch declare royal rule in early 2005.[36] This had the effect of sidelining the legal political parties, which, under Indian auspices (New Delhi marching to its own regional hegemonic requirements), formed a united front with the Maoists to overthrow the monarchy. Once achieved, though, this action gave way to the violent transitional period noted above. As decided at a key September 2005 strategy meeting, the Maoists had opted for peace as a tactical gambit.

Already in control of 80 percent of the population, they intended the “post-war” period to provide access to the “white areas” (i.e., those under state control) and the opportunity for mass, decisive action (i.e., an urban uprising) in these same areas.[37] Central to this strategy was the peace provision that placed both the military and the PLA in supervised areas, the former in its normal barracks, the latter in newly constructed regroupment camps.

Even as the PLA moved into these camps, though, key PLA personnel moved out into the YCL, with their places taken by local forces and new recruits. It was this reality that opened up the brigade level command slots (albeit 2IC) for women. In fact, though some women moved laterally into the paramilitary YCL, most did not.

Instead, as the years wore on – five, altogether – marriage and starting a family became the chosen course of action. Potential partners were overwhelmingly selected through traditional pairing procedures, though in the revolutionary movement, choice was always necessary. In pairing, as well, traditional norms asserted themselves, with the male often of senior rank to the female.

Not traditional at all, however, was the overwhelming domination of out-marriage (i.e., intercommunal pairings). This breaking of the mold obviously extended, examination indicated, to the actual nature of the spousal relationships.

Ironic, given the explicit targeting of “bourgeois education” by the Maoists, was the total commitment to education of their children expressed by every interviewee. Though several did not yet have children (and couple of them have remained single), most had two or more and (as determined through the interview process) were going to exceptional lengths to see to their education.

It was the loss of their own educational opportunities which was most regretted by many of the ex-combatants when asked to reflect upon their choice “to join the revolution,” the

terminology used by all. None, though, felt that they were taken advantage of with respect to their youth. Rather, they compared themselves to those populations which found themselves savagely occupied in wartime and hence produced resistance movements in which all, regardless of age or gender, participated.

Most now see value in the armed political project to which they committed themselves, and most see profound change in Nepali society as a result of their efforts. Simultaneously, though, there is a mix of wistfulness at unrealized potential accompanied by bitterness, often very direct even extreme, directed at senior Party figures who it is felt have parlayed their position atop rapidly changing circumstances into power and wealth. In contrast, a large proportion of the combatants, certainly many *below* officer rank, have struggled.

This reality has been extensively covered in Nepali and some foreign outlets.<sup>[38]</sup> Many of the women interviewed, both those questioned in-depth and those of the more brief encounters, had been wounded; they spoke of symptoms that clearly were associated with PTSS; and they noted the profound disconnect they now experienced with a still very traditional society. As a private self-help organization, Ex-PLA Women's Academy was formed in 2013 but proceeds with limited funding.

None of the support network that came into being in the U.S. with the return of the First World War veterans exists in Nepal. Demobilization, when it finally came, brought a lump sum payment, which the astute parlayed into employment or lodging; but for most, it was too little to make up for youth devoted to a great cause which had given way to a new-order that looked remarkably like the old.

This bears comment. Speaking as a longtime observer, I find Nepal has advanced considerably in the past two decades. The key question is whether violence was necessary to achieve that end. The question was put to every interviewee. The answers should give pause.

Most women were obviously empowered personally by their experiences and their Marxist-Leninist education, especially officers. Experiences allowed the breaking of societal strictures and the growth that went with command and achievement under the most severe circumstances. The particular education of Marxist-Leninism, driven overwhelmingly by the need to identify contradictions and to rank order enemies, provided a methodology to structurally analyze society and its shortfalls. Unfortunately, as Max Weber is purported to have observed, Marx was 100 percent correct, he simply [in claiming all stemmed from economics] missed two-thirds of reality, the other legs of the stool being status and politics.

Though I found none who had heard of Weber, the interviewees know they are missing something, and they label it "education." They are determined to see that their children are schooled, and a majority spoke bitterly of their youthful acceptance of the Maoist line that they were receiving "bourgeois education" that was "useless." They are not completely sure what a good education looks like, but they know what they have learned in the Party is not sufficient. In fact, it is the remaining legs of the Weberian analytical triad that are missing. Not one of the interviewees today supports the notion that class trumps all.

Worse, with Leninism thrown in atop Marxism, they have an approach for destruction but none for construction. Nepali Maoism, to return to the point made at the beginning of this article, exults as the zenith of human progress what in reality was one of its great depths, the Cultural Revolution. Not even acknowledged by the Maoist leadership – I know this from interviews with them – is the reality that the abomination of Pol Pot’s “Year Zero” resulted from an attempt to out-Maoist the Maoists. To take this a step further, every interviewee was asked, beyond *jus ad bellum* (i.e., was it right to go to war, to use violence?), to reflect upon *jus in bello* (i.e., the conduct of the war). The inability to grapple with this issue has already been noted.

Senior figures, however, to include all those at the brigade level, were keenly aware of the strategic approach integral to people’s war: the need to destroy the old-order to create the new. This meant, as articulated directly by all, that the power of the state – exerted through its personnel and institutions in local areas – had to be neutralized. To the extent this could *only* be achieved with violence, then such was reality.

The obvious contradiction in this analysis, particularly when the object is a democratic state, however imperfect, was long ago addressed by Lenin. It is the vanguard party, he stated, that is the bearer of correct interpretation of societal realities and the necessary way forward. That position, as irony would predict, was offered by no interviewee, regardless of current level of political awareness or involvement.

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## End Notes

[1] E.g. Max Fisher and Amanda Taub, “Looking for Meaning in Terrorism,” *The New York Times*, 24 May 2017, which delves into the psychology of the May 2017 suicide bombing in Manchester; available at various but see: <http://www.tiffehr.com/post/161037488425/the-interpreter-looking-for-meaning-in-terrorism> (accessed 14 June 2017); and Anjana Ahuja, “Psychologists Delve Into the Mind of a Terrorist,” *Financial Times*, 7 June 2017 (Wed), 9, which appeared after the early June 2017 London Bridge car ramming and shooting of pedestrians by a trio who were shot by responding police officers; available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/eb62e2a4-4a0b-11e7-a3f4-c742b9791d43> (accessed 14 June 2017).

[2] My definition accords with that used by most of academia, the various departments of the U.S. government, and both U.S. and international law: violence by sub-state actors directed against the innocent for political purposes. Despite the by now hackneyed observation that there is no accepted definition of terrorism, in reality there is considerable agreement with the formulation just provided, particularly amongst the states of the United Nations. For discussion see esp. Reuven Young, “Defining Terrorism: The Evolution of Terrorism as a Legal Concept in International Law and its Influence on Definitions in Domestic Legislation,” *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* 29, no. 1 (1 December 2006), 23-84; available at: <http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=iclr> (accessed 1 June 2017).

[3]The bastardization of the term “civil war” is covered, albeit briefly, in the larger excellent discussion of the term in a recent work: David Armitage, *Civil Wars: A History in Ideas* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), see esp. the discussion in the final chapter (pp.196-239), which notes the creation of a state of civil war (traditionally, a house divided against itself) through the adoption of arbitrary quantitative measures driven by nothing more than a need to be able to count cases. This has led to a well-nigh total abuse of the term and to its lack of analytical utility. The conflict in Colombia, for instance, typically identified as a “civil war” due to the level of internal violence, was not in any way a battle between contending sides gathering to themselves allegiance in such manner as to create a state of belligerency. For the actual situation, wherein the main challenge for power was driven by a criminal fundraising profile dominated by narcotics, kidnapping, and extortion, see Thomas A. Marks, “FARC, 1982-2002: Criminal Foundation for Insurgent Defeat,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 28, no.3 (June 2017), 488-523.

[4] Funding was provided by a MINERVA grant.

[5] Perhaps predictably, there has been an increasing tendency in the past decade to read back into the *overt* conflict (1996-2006) an ostensible Maoist ideological moderation which simply was not there at the time. In late 2008, for example, Nanda Kishor Pun *aka* Pasang, *Red Strides of the History: Significant Military Raids of the People’s War*, trans. Sushil Bhattarai (Kathmandu: Agnipariksha Janaprapakashan Griha, October 2008), iii, asserted: “For the extermination of the old order, the People’s War (PW) was initiated on 13 February, 1996 under the efficient leadership of Chairman Com. Prachanda by CPN (Maoist). The people’s war is advancing continuously in the wave-like forms horrifying the domestic and foreign enemies and creating a hurricane to shake the world. Awaking the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the PW is advancing forward ideologically and politically for a revolutionary social, economic and cultural transformation following the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), and is oriented to develop Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.” At the time he authored the original text in Nepali, Pun was the head of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). A member of the mainstream faction, he later became the vice president of Nepal as part of the bargaining that led to a political power-sharing agreement. Likewise, see “Nepal: Interview With Comrade Baburam Bhattarai,” 12 December 2009, available at <http://marxistleninist.wordpress.com/2009/12/12/baburam-bhattarai-on-nepals-social-revolution/#more-4155>(accessed 1 June 2017), wherein Bhattarai (then the mainstream Maoist second figure) – while repeatedly lauding the Cultural Revolution, goes to the extent of responding to a radical questioner by responding, “Yes we think the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was the pinnacle of revolution not only in the 20th century but in the whole history of the liberation of mankind. It is the pinnacle of the development of revolutionary ideas. So all the revolutionaries must make the Cultural Revolution their point of departure and develop the revolutionary idea and plan further.”

[6] Mallika Aryal, “Open Wounds,” *Nepali Times*, 5 February 2010; available at: <http://nepalitimes.com/news.php?id=16781#.VNtgLT8cRZs> (accessed 1 June 2017).

[7] Benchmark work on this subject remains James C. Scott, “Revolution in the Revolution: Peasants and Commissars,” *Theory and Society* 7, no. 1 (March 1979), 97-134; available at

(subscription): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/657000.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A43cc17853504ec4790407c7554c7d454> (accessed 1 June 2017). Perhaps my own most cited contribution that deals explicitly with the subject is “Ideology of Insurgency: New Ethnic Focus or Old Cold War Distortions?” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 107-28; available at (subscription): <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09592310410001677014> (accessed 1 June 2017).

[8] Basics of the discussion may be accessed through Eitan Y. Alimi, Charles Demetriou, and Lorenzo Bosi, *The Dynamics of Radicalization: A Relational and Comparative Perspective* (NY: Oxford, 2015), supplemented by Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* (NY: Oxford, 2011).

[9] A shortcoming of much recent work on political violence, particularly insurgency, is that it divorces the discussion from the fundamental reality that it is, first and foremost, *political*. That is, when agreement on the distribution of rights, resources, privileges, and obligations cannot be reached elsewhere, blows must decide. Any number of salient works make this point, but for our purposes premier treatment remains Douglas Pike, *Viet Cong: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1966), as well as his *PAVN* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1986). My own early contribution to this discussion, which remains in print, is *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 1996); Nepal is added to the cases under discussion in my later *Maoist People’s War in Post-Vietnam Asia* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 2007).

[10] See e.g. Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

[11] See e.g. Isabel Coral Cordero, “Women in War: Impact and Responses,” Ch. 10 (pp. 345-74) in Steve J. Stern, *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998). Stern himself provides succinct but useful introductory remarks to the chapter at pp. 341-44. Therein, he highlights Robin Kirk, *Grabado en Piedra: Las Mujeres de Sendero Luminoso* [*Carved in Stone: The Women of Shining Path*] (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1993). Omar García-Ponce has also pursued the subject in a number of works, to include “Women’s Political Participation in the Aftermath of Civil War: Evidence From Peru,” unpublished draft dated 25 October 2015; available at: [http://omargarciaponce.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/GarciaPonce\\_job\\_market\\_paper.pdf](http://omargarciaponce.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/GarciaPonce_job_market_paper.pdf) (accessed 1 June 2017).

[12] Neither should it be thought that this orientation is solely one of popular culture. Its easily falsifiable nature notwithstanding, it also surfaces in more than a few academic works on gender. The phrase, of course, comes from the John Gray bestseller of the same title (NY: Harper Collins, 1992) dealing with (his) observed gender distinctions.

[13] By way of disclaimer, I entered the U.S. Army at but 17½ years of age and was first in the field at 19 (which resulted in a decoration). I did not consider myself “radicalized” (or, for that matter, misled).

[14]Kiyoko Oqura, for instance, observes that about 20 percent of the Maoist combatants in the regroupment camps after the formal end of hostilities were women, which was “one of the highest levels of participation by women in conflict anywhere.” See her “A Chapamaar’s Peace,” *HIMAL Southasian* (July 2009); available at: <http://old.himalmag.com/component/content/article/565-a-chapamaars-peace.html> (accessed 14 June 2017).

[15] Having done extensive work on FARC, for instance, I know of no data that would support a 40 percent figure, albeit with the same qualification that particular time and place could produce a unit (of which I am unaware) that had reached such a gender distribution.

[16]Appropriate literature is voluminous, because there has long been investigation of the gendered facets of internal upheaval. One thinks immediately of the excellent work done on the various revolutionary upsurges of the past: e.g. Sara E. Melzer and Leslie W. Rabine, *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution* (NY: Oxford UP, 1992); Dave Barry, *Women and Political Insurgency: France in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1996) Gay L. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1996); Edith Thomas, *The Women Incendiaries [Paris Commune]*, trans. James and Starr Atkinson (NY: George Braziller, 1966); Richard Stites, *The Women’s Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1978); Jane McDermid and Anna Hillyar, *Midwives of the Revolution: Female Bolsheviks and Women Workers in 1917* (Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1999); Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (NY: Cambridge UP, 1997); and Wendy Adele-Marie Sarti, *Women and Nazis: Perpetrators of Genocide and Other Crimes During Hitler’s Regime, 1933-1945* (Bethesda, MD: Academica Press, 2012). As evidenced by the publication dates, all of these appeared before 9-11 and the emergence of “terrorism” as the default term to describe their actions. More traditional directions for analysis, relevant to the discussion in this article, are evident from the titles of a small selection of gendered considerations of irregular warfare: e.g. Sandra C. Taylor, *Vietnamese Women at War: Fighting for Ho Chi Minh and the Revolution* (Lawrence, KS: UP of Kansas, 1999); Karen Kampwirth, *Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2002); Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle* (Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2004); Vina A. Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009); Lisa Lines, *Milicianas: Women in Combat in the Spanish Civil War* (Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, 2012); and Jelena Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance* (NY: Cambridge UP, 2015). Illustrative of the current era are: e.g. Rosemarie Skaine, *Female Suicide Bombers* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006); Mia Bloom, *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); and Tanya Narozhna and W. Andy Knight, *Female Suicide Bombers: A Critical Gender Approach* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016). One hastens to add that none of the “suicide bomber” treatments cited here are reductive, demonstrating throughout awareness of the terminological and analytical issues in play. Indeed, this is the hallmark of much recent work, even as publishers and popular treatments often push for sensation; very

useful are: Caroline O.N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark, *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence* (NY: Zed Press, 2001); Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (NY: Zed Press, 2007), and their later *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking About Women's Violence in Global Politics* (NY: Zed Press, 2015); Cindy D. Ness, ed., *Female Terrorism and Militancy: Agency, Utility, and Organization* (NY: Routledge, 2008); R. Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly, *Women as Terrorists: Mothers, Recruiters, and Martyrs* (Denver, CO: Praeger, 2009); Seema Shekhawat, ed., *Female Combatants in Conflict and Peace: Challenging Gender in Violence and Post-Conflict Reintegration* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); and Jessica Davis, *Women in Modern Terrorism: From Liberation Wars to Global Jihad and the Islamic State* (Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).

[17] Thorough discussion of the genesis of this voluntarism is Benoît Cailmail, A History of Nepalese Maoism Since its Foundation by Mohan Bikram Singh, *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research* 33-34 (2008-2009), 11-38; available at: [http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/ebhr/pdf/EBHR\\_33%2634\\_02.pdf](http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/ebhr/pdf/EBHR_33%2634_02.pdf) (accessed 13 June 2017).

[18] Shining Path's example was central in the debate on the timing for launching the people's war and the strategy to be followed, as related in a 22 August 2016 interview (with author) by Mr. Shobhakar Acharya, a lifelong Party member and editor of the Maoist weekly newspaper, *Jama Uphar*, in 1999-2000. The Nepali Maoists continue to proclaim solidarity with Shining Path and would, under proper circumstances, not hesitate to reprise their December 2010 sponsoring of the son of imprisoned Shining Path leader, Abimael Guzman, as the guest of honor at the Party's youth organization's 18<sup>th</sup> National Convention (held in Kathmandu).

[19] A contending view would be that of Yami herself; see her "Women's Leadership and the Revolution in Nepal," *Monthly Review*, 21 February 2003; available at: <https://monthlyreview.org/commentary/womens-leadership-and-the-revolution-in-nepal/> (accessed 1 June 2017).

[20] The essential concept is not unlike that of *contradictions* as utilized in Marxist analysis but embraces the three systems of social stratification integral to Weberian analysis, adding status and political to economic, thus greatly enhancing analytical relevance – particularly with respect to a concept such as gender. Seminal works on cleavage remain those of the late Stein Rokkan: *Citizens, Elections, Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Processes of Development* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970), and *State-Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe: The Theory of Stein Rokkan, Based on his Collected Works*, ed. Peter Flora with Stein Kuhnle and Derek Urwin (NY: Oxford, 1999). Also useful is Simon Bornschier, "Cleavage Politics in Old and New Democracies," *Living Reviews in Democracy* (2009), 1-3; available at: [https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/cis-dam/CIS\\_DAM\\_2015/WorkingPapers/Living\\_Reviews\\_Democracy/Bornschier.pdf](https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/cis-dam/CIS_DAM_2015/WorkingPapers/Living_Reviews_Democracy/Bornschier.pdf) (accessed 1 June 2017), wherein the author emphasizes, crediting Bartolini and Deegan-Krause (p.2), the degree to which a cleavage is a "compounded divide" that is social-structural, an element of collective identity, and an organizational manifestation. For the

Marxian approach relevant here see the much-cited Mao Tse-tung, "On Contradiction" (August 1937), available, among numerous options, in *Selected Readings From the Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), 70-108; or: [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_17.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_17.htm) (accessed 1 June 2017). For a basic, introductory explanation of the more powerful Weberian approach, see Mark N. Hagopian, *Regimes, Movements, and Ideologies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (NY: Longman, 1984), 19-25.

[21] As per Collins, "The term intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but rather as reciprocally constructing phenomena. Despite this general consensus, definitions of what counts as intersectionality are far from clear." From Abstract to Patricia Hill Collins, "Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas," *Annual Review of Sociology* 41, no. 1 (2015), 1-20; available at (subscription): <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142?> (accessed 1 June 2017). Seminal thinking on the concept was work done by Kimberle Crenshaw; see e.g. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (July 1991), 1241-99; available at: [http://socialdifference.columbia.edu/files/socialdiff/projects/Article\\_Mapping\\_the\\_Margins\\_by\\_Kimblere\\_Crenshaw.pdf](http://socialdifference.columbia.edu/files/socialdiff/projects/Article_Mapping_the_Margins_by_Kimblere_Crenshaw.pdf) (accessed 1 June 2017).

[22] Most comprehensive treatment of this societal reality in Nepal is Mandira Sharma and Seira Tamang, eds., *A Difficult Transition: The Nepal Papers* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2016). The introduction speaks to the general theme of the materials presented in the volume: Seira Tamang, "Contextualizing Nepal's Permissive Environment for Sexual Violence and Impunity," xxi-xxxvii.

[23] Armed left-wing impulse (in this case, Maoism) and violent radical Islamism should not be considered, as they often are, as mutually exclusive mobilization efforts. The extent to which they mirror each other is superbly discussed by Charles Lindholm and José Pedro Zúquete, *The Struggle for the World: Liberation Movements for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2010). The authors highlight the extent to which both are "aurora movements," the latest in a struggle to build a future by vanquishing the past.

[24] This attack, upon a city of 43,000, signaled the Maoist shift to the "strategic offensive." The first attack upon a district capital had been on 24 September 2000 against Dunai, Dolpa), but that and similar actions had avoided directly assaulting the army. This changed with the Ghorahi action. For attack details, see Pasang, *op.cit.*, 112-23. In addition to establishing the vulnerability of the military and bringing it into the conflict, substantial quantities of advanced weaponry and munitions were captured (requiring a dozen trucks to remove), together with NPR 50 million in cash (USD 660,000 at the time).

[25] Every political system is comprised of a structure that either speaks to and facilitates individual and group opportunity – or does not. For democratic systems, legitimacy is essential; for authoritarian systems, power is central. Intellectuals consume themselves endeavoring to theorize on and demonstrate the extent to which

democracy exists through mystification and building an intangible structure of false consciousness. Gramsci remains a particular favorite of this genre, and he offers a great deal that is useful; but the vulgar Marxism that holds individuals are incapable of exercising agency due to systemic entrapment founders whenever adequate safeguards are in place to allow the exercise of free will (e.g., secret ballots, a free press, the rule of law). Benchmark original work on the political opportunity structure is Peter K. Eisinger, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," *The American Political Science Review* 67, no. 1 (March 1973), 11-28; available at (subscription): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1958525.pdf?refreqid=excelsior:24750156a2de852b089b3daff48d82a6> (accessed 2 June 2017). For a useful illustration of the dynamic at work (as well as the playing out of cleavages, contradictions and even intersectionality), see Gregory D. Squires and Chais E. Kubrin, *Privileged Places: Race, Residence, and the Structure of Opportunity* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006). For Gramsci, see especially Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds., *Selections From the Prison Notebooks* (NY: International, 1989 ed.); available as an e-book at: [http://courses.justice.eku.edu/PLS330\\_Louis/docs/gramsci-prison-notebooks-vol1.pdf](http://courses.justice.eku.edu/PLS330_Louis/docs/gramsci-prison-notebooks-vol1.pdf) (accessed 2 June 2017). For further discussion see especially two works by Kate Crehan: *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2002), and *Gramsci's Common Sense: Inequality and its Narratives* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2016).

[26] See Marks, "Ideology of Insurgency." This point is best explored through the numerous local studies which exist for significant irregular conflicts. Cases span the gamut from the American Revolution to the Vietnam War and now Iraq and Afghanistan. For the latter, see a recent fascinating contribution exploring the anti-insurgent side: Matthew P. Dearing, "A Double-Edged Sword: The People's Uprising in Ghanzi, Afghanistan," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 28, no. 3 (June 2017), 576-608.

[27] In the post-Cold War context, the emergence of new sources of funding produced new motivations for alienation from existing political opportunity structures. Exploration of this phenomenon was logical but quickly degenerated as all forms of armed irregular activity were conflated, often termed insurgency or even terrorism. This lumped together dissimilar activities, not least the criminal and the political. Criminality is always present tactically in the funding profile of an insurgent group, but a criminal group which tactically adopts certain insurgent methods does not thus become "a criminal insurgency," as seductive as the term is in the fierce market for theoretical recognition and scholarly branding. The so-called "terror-crime nexus" is real at the tactical and even operational level but not beyond. Insurgency is a strategic category as is crime and must be so-treated in analysis. For one of the earliest treatments of new motivations for "rebellion" in the present age of globalization, see Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*, Policy Research Working Paper 2355 (Washington, DC: The World Bank, May 2000); available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/359271468739530199/pdf/multi-page.pdf> (accessed 2 June 2017). The study speaks to "rebellion," which becomes "civil war" when meeting a standard but erroneous statistical threshold (refer to n.2 above). It is only too obvious how other scholars would just as erroneously throw into the same analytical stew "insurgency" and even "criminal insurgency."

[28] This point is laid out directly by Mao in his “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership” (1 June 1943); see *Selected Readings From the Works*, 234-39; available at: <http://www.marx2mao.com/Mao/QCML43.html> (accessed 1 June 2017). Ironic indeed is the near universal focus in the West upon *Guerrilla Warfare*, attributed to Mao but never published in his *Selected Works* during his lifetime and more likely the product of a collective (possibly even staff) effort. People’s war, as illustrated by “Some Questions...,” is anything but “guerrilla warfare,” as Mao himself said time and again. It is armed politics, with violence the shaping mechanism necessary to open up political space, not as warfighting *per se*.

[29] All interviews were taped, which included permission to proceed. This permissions procedure emerged quickly when it became clear that interviewees were profoundly hesitant to sign anything but quite willing to orally give consent to be recorded and to have permission recorded. Though they generally went by their alias names, to which they had grown accustomed during the conflict, only one declined to give her actual name.

[30] See e.g. D.B. Buda, “74% Women in Jumla Still Sent to Sheds During Menstruation,” *Republica*, 1 June 2017; available at: <http://www.myrepublica.com/news/21037/> (accessed 2 June 2017).

[31] As noted previously, the best source on this subject remains *A Difficult Transition* (see n.22 above).

[32] The Maoists have essentially been given a pass as concerns this aspect of the conflict. The topic of their widespread use of “child soldiers” has been little discussed and certainly not subject to the sort of legal interventions one associates with the various conflicts in Africa; it is approached in *Children in the Ranks: The Maoists’ Use of Child Soldiers in Nepal* (NY: Human Rights Watch, February 2007); available at: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nepal0207webwcover.pdf> (accessed 14 June 2017).

[33] See e.g. the comments of participants and observers noted by Kiyoko Ogura in her excellent “Realities and Images of Nepal’s Maoists After the Attack on Beni.” *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research* 27 (2004): 67-125; available at: [http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/ebhr/pdf/EBHR\\_27\\_04.pdf](http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/ebhr/pdf/EBHR_27_04.pdf) (accessed 14 June 2017).

[34] All combatant ages are as of September 2016. Nearly all interviewees were very young at the time of interview, a decade after the formal conclusion of hostilities, a reality highlighting their youth during the conflict.

[35] See Thomas A. Marks, “Enduring Dilemmas: Nepali Insurgency Redux,” *Mantraya*, Occasional Paper #02 in Mapping Terror and Insurgent Networks Project (28 January 2017); available at: <http://mantraya.org/enduring-dilemmas-nepali-insurgency-redux/>; reprinted in *Eurasia Review*, 30 January 2017; available at: <http://www.eurasiareview.com/30012017-enduring-dilemmas-nepali-insurgency-redux-analysis/>; reprinted in *Review Nepal*, 3 February 2017; available at: <http://reviewnepal.com/articles/enduring-dilemmas-nepali-insurgency-redux.html>.

[36] Perhaps best conceptualized as a state of emergency arguably allowed by the constitution but no less controversial for that fact, particularly given its needless truncation of the very political activity essential to counter Maoist mobilization – which, to reiterate the point made above, focused upon violently neutralizing non-Maoist political activity in local space.

[37] The relevant wording from the resolutions of the November 2005 meeting states [translated from the Nepali]: “To extensively militarize the party, authority, party members, and people and attempt to configure, specialize, and training the People’s Liberation Army to take necessary action in cities, center, region, district, and capital [Kathmandu].”

[38] See e.g. Deepak Adhikari, “Female Nepali Ex-fighters Still Struggling 10 Years After War’s End,” *DPA International*, 22 December 2016; available at: <http://www.dpa-international.com/topic/female-nepali-ex-fighters-still-struggling-10-years-war-end-161222-99-629131> (accessed 14 June 2017); “Reintegration Challenges for Maoist Female Ex-combatants,” *IRIN*, 14 April 2010; available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/88806/nepal-reintegration-challenges-maoist-female-ex-combatants> (accessed 14 June 2017).

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Web link to the occasional paper: <http://mantraya.org/occasional-paper-female-combatant-participation-in-nepals-maoist-peoples-war/>