# Road Warriors: State Power, Territorial Control, & Popular Support in Insurgencies

Richard K. Morgan[‡]
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Political Science, Emory University

September 12, 2016

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## Abstract

In countries with an active insurgency, under what conditions will increases in state coercive power and territorial control improve support for the state? One school of thought is that noncombatant support is a function of coercive territorial control. Theories of this nature find support in studies that focus on governmental wars, such as Vietnam and Greece. However, empirical support fades as researchers move beyond this type of conflict. Recognizing these irregularities, this dissertation presents a *conditional control-collaboration* theory of support in insurgencies. The central proposition is that the political goal of the insurrection – territorial or governmental – and whether insurgent elites make appeals to identity or to ideology when mobilizing the noncombatant population condition the effects state power and territorial control have on popular support. This project uses data on (1) the Maoist governmental/ideology insurgency in Central India, and (2) the Bodoland territorial/identity conflict in Assam, India to test this theory. .

## Note to the Reader

What follows are two chapters of my dissertation: the introduction and an expanded version of Chapter 6. This version of Chapter 6 contains a brief literature review and conceptualization section, a theory section, and section covering an empirical test of a primary assumption – road development increases the frequency in which security forces patrol an area. These sections are condensed versions of Chapters 2, 3, and 4. This approach is necessary for clarity, as many of the topics covered rely on information presented in these earlier chapters.

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[‡] rkmorga@emory.edu

# Contents

**Chapter 1**

**The Conditional Effects of State Power in Insurgencies, an Introduction**

The 2001 US-led war in Afghanistan sparked renewed scholarly and policy interest in the violent political phenomenon known as *insurgency*. For policymakers, developing solutions to and understanding the causes of violent political insurrections promise to remain a prominent US foreign policy objective for years to come, if for no other reason that governments and the international community will continue to face insurgent violence in countries such as Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and elsewhere. For international relations scholars, the renewed interest in insurgency came at the heels of another paradigm shift in the sub-field. With the end of the Cold War, many international relations scholars shifted their research agendas from traditional topics of the sub-field towards intrastate war. This early research on intrastate conflict provides important insights; however, many dynamics unique to insurgencies remain substantially underdeveloped.

This dissertation addresses these issues, asking the following questions: In countries with an active insurgency, under what conditions does the expansion of state coercive power into a restive periphery shift the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences in the state's favor? And, how do these shifts in the balance of popular support affect the type, target, and frequency of political violence by either combatant? While prominent in many theories of intrastate conflict processes, neither scholars nor policymakers are confident as to how state coercive power and territorial control might interact with other dimensions unique to insurgent conflicts. The international relations literature provides useful insights into the relationships between state coercive power and civil war processes in general, but the theoretical underpinnings of these important relationships are fragile with respect to insurgent civil conflicts, specifically. By building upon established theories of found in the international relations canon, this dissertation addresses advances a new *conditional control-collaboration* theory of state coercive power, territorial control, popular support, and political violence in insurgent conflicts.

This dissertation's theory agrees with the conventional wisdom that state power and territorial control affect the shape of the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences, and that the type, target, and frequency of political violence reflects this distribution. Where this dissertation diverges from conventional models concerns the directional effects increases in state coercive power and territorial control have on popular support. In established models, increases in state power and territorial control *always* shift the distribution of popular support in the state's favor. However, the empirical record suggests that state power and territorial control can both incentivize and disincentivize noncombatants from supporting the state. This dissertation argues that these mixed findings are the product of (1) the saliency of the insurgent movement's political objectives and (2) the mobilization mechanism insurgent political entrepreneurs use to gain support. While these dimensions are common in all forms of intrastate conflicts, the primacy of popular support to the success of *both* insurgents and the state amplifies their importance in insurrections.

Theories of this nature are difficult to evaluate. Measuring popular support and state power at the micro-level, where the causal processes operate, requires field experiments and/or surveys in conflict areas, placing researchers in harm's way. As such, most empirical research uses data that do not measure changes in state power and territorial control or noncombatant support at the micro-level, let alone directly. These studies rely on rough proxies and highly aggregated observational data, which often capture only the secondary effects of these relationships. This project uses novel micro-level data on rural road construction and original data from two village-level surveys across different insurgent conflicts in India to overcome these challenges. The intent of this introductory chapter is to establish scope conditions, introduce the reader to key concepts and definitions, briefly outline the theory, and provide an overview of the cases and the methodological approaches used to assess the *conditional control-collaboration* theory of political violence in insurgencies.

## 1.1 Scope Conditions & Key Concepts

The term *intrastate war* captures all internal armed conflicts where a non-state actor uses political violence to challenge state authority, resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year (Gleditsch et al. 2002). This broad conceptualization masks a number of important dimensions. Inferences about the conflict processes of insurgencies based research designs that uses this broad conceptualization of civil wars require that researchers make make and justify the assumption that the data generating processes in insurgencies are the same as those in conventional, army-to-army civil wars. This is analogous to the assumption that the data generating processes in parliamentary democracies are the same as those in presidential democracies. That is, similar to research on democracies in the comparative politics sub-field, international relations scholars might find empirical regularities common to all types of civil wars, but these finding might obscure important elements unique to insurgencies. Scope conditions and proper conceptualization help resolve these issues.

This project focuses on the violent political phenomenon commonly referred to as irregular, asymmetric civil conflict, or simply insurgency. As a concept, *insurgency* is a diminished subtype of the broader root concept *intrastate war*: The necessary, distinguishing dimensions of *insurgency* are in addition to those of root concept *intrastate war*. By adding distinguishing features, researchers limit the number of cases captured during operationalization; however, this classification procedure reduces threats to inference and comparison (Collier and Mahon 1993). The definition of insurgency Lyall and Wilson (2009, 70) use clarifies the extent of this scope condition: "Insurgency is a protracted violent struggle by non-state actors to obtain their political objectives – often independence, greater autonomy, or subversion of existing authorities – against the current political authority.... The non-state actor must have adopted a guerrilla warfare strategy." They conceptualize *guerrilla warfare* as a strategy of armed resistance by a non-state actor organized in small, mobile groups that use hit-and-run tactics in concert with attempts to mobilize and win the allegiance of the noncombatant population. This definition is similar to the one policymakers employ. Re-

searchers at RAND Corp. define insurgency as "organized movements to overthrow existing ruling structures by a combination of force and popular appeal. Their grievances, be they political, religious, ethnic, or economic, have some resonance in the population" (Gompert et al. 2008, xxix). Therefore, for an intrastate conflict to be classified as an insurgency, there needs to be (1) an armed non-state actor with (2) a stated political objective that (3) uses ambush and harassment tactics and (4) is dependent on noncombatant mobilization and support. The first three conditions are common to all forms of intrastate war. Therefore, while a consideration in other forms of internal political violence, the distinguishing dimension of insurgency is the primacy of popular support and mobilization. Kilcullen (2010, 7) highlights the importance of this dependence:

> The center of gravity of an insurgent movement – the source of power from which it derives its morale, its physical strength, its freedom of action, and its will to act – is its connectivity with the local population in a given area. Insurgents tend to ride and manipulate a social wave of grievances, often legitimate ones, and they draw their fighting power from their connection to a mass base.

While dependence on noncombatant mobilization and support differentiates insurgencies among intrastate conflicts, variation within the other dimensions is an important factor in the data generating processes found in insurgent civil conflicts. International relations researchers have historically classified conflicts – intra- and interstate – according to the political motivations of the revisionist combatant. The literature identifies two political objectives that motivate political entrepreneurs to challenge the status quo distribution of political authority: territorial and governmental aspirations. In territorial conflicts, secession of or greater autonomy over a region within the country is the political goal. The main political objective in governmental conflicts is to make fundamental changes to the structure and/or personnel of state institutions (Gleditsch et al. 2002).

This goal-centric perspective stems from the notion that all wars are political in nature. It is the product of the historical view within international relations of war as "a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means" (Clausewitz 1964 [1832], 87). This myopic perspective, however, is inappropriate for insurgency.

While violence remains a primary means of gaining political concessions, nascent insurgent movements lack the political instrument of force – a standing army. In order to challenge the status quo, insurgent political entrepreneurs must mobilize this population covertly and *well before* the initial use of political violence.

In this regard, the literature identifies two mobilization mechanisms: appeals to identity or to ideology. Identity-based mobilization leverages in-group/out-group cleavages and shared membership in social communities, which are differentiated based on specific rites, rituals, and requirements, as well as physical characteristics, features, and attributes. This is distinct from mobilization based on appeals to ideology, which focus on a person's political and/or economic beliefs, ideas, and ideals. Thus, this dissertation classifies insurgencies based on the political objectives of the insurrection – the second definitional condition of insurgency– and the mobilization mechanism elites use in their attempts to gain support from the noncombatant population – the fourth definitional condition of insurgency. This typology defines four types of insurgent conflicts; however, this project currently focuses only on territory/identity and governmental/ideology conflicts. These two types of conflicts are significantly more common than the other forms. According to Bartusevičius (2015), territory/identity and governmental/ideology make up 76.2% of the 331 UCDP 25-deaths civil conflicts,[1] which helps justify this restriction.

## 1.2  Theory, Case Selection, & Methodological Approaches, a Road Map

The above discussion highlights important aspects of this project's conceptualization solutions; however, the brevity masks the complexity of these concepts. Therefore, Chapter 2 presents a complete conceptualization of insurgency and discusses why specific political objectives correlate so well with different conflict-enabling mechanisms. Chapter 3 presents the conditional control-collaboration theory in greater detail. It identifies relevant actors, their preferences, their available actions, and how their actions interact to produce divergent out-

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[1] 38.7% are territorial/identity, 37.5% are governmental/ideology, 6% are territorial/ideology, and 17.8% are governmental/identity.

comes under the different conflict dimensions. In sum, this dissertation's conditional control-collaboration theory argues that increases in state power and territorial control increases the probability of noncombatant collaboration with the state in governmental/ideology conflicts; however, these actions decrease the probability of noncombatant collaboration with the state in territory/identity insurgencies. This project's central claim is that state coercive power and territorial control work to improve popular support for the state in some conflicts, but this approach is not a panacea policymakers should apply in all conflicts. The discussion below provides a brief overview of the theory.

The conventional wisdom is that state power and territorial control are necessary to deter, subdue, or defeat an insurgency (Buhaug, Gates and Lujala 2009, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Hendrix 2011), and increases in state coercive power and territorial control shift the balance of popular support in the state's favor, improving the state's intelligence collection capabilities (Kalyvas 2006, Kalyvas and Kocher 2009, Kocher, Pepinsky and Kalyvas 2011). According to this school of thought, as the state extends its coercive reach into and gains territorial control over its troubled periphery, the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences will *always* shift in favor of the state. The first proposition of Kalyvas's (2006, 172) articulates this position clearly: "The higher the level of control exercised by an actor, the higher the rate of collaboration with this actor – and, inversely, the lower the rate of defection." The logic is straightforward: The ability of the state to deploy forces throughout its territory helps it maintain order, improve economic conditions and stability, protect the population, and ensure policy compliance. These actions improve regime legitimacy and authority, which helps deter noncombatants from joining or support an insurgent movement. Therefore, coercive territorial control by the state increases the probability that noncombatants will defect from the insurgency and collaborate with the state.

Certainly, state absence makes insurrections more feasible; insurgent mobilization is easier when the state is absent, neglectful, and/or lacks the ability to project coercive power into a recalcitrant periphery. Likewise, victory in insurgent conflicts, as in all conflicts, requires

the use of force. In conventional wars – intra- and interstate, victory is secured by capturing territory and vanquishing your opponent. However, for this to be applicable in insurgencies, where popular support is necessary for victory, the use of force and territorial control must improve the dominant actor's standing with the population. This dissertation questions whether this is always the case.

Two primary propositions stem from the conditional control-collaboration theory. The first states that, in governmental/ideological conflicts, the probability that noncombatants will express support for the state increases with increases in state coercive power and territorial control. In these conflicts, state absence undermines rule of law and state neglect erodes state legitimacy, increasing the saliency among the population of the necessity of regime change, which facilitates mobilization. It is easy to divide a politically marginalized and economically depressed population along class lines. However, an increased presence of and territorial control state security forces can help improve economic conditions, state legitimacy, and state authority, undermining mobilization messages that place an emphasis on state absence and neglect. The second proposition states that in territorial/identity conflicts, as state coercive power and territorial control increase, the probability that noncombatants will express support for the state decreases. An increased presence of and territorial control by state security forces validates in-group/out-group mobilization appeals and compounds the problems caused by sons-of-the-soil dynamics – the importance of the disputed territory to the identity of the in-group. Insurgent elites leverage these sentiments, facilitating insurgent ethnic provocation. The threat posed by the insurgency causes the state to retaliate. The noncombatant population will view these actions as evidence of the state's repressive nature, triggering a security dilemma.

The multiple insurgencies in India make it an ideal case to test the conditional control-collaboration model of state power, popular support, and political violence in insurrections. India faces challenges from a number of groups with distinct political goals and mobilization mechanisms and has responded to these threats with similar strategies and tactics. This

project focuses on (1) Maoist governmental/ideology insurgency in Central India, and (2) the Bodoland territorial/identity conflict in Assam. This dissertation fielded household surveys in both of these conflict-affected areas. Each survey contained a number of item-count and open-ended questions to measure the presence of and popular support for the state. By focusing on two insurgencies within the same country, this project can account for structural, political, and socioeconomic confounding factors, helping improve cross-case comparability.

As Chapter 4 explains, this project leverages project allocation procedures of India's rural road development scheme, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), in a survey-based research design to overcome potential problems to inference. Chapter 4 presents a direct test of the assumption that road construction is an important method states use to expand their effective coercive power and territorial control in the periphery. The conventional wisdom concerning roads and conflict is uncomplicated: Roads are the arteries of power and can affect conflict dynamics through economic and political mechanisms. While seemingly self-evident, the literature lacks a direct test of this assumption. This dissertation remedies this shortcoming, helping to justify the use of road development as a proxy for state coercive power in subsequent chapters. Nevertheless, a proper test of this assumption requires careful attention to concerns about endogenous relationships. The allocation procedures of the PMGSY program help in this regard. To receive a PMGSY road, a village must not be connected to the road network, and in areas with an active insurrection, it must have a population of 250 or more. This dissertation restricts the sampling frame to villages in areas conflict areas that have populations just above (230 to 250) and just below (270 to 250) this threshold. This restriction helps to identify survey villages that are and are not connected to the road network but had a similar probability of being awarded a PMGSY road.

The first survey, conducted in June and July 2015, covered 71 villages in the eight districts of Assam where the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), an ethno-separatist group, operates. Local enumerators interviewed 20 adults in each village. The second survey, conducted in July and August 2016, covered 96 villages across the southern districts of Bihar

where the Communist Party of India – Maoist (Naxalites), operates. Local enumerators interviewed at least 30 adults in each village. In both cases, an enumerator held a semi-structured interview with elders in each village. The responses to these questions help reduce the noise that the other survey techniques introduce. Through item-count questions and open-ended questions, this project estimates the frequency in which the state patrols a survey village. This project then uses these estimates to evaluate the hypothesis that state security forces are more likely to patrol through villages that received a PMGSY road relative to villages that did not.

Building off these findings, Chapters 5 and 6 assess the core propositions of the conditional control-collaboration theory. The responses to the item-count questions and the interviews with village-elders allow this project estimate the level of support for the state as well as the insurgency in a village. Chapter 5 uses the data from the Bihar survey to evaluate the hypothesis that increases in state power and territorial control improve support for the state in governmental/ideological conflicts. While conventional models of state power in civil conflicts make similar predictions in governmental/ideological conflicts, Chapter 6 uses data from the Assam survey to evaluate a divergent hypothesis – increases in the presence of and territorial control by state security forces will decrease popular support for the state in territorial/identity conflicts, all else being equal.

The last empirical chapter, Chapter 7, uses micro-level data on road, housing, sanitation, and electrification development in India as well as event data that captures the type, target, and frequency of political violence, and data on the force structure and strength of security forces from 2000 to 2015 in a sub-state time-series research design. This research design helps link the micro-level findings from the survey analyses to the broader macro-level theory concerning the effects that state coercive power has on political violence in different types of insurgent conflicts. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes with a discussion of the policy implications of these findings and plans for future research that will help answer a number of the remaining problems concerning our collective understanding of insurgent conflicts.

**Chapter 6**
**State Power & Popular Support in Territorial/Identity Conflicts**

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The second proposition of this dissertation's conditional control-collaboration theory states that in ethno-separatist conflicts, increases in state power and territorial control decrease the probability that noncombatants will express support for the state. The degree of these shifts in support is a function of two conditions: (1) the saliency of the political objective among the population and (2) the effectiveness of the insurgent movement's mobilization mechanism. This chapter discusses these dynamics in the context of Bodoland territorial/identity conflict in Assam, India. The first section provides a brief history of the conflict. The second reviews the literature, discusses road development in counterinsurgency, and outlines the theory. The third section covers the research design, and the fourth presents the results. The analysis of village-level data from the Bodoland conflict areas in Assam, India provides support for the theory that in territorial/identity insurgent conflicts, (1) road construction increases the probability that security forces patrol an area, and (2) that the probability of an area expressing support for the state decreases as state presence increases.

## 6.1 The Bodoland Conflict in Assam, a Brief History

Assam is an ideal location for insurgent conflict. It is rich in natural resources. Assam produces more than half of India's tea (Indian Tea Association 2016) and provides 18% of India's domestic petroleum needs (Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, India 2016). However, Assam's population is undeniably poor. Its per capita Gross State Domestic Product is 40% lower than the Indian average, and 81% of its 31 million residents live in rural areas (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, India 2016). Assam's location along the southern slope of the Himalayas contributes to its unforgiving terrain. The floodplains of the Brahmaputra and Barak Rivers and dense forests dominate the topography of Assam's $78,500\ km^2$ territory;[1] 38% of its territory is flood-prone and 34% is forested (Sharma 2002). Assam is also geographically isolated, connected to the rest of India by a $22\ km$ stretch of territory.

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[1] Approximately the size of South Carolina.

The ethnic landscape of Assam is as diverse as its geography. The Census of India (2001) reports that 48.8% of the population speaks Assamese, 27.5% speak Bengali, 4% speak Hindi, and 19.7% speak one of the indigenous tribal languages as their first language. Further, it is one of only four states covered under Schedule Six of India's constitution, which designates Tribal Areas and provides Scheduled Tribes (ST) in these areas special protections. While the government of Assam maintains executive authority in these areas, Schedule Six devolves legislative authority to Autonomous District Councils (ADC). However, state governors, who are appointed by the President of India, must approve of all ADC legislation; enforcement of these laws is at the discretion of the government of Assam, and the Vidhan Sabha of Assam (state assembly) retains developmental and financial responsibility over these areas. As such, Hassan (2008) notes that the legislative authority of ADCs is rather arbitrary. Nonetheless, STs make up 12.4% of Assam's population.

The state government of Assam and the national government of India have a long and violent history with ST groups in Assam. The main source of frustration among these groups are land rights and language policies enacted by Assamese-dominated governments, with the Assam Official Language Act of 1960 being the most flagrant (Mukherjee 2007, Singh 2010, Subir 2009). Among other things, this act mandated that schools teach only in Assamese. While never implemented fully, this act polarized the population, sparking the 1979 Assam Agitation. The All Assam Students' Union organized protests demanding the expulsion of foreign nationals staying illegally in Assam (Singh 2010). The Assam Agitation helped create the United Liberation Front of Asom – an active Assamese nationalist insurgent group, which triggered a security dilemma among Assam nationalists and the Bodo ethnic group. By 1980, the increasingly violent protests and counter-protests led the government to place Assam under the *Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act*. Among other powers, this act gives the army the authority to arrest without a warrant and grants soldiers immunity. It remains enforce today, making it a continued source of frustration among the population and powerful mobilization tool of insurgent groups Subir (2009).

The Assam Agitation ended in 1985 with the signing of the Assam Accord. However, a number of provisions in this agreement caused concern among non-Assamese ethnic groups. According to Singh (2010), the Bodos disapproved of Clause 6, in particular, as it promised to safeguard Assamese identity, which they feared this would give the dominant Assamese a legal channel for forced assimilation. In 1986, in response to the perceived threats to Bodo ethnic identity posed by the policies of the government and the increased presence of Assamese security sector personnel, the Bodo Security Force (BdSF), an territorial/identity insurgent group, began mobilizing support (Mukherjee 2007, Saikia 2011, Singh 2010). Under the slogan "Divide Assam fifty-fifty," the BdSF demanded statehood under the Indian constitution. They wanted the government of India to create an Indian state consisting of the territory along the north bank of the Brahmaputra River, the ancestral land of the Bodo people. As the insurgency ensued, the BdSF lessened their demand from statehood to tribal protections under Schedule Six. In 1994, government made concessions to the BdSF and created the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) (Cunningham 2014).

The 1994 Bodo Accords "promised to provide maximum autonomy to fulfill the economic, educational, and linguistic aspirations of the Bodos" (Singh 2010, 19); however, these concessions fell short of Schedule Six protection. Hardliners in the BdSF rejected these terms and formed the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB). In their manifesto, the NDFB claimed that the government of Assam was encouraging migration to the "tribal belts and [turning] the indigenous population into minorities in their homeland."[2] The NDFB laid blame for the deteriorating conditions in tribal areas on the government of Assam and its immigration policies. The NDFB increased their demands of the state; rather than Schedule Six protections or a state under the Indian constitution, the NDFB now demanded total secession from India. A sovereign Bodoland for all Bodos became their slogan.

NDFB's use of political violence hastened the collapse of the BTC, which dissolved in 1996. The failure of the BTC gave rise to Bodoland Liberation Tigers (BLT). The NDFB in-

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[2]Quoted in Singh (2010).

tensified their violence in response to this competition. Rather than dealing with the NDFB, the governments of Assam and India focused their diplomatic efforts on the more moderate BLT (Cunningham 2014), and in 1999, the three parties enter into a ceasefire agreement. Hoping to erode popular support for the NDFB, the governments of Assam and India made greater concessions to the BLT than they did under the 1994 Bodo Accord. The governments of Assam and India signed a peace treaty with the BLT in 2003, the terms of which favored the insurrection. The government granted Schedule Six protections to the Bodos, officially recognized the Bodo language, agreed to set up and partially fund the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), and delineated the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts.[3] Some BLT members formed a political party, the Bodo People's Progressive Front, and others joined the government security forces.

The NDFB maintains its demands for a sovereign Bodoland. It continues to attract support from a significant portion of the population. The saliency of its political objective remains high, and it can still mobilize the population. The substantial turnout for protests on August 30, 2016 and the continued use of violence against security forces are evidence of this support (Press Trust of India 2016, South Asia Terrorism Portal 2016). The Bodoland territorial/identity conflict and the growth and continued relevance of the NDFB are a direct product of the political choices of the government of Assam, and its inability or unwillingness to end the vicious cycle of an ethnic security dilemma (Mukherjee 2007). The NDFB uses the history of Bodo and Assamese relations to gain support. They mobilize using appeals to their shared ethnicity, leveraging the territorial aspirations of the Bodo population and the popular perception that the state is a threat to their identity (Singh 2010). Through these actions, the NDFB is able remain a viable threat to the territorial integrity and political authority of the state government of Assam and the national government of India.

Unfortunately, prominent theories dismiss as inconsequential the role ethnic ties play in determining the baseline proclivities of the population to support one combatant over

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[3] The BTC has population of 3.1 million and covers nearly $9,000\ km^2$.

the other. These theories do not acknowledge that an insurrection's political objectives and mobilization narrative help condition how noncombatants perceive the actions of the state. The conditional control-collaboration theory of state power, popular support, and political violence in insurgent civil conflicts builds upon and refines established theories of political violence found in the larger literature on intrastate war. The next section provides an overview of this dissertation's theory as it relates to territorial/identity insurrections.

## 6.2 Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, & Popular Support

In insurgent civil conflicts, there are three actors: insurgents, counterinsurgents (the state), and noncombatants. Insurgents and counterinsurgents are, by assumption, unitary actors engaged in combat. Noncombatants fall along a continuous but bounded spectrum of combatant support. While continuous, for tractability, it is best to think of popular support as a distribution of three types: pro-state, pro-insurgency, and fence sitters. The initial shape of this distribution is a function of the political, social, and economic environments of an area; however, these noncombatant support preferences are not static. Noncombatants take into consideration the presence and actions of as well as their baseline affinity towards each belligerent when deciding whom to support, updating often. Once noncombatants make their support decision, those who choose to support a combatant do all they can to help their preferred actor win. Between these poles are fence sitters, those who are indifferent towards either actor. Their goal is to survive the conflict with minimal costs.

The conventional wisdom is that success for *either* combatant is dependent on the degree of support they receive from the noncombatant population. Therefore, the strategic goal of both combatants is to win over a significant portion of the noncombatant population. Combatants use all available resources – financial, informational, and human – to achieve their strategic objective. They make strategic choices in hopes of shifting the underlying support distribution in their favor (Berman and Matanock 2015, Blair et al. 2013, Condra and Shapiro 2012, Kilcullen 2010, Nagl et al. 2008). The insurgent group's ability to win over a significant portion of noncombatants is a function of the saliency among the population

of the group's political objectives and the efficacy of the group's mobilization mechanism. These two elements interaction with state coercive power and territorial control, shifting the balance of popular support one way or the other.

This dependence on the noncombatant population is the product of two asymmetries: material and informational asymmetries. The material asymmetry stems from the fact that counterinsurgents have available to them the economic and material strength of the state. However, in order to identify and target insurgent cadre and sympathizers, the state requires actionable intelligence. Therefore, the insurgent group's strategic advantage rests with its ability to control the flow of information. This informational asymmetry allows the insurgency to choose when and where to engage the state, and it allows them to move among the noncombatant population without detection. The shape of the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences determines the severity of these asymmetries.

The initial use of political violence signals that a significant portion of the noncombatant population either supports or is indifferent towards the insurgent movement. It is a signal that state authority and legitimacy is in retreat in the area. When violence breaks out, winning over the fence-sitting population becomes a critical task for the state. All insurgents need to do is discourage the fence-sitting population from defecting to the state. While supportive noncombatants provide active assistance to their preferred combatant, fence sitters acquiesce. It easy for combatants to determine whether a noncombatant is withholding material resources. Information, however, is an abstraction. It is easier to deny knowing something or to provide false information when under duress than lying about having a physical object. Therefore, Upon demand, fence sitters relinquish tangible goods, but they do not provide either combatant useful information. Therefore, while a supportive noncombatant population and indifferent compliance from fence sitters helps the insurgency remain concealed from the state, noncombatant support alone produces the informational resources the state needs to defeat the insurrection. Kilcullen (2010, 8) provides useful insight into this important dynamic:

> Insurgents need the people to act in certain ways (sympathy, acquiesce, silence, reaction to provocation, or fully active support) in order to survive and further their strategy. Unless the population acts in these ways, insurgent networks tend to wither because they cannot move freely within the population. ... Insurgents do not necessarily need the active support of the population: they can get by on intimidation and passive acquiescence....

How might state coercive power and territorial reach affect the distribution of citizens' combatant support preferences? How might state coercive territorial control affect the size of the fence-sitting population? A mainstay in the civil conflict literature is the proposition that state coercive power and territorial control are necessary shift popular support and defeat an insurrection. This proposition is foundational to many conventional models of insurgent political violence, and researchers present evidence suggesting that difficult to monitor areas (rough, road-less terrain) are more susceptible to insurrections (Buhaug and Gates 2002, Buhaug, Gates and Lujala 2009, Hendrix 2011, Herbst 2000, Raleigh 2010). When the state lacks the ability to exercise power legitimately or when it lacks the capabilities to project coercive power effectively, it is easier for insurgent elites to mobilize the population. This is at the core of Fearon and Laitin's (2003) influential article on civil conflict onset. The theory Kalyvas (2006) presents is a prominent example of this conventional school of thought. The primary argument that Kalyvas (2006) makes is that noncombatants use only the likelihood of victory, based on the strength and physical presence of combatants in an area, when evaluating whom they will support. Noncombatants shift their loyalties towards the actor they perceive as most likely to be successful, disregarding their prior political and social alignments. When stripped to its essential components, this school of thought suggests the state's most effective strategy is to use coercive power to expand its territorial control.

Certainly, state absence make insurrections more feasible. However, does this mean increases in state coercive control will always shift the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences towards the state as conventional models of state coercive power suggests? While these theories find support in the literature (Kalyvas 2006, Kalyvas and Kocher 2009, Kocher, Pepinsky and Kalyvas 2011), researchers presents evidence suggesting

that state coercive power and territorial control can have heterogeneous effects on important conflict processes. For example, Lange and Balian (2008) show that state power can both subdue and incite political violence, and De Juan and Pierskalla (2015) present evidence supporting the claim that state power has a non-linear, convex relationship with political violence. Further, according to Lyall and Wilson (2009), technologies that increase coercive strength, such as tanks and armored personnel carriers, also constrain the intelligence collection efforts of the mechanized force. Scott (2009) argues that some tribes in Southeast Asia actively avoided state expansion, and that the growth of state power into these areas triggered violence. And, Hirose, Imai and Lyall (2016) present evidence suggesting that even if state power improves popular support for the state, these attitudes increase violence.

Therefore, it seems likely that the relationship between state coercive power and popular support is more involved then the simple might-equals-right logic suggests. For self-preservation, noncombatants might feign loyalty to the combatant with the most visible presence. However, this does not mean they prefer that actor over the other, or that they are not working covertly to undermine a combatant's probability of success. Nor, does this surface-level support mean that an insurgent group is not exercising control over and/or extracting resources from the noncombatant population covertly or under the cover of night. Noncombatants may harbor loyalties for and assign legitimacy to belligerents for a number of reasons. Noncombatants take into consideration the potential rewards and punishments from combatants *and* their community. Social pressures, in-group loyalties, and local politics influence their support decisions. Noncombatants take into account the insurgency's political goals, its relationship with the community, and the combatants' physical strength and presence in an area.

What actions are available to combatants that will help them shift the balance of popular support in their favor? As it is in every political arrangement, either political actor can use coercion and/or persuasion. While the conventional models places an emphasis on coercion, the conditional control-collaboration model incorporates the use of persuasion. In counterin-

surgency, the state has to decide how to invest its resources. It can choose to invest in tools of persuasion – those that work to improve the quality of life of the populace – and tools of coercion – those that allow the state to use or threaten to use force to maintain internal order. The state makes a strategic decision concerning which type of tool to invest in given the political, social, and economic conditions of the state. In order to ameliorate economic conditions and improve the material quality of life of the population, the state might fund the construction of agricultural co-ops and marketplaces; it might sanction electrification schemes or fund vocational training. Or, the state might increase the availability of clean water, invest in sanitation projects, or build medical and educational facilities. Further, the state might invest in elements that improve the quality and efficiency of the bureaucracy. While investments of this nature target a diverse set of needs, each is an investment in the tools of persuasion available to the state.

A handful of studies evaluate how investment in tools of persuasion affect conflict processes in insurgencies. Research on how the allocation of public goods might win over the population is expanding the methodological and theoretical boundaries on what we know about insurgencies (Berman and Laitin 2008, Berman et al. 2011, Blaydes 2014, Fetzer 2014, Grynkewich 2008, Lyall, Blair and Imai 2013, Sepp 2005). The directional effects that development projects have on popular support and political violence in insurgencies, however, are far from clear. For example, Beath, Christia and Enikolopov (2011) found that community-selected development projects in Afghanistan increased security and improved attitudes towards the state. In Iraq, Berman, Shapiro and Felter (2011) found that small-scale projects reduced violence, but large-scale projects, like road development, had no desirable effect. Crost, Felter and Johnston (2014) found that development projects in the Philippines increased insurgent violence, speculating that projects attracted attacks when the populace perceived that the government could not ensure success.

The findings in Crost, Felter and Johnston (2014) imply that for development projects to be effective counterinsurgency tools, they must be accompanied by increases in state coer-

cive control, echoing the "clear-hold-build" counterinsurgency strategy. Importantly, Beath, Christia and Enikolopov (2011) and Berman, Shapiro and Felter (2011) note that different types of development projects have disparate effects. Indeed, not all projects aim to achieve the same goal. Some development projects seek to improve the state's ability to persuade compliance by improving the quality of life. Other forms of development increase state coercive power, and still others are dual-purpose; they improve quality of life conditions as well as coercive power. Road development is a prominent dual-use tool. Through socioeconomic and coercive control mechanisms, road development has positive and negative effects on the opportunity costs of supporting an insurgency. An extensive road network allows for more efficient travel, opens up markets, decreases transaction costs, and facilitates the delivery of goods and services, all of which help reduce poverty (Ferf and Mashanda 2014, Jacoby 2000, Mogues 2011). Roads also enables the state to address threats quicker and to patrol larger areas with the same number of troops. Roads are a force multiplier.

The conventional school of thought suggests the state's most effective strategy is to use coercive power to expand its territorial control. This dissertation argues that this traditional school of thought is more likely to hold in governmental/ideological conflicts, where insurgent elites link the economic plight and lack of development to state absence and neglect. If the state is unable to prevent insurgent violence, then the population might shift their support to the insurgency. As Galula (2006 [1964], 6) states, "When the insurgent burns a farm, all the farmers clamor for protection; if they do not receive it, they may be tempted to deal privately with the insurgent." Attacks on government buildings or personnel are just as damning, as they signal that the state cannot protect itself, let alone the noncombatant population. In governmental/ideological conflicts, the party that can provide order, stability, and most importantly, protection will shift the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences in their favor. The most convincing support for coercion-centric models comes from the Greek civil war (Kalyvas 2006) and the US-Vietnam War (Kalyvas and Kocher 2009, Kocher, Pepinsky and Kalyvas 2011), both of which are governmental/ideological conflicts.

Be that as it may, in governmental/ideological conflicts, the state might be able to shift the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences if it can regain legitimacy, control territory, and protect the noncombatant population. However, Young (2012) shows that repression of dissent is a leading indicator of civil conflict onset. If this is the case, it is difficult to see how increased coercive territorial control also decreases conflict onset or helps subdue political violence that is a response to state repression. That is, if state repression or the fear of state repression and assimilation is a mobilization trigger, coercive territorial control is more likely to exacerbate issues than solve them. According to Weiner (1978) and Fearon and Laitin (2011), sons-of-the-soil dynamics – the importance of the territory to the identity of the group – a primary driver in territorial/identity conflicts, complicate the state's ability to subdue an insurgency, regardless of its approach. The more the identity of a group is linked to the status of a piece of territory and the stronger the ties between the insurgent group and the community, the harder it is for the state to defeat the insurrection.

Therefore, in ethno-separatist conflicts, as the state exercises control through coercion and repression, support for the state could decrease. In-group bonds enhance the insurgent group's ability to monitor and punish defection, compounding the incentives to cooperate with the insurgency. Insurgent elites present the state as a foreign occupier that seeks to destroy the community's way of life, while insurgent elites portray themselves as defenders of the community's customs, traditions, and homeland. In this way, elites can advance their political objectives as well as strengthen their communal ties. This is the narrative frame the National Democratic Front of Bodoland uses in their mobilization messages (Singh 2010). And, while the state has made development a focus of its efforts, the *Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act* remains in effect, allowing the military and paramilitary units to apply heavy-handed coercive force in response to this persistent threat. Similar to the interaction between state direct strategies and insurgent indirect strategies Arreguin-Toft (2005) posits, the outcome of these mixed strategies – one through the end of the gun the other through the ties that bind – will favor the insurgency.

The following two hypotheses stem from the above discussion. The first is a check on the assumption that the state uses road development to increase its coercive presence over its territory. The second hypothesis concerns the effects that increases in state coercive power and territorial control have on popular support for the state.

**H1**: *A paved road increase the probability that security forces will patrol through the village.*

**H2**: *In territorial/ethnic conflicts, increases in the coercive strength and territorial reach of the state will decrease support for the state.*

The solid arrows in Figure 6.1 illustrates these hypotheses. The dashed path from road development to state support represents a potential source of bias working against hypothesis 2. Because road development, through economic mechanisms, improves the material quality of life in a treated area, it alone should have a positive effect on popular support. Moreover, the allocation of road construction projects is highly susceptible to patronage politics (Harding 2015). Politicians can use road construction as a vote-buying tool and to reward loyal constituents. However, lacking an instrumental variable that does not violate the exclusion restriction, separating these effects from the those this dissertation focuses on is difficult. Nevertheless, this bias works against hypothesis 2.

Road development could also have an indirect effect on state presence and popular support through its relationship with political violence. The visibility and vulnerability of roads make them a valuable target for insurgents (Raleigh 2010). Holtermann (2012) finds a negative correlation between roads and conflict while Buhaug and Rød (2006) find limited support for this claim, and Lyall, Blair and Imai (2013) report no correlation between road development and civil conflict dynamics in Afghanistan. But, Malkasian and Meyerle (2009) find that road development in Afghanistan decreased the number of road-side IED attacks while increasing the number of military patrols and the participation rates at local-level governing institutions. Further, roads are nonpartisan. Road networks are a force multiplier for insurgents just as it is for the security forces; insurgents can move to other areas as the state advances (Zhukov 2012). Predicting the direction of bias is difficult given these findings.

Figure 6.1: Path Diagram of Relationships
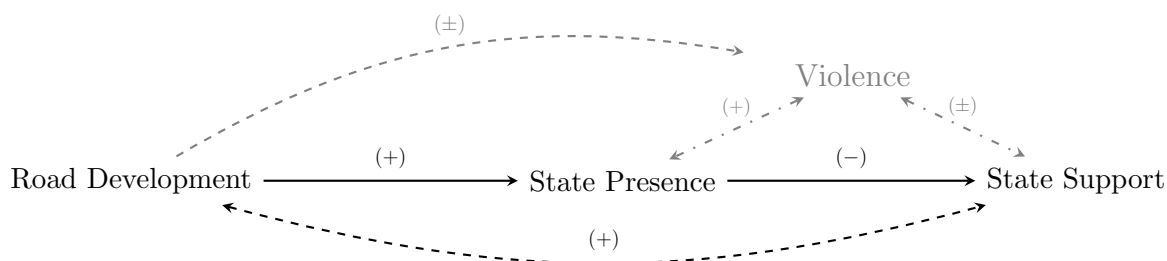


## 6.3 Research Design

This project uses survey data from the 71 villages[4] that are (1) in the eight districts of Assam, India where the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) operates, (2) had populations between 230 and 270, (3) were unconnected to the road network in 2000, and (4) were not connected to another survey village by either a paved or unpaved road.[5] Of these villages, 34 received an all-weather road under the government of India's rural road development scheme, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). Figure 6.2 shows the location of these districts with respect to the surrounding areas as well as the location and the PMGSY treatment status of the villages.

### 6.3.1 Sampling & Inferential Design

Institutional design and allocation procedures of the PMGSY rural roads development scheme allow researchers to identify villages that are and are not connected to the road network but had a similar probability of being awarded a road project by the government. To identify eligible villages, district-level road development committees used census data and field assessments to record the location and population of hamlets serviced by all roads in

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[4]The Government of India uses the term *habitations*. According to the PMGSY legislation a habitation "is a cluster of population, living in an area, the location of which does not change over time. This project uses the terms *villages*, *hamlets*, and *habitations* interchangeably

[5]75 villages actually meet these requirements, 38 of which received a PMGSY road. I had to drop four villages because more than half of the respondents reported "don't know" in response to the item-count measure of state presence. This indicates that the enumerators did not administer the survey correctly. Indeed, these villages were surveyed during the first week by the same team. During this week, the survey firm was made aware of some personality clashes within this team. One of the enumerators was replaced.

Figure 6.2: Bodo Conflict Area: Assam, India



**Bodo Conflict Area: Assam, India**

**Survey Villages**
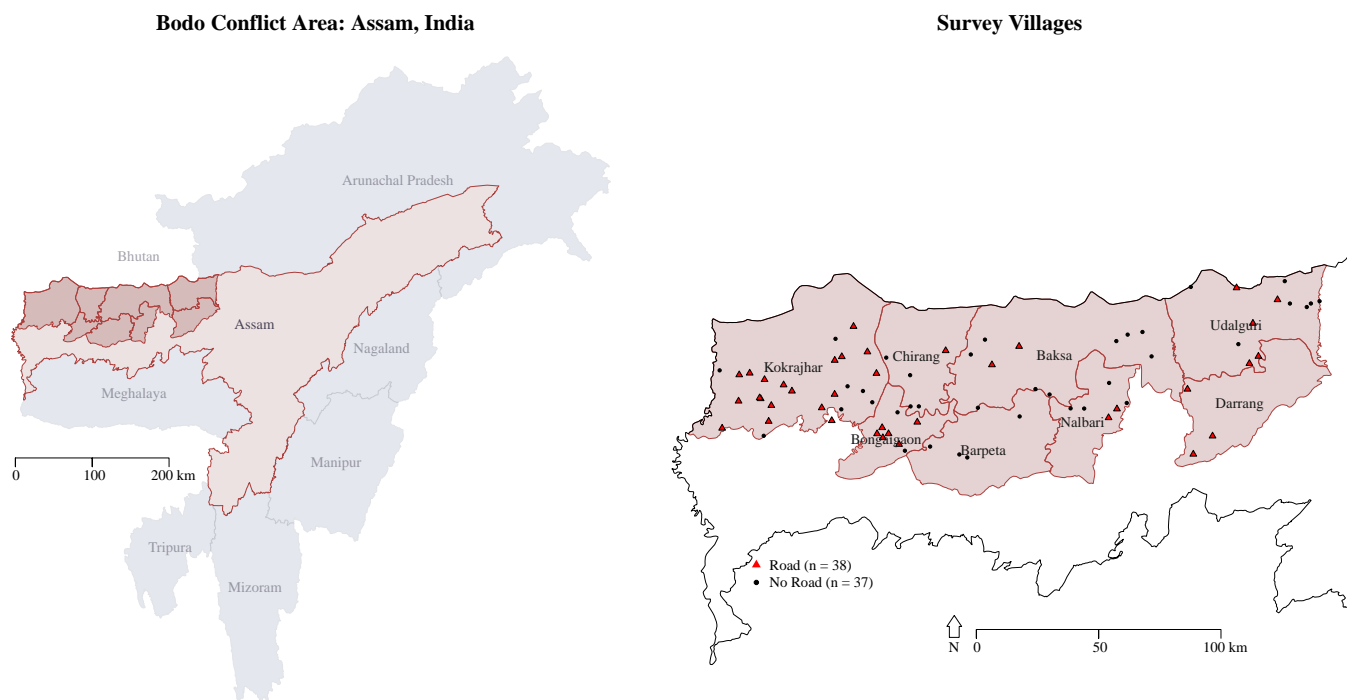
a district. These committees also recorded the presence of general development indicators such as schools and healthcare facilities in all villages. The committees compiled these data into a District Rural Road Plan (DRRP). PMGSY regulations require that new roads follow, as best as possible, the existing dirt road. This increases the probability that an ineligible village could receive a road because it shares a route with a large number of villages. This eliminates a regression discontinuity design as a possible method of inference, and complicates the Stable Unit Treatment Value Assumption (SUTVA) – the treatment status of one unit does not affect the potential outcomes of another unit.

Road networks facilitate interactions between units. Fortunately, PMGSY data report the names and populations of all habitations along PMGSY roads. These data allow this project to extend to clustered observational studies the SUTVA formulated for clustered randomized experiments in Imai, King and Lau (2008). The core of this SUTVA is that units are conditionally independent. As long as the treatment of one within-sample unit does not affect the probability of treatment of another within-sample unit, this SUTVA
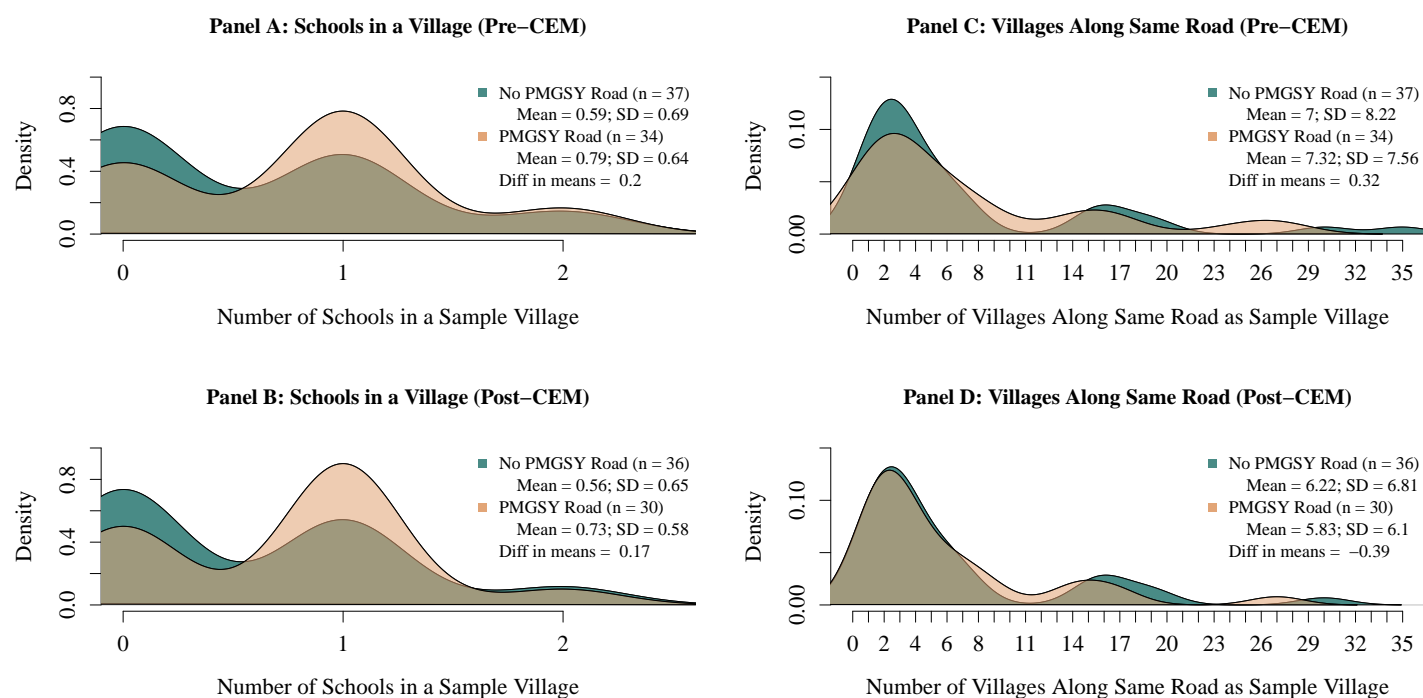
holds. To ensure conditional independence, hamlets that are connected to other within-sample units are removed. While, hamlets in the sampling frame are connected to other out-of-sample habitations, no village in the sampling frame is connected to another village in the sampling frame.

To receive a road under the PMGSY scheme, the regulation stipulates that a village must not be connected to the road network by an all-weather road, and it must have a population of 1000 or more. However, in districts that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) deems "disturbed areas" (i.e., an insurgent group operates in the district), the government of India reduced this eligibility threshold to 250 people. All villages in the sampling frame are in these districts. This project uses this relaxed eligibility threshold to limit the sampling frame to hamlets within the NDFB conflict-affected area with populations between 230 and 270 people. This sampling frame helps identify villages that had a near equal probability of receiving treatment.

This project uses the Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM) procedure Iacus, King and Porro (2012) introduce to determine the Sample Average Treatment effect of the Treated (SATT). To be effective, the CEM procedure requires pretreatment data on the characteristics the government of India used to determine road allocation. PMGSY regulations identify two primary categories of treatment assignment considerations: Demographic and developmental. The DRRP reports provide data on these elements. Using these DRRP data, this project is able to include in the CEM protocol a count indicator of the total number of villages that lie along the same road (paved or unpaved) as a sample frame village. Further, the CEM model includes a count variable indicating the number of education facilities in a village. This project used the `cem` package in `R` to calculate village weights to help achieve a balanced sample across treatment assignments.

The CEM algorithm assigned weights for 30 (out of 34) of the PMGSY villages and 36 (out of 37) non-PMGSY villages. Figure 6.3 shows the density plots for and the descriptive statistics of these variables with and without CEM weights. In each of the four panels,

Figure 6.3: Density Plots for Matching Variables



**Panel A: Schools in a Village (Pre–CEM)**

No PMGSY Road (n = 37)
Mean = 0.59; SD = 0.69
PMGSY Road (n = 34)
Mean = 0.79; SD = 0.64
Diff in means = 0.2

Number of Schools in a Sample Village

**Panel C: Villages Along Same Road (Pre–CEM)**

No PMGSY Road (n = 37)
Mean = 7; SD = 8.22
PMGSY Road (n = 34)
Mean = 7.32; SD = 7.56
Diff in means = 0.32

Number of Villages Along Same Road as Sample Village

**Panel B: Schools in a Village (Post–CEM)**

No PMGSY Road (n = 36)
Mean = 0.56; SD = 0.65
PMGSY Road (n = 30)
Mean = 0.73; SD = 0.58
Diff in means = 0.17

Number of Schools in a Sample Village

**Panel D: Villages Along Same Road (Post–CEM)**

No PMGSY Road (n = 36)
Mean = 6.22; SD = 6.81
PMGSY Road (n = 30)
Mean = 5.83; SD = 6.1
Diff in means = −0.39

Number of Villages Along Same Road as Sample Village

there are two distributions – one for PMGSY villages and one for non-PMGSY villages. Panels A and C show the pre-matched distributions while C and D show the CEM-weighted distributions. The density shifts between the original and matched data show how the CEM procedure adjusts the balance across treatment groups. Ideally, the distributions in the CEM-weighted plots would perfectly overlap. While this is achieved to some degree with the shared road variable, it is not achieved with the schools variable. The shared road variable is doing most of the work; however, removing the school variable worsens the match results. Nevertheless, the $\mathcal{L}_1$ score of imbalance indicates that 67.7% of the two multivariate distributions overlap.

In June 2015, the author partnered with a New Delhi-based survey firm, Ideal Impression Market Research (IIMR) and trained three survey teams of three, one supervisor and two enumerators. All enumerators were residents from the survey districts, and the supervisors hold master's degrees in history or political science from prominent Indian universities. Upon reaching a village, the team leader would identify the village leader, explain the reason

for the visit, and ask permission to conduct the survey. No village elders denied them access. Enumerators used the random walk technique to determine which household to survey, interviewing at least 20 households in each village (n = 1450). If an adult was not willing or unavailable to take part in the survey, the enumerators recorded this response and moved to the next household. The survey started in June and ended in August, 2015. This time frame corresponds with the monsoon season in Assam, increasing the time it took to finish the survey. However, this heavy rain meant more people were home when the enumerators visited. This otherwise inclement weather helped ensure a survey response rate of over 90%. In all, the enumerators visited 1566 households across the 71 villages. The enumerators were unable to survey 116 households they visited, a refusal rate of 7.4%

### 6.3.2  Measurement

The survey contained an item-count question designed to measure the presence of the security forces in the village. The assumption with item-count questions is that a respondent will not report encountering all or none of the groups on the lists. These ceiling and floor effects reduce the efficiency of the instrument. This project uses the method described in Glynn (2013) to help mitigate these issues. The item count technique described in Glynn (2013) requires that the investigator compile a list of four or five groups; among these groups, it is important that respondents have a high probability of encountering at least one group and a low probability of encountering another. This helps avoid the undesirable ceiling and floor effects while allowing for inference about the effects of the inclusion of the sensitive group – the element the survey is measuring. Enumerators read the list to the control group and ask them to report the number but not the names of groups they have encountered. Enumerators then present a similar list to the treatment group. However, the name of a sensitive group replaces the group the respondent has a very low probability of encountering. The pretests of the survey and discussions with the survey teams during training help this project identify `Non-governmental Development Organizations` as the low probability group and `Student Union personnel` as the high probability group.

Before the first item-count question, enumerators read to respondents the following instructions to help clarify the instructions.

```
I am going to read to you a statement followed by a list of groups or items.
After I read the list to you, I am going to ask you to tell me the number
but not the name of items that are related to the statement.  In this way
no one will be able to tell which the items you feel are related to the
statement only how many of them.
For example, if I asked you to tell how many items from the following list
you have in your household and read to you the following list:  TV, car,
mobile phone, chair, and table.  If you have a TV, a chair, and a table but
not a car or mobile phone -- three of the five items -- you would tell me
''3'' when I ask you how many of these items are in your household.
```

Below is the item-count question this project uses to measure state presence.

```
I am interested in knowing the number of groups from the following list that
have been in your revenue village over the past six months.  These question
help me understand how often groups come into the area without you telling
me the names of the groups.  From the list I am about to read to you, please
tell me the number of groups -- 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 -- that have been in our
revenue village over the past six months.  The groups are:
```

- Student Union personnel,
- Gram Sevak,
- Block Development Officer,
- Non-governmental Development Organizations [[State Security Forces]]

```
Now, if you would please tell me the number of these groups that you have
seen in your revenue village over the past six months.  [RECORD THE NUMBER
THEY REPORT] [DO NOT READ] DK: -99 [DO NOT READ] RA: -88
```

Enumerators were trained to randomize the order of these groups. By replacing `non-governmental groups` with `state security forces`, the within-village difference in means between treatment and control survey groups serves as the primary village-level estimate of state presence. Figure 6.4 shows the break down of responses while Figure 6.5 shows the density plots for the village-level differences in means. These density plots foreshadow the results of the regression models. The spread across the PMGSY villages in contrast to the spike-like density of the non-PMGSY villages provides perfunctory support for the assumption that road development increases state presence.

Figure 6.4: Observed Data from the Item-Count Question to Measure State Presence (Within Village Individual Responses)



**PMGSY Village**
**(pooled)**

- Control: $\mu = 1.33$, $\sigma = 0.64$, dk/ra = 12
- Treatment: $\mu = 2.01$, $\sigma = 0.87$, dk/ra = 16
  Diff in $\mu = 0.68$

**Non−PMGSY Village**
**(pooled)**

- Control: $\mu = 1.32$, $\sigma = 0.64$, dk/ra = 2
- Treatment: $\mu = 1.29$, $\sigma = 0.61$, dk/ra = 2
  Diff in $\mu = -0.03$
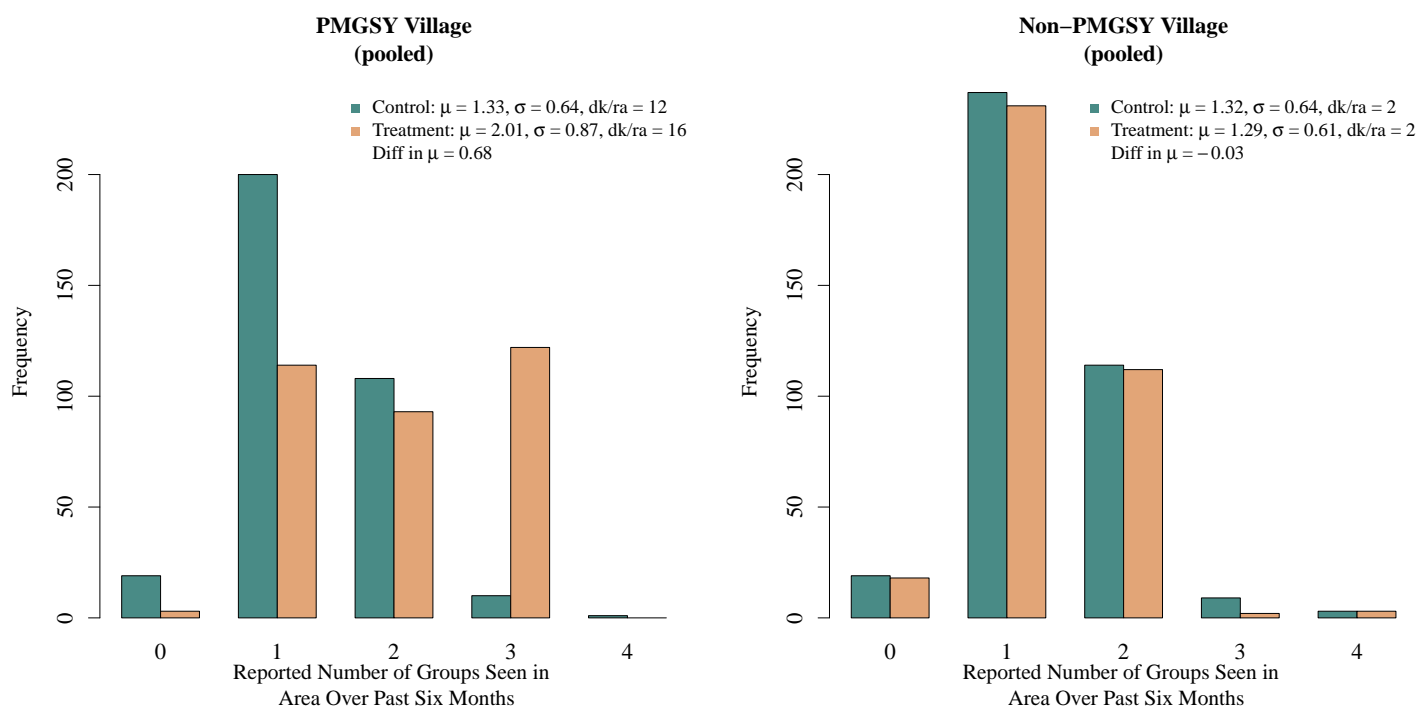
Figure 6.5: Kernel Density Plot of Village-level State Presence



- PMGSY
  Mean = 0.697, SD = 0.584

- Non−PMGSY
  Mean = −0.025, SD = 0.225
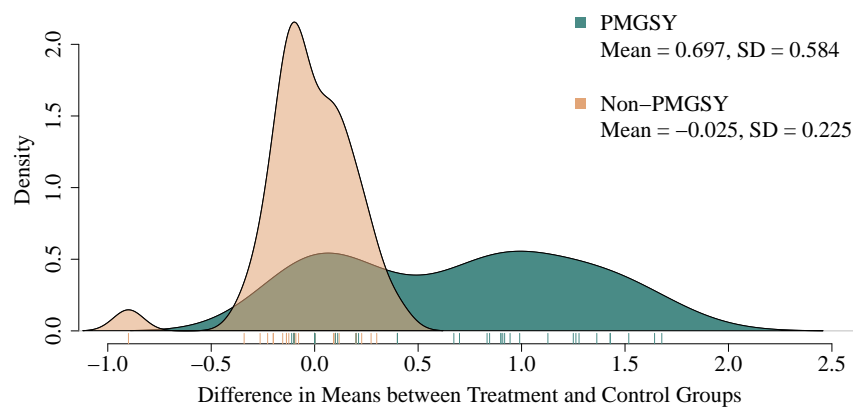
While enumerators where conducting the survey, team leaders held semi-structured interviews with village elders. None of the village elders refused to take part in the interview, which lasted about 20 minutes. The responses to open-ended questions about support for the security forces, the presence of security forces, and whether there was some form of political violence in the village over the past three months serve as both dependent and independent variables in the regression analyses. First, team leaders asked village elders to estimate the general level of support security forces have within their village. They asked this question before asking about other projects the state awarded the village, the frequency that security forces patrol the area, and about political violence, which were all asked at the end.

Village elders were very forthright with their responses. Supportive comments include "Our general feelings towards the state security forces are good" and "We have positive feelings towards them" while indifferent comments include "Moderately good," and "We have mixed feelings towards them, both good and bad." Negative responses range from "People think that they are not correct" and "Not at all a good feeling towards them" to "They have no sympathy for humans" and "We have no faith nor do we trust them." Of the 71 village elders interviewed, 47 expressed supportive opinions, 10 reported neutral opinions, and 14 held negative opinions of the security forces. Concerning the degree of political violence in a village, 13 village elders reported that the village witnessed some form of political violence over the last three months, 58 reported no violence. Figure 6.6 breaks down these measures.

Team leaders asked elders to identify the primary tribe the village belongs to, and they used observed characteristics to record the primary religion in the village. Team leaders also filled out a village assessment form, writing down the highlights from the interview shortly after their conversation and recording development, economic, and culture characteristics of the village. As the conflict centers on appeals to a common identity, namely the Bodos, and because the government has a history of neglecting these tribes, a dummy variable indicating whether a village is primarily Bodo is included in the secondary regression models. Further,

Figure 6.6: Village-level Support and Political Violence by PMGSY Treatment Groups (Village Elder Responses to Open-ended Questions)
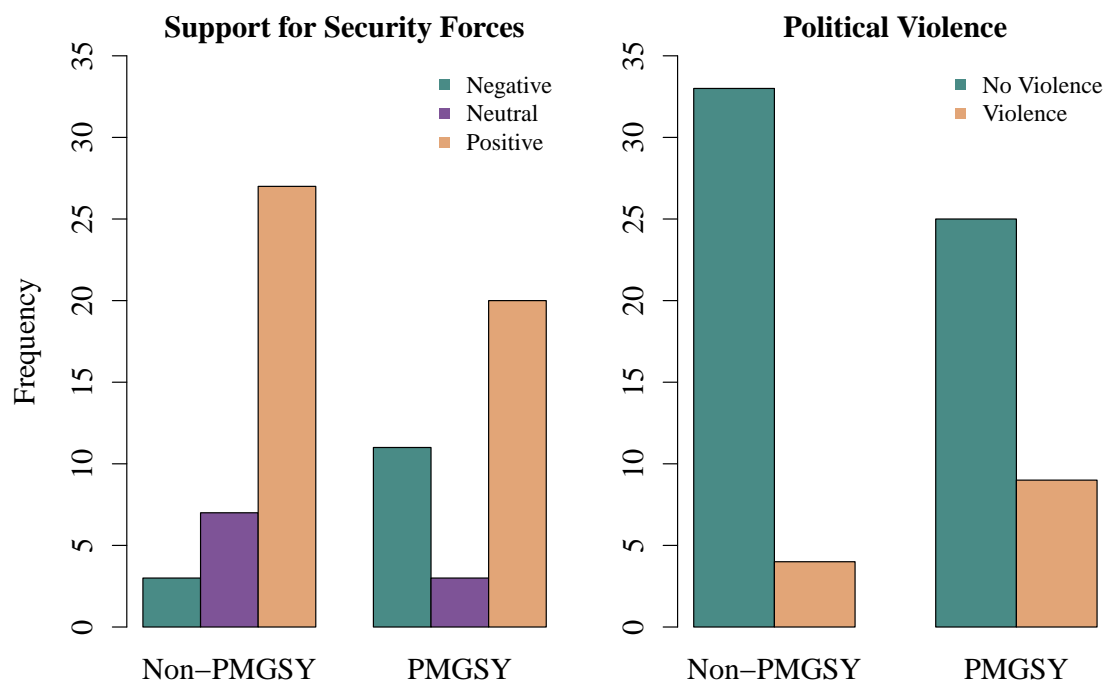


a major element in the National Democratic Front of Bodoland's mobilization narrative concerns the influx of Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh. Therefore, a dummy variable indicating whether the village is Muslim is also included. The approximate distance to the nearest police station and to the district headquarters as well as whether a village has a post office capture residuals of state reach. To help account for economic factors, a dummy variable that records whether there is a shop in the village is included as is a count variable indicating the number of government-built homes in the village. While the CEM-weights help reduce the need for these controls, the relationships this project evaluates and the available data require the inclusion of a number of covariates as controls in robustness checks.

## 6.4   Results

This section first presents the results and analysis of the regression models estimating the relationship between road development and the probability that the security forces will patrol an area. This chapter then examines the estimated effect these patrols have on popular support. Table 6.1 reports the results of OLS and CEM-weighted OLS regression models

Table 6.1: Roads & State Presence DV: Difference in Means to Item-count

| | OLS | | CEM OLS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\beta$ | 95% CI | $\beta$ | 95% CI |
| ***PMGSY*** | ***0.72*** | ***[0.52, 0.93]*** | ***0.69*** | ***[0.49, 0.91]*** |
| | (0.10) | | (0.10) | |
| Intercept | -0.03 | | -0.03 | |
| | (0.07) | | (0.07) | |
| | $R^2 = 0.401$; $N = 71$ | | $R^2 = 0.402$; $N = 66$ | |
| ***Bold italics***: $p \leq 0.001$; SEs in parentheses | | | | |

Table 6.2: Roads & State Presence DV: Difference in Means to Item-count

| | OLS | | CEM OLS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\beta$ | 95% CI | $\beta$ | 95% CI |
| ***PMGSY*** | ***0.72*** | ***[0.52, 0.93]*** | ***0.71*** | ***[0.49, 0.93]*** |
| | (0.11) | | (0.11) | |
| Bodo | -0.04 | [-0.28, 0.20] | -0.02 | [-0.27, 0.23] |
| | (0.12) | | (0.13) | |
| Islam | -0.15 | [-0.40, 0.10] | -0.12 | [-0.38, 0.15] |
| | (0.13) | | (0.13) | |
| Police Station | -0.006 | [-0.02, 0.01] | -0.005 | [-0.02, 0.01] |
| | (0.01) | | (0.01) | |
| District HQ | 0.003 | [-0.003, 0.01] | 0.004 | [-0.002, 0.01] |
| | (0.003) | | (0.003) | |
| IAY Homes | 0.00 | [-0.01, 0.01] | 0.00 | [-0.01, 0.01] |
| | (0.003) | | (0.003) | |
| Postoffice | -0.20 | [-0.46, 0.07] | -0.14 | [-0.44, 0.16] |
| | (0.14) | | (0.15) | |
| Shop | -0.20 | [-0.49, 0.10] | -0.17 | [-0.48, 0.14] |
| | (0.15) | | (0.16) | |
| (Intercept) | -0.19 | [-0.190, 0.55] | -0.08 | [-0.28, 0.45] |
| | $R^2 = 0.474$; $N = 71$ | | $R^2 = 0.446$; $N = 66$ | |
| ***Bold italics***: $p \leq 0.001$; SEs in parentheses | | | | |

assessing the relationship between road development and state presence. The dependent variable is the within-village difference in means from the item-count question, and the explanatory variable is a dummy variable indicating whether a village received a PMGSY road. Table 6.2 shows the results with the inclusion of control variables. The coefficients for *PMGSY* in each model are similar and statistically significant. Road development affects state presence. PMGSY villages reported 0.7 more groups than non-PMGSY villages. The item-count technique can introduce noise to the estimation model (Glynn 2013). So, as a robustness check, these models are run again with the village elites' responses to an open-ended question on state presence as the dependent variable. A village is coded 1 if the elder reported that the security forces patrolled through the village in the last six month, and zero otherwise. Four village elders did not provide a response and are removed from the sample. The estimated effect remain statistically and substantively significant.[6] These results provide strong and consistent evidence supporting the assumption that road development increases the probability that the state will patrol an area.

Building on these findings, this chapter uses multinomial logit models, with and without CEM-weights, to evaluate hypothesis 2: Increases in the presence of state security forces decreases popular support for the state in territorial/identity insurgencies. The dependent variable is the general level of support for the security forces. The item-count indicator measuring the presence of the security forces is the primary explanatory variable. Models that include the control variables and that use the PMGSY dummy variable serve as robustness checks. Table 6.3 reports the results of the multinomial logit models, and Figure 6.7 shows the probability of support across the range of state presence scores. Using the estimates from the unweighted multinomial logit model, the likelihood that a village elder will express a negative opinion of state security forces increases with the item-count indicator of coercive presence. Moving from the mean of the item-count measure (0.32) to 0.7, the model generated increase in state presence given a PMGSY road, the probability that a village

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[6] Table available in appendix

Table 6.3: State Presence (Item-count) & Popular Support
DV: Elite Responses – Negative, Neutral, & Supportive Opinions

| Reference Category:<br>Negative Opinion | Multinomial Logit | | CEM Multinomial Logit | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | IV: Item-count | | IV: Item-count | |
| | $\beta$ | 95% CI | $\beta$ | 95% CI |
| **Neutral Opinion** | **-2.54** | **[-4.63, -0.44]** | **-2.39** | **[-4.71, -0.06]** |
| | (1.07) | | (1.19) | |
| **Positive Opinion** | **-1.06** | **[-2.08, -0.03]** | -0.92 ‡ | [-1.97, 0.13] |
| | (0.52) | | (0.53) | |
| | $N = 71$ | | $N = 66$ | |
| | $Res.Dev. = 114.75$ | | $Res.Dev. = 105.58$ | |
| | $AIC = 122.75$ | | $AIC = 113.58$ | |
| **Bold**: $p \leq 0.05$; ‡: $p \leq 0.1$; SEs in parentheses | | | | |

Figure 6.7: The Probability of State Support Given State Presence (Item-count) Multinomial Logit Model (No CEM) – DV: Elite Responses
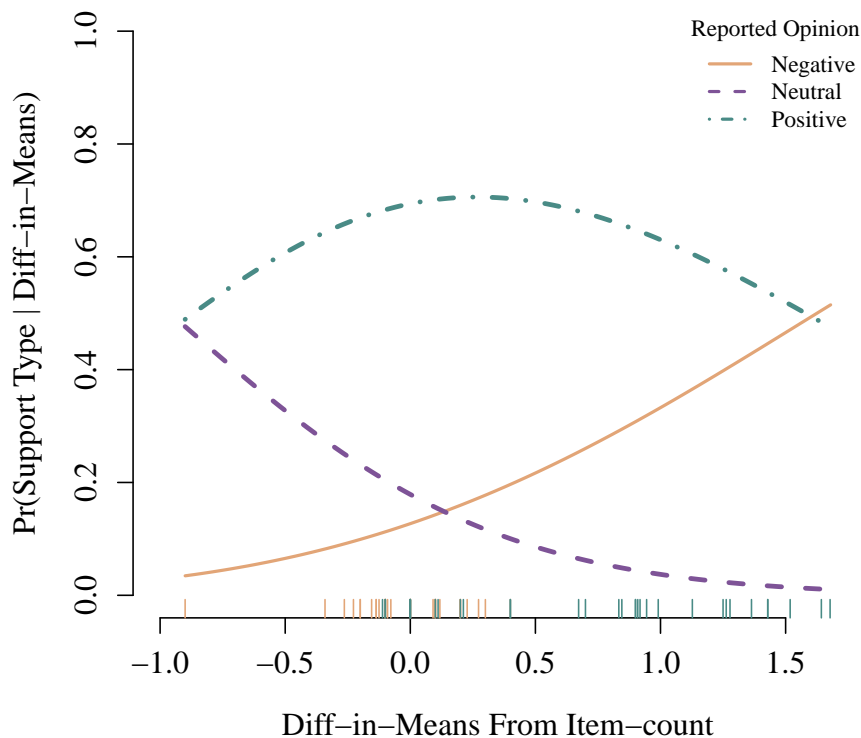
elder will hold a negative opinion of the state increases from 18% to 26%. Increasing by one standard deviation (0.56) from the mean value increases the probability of a negative opinion by 12.3%. This increased probability in negative support is, of course, matched by decreases in the other two categories. The same standard deviation shift in item-count scores decreases the probability that a village elite reports a positive opinion by 5.5% and the probability of a neutral opinion by 6.8%, suggestion that the actions of the state might be pushing fence sitters towards the insurrection.

The results remain significant with the inclusion of the control variables. Table 6.4 presents these results and Figure 6.8 presents the marginal effects from the non-weighted model across the range of the item-count indicator of state presence when all other variables held at their mean. When the controls are added, the probability of an elder reporting a negative opinion of the security forces is 14% when the item-count indicator is at its mean. A one standard deviation shift in the state presence variable increases the probability of a negative opinion increases 28%. Table 6.5 presents the results when the PMGSY dummy variable is the explanatory variable. These results show that the probability that a non-PMGSY village will hold a positive opinion of the security forces is 73%; however, the likelihood of a positive opinion in a PMGSY village is 58.8%, a decrease of 14.2%. The coefficients across all models are remarkably similar to those reported in Table 6.3. Increases in state presence seem to decrease support for the state.

Next, the responses to open-ended questions focusing on whether the village witnessed any form of political violence over the last three months are incorporated into the models. This helps assess the influence political violence has on popular support for the state given the presence of state security forces. Table 6.6 presents these results, and Figure 6.9 shows the marginal effects of this relationship when violence is at its mean value as well as when there is no reported political violence and when violence is reported. Given violence in the village over the last three months, the probability that a village elder will express a negative opinion of the security forces when the security presence is at its mean value is

Table 6.4: State Presence (Item-count) & Popular Support

DV: Elite Responses – Negative, Neutral, & Supportive Opinions

| Reference Category: | Multinomial Logit | | CEM Multinomial Logit | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Negative Opinion | $\beta$ | 95% CI | $\beta$ | 95% CI |
| **Neutral Opinion** | | | | |
| **Item-count** | **-3.11** | **[-5.83, -0.76]** | -2.72‡ | [-5.52, 0.08] |
| | (1.29) | | (1.43) | |
| Bodo | 0.10 | [-2.06, 2.26] | -0.03 | [-2.20, 2.14] |
| | (1.10) | | (1.11) | |
| Islam | 0.77 | [-0.10, 0.12] | 0.33 | [-2.39, 3.04] |
| | (1.48) | | (1.38) | |
| Police Station | 0.01 | [-0.07, 0.05] | 0.03 | [-0.09, 0.15] |
| | (0.05) | | (0.06) | |
| District HQ | -0.01 | [-0.06, 0.05] | 0.01 | [-0.06, 0.07] |
| | (0.03) | | (0.03) | |
| IAY Homes | -0.01 | [0.05, -0.06] | 0.00 | [-0.05, 0.05] |
| | (0.03) | | (0.02) | |
| Post Office | -1.91 | [-4.61, 0.78] | -1.61 | [-5.24, 2.03] |
| | (1.37) | | (1.85) | |
| Shops | -2.03 | [-5.15, 1.08] | -0.81 | [-4.19, 2.57] |
| | (1.60) | | (1.73) | |
| Intercept | 2.85 | [-1.14, 6.84] | 0.24 | [3.54, 4.03] |
| | (2.03) | | (1.46) | |
| Positive Opinion | | | | |
| **Item-count** | **-1.40** | **[-2.64, -0.16]** | -0.93‡ | [-2.04, 0.17] |
| | (0.63) | | (0.56) | |
| Bodo | -0.33 | [-2.01, 1.35] | 0.01 | [-1.53, 1.55] |
| | (0.85) | | (0.78) | |
| Islam | 1.72 | [-0.51, 3.95] | 1.11 | [-0.75, 2.96] |
| | (1.14) | | (0.95) | |
| Police Station | -0.05 | [-0.13, 0.04] | 0.01 | [-0.10, 0.08] |
| | (0.04) | | (0.05) | |
| District HQ | -0.01 | [-0.04, 0.03] | 0.01 | [-0.03, 0.04] |
| | (0.02) | | (0.02) | |
| IAY Homes | -0.01 | [-0.03, 0.02] | -0.01 | [-0.03, 0.02] |
| | (0.01) | | (0.01) | |
| Post Office | -1.33 | [-3.05, 0.39] | -0.42 | [-2.18, 1.34] |
| | (0.87) | | (0.90) | |
| Shops | -1.78 | [-4.40, 0.84] | -1.38 | [-3.79, 1.02] |
| | (1.34) | | (1.23) | |
| Intercept | 4.43 | [ 1.03, 7.82] | 2.63 | [-0.13, 5.39] |
| | (1.73) | | (1.46) | |

$N = 71$      $N = 66$

$Res.Dev. = 102.18$      $Res.Dev. = 99.82$

$AIC = 138.18$      $AIC = 135.82$

**Bold**: $p \leq 0.05$; ‡: $p \leq 0.1$; SEs in parentheses

Figure 6.8: The Probability of State Support Given State Presence (Item-count)
Multinomial Logit Model w/controls (No CEM) – DV: Elite Responses
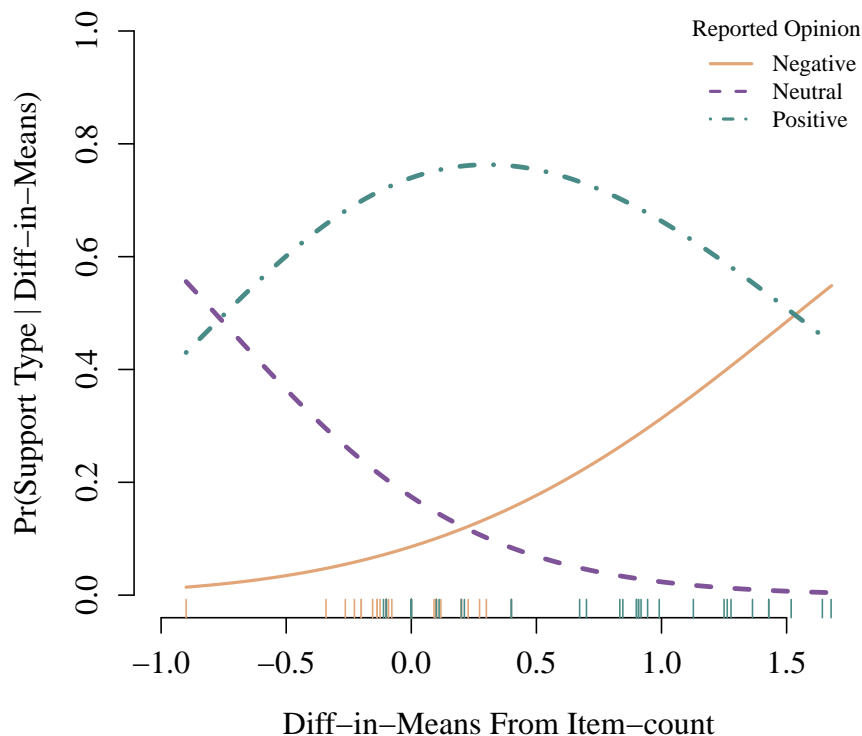All control variables held at their mean value



Table 6.5: State Presence & Popular Support

DV: Elite Responses – Negative, Neutral, & Supportive Opinions

| Reference Category: Negative Opinion | Multinomial Logit | | CEM Multinomial Logit | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | IV: PMGSY (1/0) | | IV: PMGSY (1/0) | |
| | $\beta$ | 95% CI | $\beta$ | 95% CI |
| **Neutral Opinion** | **-2.15** (0.95) | **[-4.01, -0.29]** | -1.23 (0.93) | [-3.06, 0.59] |
| **Positive Opinion** | **-1.60** (0.72) | **[-3.00, -0.20]** | -1.01 ‡ (0.66) | [-2.37, 0.19] |
| | $N = 71$ | | $N = 66$ | |
| | $Res.Dev. = 116.01$ | | $Res.Dev. = 108.71$ | |
| | $AIC = 124.01$ | | $AIC = 116.71$ | |
| **Bold**: $p \leq 0.05$; ‡: $p \leq 0.1$; SEs in parentheses | | | | |

Table 6.6: State Presence (Item-count) & Popular Support

DV: Elite Responses – Negative, Neutral, & Supportive Opinions

| Reference Category: | Multinomial Logit | | CEM Multinomial Logit | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Negative Opinion | $\beta$ | 95% CI | $\beta$ | 95% CI |
| Neutral Opinion | | | | |
| **Item-count** | **-2.56** | **[-4.68, -0.44]** | **-2.51** | **[-5.52, 0.08]** |
| | (1.08) | | (1.27) | |
| Violence | -11.32 | [-208.07, 185.43] | -11.52 | [-2.20, 2.14] |
| | (100.38) | | (109.02) | |
| Intercept | 1.01 | [-0.19, 2.21] | 0.77 | [3.54, 4.03] |
| | (0.61) | | (0.62) | |
| Positive Opinion | | | | |
| **Item-count** | **-1.20** | **[-2.30, -0.10]** | -1.04 ‡ | [-2.04, 0.17] |
| | (0.56) | | (0.57) | |
| **Violence** | **-1.60** | **[-3.01, -0.19]** | **-1.68** | **[-1.53, 1.55]** |
| | (0.72) | | (0.72) | |
| Intercept | 2.22 | [1.15, 3.30] | 2.14 | [-0.13, 5.39] |
| | (0.55) | | (0.53) | |

| | |
|---|---|
| $N = 71$ | $N = 66$ |
| $Res.Dev. = 105.92$ | $Res.Dev. = 96.27$ |
| $AIC = 117.92$ | $AIC = 108.27$ |

**Bold**: $p \leq 0.05$; ‡: $p \leq 0.1$; SEs in parentheses

44%. A standard deviation shift in security presence increases this likelihood to 61%, a 17% increase. If the village has not suffered from political violence in the last three months, the likelihood that an elder holds a negative opinion of state security forces when security presence is held to its mean value is 12% and a one standard deviation move increases this probability to 22%. While the substantive impact presence has on support when there no violence was reported is less significant than when violence is reported, the apex of the likelihood of positive support under conditions of no violence is lower than any of the other models. These decreases in support for security forces, regardless of a village's propensity for political violence, are similar to each other and to the changes reported by the other models.

Figure 6.9: The Probability of State Support Given State Presence (Item-count)
At Different Levels of Reported Violence
Multinomial Logit Model (No CEM)– DV: Elite Responses
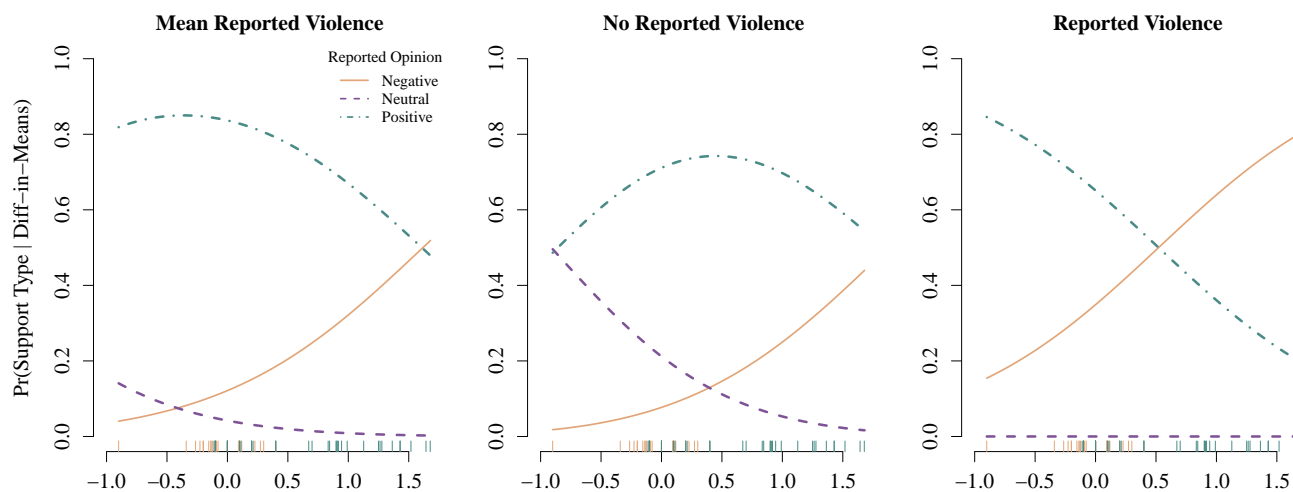


These findings as well as the fact that (1) all survey villages are located in areas contested by the NDFB, (2) they share similar demographic, social, and economic characteristics, and (3) each had an equal probability of receiving a PMGSY road from the government help reduce concerns that the relationships this chapter identifies are a product of political violence. Further, it is important to note that these estimates of popular support are, in all likelihood, underestimates of the true relationship. This underestimate is a function of the secondary effects road development has on support through socioeconomic mechanisms. Nevertheless, the above results provide strong and consistent support to hypothesis 1 and 2: Road development increases the territorial reach of the state, and in the Bodoland ethno-separatist conflict, this increase in state coercive presence works to shift the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences away from the state.

## 6.5   Conclusion

This chapter focuses on how the decisions and actions of the state affect the balance of popular support between the state and an active insurgent group. The theory this dissertation advances centers on the ability of the insurgency to leverage the actions of the state to shift the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences in their favor. Because an

ethno-separatist insurgency can portray the state as a foreign occupier that seeks to destroy the local way of life, insurgent elites can use coercive actions by the state as evidence of the state's repressive nature. They can effectively argue that the state is trying to assimilate the ethnic population by force, increasing their ranks of fighters as well as supporters. Under these settings, the actions and coercive tactics of the state to subdue and defeat an insurgent movement can prevent the state from achieving its strategic and political objectives.

However, the conventional coercion-centric theories of state power, territorial control, and popular support in civil conflicts posits that the actor that can gain and maintain control over the disputed territory is more likely to win the support of the conflict-affected population. To shift the distribution of popular support in its favor, the state must project its power into the troubled periphery. The core argument of this chapter is that this relationship is not as straightforward as the prevailing theories suggest. In order to understand more clearly the implications of the conventional models under different conflict conditions, researchers need to take into account the motives for and means of an insurrection.

As the above discussion makes clear, increases in the presence of the state security forces can be counterproductive. Using a survey of remote villages in conflict-affected areas of Assam, India, this chapter shows (1) that road development increases the presence of state security forces and (2) that this increase in the coercive presence of the state drives down popular support for the state in the Bodoland territorial/identity conflict. This chapter presents strong evidence in support of the causal mechanism linking road development to increases in the presence of security forces, and it finds convincing evidence in support of the causal mechanism linking increases in security presence in an area to reduced levels of support for the state. The results across the different model specifications strongly imply that increases in the coercive presence of state security forces improves the efficacy of the in-group mobilization mechanism insurgent elites use in ethno-separatist conflicts. When the state uses road development as a tool of coercion, they are adding a level of legitimacy to insurgent group propaganda.

The findings of this project imply that the conventional coercive-centric models require refining, if only when researchers apply it to territorial/identity conflicts. The literature would be well served by a thorough cross-sectional time-series analysis of these dynamics. Chapter 7 covers this concern. While the empirical evidence this chapter presents supports this theory in ethno-separatist conflicts, the literature lacks a proper micro-level investigation into these relationships in governmental/ideological conflicts. The civil conflict in central India – the Naxalite (Maoist) insurgency – provides an opportunity to apply this dissertation's research design to the second most frequent type of conflict – ideological/governmental. The fact that the government of India has approached this conflict with a similar strategy and using similar tactics makes this an attractive future path. By juxtaposing the current findings with the results that come out of a survey in the Naxalite conflict, researchers can have a more complete picture of the effects coercive control have on popular support under different conflict conditions. Chapter 5 covers this topic.

While this chapter focused on the effects state coercive or despotic capacity have on popular support, coercive capacity is only one dimension of the state power (Hendrix 2010, Hendrix and Young 2014). Missing is a complete and thorough understanding of how bureaucratic or infrastructural power affects and interacts with these important civil conflict dynamics. Mann (1984, 189) defines infrastructural power is the ability "of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and implement logistically political decisions throughout" the state. Infrastructural power is the diplomatic and persuasive arm of the modern state. As it is a compliment to coercive capacity, it too should influence noncombatants' perceptions of state actions. That is, the expansion of infrastructural power into a resistive periphery should also affect the underlying distribution of noncombatants' support preferences. However, theory development and empirical research on these infrastructural power mechanisms is underdeveloped. As such, this relationship requires further investigation and is a fruitful avenue for future research.

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