

The impact of women's participation, leadership, and units on rebel organizations' goal attainment and conflict outcomes

by

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B.A., University of Wyoming, 2007
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Abstract

Conflicts end not only through easily identifiable outcomes, but also through the goals that rebel organizations pursue and achieve. Intermediate goals are a necessary step toward outcomes, but are rarely discussed, except in terms of interim governments and power-sharing agreements. End goals help to guide a rebel organization's mission and vision for the future. These two types of goals then help the rebel organization meet a successful outcome, specifically a peace agreement or a rebel victory. Women may play critical roles in helping rebel groups achieve their goals. Women's inclusion in roles as participants, leaders, and in all-women units and in frontline and non-combat positions provides the rebel organization with a wealth of potential for success.

Using Firth's logistic regression, I analyzed the impact of these women's roles and positions on goal attainment and outcomes. I found that women leaders and units with no specific role were essential to meeting intermediate goals, but I found very little support for women being impactful in any role or position for complete goal attainment, except potentially for non-combat women's units. When analyzing specific outcomes, frontline and non-combat participants, frontline leaders, and women's units, specifically frontline units, were significantly impactful for a rebel organization to successfully negotiate a peace agreement. Women participants and frontline leaders were associated with rebel victory as well.

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Abstract

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Conflict studies is a broad and varied research area that offers multiple avenues for a better understanding causes, influences, and outcomes. As conflict in the post-World War II decades has shifted from primarily interstate to intrastate, there has been an increasing desire among scholars and governments to study what makes these conflicts differ, in hopes of reducing the likelihood of starting a conflict or increasing the government's chances of success once a conflict starts. This same research also has the potential to help future rebels organize a more successful campaign.

One way to better understand conflicts is to examine how they end and the variables that influence such outcomes. Because no two conflicts are the same, multiple studies have examined a wide array of variables. Outcomes are not created in a vacuum and result from a series of smaller decisions throughout the conflict. There are infinite pathways to approach conflicts, beginning with the reasons for their onset. These reasons include, but are not limited to, political, economic, and social tensions, differences in ethnicities and religions, and varying value-based approaches to the environment. As a conflict continues, each actor's decisions change the calculus for future decisions. These decisions then result in a specific outcome.

Of interest to this work are the actions and successes of rebel organizations. This umbrella term is used to include multiple types of groups. They are non-state actors, meaning they are not a recognized state government organization, and are in active violent opposition to a state government. Other terms used to describe these groups include, but are not limited to, terrorist organizations, insurgencies, and violent extremist organizations. Each government, and even agencies within each government, has its own definition of terrorism. This is by design to allow governments to legally justify their actions. But there are similar elements – the deliberate use or threat of violence to inculcate fear in pursuit of political change (Hoffman 1998). These groups

can cross borders and fight against governments that are not necessarily in their region. Terror is considered to be a tactic used by groups, and is most commonly associated with religious Islamic, or *jihadist*, groups due to recency bias and bias in the media, but all types of groups can use terror tactics. Insurgencies are struggles against a ruling authority that uses political resources and violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of a political system the ruling authority considers illegitimate (O'Neill 2018). While generally associated with guerrilla campaigns, such as those of the Zapatistas in Mexico, insurgencies can also be purely politically motivated to change a specific government. Violent extremist organizations are a term that has been used more recently to move away from connotations with religion, class, or ideology. These organizations look to use violence for effect in a society where the majority considers that violence to be subjectively outside reasonable and acceptable behaviors and norms, to give the government the ability to adapt and react without having to change bureaucratic requirements (Davis 2019). While they are different terms, they are commonly used interchangeably. The term “rebel organizations” has been chosen for this work to encompass all these terms without attempting to quantify the relationship between governments and non-state groups, and without narrowly defining the characteristics of the group. It also carries connotations of violence against a government, which is an important qualifier for the groups included in the dataset I use, as they needed to meet the 25-battlefield-death threshold defined by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Conflict Termination Dataset (UCDP CTD).

Once a conflict starts, post-mortem examination of decision trees shows the path of the conflict and has led to the creation of multiple theories about conflict. Theories of international interactions, game theory, and norms are consistently used to better describe why a conflict has occurred and continues. The reasons for the onset of the conflict are then solidified as the conflict

continues. These reasons are then tied to support levels, duration, intensity levels, and other variables to map the conflict.

The culmination of the variables' interactions leads to conflict outcomes. As the amount of data on these outcomes has increased, patterns have emerged that allow categorization of how conflicts end. Peace negotiations and rebel victories are two of the most studied ways conflicts end, but there are other outcomes, such as ceasefires or conflicts simply ending due to inactivity. Each outcome has its own general decision tree, but there is still much to learn about those trees and why a conflict ended the way it did. Important to the outcomes are the goals that each group produces. The ultimate end goal may be the creation of a new state under the control of the rebel organization as the outcome of a successful negotiation, but there are many intermediate goals or steps the organization must meet to achieve that end.

While not a new aspect of conflict, understanding how women affect conflict and having data to back it up offers a multitude of research opportunities as a variable of interest. Even if women have not been formally documented as participants in a conflict, their invisible labor has had a massive impact, as they have taken on tasks typically not attributed to men, thereby allowing men to be documented in roles such as negotiators or fighters. As our understanding of conflicts and the roles within them has broadened, researchers have been more deliberate in recording what women have done and in what capacity they have acted. The initial approach was to simply gather information on women's participation, followed by the identification of women as leaders. Initially thought to be rare cases due to social norms, research has identified rebel organizations with women participants and leaders across the ideological spectrum. Each of these roles has been further divided into two types: combat and non-combat. The next step is to identify all the women's

units or wings these groups have established and to see whether women have had an impact on conflict outcomes.

Research Question

These two paths converge on the research question of whether women in rebel organizations positively affect a rebel organization's ability to achieve its desired outcome. There have been some forays into understanding how women aid or hinder a rebel organization's vision for its future, but those studies have yielded mixed results due to differences in research questions, highlighting the complexity of conflict studies. To understand how women in rebel organizations affect outcomes, their involvement is divided into three types: participation, leadership, and all-women units. It does not matter which women are in these roles, only that women are verified as holding them. Documentation of participation means that a specific task was given to a woman to fulfill. Leadership designates those women who are in a position of power to command at least one subordinate or direct actions in any capacity. All-women units are those that are entirely populated by women. Their leaders and their participants are women, with no men documented within their enclosed group. These categories are then split again into two types: combat and non-combat. Frontline units, interchangeably described as combat units throughout, are those who engage in direct combat against a government in support of the organization and also include suicide bombers (Matfess and Loken 2023, 2). Non-combat units provide a variety of actions, including clandestine operations, outreach to civilians, and logistical support. Their roles range from medics, spies, and smugglers to planners and administrators. (Matfess and Loken 2023, 2). Separating the roles women take on into specific subtypes allows potential themes and patterns to be discerned, rather than approaching women as a monolith within a rebel organization. This is a

broad research question, necessitating sub-questions that allow for a more defined approach to answering it.

Under the umbrella research question, there are two sets of sub-questions. The first set of sub-questions concerns whether women affect goal attainment. In the first two studies, the specific goals are not the focus. The focus is on whether women's roles structurally affect the rebel organization's ability to meet its goals or aims successfully. The outcome of interest is whether a group attained an intermediate goal or its final desired goal. A rebel organization's ability, or lack thereof, to achieve a goal is the first step toward better understanding how an outcome is achieved. Examining the relationship between women's roles and the attainment of intermediate goals is a novel approach. Current research has skipped over the step of understanding if the structural component of women's participation, leadership, and units is impactful. Women's roles and their effect on complete goal attainment are also a new approach to better understand the overall impact that women's roles have as a structural component of an organization.

The second set of sub-questions is whether women in these roles favorably facilitate specific conflict outcomes. The first conflict outcome of interest is a peace agreement. Women participating in various peace processes have been held as the gold standard of negotiations, even prompting and scaffolding international efforts to ensure that women are documented as participants in such agreement processes. The second outcome of interest is the military victory of rebel organizations over state governments, and whether women in specific roles within the organization positively affect the path towards victory. While these two approaches appear similar on the surface, they instead address the research question from different angles. The first set of sub-questions is focused on how successful a group is at meeting its goals throughout the conflict.

This, in turn, leads to the second set of goals, which focus on specific outcomes and expand previous research.

These questions are used to guide the research, identify whether women in those roles have an impact, and examine what themes or patterns emerge through quantitative analysis. There are no metrics for the quality of women's participation or leadership. The metric is whether at least one woman holds those roles. There is no measure for the character or viability of women's units. The only measure is that the women's units exist. A secondary objective is to see if there is a difference between women in these rebel groups and specific outcomes versus meeting goals.

How This Work Adds to the Literature of Rebel Organizations:

There are three major areas where my work adds to the existing literature. First, my examination of intermediate goal attainment that is not an interim peace agreement is the first use of the REVMOD in such a manner. Attaining intermediate goals, logically, has an impact on how interstate conflict plays out, but almost no literature exists on this. Smaller goals obviously need to be met to reach final objectives, and the attainment, or not, of those goals helps to identify adjustments that need to be made.

The second major area where my work adds to the existing literature is in the field of women in rebel organizations. There have been a few studies on how women participants and leaders impact the probability of interstate conflict outcomes. I contribute to that literature by disaggregating the known data into frontline and non-combat participants to compare their effects, while other studies only focus on one grouping or do not separate types. I also examine the impact of women in different types of leadership positions, a topic that has been given scant attention. Finally, my analysis offers the first quantitative study of women's units in rebel organizations.

The third major area where my work adds to the existing literature concerns data limitations. I rely on data collected and used by other researchers, but concerns nonetheless remain about this available data. My results often diverge from existing studies, which may be a product of the imprecision of existing data. It may be that data limitations tend to generate unstable results across analyses. As I will elaborate upon this further in the conclusion, the hope is that as scholarship progresses and data is refined, greater accumulation and consensus will be reached in the literature.

Organization

The next chapter will discuss current literature on how termination, outcomes, and women in rebel organizations. I argue that, based on previous research, women in roles of participation and leadership, and in women's units, will tend to increase the probability of positive conflict outcomes and goal attainment for rebel organizations.

Chapter 3 will introduce my quantitative methodology. This chapter will explain the databases used and how they are employed. It will also describe the control variables used for the four sets of analyses. This chapter will lay the foundation for how the analysis was conducted for each role and type, against intermediate and complete goal attainment and specific outcomes.

The empirical chapters each begin with an illustrative case of a rebel organization selected based on two criteria. The first is that it successfully achieved the outcome of interest for that chapter, such as attaining intermediate goals or reaching a peace agreement that ended the conflict. The second criterion is that the group had women documented as participating. The types and roles of women's engagement in organizations will be presented.

Chapter 4 begins the analysis of sub-questions regarding the attainment of intermediate goals by a rebel organization, using the Revolutionary and Militant Organizations dataset (REVMOD) (Acosta 219). In these analyses, no relationship between women's participation and intermediate goal attainment is found, but there is strong support for women leaders, specifically non-combat leaders, and women's units, specifically non-combat units, to positively impact a group attaining its goals.

The relationship between complete goal attainment and women's roles and types is described in Chapter 5. In these models, women's roles do not significantly affect a group's ability to reach its goal. The only statistically significant results I find are that a frontline women's unit negatively affects complete goal attainment, and that a non-combat unit may positively affect it. This chapter's non-findings are in and of themselves significant.

Chapter 6 begins the exploration of the relationship between women's roles and the outcomes of two specific conflict outcomes as defined by the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset (UCDP CTD) (Kreutz 2010). I find that women's frontline and non-combat participation has a statistically significant effect on peace agreements. When women are documented in leadership, their significant relationship potential is demonstrated by frontline leaders. I find that a rebel organization with an unspecified women's unit has a statistically significant positive impact, and there are indications that a women's frontline unit can be positively impactful. These findings support the need for further research to identify how frontline women's units increase the potential for a peace agreement.

The relationship between women's roles and types and rebel victory continues in Chapter 7. In the participation model, I find that women's participation negatively impacts the probability of a rebel victory, as does a non-specified type of woman leader. I find some support for the idea

that a woman frontline leader increases the probability of a rebel victory, whereas a non-combat leader decreases it. Women's units, specifically non-combat units, are a negative force on the probability of a rebel victory.

Chapter 8 concludes with the themes and patterns observed across the models. These themes and patterns provide avenues for further research into conflict outcomes and into how women affect the success of rebel organizations.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

Many people have tried to pinpoint exactly why conflicts occur, how they progress, and how they end. A wide variety of research questions has led to themes used by subsequent researchers, but the complexity of conflicts means new avenues of inquiry are continually being opened. Conflicts are considered rare events; their violent and all-encompassing impact on the societies affected demonstrates the need to understand them.

There are two sections to this literature review, each with sub-foci. The first section will explore conflict termination. The terminations include the intermediate aims met, conflict outcomes as a whole, and specifically peace agreements and rebel victory. Important to the first approach is that the goal type is not explicitly laid out, only that the group has detailed what they are attempting to achieve and is moving forward with a vision and mission to achieve that goal. The second approach is more widely studied, as it highlights specific types of outcomes.

The second section will focus on how women in rebel organizations have affected conflicts and the research conducted to explore that relationship. This section will include information on participation, leadership, and units that women have been a part of, and how those roles have so far affected conflicts and their outcomes.

The third section looks at the historical approaches taken to women in rebel organizations. The four approaches discussed demonstrate how historians have adapted their views of women in rebel organizations as new lenses are developed to better understand previous rebellions.

Section 1: Conflict Terminations

Before examining termination and outcomes, a definition of conflict is needed. In epistemological terms, a conflict is an incompatibility of goals between parties (Bar-Tal et al. 1989). The conflict occurs when one party views the other party's goals as opposing its own goals. These sides then look for evidence or information that supports their views and must carefully analyze the situation to maintain that their particular belief is true (Bar-Tal et al., 1989). While understanding conflict as an incompatibility explains the ideological underpinnings, a realist approach better describes the methods used in the conflict. Termed the rivalry approach, a conflict is a prolonged competitive relationship that is an enduring rivalry characterized by mutually reinforcing interactions that are resistant to outside forces (Bercovitch et al. 1997). The complete relationship of reinforcing actions provides space for escalation of violence beyond political machinations. Mason and Fett's (1996) definition of a civil war is the closest to the implied and assumed understanding of conflict in many studies - that it is an armed confrontation between a government and a rebel organization. Their use of "rebel organization" limits it to a civil war understanding, but as discussed in the introduction, there are multiple ways to look at a rebel organization fighting against a government. Taking these three approaches into account, I define a conflict as a situation in which a rebel organization engages in active combat and revolt against a government force in pursuit of a specific goal. This definition requires there to be violence, a specific goal in mind that the organization has a vision and plan to achieve, and is working against a government force and not another non-state actor group.

The realist lens aids in understanding why termination occurs due to rapidly changing contexts and reordering of preferences (Bercovitch et al. 1997). In adapting to the situation as it transforms, the rebel organization is making continual decisions about the environment that it is

operating in and makes decisions to increase, or at the very least keep, its power relative to the government. There are numerous strategies available across the spectrum, from domestic and international political relationships to economic incentives to military actions, that can be used to bring about a conflict termination.

Intermediate Aims

Understanding intermediate aims or goals is a fairly new research area as it requires understanding what is happening in a dynamic situation that could change quickly. Unlike conflict terminations, they are much more difficult to define because each rebel organization dictates what is important to them. They can also be non-violent aims that use violence as a tactic, and the opposite. While intermediate is the predominant term used in this dissertation, other terms such as partial and interim may be used. Intermediate goals are those a rebel organization has determined to be essential to achieving the ultimate end goal, and reaching one or more of them is required for the success of the rebel organization. Intermediate aims are often discussed in terms of interim peace agreements or power-sharing agreements while a conflict or further negotiations continue. Research on interim agreements has shown that they are used in conflicts in which a rebel organization seeks independence from a government. These interim agreements allow for negotiations to continue on in situations where the rebel organization is in such a strong position that it is extremely difficult to find a mutually acceptable solution that maintains the power of the existing state (Casperson 2020). These agreements are also ambiguous at best and pose an extreme risk to those movements seeking independence (Casperson 2020). The relative strength between the rebel organization and the government is what dictates whether the two sides are willing to agree to an interim agreement. The rebel organization's calculus relies on trust in the government

and on whether it will honor the agreement and correctly assess the risk of a backlash among its own supporters (Casperson 2020).

Concessions are a specific type of intermediate goal that address grievances. Rebel organizations receiving concessions prior to military action have the potential to delay the onset of military action (Arena and Hardt 2014). Once a conflict has started, those who receive concessions during a conflict have better opportunities at the end of a conflict for dispute settlement as the negotiation channels are already open. This is especially true of student-based groups, those with strong community ties, and groups with high military experience (J. Braithwaite and Cunningham 2023). Another way governments can be persuaded to negotiate with the rebel organization is for the rebel organization to provide social services, as this increases its credibility on all fronts (Heger and Jung 2017) and creates public pressure on the government. Successful social service provisions are an intermediate step that indicate a strong civilian interface that shares power, integrates the rebel organization more fully into the community, and increases inclusivity, all of which point to a stronger rebel organization (Mampilly and Stewart 2021). Aside from these approaches, there has been little research specifically investigating the achievement of intermediate goals in violent conflicts. Even less research has been done on how the structural and role types women are in affect intermediate goal attainment.

Conflict Outcomes

No two conflicts, no matter how many similarities they may have, are the same. The similarities allow for generalization, but the variance within the similarities is staggering. This is especially true for those conflicts in which one of the combatants is a non-state actor. As Coser (1961) describes, a conflict outcome is the result of a social process involving reciprocal activity,

not merely the imposition of a stronger will on a weaker one. The will to act between parties is not a finite or fixed distance, but is in actuality relative to the group and what it perceives to be its aims. In this approach, conflict outcomes require both sides to make contributions along the way. A second, and more important point, is that specific outcomes are related to the aims of the contender (Coser 1961). While this may seem obvious, there is little research on the effect of linking a specific goal to a specific outcome. Instead, much of the research ties a specific variable or set of variables to an outcome to describe the environment in which the outcome occurred. Defining outcome and termination types has given researchers a better basis for making inferences and observations.

The duration of a conflict can affect the outcome, as it depends on how well organized the rebel organization is, how militarily strong it is, and whether it controls territory (Cunningham et al. 2009). When the rebel organization is stronger relative to the government and can sustain a longer conflict, findings suggest that the government is less likely to prevail (Cunningham et al. 2009). Long-duration conflicts also increase the probability of a negotiated settlement, as the costs of continuing conflict grow exponentially, prompting both sides to rethink their approach to the conflict (Mason et al. 1999). Additionally, rebel control of territory can affect conflict outcomes. Territory provides multiple advantages for a rebel organization. It provides a base for recruitment, a place where members can retreat to for rest and recovery, and controlling territory increases the base from which the rebel organization can launch its revolt (de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenaca 2015).

Peace Agreements

A common assumption is that most wars end in peace treaties, but this assumption is highly linked to violent conflicts between states (Carroll 1969). In reality, negotiating for and reaching a peace agreement is arguably the most difficult type of conflict termination due to the complexity of emotions, relationships, signaling, and whether there is a desire to meet the other side at the negotiating table. Between 1989 and 2005, there were 144 successful peace negotiations, of which 63% were ceasefire agreements between a government and a rebel organization (Harbom et al. 2006). Peace agreements are also usually not just a two-party affair in the era of globalization, but involve third-party actors who help facilitate the negotiation process, complicating relationships.

Women tend to be forced into the role of peacemaker no matter their role in the conflict when negotiations occur. This reflects cultural norms that women are expected to follow after the conflict, which reflect pre-conflict status (Ta-Johnson et al. 2022). Conflict disrupts a culture's social norms and may result in a short- or medium-term increase in women's empowerment and changes in expectations. Still, there is always pressure to force women back into roles that conform to cultural expectations, such as moving back into the home space and taking care of family and children (Nagel 2021). Violence has been normalized as a masculine endeavor when, in reality, everyone can be violent, and conflict changes the culture fundamentally. Many times, cultural expectations for women involve nurturing others within the family unit or community and being responsible for creating bonds and kinship that can improve the lives of those around them. Peace agreements are more likely to occur with rebel organizations that have strong community ties, such as community and grassroots bases, and that have high levels of military experience to counter the government effectively (Braithwaite and Cunningham 2023). Many organizations that can negotiate for peace do so because women were able to organize within their social wings and

provide social services that the government may not provide, creating the foundation for future negotiations. It is theorized that women have been socialized to compromise through their cultural roles and status, becoming an advantage to the rebels when negotiations do occur (Brannon et al. 2024, 4-5). These cultural norms are why women are put into peace negotiator positions, even if they are combatants.

The likelihood of negotiations increases when women are present, and their presence in the peace process leads to a longer-lasting, more durable peace. While women are regularly forced into peace roles, any group that uses women on its behalf is more likely to pursue negotiations with the state and to achieve positive accord content, implementation, and peace longevity (Krause et al. 2018). If women are left out of the process and their concerns are not addressed, there is an increased chance of the peace not holding, and that conflict will resume, as has been documented in the Sudan and its ongoing conflicts (Westendorf 2018). Women as members encourage the group to be more amenable to negotiation, which can also increase the group's legitimacy in the government's view, creating a feedback loop that increases the success of peace negotiations (Brannon et al. 2024). As more women join, women's issues are more likely to be addressed during negotiations. This means that women are also more likely to become negotiators when a significant percentage of women are in the organization.

Women are most often associated with peace negotiations that occur towards the end of a conflict and afterward. Initial research has shown that approximately 35% of groups with female combatants at a moderate or high level have resolved their conflicts through peace agreements (Estrada Metell 2019). Even if women were used in violent capacities, women in rebel organizations increase a rebel organization's willingness to negotiate with the state (Brannon et al. 2024). This was defined at the systemic level in 2000, when the United Nations Security Council

adopted resolution 1325, encouraging all member states to incorporate gender perspectives on peace and security. A positive outcome of the resolution was that it highlighted the importance of incorporating women into the peace process. When women were participants, the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least 2 years rose by 20%, and the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years rose by 35% (United Nations 2015). These statistics are even more surprising given the incredibly low formal participation rates of women in peace processes. Between 1992 and 2019, only 13% of processes had women as formal negotiators, and 6% had women as signatories and mediators (Thomas 2023). By 2023, over 100 member nations had created national action plans, including the United States in 2019 (United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security 2019). However, viewing women's participation as a monolithic systemic category does not allow for a true understanding of which types of roles are better predictors of how non-state groups act and are likely to win a conflict. This institutionalization of women as brokers for peace is important when discussing a rebel group's strategy, as women quickly become a means to an end, and their participation is a powerful way to achieve it. Women are only one variable in a complex environment, but their ability to impact multiple variables demonstrates how important they are to how conflicts end.

Rebel Victory

Military victory is not assured, even for governments with vastly larger resources. Each side of a conflict has to weigh the benefits and costs of their actions. This is especially important when their actions could kill or injure large numbers of their support base. International recognition, political pressure, and economic fortunes also play a part. Rebel groups fighting for

independence have a higher probability of victory, but that probability decreases as the duration increases (Mason et al. 1999).

Groups that recruit female combatants and see women join voluntarily are more likely to achieve victory than those who do not (Braithwaite and Ruiz 2018). Having women as combatants undermines the likelihood of a government victory, even if they do not directly increase the rebel organization's likelihood of victory (Braithwaite and Ruiz 2018). However, when women and girls are forcibly recruited, the government is more likely to achieve victory, with the quantitative research showing a potential 68% drop in the likelihood of the rebels achieving victory (Braithwaite and Ruiz 2018). As more women join a group, they can influence the group's politics and begin to direct its growth and positions (Thomas 2023).

Section 2: Women in Rebel Organizations

Approaching women in rebel organizations requires a different lens than the traditional views used in international relations. Feminist international theories tend to approach women in these organizations as marginalized or socially subjugated (Sjoberg 2012). These approaches then relegate women to social norms instead of acknowledging that, as women join these organizations, they challenge and change the norms society deems appropriate. Instead of focusing only on norms, Sjoberg suggests that Stephen Waltz's third image of international structure be adapted to include a gender structure, without diminishing the other hierarchies used by theorists (2012). She posits that gender hierarchy is a sociopolitical ordering principle, not an innate human characteristic, that specifies the functions of units and distributes capabilities among them (Sjoberg 2012). In taking this approach to gender in conflict, structures are no longer gender-neutral, and gender is not considered a "corruption of a gender-neutral system". While there is much work to

be done to better describe how gender works in the theoretical space when not just a function of feminist ideals, Sjoberg's framework helps to describe why the roles and types in this dissertation are more about structure than about masculine versus feminine.

Between 45% and 60% of rebel organizations have documented active female involvement (Marks 2017), and researchers have worked to codify and verify how women participate. Violent rebel organizations rely on the political and grassroots organizational capabilities and efforts of non-violent groups, and use those roots to increase perceived legitimacy at regional and global levels. Identifying groups that include women in their organizational design is a more recent effort, but one that has yielded insights into how rebel organizations are structured, how their goals and ideologies impact women's recruitment and retention, and how they present themselves to the world.

Categorization

Categorizing women's roles has moved beyond the narrow category of just being a "victim." The non-combat roles that women participate in vary widely, from propagandists to logistical planners to medical personnel, as they are an important source of labor (Henshaw 2016) to recruiters helping to provide social and community services (Loken 2024). Labor is a constant need for rebel organizations, and women provide that labor through domestic roles, such as cook, laundress, and even childcare provider, freeing up those women who participate in combat roles while also having children. Specialized roles such as doctor, educator, and lawyer are also a part of this category. Women are specifically recruited for these roles not only for their qualifications but also for their unique knowledge bases that are important to the organization. Women in the Provisional IRA were used as "welfare work" to take care of male prisoners and their families,

first aid, and cleaning (Alison 2004). Often, women provide social services that the government either cannot or will not provide in areas that are part of the rebellion. These types of roles embed the women in the communities, which is where they can build relationships with the civilians, potentially creating pathways for better information sharing and aiding in better targeting to reduce indiscriminate violence (Mehrl 2024). An often-overlooked non-combat role is that of spiritual and mythic leader. The problem with defining this role is that it strongly relies on narratives and is seen as an inspirational example (Henshaw et al.. 2019). Yet women are constantly used as ideals by their organization to inspire other fighters and increase recruitment and retention of other women. Inspiration from women leads to greater female participation, including in combat roles.

The active deployment of women in combat by rebel organizations is the strongest predictor of women becoming leaders within those organizations and is most evident in leftist organizations in the Americas (Henshaw et al..2019). Leftist groups are more likely to have and use female combatants, due to a tendency towards equality policies and women being more likely to participate in collective action prior to joining the group, but they are not the only groups as women fighters have been seen used across the political and ideological spectrum (Matfess and Loken 2024; Wood and Thomas 2017). The majority of leftist groups are seen as originating in South and Latin America, such as the Shining Path and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) (Cunningham 2003).

The line between combat and non-combat can become blurred. When women become spies, couriers, and smugglers, they become military targets and tend to have a tactical advantage because they are less scrutinized than men while moving through conflict areas or are able to use culturally and socially designated female spaces to maneuver. This blurred line is where some researchers have struggled to categorize women's roles. One of the first attempts to categorize

women's roles split them into logistician, recruiter, martyr, guerrilla, operational leader, and political vanguard (Cragin and Daly 2009), acknowledging how roles can shift between the initial nominal categorization. As with the follow-on attempts, Cragin and Daly recognize that roles change and are fluid, meaning that any specific categorization is but a fixed point in time. The fluidity of roles women take on is why there is a specific definition for combat and non-combat roles according to the data that has already been collected. Other attempts use the categories of sympathizer, spy, warrior, and dominant force (Mahan and Griset 2013) to differentiate, and others use themes instead, calling them ideological, active, support, and caring (Vogel et al. 2014). A simpler way to look at how roles are categorized is by dividing women's roles into externally facing and internally facing roles (Loken 2022). Internally facing units are used to mobilize support from disaffected communities through social work that a state government does not provide and ensure stability within the local community (Keels 2019). Externally facing units provide international support through political, ideological, and financial support (Manekin and Wood 2020). These varying approaches highlight how difficult it is to pinpoint what each job entails, especially for a non-state actor that lacks the same administrative support as a state. These categorizations acknowledge that women play a role in every facet of rebel organizations.

Why Women Join

Women tend to join these groups because friends and families are associated with the organization or because these same friends and families, or even they themselves, have been hurt or harmed by the state government. These close relationships serve as the entry vehicle for women's participation (Cragin and Daly 2009). One group that has been significantly studied due to the role that women took is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka. The

reasons women joined the LTTE ranged from personal suffering due to family members being killed to supporting the ethnic Tamil nationalist ideology to anger at suffering in their community (Alison 2004). This trend has also been seen in Northern Ireland's paramilitary groups such as the IRA (Alison 2004), Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (Cunningham 2003), and groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Amusan et al. 2019). Women joined each of these groups based on relationships already important in their lives and transferred the meaning from individual relationships to organizational ties.

In an interesting contrast to how men tend to make a single decision based on a single action when joining a rebel organization, women continually make a conscious decision to join and remain in the organization. Cragin and Daly (2009) describe this as more of a continual process of radicalization, whereas men see participation as the result of a one-time choice. Women who take roles in militant and violent groups are actively working against societal expectations of women. Instead of being a nurturer or caregiver, they are decisively stepping into roles that take lives and cause harm. When doing so, society at large judges and targets them. Most rebel organization membership is male-dominated, so women may end up being the targets of harassment and discrimination from their own teammates. In Latin America, the phenomenon of "machismo" has been used to explain why prominent leftist groups continually have male leadership when they do enjoy high percentages of women in their ranks (Cunningham 2003). The exaggerated sense of manliness is seen in the violence that the men are able to incite and perpetrate. Violent acts include the harassment, assault, and rape of their fellow female members, which can then be used in a narrative to encourage more women to join. In effect, as men get more violent, the calls for women's participation increase to help counter the violence and guide the organization to a different course. It can then help focus the energy of the organization wholly against the

government, without causing splintering among fellow members and supporters. Women who join nationalist movements specifically have changed their approach to these conservative gender constructions and stereotypes and have used the structures in place as vehicles for their fight (Alison 2004). These perceptions of women as needing to be protected or not seen as a threat have allowed them to gain access to targets with weapons that men could not do.

Women's Units

The deliberate addition of a women's unit or wing is a 20th-century phenomenon. Nearly 40% of groups that Matfess and Loken (2024, 6) codify in the WAAR project and dataset have a women's wing. Of the groups found to have a documented women's unit, just over half of those units have been designated as mixed use, focusing on women's participation rates instead of a mission. Of the other groups, approximately 32% have non-combat units, and approximately 15% identify specific women's combat units. Both types of units provide pathways for women to become leaders in their organizations (Matfess and Loken 2024). Like the variances in participation in non-combat roles, non-combat units have a wide array of missions. Many tend to focus on social aid, such as administration or support functions, and increasing connections with diasporas. Large rebel organizations such as Hamas, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the Palestinian Liberation Organization are more likely to provide social services.

Rebel organizations led by leaders with prior military experience are more likely to specialize their forces across units by mirroring their experience (Doctor 2021). It is through these militant wings that combatants are recruited and used. Female-specific participation positively affects the rebel organization's cause. Women's front-line combat has been shown to be a

significant factor in determining a rebel victory (Loken 2018) and the active deployment of women in combat is the strongest predictor of women becoming leaders in the organization (Henshaw et al. 2019). Combat wings are better known due to the violence that they perpetrate and the media's portrayal of them. Again, looking at the LTTE Tigers, women and girls were specifically recruited to be suicide bombers in the Black Tigers, along with other women's units in the naval forces, the Sea Tigers (Alison 2004; Jordan and Denov 2007). Combat units can also fulfill the goals of non-combat propaganda units, such as the Kurdish Women's Protection Groups (YPJ) in the fight against the Islamic State. The actions of YPJ were used by the PKK's public affairs equivalent and global media to highlight the fight against the Islamic State, and this portrayal built support and awareness throughout the world of the Islamic State's crimes along with the YPJ's capabilities (Toivanen and Baser 2016; Yelpeze 2023).

The political wings of the rebel organizations provide social services, which tend to be populated by women. Organizations like these have been able to negotiate continuously with governments because they are perceived as credible and legitimate. If the political wings include women and focus on women's issues and concerns, women are then more likely to be included in the peace negotiations (Matfess and Loken, 2024).

Having an all-woman unit is the result of deliberate recruitment, suggesting a more comprehensive, well-thought-out approach. All-women units are more likely to be designed to support the rebel group's goals by leveraging female-specific grievances and creating opportunities that men do not fulfill. Even if all-female units are a result of conservative culture, such as the Islamic State's al Khansaa Brigade, which focused on membership conformity and enforcement of the traditional roles the other women were required to fulfill (Jadoon et al. 2022),

they still use their numbers to positively impact the organization. No matter how they are designed, women's units may often be an aid to the organization.

Section 3: Historical Approach

Historians also provide valuable information on women in rebel organizations. Their documentation of the roles women have played in past groups also adds insight on context that furthers our understanding. However, with the variety of rebel organizations, their conflicts, and how those conflicts have played out, there is a lack of consensus on how women behave, are treated within the organizations, and what their impact is. Historians also add more to the conversation about culture and society, emphasizing that women and their experiences are not monolithic. Historical accounts rarely compare women's experiences across different rebel organizations, instead focusing on individual conflicts.

The civil conflict in early twentieth-century Ireland and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has produced a rich historiography of women's roles and experiences. beginning in the early 20th century. Now described by historians as the Old IRA, it formed to fight against British rule and the partition treaty that led to the Irish Free State. Women at the end of the 1910s were participants in the political wing, Sinn Féin, or joined the paramilitary organization *Cumann na mBan* (Hart 1999). Women were a part of the Irish Citizen Army, taking part in the 1916 uprising and being active combatants against the British forces (Hart 1999). In fact, the focus of much research into this time is the fact that women joined the militant offensive at the beginning of the conflict instead of the norm of focusing only on social and political efforts. The Old IRA followed the opposite track of nearly every other rebel organization. Women began as militants in the early stages, but were consistently forced into auxiliary roles while the men took more prominent violent roles (Hart

1999). But the women worked their way back to the front lines, once again taking up violent roles against the British. As Hart (1999) observes, “gender was an active, transitive element”, which counters the monolith approach where women are described as a group with no acknowledgment of the variation within gender. Too often scholars assume that women’s experiences across rebel groups are uniform and ignore the group’s cultural and social context and the nuances of the conflict. For example, a monolith approach would treat women's roles as if they follow a uniform trajectory across time and regions, with women’s experiences being highly similar in different conflicts. It is easier to approach women as one group for studies because it reduces the variance in what women have done and continue to do. Women in the Old IRA were also very politically involved, which led to two women being jailed for political activity between 1917 and 1919, including Countess Constance Markievicz, who was elected to the House of Commons in 1918 from jail. Her political actions in Sinn Féin led to her arrest, where she was jailed and sentenced to death, but that sentence was commuted to life in prison because she was a woman. Markievicz was the first woman elected to the British House of Commons and to the Irish legislature, which was formed by those members elected to represent Irish seats in the 1918 British elections. She would also become the second female Cabinet minister in all of Europe, serving as Minister for Labour in 1919. Her work directly led to the emancipation of the Republic of Ireland as a separate nation (Arrington 2015).

The women who served as resistance members in occupied Europe during World War II show the limitations of the monolith approach and assumptions that women begin their service in traditional support roles. But challenging the status quo comes with its own challenges. While organizations such as the Special Operations Executive and the Signals Intelligence Service in the United Kingdom and the Office of Strategic Services in the United States recruited and deployed

women as couriers and wireless transmitters, there were still individuals within each organization who vocally advocated for keeping women in their traditional roles. Sending the women behind enemy lines was disparaged by many men, even as the women proved themselves to be more than competent leaders and agents. Within France, one of the most successful agents of the war not only destroyed any notion against a woman being a clandestine leader, but did so while coming from the right as opposed to the more commonly associated leftist approach. Marie-Madeline Meric, later Fourcade, née Bridou, was writing for and running a right-leaning paper in southern France when the Germans invaded France. At the beginning of the Occupation, Meric shut down the paper and joined her first resistance network, which was led by the owner of the paper, Georges Loustaunau-Lacau. When Loustaunau-Lacau was captured, she hid her gender from her the British intelligence officers her network sent information too and stepped into the leader role to rebuild what would be known as the Alliance network. This network helped make D-Day a success, as it sent back vital information about German positions in the Normandy region. Her leadership meant that she was not only working with those behind the lines in France, but also the British leadership and Charles de Gaulle's government in exile, even though her organization was initially anti-Gaullist. Negotiating those linkages as a man was difficult enough, but once she was outed as being a woman, it became even more difficult due to the difficulty some had with separating her proven success record from her gender. But as Fourcade stepped out of traditional roles, how she was treated was representative of how other women were treated. She was forced to defend her actions from accusations ranging from lying to inefficiency due to the fragility of her gender to collaboration concerns with the Germans because of the contacts within Vichy France, who unknowingly supplied a great deal of information (Deacon 2015). Fourcade was also forced to defend herself against rumors that reduced her to a sexual and reproductive role. Prior to the war,

she had two children whom she sent to live with her mother in Switzerland for safety, but she attempted to reduce any discussion of them to keep the focus on her work and not on her as a mother. She was accused of being the network leader's mistress, having her child's parentage called into question, and then being described as "expensive" and accused of causing problems for the networks for allegedly demanding finery during a time of rationing and repression (Deacon 2015). Yet while she was feminized during the war, the revisionist effort after the war attempted to de-womanize her as she took on roles that were usually filled by men. At the same time, historians changed their approach, and instead of highlighting specific women like Fourcade and how they supported the war effort through their actions, historians began to emphasize the roles women took, which enforced the idea that Fourcade no longer fit the narrative as a woman (Deacon 2015). Because Fourcade purposefully moved into a leadership role, she was no longer part of the female contingent because she refused to follow the roles set aside for women. Yet, the critique of this approach is that it reinforces a too narrow view of what resistance is, thereby limiting the definition of resistance and understanding of how women participated (Deacon 2015). How to categorize what a woman does in a rebellion continues to be argued today, and the discussions continue to revolve around what women did and what people think they should be allowed to do.

On the other side of the world, the Huk Rebellion, also known as the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (People's Liberation Army), or HMB, worked to fight against the Japanese invaders during World War II and then against the Philippine government until the 1960's, when it was defeated by the Filipino government with American assistance. (Lanzona 2009). Lanzona described the peasant women who joined the Huk rebellion as existing simultaneously in two worlds – the world of war and the world of love (Lanzona 2009). To exist in these two worlds, gender as a category of historical analysis is essential, as it helps explain complex systems of

social, sexual, and power relations and provides a bridge between two seemingly opposite worlds (Scott 1988). In this examination, the history of women as leaders of other women while remaining subject to men within the resistance can be more effectively understood. Gender as a social power relationship helps explain male insurgents' claims that women are politically immature, as well as assumptions that women's roles naturally involved supporting men and making them happy. It also explains how women could exercise public resistance roles while still being seen as separate from men and how women could meet their goals, yet still be seen as subservient to the men. In this, the ultra-feminization of the Huk women in visible traditional roles as critical supporters of men on the frontlines and beyond makes sense, as it comes from a social structure that separates the masculine and the feminine. The women could be feminine while they supported the effort, as long as they stayed within the traditional role, mostly seen in the "forest" marriages of paramilitary members with women in the areas that they fought. The women were expected to have children to continue family blood lines, and the men saw this as a protective measure for the rebellion and as support for them individually. While these marriages were seen as against the Communist principles the Huks espoused, keeping the tradition of marriage helped support the fighters and enabled more support for the Huks. In Huk society, the masculine and feminine each have distinct roles that work toward a common end, but they act as if they are two sides of a coin that never meet. Many rebel organizations have treated their male and female members like this, ensuring the women's support stays within a culturally and socially defined area. Yet each organization and conflict still has its own flavor and quirks, and what is traditional in one culture is not necessarily what is traditional in another.

The women of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) were essential to the end of apartheid in 1994. Established in the 1950s and run in exile starting in the 1960s, the ANC

needed women for their diplomatic contacts with non-governmental organizations and other African governments. These relationships were essential for the group's survival in exile and bolstered the ANC's ability to engage internationally. They were also important to the political aims of the ANC, where Ruth Mompati, a leading political ANC member, explained that national liberation was of the highest priority, which would then create the foundation for the emancipation of women (Sandwell 2025). Mompati's work to engage non-governmental organizations and African governments helped to raise the visibility of what was happening under apartheid. She and the other women whom she worked with were major contributors to the rest of the world leaning on the South African government to induce apartheid's end. Feminist historians have criticized this approach as they see it as deferring the needs and wants of women, but anti-imperialist approaches agree with the sentiment as they agree the bonds and structures that imperialism created needed to be destroyed first before concerns for any specific group beneath a cultural or national approach could be addressed (Sandwell 2025). Much of the literature is about women navigating the tensions between nationalism and feminism, which invites perspectives from anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist historians who tend to look at women within the ANC through a traditionally gendered lens (Devenish 2026). Women were still expected to adhere to traditional gender roles, and the treatment by the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist historians agrees that the best support women could give to the movement was to ensure that traditional values continued while their world was being reimagined and reworked in significant ways when these approaches decided to examine women at all. Yet women consistently worked to step out of those roles and into higher levels of leadership and greater networks. Thandi Modise became a high-level paramilitary leader in the *Umkhonto We Sizwe*, even though the frontline unit was male-dominated and those men actively worked against any woman joining their ranks (Iny 2025). She learned and trained with

the men, outperforming them to be named a leader through each level of rank and finally as one of the highest commanders of the paramilitary force. Modise not only had to break into an organization that was patently against women joining, but she also had to continually prove herself against the expectations and sexism of the men. To deal with sexism from their fellow members, she and the many other women in the political and martial arenas had to come up with more creative ways to support the ANC (Iny 2025). They created their own group within the ANC, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) in 1954 (Devenish 2026). FEDSAW came about due to an increase in women in the workforce, increased unionization, and black women's participation in grassroots political concerns, and looked to work at the intersection of national liberation, gender, political concerns, and diverse backgrounds (Devenish 2026). FEDSAW organized marches, including a 20,000-strong march on August 9, 1956, and worked to create infrastructure that enabled young women to be more active in the fight (Devenish 2026). One of these ways was through childcare centers, where women could give birth and have enough support to get back out into the anti-apartheid fight. Yet the sexism and racism within the ANC at large meant that these childcare centers, which were helping enable more fighters, were seen as dirty and as ways for women to openly have sexual relations outside the marriage norm (Sandwell 2025). Through the work of feminist historians, the duality of women's approach to rebelling against apartheid is better understood. Motherhood was an essential foundation for the diverse participants, but it was not intended to constrain them. Instead, it was used to springboard the women into participation by acknowledging their power in their relationships and experiences that they could draw on while on a national or international stage. A woman who could manage her home was also seen as capable as a political entity. While most evident in the story of the women

against apartheid, the tension between traditional approaches to understanding and new lenses such as feminist studies is a theme that runs through all literature about women in rebel organizations.

These four rebellions demonstrate the diverse ways in which historians have approached how women participate in said organizations. The vast differences in how traditional roles are treated, whether through anti-colonial or anti-imperial lenses or as an understanding of the cultural foundations of that group, show that each conflict is different and that women have participated differently. Understanding how a specific person is important, such as Marie-Madeleine Fourcade or Thandi Modise, in the greater context of a conflict provides a better understanding of how women participated more generally. While the general actions and roles of women are also important, grouping women together tends to mute the impact of the opposition the women faced while serving. Adding in feminist historical perspective allows for a new lens to better understand the impact of women while viewing gender as a historical structure, an approach that is still being grappled with. In all of this, historical work makes clear that context and culture matter, and that women's roles across different rebellions are diverse. Although my work attempts to find broad patterns across different rebellions, this diversity and the importance of context must also be considered.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will discuss how combined data from multiple datasets is used to answer the overall research question of whether women have a positive impact on rebel organizations' conflict outcomes. First is a quick overview of the methodology, which is followed by an in-depth discussion of the datasets used. This section explains what variables are used and why. The final section will discuss the logistic regression model used due to the limitations of the data.

Methodology

This project takes a quantitative approach, using data to create the variables. The first two sets of models examine a group's ability to attain an intermediate goal and then to attain the final goal. These two studies use most of the same control variables, as described below. This dissertation analyzes cross-sectional, event-level data of conflict outcomes: intermediate and complete goal attainment, peace agreements, and rebel victories. The dependent variable for my different quantitative chapters are the goal achievement or conflict outcome events analyzed in this study. In other words, when a civil war is terminated, it is coded 1 in the rebel victory and peace agreement analyses, respectively, or 0 if it did not end with that outcome. Similarly, rebel goals are either achieved or not achieved, being coded 1 or 0. Due to the nature of the conflict outcome definition and the battle death-related data sampling described below, a few instances of groups with multiple outcomes are observed. The data are non-experimental and observational in nature, and are transformed into usable variables. The unit of analysis throughout is the government-rebel organization dyad.

Data Collection:

Operational Definitions of the Dependent Variables:

The base dataset is the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset (UCDP CTD, Kreutz 2010). This dataset provided the groups, start and end dates, and outcomes from 1946 to 2020. There are six types of outcomes detailed in the UCDP CTD: Peace Agreement, Ceasefire, Victory for Side A (government), Victory for Side B (non-state side), Low Activity, and Actor Ceases to Exist. The first and third of these outcomes were used to create the dependent variables *Peace Agreement* and *Rebel Victory*. Each time a conflict ended in either a peace agreement or a rebel victory, it is coded as such in the respective dependent variables.

To this refined dataset, information from the Revolutionary and Militant Organizations dataset (REVMOD, Acosta 2019) was added on which groups were designated as having met intermediate goals or fully attained their overall goals. This designation does not quantify how many stated goals were met, only that at least one was met. As described in the introduction, many groups put out specific aims or goals that are not the ultimate end goal. These aims could be that they control some of the desired territory, the government has implemented some reforms demanded by the rebel organization, or that the rebel organization is able to participate in the formal political system but holds no real power. For those groups that are designated as having met their goals completely, Acosta has identified multiple ways this occurs. These include the government not seeking a political reversal of the changes, the organization completely controlling all of its desired territory, resistance against the rebel organization being halted or defunct, or the government fully implementing the policy reform (Acosta Online Appendix 2019, 23-24). This dataset has groups from 1940 to 2014.

Operational Definitions of Independent Variables:

The third major dataset is the Women's Activities in Armed Rebellion (WAAR) dataset introduced by Meredith Loken and Hilary Matfess in 2023. The WAAR is populated with groups that have documented women as participants, leaders, and in women's units in frontline or non-combat roles from 1946 to 2015. These are the independent variables used in each study. There are two important assumptions regarding the information in the WAAR. The first is that these groups are documented to include adult women. No group that included only child or girl participants was included, with the distinction between a girl and a woman made according to the data-entry documentation. The second is that there is no distinction in the type of recruitment of women. The documentation does not take the women's entry pathway into the group into account, only that the women were part of the group and how they participated (Loken and Matfess 2023 Codebook, 8). These assumptions preclude any ethical or theoretical concerns regarding the quality of women's participation. Further research can disaggregate the differing paths to recruitment.

Leadership is defined as those who have direct control over strategy, policies, and ideology and can be seen at all levels within military and political structures (Matfess and Loken, Codebook, 9). These women hold positions of power that enable them to influence the course of a rebellion. Frontline leaders are those women who have direct control or influence in planning and executing combat operations, including suicide bombing campaigns. Units or wings, two terms used interchangeably throughout, are entities focused on a specific mission or aim in support of the rebellion. Researchers have identified units by their primary function. This allows for situations where a combat-trained woman has been documented as being part of a non-combat mission, such as intelligence gathering, but the overall mission of the unit is still

identified as non-combat. As described for the leaders, women-only units are seen at all levels of political and military structures and have their own structures as well.

The types and roles are coded using binary variables. If a group has documented the presence of at least one female participant, it is designated as 1. If there is no available documentation, it is coded with a 0. This continues for the role. Those groups with women documented in frontline or combat actions, or in specific non-combat roles, have been coded as 1 for those types. If those roles have no available documentation as being fulfilled by women, they are coded as a 0. This pattern continues for leaders and units. If a group is recorded as having a specific type, frontline or non-combat, as being filled by a woman, then the group is also documented as having a woman in that role. However, if a role is documented as having a woman in it but no specific type is mentioned, no assumptions are made, and it is only documented in the non-specified models. Again, the information for the women's units depends on the availability of documentation.

For these models, a small group with one documented woman is treated the same as a large-scale rebel organization with multiple documented women. At present, there is no data available that provides estimates of the number of women in rebel organizations. Matfess and Loken (2023) have a scale that distinguishes between low levels of participation and moderate and high levels drawn from depictions of women's involvement in largely secondary materials. In this initial study, I do not make use of such distinctions. While a limitation of my study, my results nonetheless offer a first cut at understanding the impact of women in rebel groups.

For each set of models, there are three sets of independent variables. For the participation variable, *Women Participant* identifies the groups with women documented in any capacity with no qualifier of role, and is split into *Frontline Participant* and *Non-Combat Participant*. *Woman*

Leader shows the groups with a documented woman in a position of power and is split into *Frontline Leader* and *Non-Combat Leader*. *Women's Unit* designates the presence of an all-woman unit, wing, battalion, or group, which is then split into *Frontline Unit* and *Non-Combat Unit*.

Operational Definitions of the Control Variables:

My control variables also include rebel group ideology and the type of goals rebels pursue. Data for these variables comes from Jessica Braithwaite and Kathleen Cunningham's Foundation of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) (Braithwaite and Cunningham Codebook, 2). The importance of such ideology has been highlighted by multiple prior works, particularly Wood and Thomas (2017) in their examination of female combatants. The ideology of a group helps form a common bond among members. When the ideologies of the government and the rebel organization differ significantly, the negotiation process becomes significantly more difficult and the chances of a peace agreement drop (Keels and Wiegand 2020).

The first ideological control variable is *Leftist Ideology*, which includes all groups espousing a left-of-center ideology, including those organizations with a Communist- or Marxist-inspired ideology. Leftist organizations have been shown to be more likely to have women participants and also have been associated with positive conflict outcomes such as rebel victory and peace agreements (Cunningham 2003). Research has also shown that groups with a leftist ideology demonstrate a strong relationship to women in leadership positions within those groups (Henshaw et al 2019).

The second ideological variable examined is *Religious Ideology*, and includes all religions, not just Islam. This was a deliberate choice to expand the focus beyond just jihadist organizations to see if any religion had any impact. Groups with a stated religious ideology, not just an Islam-

based ideology, demonstrate lower odds of reaching a negotiated peace agreement with the government (Svensson 2007). The third ideological variable examined is *Nationalist Ideology*. Groups with a nationalist ideology, whether civic or ethnic, seek to create congruence between the state and the people (Miller 2025). This ideology has been investigated in terms of its onset, durability, and lethality, and has been used in multiple research articles as a control variable, but only two studies have examined its effect on conflict outcomes. Nationalist ideologies have a strong appeal but can also create deep divides between “in” and “out” groups, making conflict settlement difficult. As such, nationalist conflicts are less likely to reach a negotiated settlement (Downes 2004). When investigating the mechanization of asymmetric groups, Lyall and Wilson (2009) conclude that the chance of a government victory decreases as nationalism spreads, increasing the potential for positive outcomes for the rebel group. Wood and Thomas (2017) found potential for a positive relationship between women’s participation and nationalist ideology. Both of these variables are treated using dummy variables. Those organizations that are designated to have leftist, religious, or nationalist ideologies are designated with 1. All others will be designated as a 0.

Control variables on the type of goal a group seeks to achieve also come from FORGE. As this study examines the outcomes of conflicts, it is imperative to disaggregate the organizations' goals. The three chosen goals demand the most substantial change from the status quo, often requiring rebel groups to adopt a focused and coherent approach to reach their goals. It can be assumed that such ambitious goals are related to rebel goal achievement and conflict outcomes. Those groups looking to establish an independent state are designated as having *Independence Goals*. When groups seek to create a new state, the outcome of interest is a rebel victory, as this goal requires eliminating military and political uncertainty to prevent a reversal of the newly drawn

borders (Downes 2004). This differs from groups seeking an autonomous region within the country, designated as Autonomous Zone Goals, in which an ethnic or territorial community exercises public policy functions independent of state authority but remains subject to the overall state legal order (Wolff and Weller 2005). Successful autonomous zone creation requires a substantial, well-institutionalized settlement agreed upon by the state and the rebel organization, for which a peace agreement is needed to begin the process (Hartzell and Hoddie 2007). The third goal of interest is when a group seeks to change the state government to a more democratic system, designated as *Democratic Goals*. Democracy has been studied extensively in relation to conflict onset and duration and then post-war democratization, but little has been empirically examined regarding how a rebel organization's democratic aims affect the end of a conflict. Much of the literature assumes that democratic goals must be present for democracy to emerge after conflict (Nilsson 2012), but, to my knowledge, no studies focus on how democratic goals affect conflict outcomes overall. Since democratization often represents a major change in state governance, it seems logical that such an ambitious goal would have some impact on the type of conflict outcome achieved and on rebels' ability to meet their objectives. Each of these is binary, with 1 designating groups that have those goals and 0 designating those that do not.

The regime type of the government is also examined as a control variable, with data coming from the Polity5 Project (2023). This is used to help define the environment in which the conflict occurs, as an autocratic government will use different tools against a rebellion than a more democratic nation. Strong autocracies are more likely to suppress a rebellion, and democracies are more likely to reach an agreement, and those governments in the middle, the semi-autocracies, tend to be the most conflict prone (Cunningham et al. 2009). The Polity 5 scores range from -10 (fully autocratic) to 10 (fully democratic). This initial score provided is designated as *Regime Type*.

The score is based on the government structure, power-sharing agreements within the structure, and approach to international relations.

The Madison Project Database (2023) provided the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita information. The *GDP per capita* is used as a proxy for the economic status of the country, which may be used as a poverty indicator. Conflicts in low GDP per capita countries tend to last longer, but governments try to end the conflict as quickly as possible, as prices of key commodities fall due to the conflict (Collier et al. 2004). Fearon and Laitin (2003) provide the foundation for many research papers that have studied the relationship between GDP per capita and civil conflict. They explain that states with low GDP have weaker institutions, creating space for rebel organizations to challenge state governments and potentially succeed. The inclusion of GDP per capita in this dissertation additionally follows notable studies. First, Akcinaroglu's (2012) research on rebel alliances and conflict outcomes found that GDP per capita was positively related to both peace agreements and rebel victories. Silverman et al. (2024) found the opposite when including GDP per capita as a control variable. Their project found no significant relationship between this variable and the likelihood of a rebel victory or peace agreement. Poverty, which is roughly captured by GDP per capita, also influences women's participation in rebel organizations. Poverty affects the ability of women to have a job and potentially forces them to look towards other means of supporting their families, such as joining or supporting a rebel organization (Asal and Jadoon 2022; Henshaw 2016). Having little means to support oneself and one's family significantly increases the attractiveness of the rebel organization while reducing barriers to women joining a rebel organization.

The UCDP CTD also provides the control variable for conflict duration. The start and end dates calculate conflict *Duration* by counting the days between and dividing by 365 to get the

duration in years. There is a demonstrated strong relationship between women's involvement in rebel organizations and conflict length. If a rebel organization can sustain a conflict beyond the initial first months, it increases its chances of victory (DeRouen and Sobek 2004). As the conflict continues and the rebels can keep fighting meaningfully, they erode the government's resistance and prove to the government that they are a genuine force it has to reckon with (Buhaug et al. 2009). Duration is also associated with the strength of a peace agreement after a conflict has concluded. Additionally, there is a strong, demonstrated relationship between women's involvement in rebel organizations and the length of conflict. Specifically, Wood and Allemang (2022) demonstrated that the presence of female combatants is a strong predictor of conflict duration: when women are recruited, conflict duration increases, potentially increasing the group's chances of successfully negotiating peace.

The Non-State Actor database (NSAD) provides the final two control variables used. This database, created by David E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan (2012), describes multiple groups that are actively resisting their governments, but not necessarily using violent means. The first data provided is the *Rebel Size Estimate*, in which the authors used multiple sources to provide the best estimate of how many people are members of the rebel organization. A larger group can increase its visibility beyond the immediate conflict area, raise funds from external sources, and signal to the government that it is a viable and effective opponent that warrants serious attention. Larger organizations may also have greater potential to include women as participants. A larger force can also mobilize rapidly to gain offensive advantages and win a victory (Cunningham et al. 2009). Sizeable and larger rebel organizations increase the potential for peace agreements, as they have more leverage than smaller insurgent outfits whom the government does not see as able to enforce their side of an agreement (Clayton 2013).

The second addition is a binary variable describing whether a rebel group ever held *Territory* at one point during the conflict. This is a binary variable: 1 indicates that the group held territory, and 0 indicates they did not. It does not indicate how much territory was held relative to the government or how well the group controlled the territory, only that control of territory was ascribed to the rebel group. If a rebel organization controls a large enough swath of territory, they can change their tactics from terror tactics, such as assassinations and suicide bombings, to more conventional military tactics. This is based on the assumption that larger and stronger organizations can control more land and make it available for training in conventional military tactics (de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenaca 2015). Once a rebel organization can change its tactics like that, it is better able to win a military victory. Rebel organizations that control territory possess a valuable asset they can use as a bargaining chip in peace negotiations and are therefore more likely to negotiate with the government to end a conflict (Asal et al. 2017).

Data Analysis

Model fit and multicollinearity were assessed for each of my estimates. Tests for multicollinearity were essential. Women's participation was initially treated as a control variable and included in the leader and unit models. While no individual variable met the variance inflation factor (VIF) threshold for multicollinearity, women's participation did indicate a notable degree of correlation with women leaders. These tests led to the conclusion that treating women's participation as an independent variable would be valuable in and of itself and would also provide insight on rebel group outcomes. Additionally, following previous work, Islamic ideology was

initially separated from my broader control variable of religious ideology, and the results reached the same level of statistical significance.¹

Table 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Women Participants	501	0 (214)	1 (287)	0.573	(0.495)
Frontline Participants	501	0 (249)	1 (252)	0.503	(0.500)
Non-Combat Participants	501	0 (226)	1 (275)	0.549	(0.498)
Women Leaders	501	0 (288)	1 (213)	0.425	(0.495)
Frontline Leader	499	0 (380)	1 (119)	0.238	(0.427)
Non-Combat Leader	499	0 (309)	1 (190)	0.381	(0.486)
Women's Unit	501	0 (304)	1 (197)	0.393	(0.489)
Frontline Unit	501	0 (408)	1 (93)	0.186	(0.389)
Non-Combat Unit	498	0 (328)	1 (170)	0.341	(0.475)
Ideology					
Leftist Ideology	401	0 (283)	1 (118)	0.294	(0.456)
Religious Ideology	411	0 (343)	1 (68)	0.165	(0.372)
Nationalist Ideology	411	0 (237)	1 (174)	0.423	(0.495)
Goals					
Independence Goals	475	0 (286)	1 (189)	0.397	(0.490)
Autonomous Zone Goals	475	0 (471)	1 (58)	0.122	(0.328)
Democratic Regime	473	0 (436)	1 (37)	0.078	(0.269)
Conflict Environment					
Duration	475	0	72.416	16.571	(17.545)
Regime Type	475	-10	10	0.265	(5.488)
GDP per capita	492	377.580	33,951.89	3170.943	(4,676.646)
Rebel Size Estimate	272	2	1,000,000	15,199.15	(65,422.52)
Territory	288	0 (187)	1 (101)	0.351	(0.478)

Following these changes, no variable or model VIF outcome exceeded 5. Multicollinearity does not have a pernicious effect on my estimates. While there may be a theoretical concern that control variables for national ideology and the goal of creating an independent state may overlap, this did not register in my VIF tests. This is likely because not all nationalist groups aim for

¹ The religious ideology variable excluding Islamic groups does not reach statistical significance and is highly correlated with other variables.

independence, and not all groups seeking independence have a nationalist ideology. Few, if any, current studies include both of these distinct controls in estimates, and thus their inclusion sheds light on these distinct attributes of rebel organization.

I also completed Durbin-Wu-Hausman tests on each of the models to ensure that there was no simultaneity. Each test indicated that no simultaneity was detected, increasing confidence that my estimates do not suffer from excessive endogeneity.

Models were estimated using Firth's logistic regression in Stata as my dependent variables are rare events. To substantiate this, each chapter will include a table showing the rarity of dependent variable events. Additionally, the small sample sizes for both intermediate and complete goal attainment have the potential to produce bias in standard logistic regression. . . . For each chapter, there are three sets of four models. The first set is the participation models, the second is the leader models, and the third set is the unit models. Each set then has four total models. The first is the base model of the non-specified role. The second is the full model with the control variables and the non-specified role, with each chapter specifying which control variables are used. The third model is the specified-type base model, in which the two roles are separated into frontline and non-combat. The final model is the full model in which the independent variables are the two roles.

Akaike's information criterion (AIC) is used to determine which model has a better fit. While the dataset is large, it was not large enough to justify using the Bayesian information criterion (BIC) given the number of control variables and complexity. This allows for comparison within each set of independent variables and across sets. It also provides information on model fit between the specific outcomes and the type of goal attainment. AIC was also used when testing to see if separating Marxist and Communist ideologies from other leftist ideologies and Islamic

religion from other religions made a difference in the models. There was a difference in that combining the variables created stronger AIC.

Data Limitations

The focus of this dissertation is on combining multiple datasets to better understand how women's participation, leadership, and units affect conflict outcomes. However, there are some limitations to the data. These limitations demonstrate the main critique of the data at large for intrastate conflict and rebellion studies. Whether it is due to the lack of ability to record applicable and correct data or that the data that can be collected has verification concerns, there are concerns with the foundations of what we use to make assumptions as research continues. However, it is only when we use the data to try and explain the world that we find out these issues. In this study, data limitations are arguably most apparent in the information available on women's participation in rebel organizations, rebel group goal attainment, and rebel control of territory.

The most difficult issue to overcome for anyone researching rebel organizations is that there are no verified registers for these groups. It is in the rebel organization's best security interest not to have a physical list of who is in the group, what position they hold, and any other identifying information that the government could potentially get hold of and then use against the group. This means that as women joined the groups, their roles had to be verified through other means. Methods of verification used by Matfess and Loken (2023) for the WAAR include, but are not limited to, digitally archived resources from the rebel organizations, reports from international and non-governmental organizations, local news, policy briefs, and systematic search strings in Google Scholar and Google search engines (WAAR Codebook 12). Their research and research assistants were then able to code women's presence and activity.

Across the variables, there is no temporal distinction. For example, women were documented as being in these roles only as an indication that, at one point during the lifetime of the rebel organization or that at one point in the conflict, the rebel organization controlled an unknown amount of territory, but when they were documented or the change in territory controlled over time is not accounted for. Adding a time element to these variables has the potential to better explain if and how various independent variables impact dependent variables and how well the control variables describe and account for the environment.

Continuing with the dependent variables, there are no indicators as to how many intermediate goals were met in the REVMOD (Acosta 2019). The only indicator is the binary variable of 1 indicating that an intermediate goal was met. It does not indicate the level (local, state/province, or national) of that goal or if the goal was maintained. Common sense suggests that goals may be initially met but, due to the specific conflict circumstances, that attainment may be reversed. This variable also has a temporal issue. It does not account for when the intermediate goal was attained. When intermediate goals are attained, it impacts further operations and has the potential to alter the course of the conflict, but as there are no other studies on intermediate goal attainment, this effect is unknown. The lack of information and descriptors does hamper broader interpretation. Despite its limitations, the available data is what allows for the initial research presented in this dissertation. It provides a basic indicator to show that a goal was reached, which can be a springboard for further research.

Most data regarding territory and how much territory is controlled is inter-state. The Non-State Actor dataset (NSAD) (Cunningham et al. 2009) is the only dataset that accounts for a rebel organization controlling territory, but it does not provide the amount of territory controlled. While having a defined amount of territory controlled would help with future research, it will be difficult

for those numbers to be accurate. During a conflict, how much territory a group controls can be used for propaganda against the government, which disincentivizes the government from accurately reporting how much territory it has lost control over. A government may not report accurate numbers for a multitude of reasons. It can be used as an indicator to other nations of how weak the national government is if it is unable to maintain its territory against a smaller group. The numbers themselves are also a point of contention. How the government comes up with the numbers may be a classified procedure, or the number itself is considered classified due to its relation to military operations. These same issues are also seen with rebel group size estimates. The rebel organization wants to inflate the numbers to appear more successful than it is and to discredit the government. The government may underreport to downplay the severity of the situation, may overreport to inflate its success, or decline to report because its estimates come from intelligence sources the government does not want to compromise. The NSAD provides the best estimate that the authors could verify, and it, again, offers a useful starting point for valuable research.

Such data limitations underscore the importance of continuing detailed research on rebel organizations to further our understanding and to improve the data that informs studies. The information presently available is without doubt valuable, but as in so many areas of research, more needs to be done to advance knowledge.

Conclusion

The next four chapters will examine, in order, intermediate goal attainment, complete goal attainment, peace agreement outcomes, and rebel victory outcomes through a quantitative statistical analysis using Firth's logistic regression. Each chapter will begin with an introduction

and state the specific hypotheses. Each chapter includes a case study of a representative rebel organization corresponding to that chapter's dependent variable. As each chapter has a different dependent variable, these will be discussed in turn. No independent variables- participation, leadership, and women's units- will be discussed, as they do not vary from what has been discussed in this chapter. Control variables will be discussed as needed. Each chapter will then start with the participation models, followed by a results discussion and analysis. Following the participation models will be the leadership models, and then the unit models. A final discussion looking at the results together will end each chapter.

Chapter 4 - Intermediate Goal Attainment

Introduction

Most research into conflict outcomes jumps straight to specific outcomes. The purpose of these first two studies is to take a step back and challenge the assumption that only specific outcomes matter. Instead, the focus of these two sets of estimates is to ascertain if there is a difference between unspecified goal attainment, that is, no quality or quantity to the goals, and specific outcomes. This chapter uses Benjamin Acosta's (2019) Revolutionary and Militant Organizations Dataset (REVMOD) to investigate how women's involvement in rebel organizations facilitates, or does not facilitate, attaining intermediate goals. A group's ability to meet an intermediate goal can help determine its overall success. However, this step is usually overlooked on the assumption that intermediate goal attainment is not impactful. REVMOD is a relatively new dataset that has been used in little published work.

Hypothesis 1a: Rebel organizations with women documented participating in any capacity have an increased probability of achieving an intermediate goal.

Hypothesis 1b: Rebel organizations with women leaders documented in any capacity have an increased probability of achieving an intermediate goal.

Hypothesis 1c: Rebel organizations with women units documented in any capacity have an increased probability of achieving an intermediate goal.

An overview of the Polisario Front in Western Sahara, a group that has met an intermediate goal, will begin this examination. Following that description will be a discussion of the methodology. Each hypothesis has four associated models, looking at the roles and types of women's participation and potential impact on rebel organizations. After the models, there will be a discussion of the results, along with model-specific analyses. The chapter's conclusion will expand on the themes found across the three sets of models.

The Polisario Front in Western Africa

Parts of Western Sahara became a Spanish colony in 1884, and more was given to Spain in 1912 when France and Spain declared protectorates over Morocco. (Abi-Mershed and Fararr 2014). Morocco became an independent Kingdom in 1956, but the Spanish continued to retain control of important ports and cities (Abi-Mershed and Fararr 2014). Western Sahara then became a disputed territory between Morocco and Spain. This continued colonization by Spain led to the establishment of a multitude of nationalist and freedom groups in Morocco, one of which was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro, known in Spanish as Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro. It later became known as the Polisario Front. This group was cofounded by Brahim Ghali and El-Ouali Mustapha Sayed (Abi-Mershed and Fararr 2014) on 10 May 1973 (Strzelecka 2023). The Polisario Front aimed to expel Spain from Western Sahara and create a state separate from all former colonizers and surrounding countries. While the Kingdom of Morocco waged a political war against Spain at the United Nations, the Arab League, and the African Union, the Polisario Front engaged in active combat to retake all disputed Spanish-held territories and what would become Western Sahara. Bowing to international pressure, Spain agreed to the Agreements of Madrid on 14 Nov 1975 and officially withdrew from Western Sahara in February 1976 (Abi-Mershed and Fararr 2014). The Kingdom of Morocco saw the Agreements as a success because it continued to occupy the territory, but the Polisario Front did not, as Morocco still controlled the disputed territory and Mauritania also occupied part of Western Sahara.

In response to the Agreements' signature, Polisario established the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and appointed Polisario's General Secretary, El-Ouali Mustapha Sayed, as its president on 27 February 1976 (Strzelecka 2023). Acting as a government-in-exile

based in Algeria, the Polisario Front asserts sovereignty over the entire territory of Western Sahara, but its actual control was confined to the Free Zone on the eastern border with Algeria (Strzelecka 2023). Situated southwest of Morocco and Western Sahara, on the border with Algeria, the Polisario began receiving support from Algeria in its fight against Mauritania, Morocco, and Western Sahara in its quest for a new, internationally recognized state. A successful coup in Mauritania in June 1976 led to Mauritanian troops withdrawing from Western Sahara after signing a cease-fire with the Polisario Front (Abi-Mershed and Fararr 2014). At the same time, the Moroccans took advantage of the resulting power vacuum and sent troops into Western Sahara to take control of the mineral-rich deposits and ports there. Multiple military clashes occurred between 1976 and 1980, after which Morocco decided to build the Moroccan Wall. The Moroccan Wall was approximately 1,500 miles long, manned at times by up to 100,000 to 170,000 troops, and was designed to protect the mineral-rich areas from Polisario incursions (Jensen 2013). The wall, which is mostly constructed out of sand berms, still stands today, and has been identified as one of the longest and largest minefields in the world (Wright 2026). Between the 1970s and today, there have been multiple international interventions, culminating in the 1991 UN-proctored and enforced United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) peacekeeping operation. Throughout this time, Cuba and North Korea have sent technical advisors to the Polisario, and France and Israel have worked with Moroccan forces (Jensen 2013) in addition to UN forces. While the Polisario Front has been unsuccessful in forcing the Spanish to withdraw from Western Sahara, it continues to fight for an internationally recognized nation of its own, and the government is still in exile in Algeria.

Drawing from the socialist and anti-imperialist movements of the Cold War Era, the Polisario Front aimed to create a nation of a largely nomadic and tribal people (Strzelecka 2023).

This required bridging tribal, social, racial, and gender divisions. While each of these is important, gender divisions are of most interest for this dissertation. Women's emancipation became a central issue and a key strategy, seen as a necessary step for modernizing Sahrawi society (Strzelecka 2023). Following the Second Polisari Congress in 1974 with the creation of the National Action Plan, Secretary General Sayed established the National Union of Sahrawi Women (NUSW) (Strzelecka 2023). The role of the NUSW was to specifically "promote women's development and their political, social, and military participation in the Polisario state-movement" (Strzelecka 2023).

Much of what the Polisario Front has attained politically can be attributed to the women involved. With so many men being drafted and forced to fight, women accounted for nearly 80% of the refugee population, providing them with the ability to exercise influence on political matters (Ilesanmi 2025). The idealized Sahrawi woman who can reform society, be productive in political matters, and be educated has been closely tied to a woman who is also a militant, fighter, and revolutionary (Strzelecka 2023). On the home front, women were responsible for organizing the refugee camps, conducting the majority of the administrative work, and mobilizing the community at the grassroots level (Strzelecka 2023). Refugee camps were organized into provinces and municipalities, and each municipality is organized into a political cell of 10 members with an elected leader. Women were consistently part of the political cell but were not elected leaders of the municipalities. Although they did not serve as cell leaders, women were an essential part of the leadership structure, which gave them power in society. Their advisory role to the cell leaders meant that many of the decisions reached were directly due to the women's influence, creating a feedback loop where women's ideas and efforts were rewarded by having their efforts codified into everyday life through the cell leader's decisions.

Women's leadership at the lowest levels within the household ensured that while the men were at war, the well-being of those in the camps continued. The women's administration and management oversight of the health systems, logistical supply chains, and schools within the camps ensured continuity of day-to-day life and political activism, consolidating their power to influence voting by the political cell leaders (Ilesanmi 2025). Their role as leaders in the municipalities is how they continue to promote national culture through language, clothing, and other practices to increase their support base and support the transition to a modern state (Strzelecka 2023). Women also worked to increase literacy and education rates within the refugee camps not only to recruit more women for political struggles and protests, but to improve the community as a whole, increase their ability to reach international partners, and fight more effectively. In 1975, the illiteracy rate of Sahrawi women was estimated to be 98% to 99% (Lippert 1992). To combat illiteracy, women were sent abroad to complete their schooling and then were brought back to teach those who could not leave. Education was recognized as an essential block needed to mobilize on behalf of the independence movement, while at the same time using that education to develop and conserve Sahrawi traditions to encourage the principles of resistance, community mobilization and consciousness, and set in concrete the right for self-determination within the culture (Ilesanmi2025). The women then demonstrated these principles through non-violent protests within occupied territory, during which many women were arrested, imprisoned, separated from their families, and tortured because of their involvement in the protests (Ilesanmi 2025). The National Union of Sahrawi Women (NUSW) became the vehicle through which the women garnered international attention to the situation and crises of the Saharawi people, leading to essential political connections with non-governmental organizations and coordinating with the diaspora abroad (Ilesanmi 2025).

Militarily, Sahrawi women were present and impactful as fighters in all Western Saharan resistance movements from the 1930s onward. Women who joined the paramilitary organization the Saharawi Popular Liberation Army (Ilesanmi 2025) became responsible for recruiting men and women, making uniforms, grassroots mobilization for financing and ideological messaging, and organizing protection, food, and shelter for refugees fleeing the conflict (Lippert 1992; Strzelecka 2023). As the majority of the men were drafted into the fight at the front, it fell to the women who were trained by the paramilitary to help protect local communities. The women's ability to organize while on the run, create a foundation for the refugee camps, and militarily protect those who were fleeing is an important reason the resistance was able to continue. Female insurgents thus undoubtedly played a major role in the persistence and success of the Polisario Front. While education was an important component of female participation within Polisario, I do not analyze female education directly in my quantitative analyses. My hope is that future study can help to build in such important secondary variables.

Research Design

As described in the Methodology chapter, the majority of the data is pulled from the UCDP CTD, WAAR, and REVMOD, with FORGE as a supplement. In contrast to the later specific outcome chapters, the sample size for this project is much smaller. As the sample size is much smaller, the results are less precise and indicate trends, whereas the larger sample sizes of the peace agreement and rebel victory models allow for greater precision. In the full models of this section, the coefficients shown in the logistic regression tables have two tendencies. First, the positive coefficients tend to be very large in magnitude, with statistically significant variables increasing the odds by a double-digit factor. Second, the negative coefficients for statistically significant

variables generally show very small increments. Due to the wide variance, the full models will be discussed in more general terms.

Operational Definition of the Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is intermediate goal success, which is a binary variable. If, at any point, the rebel organization meets an intermediate goal, it receives the designation 1. Groups that do not meet this threshold are designated 0. According to Acosta (2019), an intermediate objective is one that is short of “gained autonomy, governmental power-sharing, territorial control, or shift in regime makeup” (728). This definition also allows multiple intermediate goals to be met. As a binary variable, meeting one intermediate goal is the same as meeting multiple. Importantly, attaining an intermediate goal does not ascribe to which one was attained, only that it was attained. Intermediate goal attainment includes, but is not limited to, consolidating power over some of the desired territory or some appeasement by the ruling regime but not a significant acquiescence of power (Acosta 2019 Codebook, 23-24). Important to understand that the dependent variable depicts the quantity, not the quality, of intermediate goals. Once a group has met a goal, it is counted, even if that goal is later reversed.

Operational Definition of the Independent Variable

As described in the methodology chapter, if a woman is documented as being a participant, a leader, or if there is a women’s unit, the first two models have it coded at 1. No documentation available shows it as a 0. This holds true as well for separated frontline and non-combat positions as well.

Control Variables

The first set of control variables is the goal variables. As outlined in Braithwaite and Cunningham's (2019) FORGE, these three goals are *Independence Goals*, *Autonomous Zone Goals*, and *Democratic Goals*. They are included in these models because the end goal guides the group's mission, vision, and pathway toward the intention. Each of these goals provides ample opportunities for a group to meet an intermediate goal before the culminating goal. For example, those seeking to create an autonomous zone may need to win local and regional elections, which require strong relationships with the local community. To win those elections, they need a viable political party that is seen as legitimate and capable of effectively meeting the community's needs while advancing their own aims.

An important aspect to describe the group is the size of the rebel organization. *Rebel Size Estimate*, coming from the Non-State Actor database (NSAD), and is the best estimate of the rebel group's membership. A larger group also has the capacity to potentially have multiple wings, allowing for more participation, leadership opportunities, and the creation of an all-women's unit. The size of the group, along with the *Territory* variable, is used to describe the group's strength and indicate the need for the government to respond in order to keep power. While this variable does not quantify how much territory a group holds, it does indicate that the group was able to govern its own community effectively enough to become a threat to the government's hold in the area. Having territory and a larger group size also changes the government's risk matrix, potentially changing its approach to conflict termination. The larger a rebel organization's membership and the more territory it can effectively control, the more it increases its negotiating leverage and base to increase its fighting force. Either of these can influence the government to be more amenable to concessions, or coming to agreements regarding intermediate goals.

Regime Type, *Duration*, and *GDP per capita* are used to describe the environment in which the conflict occurs. The government's regime type indicates how willing it may be to work with the group, even if a conflict is ongoing. A more democratic regime may be more willing to pursue negotiations even while there is active fighting, whereas an autocratic regime may focus only on quashing what it sees as a rebellion. Such variance has the potential to impact intermediate goal attainment. In these models, the duration of a conflict is important to whether potential intermediate goals are met. A longer duration is expected to help achieve the goal. Some intermediate goals for the variables being used require time to be met, such as negotiations for services and the time needed to fund and execute those services, or negotiations on the borders of an autonomous zone. The GDP per capita demonstrates how wealthy the country is and whether poverty is a factor in the rebel organization's existence. A better GDP per capita is expected to be associated with a lower probability of meeting an intermediate goal, as the government has more power. A lower GDP per capita can lead to larger rebel group sizes, which facilitate many of the actions needed to meet intermediate goals.

Methods

Multiple models were run to determine the best variables for this chapter. First, regressions were run utilizing all control variables described in Chapter 3 to determine collinearity. Since collinearity was a concern, variables included in the estimate had to be reduced. While no individual variable exceeded the VIF collinearity threshold, most variables showed potential multicollinearity, so they had to be reduced. Using the step-down method, the ideological variables were shown to have the least effect on the model, to reduce potential multicollinearity, and were

therefore removed (Schroeder et al. 1986). After removing the ideological variables, collinearity levels became less of a concern

Table 4.1 Intermediate Goal Attainment Distribution

	Frequency	Percent
Attained Intermediate Goals	18	25
No Intermediate Goals Attained	54	75
Total	72	100.00

Table 4.2 Cross-Tabulation of Intermediate Goal Attainment and Women's Roles

	Intermediate Goal Attainment		
	0	1	<i>Total</i>
Women's Participation			
0	9	1	<i>10</i>
1	45	17	<i>62</i>
Women's Frontline Participation			
0	14	1	<i>15</i>
1	40	17	<i>57</i>
Women's Non-Combat Participation			
0	11	1	<i>12</i>
1	43	17	<i>60</i>
Women Leaders			
0	18	1	<i>19</i>
1	36	17	<i>53</i>
Women Frontline Leaders			
0	28	7	<i>15</i>
1	26	11	<i>57</i>
Women Non-Combat Leaders			
0	11	1	<i>12</i>
1	43	17	<i>60</i>
Women's Units			
0	22	2	<i>24</i>
1	32	16	<i>48</i>
Women's Frontline Units			
0	38	13	<i>51</i>
1	16	5	<i>21</i>
Women's Non-Combat Units			
0	28	3	<i>31</i>
1	26	15	<i>41</i>

Participation Analysis

Women Participants in Any Capacity

Model 1 begins by investigating how women participants affect a rebel group's ability to partially meet its stated objectives. In this base model, women's participation of any kind is not statistically significant, which does not support Hypothesis 1a. Unlike the peace agreement and rebel victory models, which have a significantly larger sample size due to the dataset usage, the base models have a sample size of 72, which is reduced to 30 for the full models. The sample size is a pattern seen in all models in this chapter.

Table 4.3 Intermediate Goal Attainment Model Comparison for Women's Participation

Variables	Model 1 Base Model	Model 2	Model 3 Separated Base Model	Model 4
Women's Participation	0.890 (0.923)	2.300 (2.006)		
Frontline Participation			1.138 (1.124)	0.589 (1.904)
Non-Combat Participation			0.286 (1.164)	2.816 (2.196)
Independence Goals		-0.812 (1.414)		-1.226 (1.580)
Autonomous Goal		2.872* (2.872)		4.534* (2.746)
Democratic Goals		1.460 (1.978)		2.062 (2.587)
Rebel Size Estimate		0.000* (0.000)		0.000* (0.000)
Territory Held		2.764** (2.764)		2.877* (1.513)
Regime Type		-0.191* (0.145)		-0.226* (0.165)
Duration		-0.123* (0.087)		-0.164* (0.102)
GDP per capita		-0.000* (0.000)		-0.000** (0.000)
Intercept	-1.846** (0.186)	-1.558 (2.093)	-2.242*** (0.922)	-1.761 (1.969)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	80.779	-4.418	80.522	-3.101
N	72	30	72	30

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

When the control variables are added in, women's participation is again not statistically significant, which does not support Hypothesis 1a. In this model, the only goal variable that reaches statistical significance is the autonomous zone goals. Groups with the goal of creating an area under the current regime that the rebel group would administer significantly increase their odds of partially achieving their goals. This is statistically significant at the 10% level or better. Independence goals show a negative coefficient, while changing the regime to a democratic type shows a positive coefficient, but neither is statistically significant. Larger rebel groups are more likely to partially meet their goals than smaller groups, with increased size being statistically significant at the 10% level or better. Those groups documented as holding territory have significantly higher odds of partially meeting their goals than those not documented as holding territory. Holding territory is significant at the 5% level or better. Each conflict environment variable negatively affects a group's odds of partially achieving its goals at the 10% level or better. An autocratic regime is more likely to undermine a group's ability to attain an intermediate goal, reducing the odds of meeting it by one-fifth compared with a group fighting a democratic regime. As the GDP per capita increases, a rebel group incrementally loses the ability to meet an intermediate goal for every dollar the economy loses. Finally, as conflict continues, the odds of a rebel group attaining the goal decrease.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Participants

Separating non-combat participants from frontline participants does not make either type of participation statistically significant. The final participation model follows the same result as Model 2. The only statistically significant variable is independence goals, which is significant at the 10% level or better. The significance is reduced when compared to the non-specific

participation model. In this model, groups seeking to create a new state have a higher likelihood of partially meeting their objectives than groups that are not seeking to do so. Independence goals have a negative coefficient, while democratic goals have a positive coefficient, but neither is statistically significant. Increased rebel group size positively affects intermediate goal attainment, with statistical significance at the 10% level or better. Groups that hold territory at any point during the conflict increase their odds of attaining an intermediate goal, significant at the 5% level or better. Regime type and duration are again significant at the 10% level or better, and GDP per capita is significant at the 5% level or better. These three variables all demonstrate negative coefficients, negatively impacting a group's ability to meet its goals.

Analysis

These initial models demonstrate no support for Hypothesis 1a. But as the first models, they begin to demonstrate the patterns that will be seen in the follow-on models. The only goal that demonstrates statistical significance is the creation of an autonomous zone. There are many steps required for a rebel group to gain control of an area, which means multiple concessions from the government must be secured, providing plenty of opportunities for the group to reach intermediate goals. Larger rebel groups act similarly to Clayton's (2019) findings, where he found that larger groups do positively impact outcomes. A larger group size allows more lines of effort to run in parallel and tends to be associated with greater capabilities. While this increases the complexity of the conflict, it also provides better opportunities to achieve goals. The ability to hold territory against a state government demonstrates the capacity to govern, thereby increasing a rebel group's legitimacy. Increased legitimacy leads to a multitude of secondary effects, including greater global visibility, increased financial support, and a stronger base of

support. Autocratic regimes are difficult to negotiate with or to effectively mobilize against, as they have fewer inhibitions and restrictions on using any and all forms of force to stay in power. As seen in previous models, longer conflicts strain group resources, so shorter conflicts are more beneficial to a rebel group. Finally, as state GDP per capita increases, rebel intermediate goal attainment declines. The state has more capacity to thwart rebel endeavors in this context.

Table 4.4 Intermediate Goal Attainment Model Comparison for Women's Leadership

Variables	Model 5 Base Model	Model 6	Model 7 Separated Base Model	Model 8
Women Leaders	1.777** (0.897)	4.802** (2.653)		
Frontline Leader			-0.069 (0.597)	-0.081 (1.187)
Non-Combat Leader			1.753** (0.769)	2.689** (1.634)
Independence Goals		-2.046 (1.987)		-1.004 (1.647)
Autonomous Goal		5.327* (3.349)		3.015* (2.150)
Democratic Goals		5.977* (3.960)		2.800 (2.647)
Rebel Size Estimate		0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Territory Held		4.905** (0.806)		3.029* (1.876)
Regime Type		-0.396* (0.244)		-0.253 (0.160)
Duration		-0.183* (0.131)		-0.108 (0.090)
GDP per capita		-0.001** (0.000)		-0.000* (0.000)
Intercept	-2.512*** (0.849)	-1.990 (2.389)	-2.278*** (0.675)	-0.881 (1.752)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	75.770	-12.213	74.774	-6.289
N	72	30	72	30

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

Leadership Analysis

Women Leaders in Any Capacity

The first base model shows that having a woman leader of any type is associated with higher levels of support, thereby supporting the first hypothesis in this chapter. This model shows statistical significance at the 5% level or better that a group with a documented woman leader has higher odds of intermediate goal attainment than groups without a documented woman leader in any role.

The full model continues to support Hypothesis 1b. Women leaders are again statistically significant at the 5% level or better and dramatically increase the odds of intermediate goal attainment compared to groups without women leaders. As with Model 2, this model also demonstrates that autonomous zone goals increase the odds of intermediate goal attainment, significant at the 10% level or better. Interestingly, in this model, groups aiming to change the state regime to a more democratic one increase their odds of intermediate goal attainment, and this is significant at the 10% level or better. Independence goals have a negative coefficient and are not significant. Unlike the participation models, rebel group size does not significantly affect the odds of intermediate goal attainment. Groups that can hold territory significantly increase their odds of intermediate goal attainment, and this variable is significant at the 5% level or better. Autocratic regimes reduce the odds of a rebel organization meeting intermediate goals, as does increased duration; both variables are significant at the 10% level or better. Finally, a lower GDP per capita decreases the odds of intermediate goal group attainment, with the effect significant at the 5% level or better.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Leaders

Disaggregating frontline leaders from non-combat leaders shows that non-combat leaders have a much greater impact than frontline leaders, supporting Hypothesis 1b. Non-combat leaders increase the odds of meeting the intermediate goal, at the 5% level or better.

Including the control variables continues to support Hypothesis 1b. Non-combat leaders maintain their significance at the 5% level or better and increase a group's odds of reaching an intermediate goal. Independence goals and autonomous zone goals stay at their respective significance levels with the same coefficients. Independence goals are not significant with a negative coefficient, unlike the autonomous zone goals, which are significant at the 10% level or better and increase the odds of intermediate goal attainment. In the first of two significant differences between the two women leaders' full models, groups with democratic aims are no longer statistically significant, and these goals retain their positive coefficient. The second significant difference between the models is that duration is not statistically significant when the leaders are broken out, but it also retains its negative coefficient. The rebel group size has a positive coefficient, but it is not significant. Territorial possession continues to positively impact the odds of intermediate goal attainment and remains statistically significant, but its significance drops to the 10% level or better. Autocratic regimes continue to negatively impact at the 10% level or better. Finally, a lower GDP per capita decreases the odds of reaching intermediate goals, but in this model, it reduces the significance level to 10% or better.

Analysis

Every model in this set demonstrates support for Hypothesis 1b. Women leaders increase the odds of reaching an intermediate goal short of the final goal, and more specifically, non-combat

women leaders help rebel organizations to reach their goals. These four models also have better AIC values, indicating a stronger data fit than the participation models. In Model 6, two variables are significant, but in Model 8, they are not. The first is democratic goals and the second is duration. The impact is thus likely conditioned by other variables (see Clayton 2019).

Table 4.5 Intermediate Goal Attainment Model Comparison for Women's Units

Variables	Model 9 Base Model	Model 10	Model 11 Separated Base Model	Model 12
Women's Unit	1.519** (0.732)	4.164** (2.214)		
Frontline Unit			-0.369 (0.619)	-0.399 (1.441)
Non-Combat Unit			1.621*** (0.661)	3.599** (2.066)
Independence Goals		-2.319 (1.970)		-2.406 (2.191)
Autonomous Goal		5.359* (3.330)		4.821* (3.540)
Democratic Goals		5.250* (3.834)		4.605 (4.188)
Rebel Size Estimate		0.000** (0.000)		0.000* (0.000)
Territory Held		4.677* (2.949)		5.055* (3.384)
Regime Type		-0.386* (0.236)		-0.383* (0.255)
Duration		-0.192** (0.115)		-0.165* (0.121)
GDP per capita		-0.001** (0.000)		-0.001* (0.000)
Intercept	-2.197*** (0.667)	-1.569 (2.195)	-2.014*** (0.572)	-1.033 (1.443)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	75.812	-12.292	74.90	-8.358
N	72	30	72	30

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

Unit Analysis

Women Units in Any Capacity

In the first base model of all-women units in a rebel organization, the presence of such a unit in a group is statistically significant at the 5% level or better and increases the odds of partially attaining stated aims compared to a group without a documented all-women's unit. This finding supports Hypothesis 1c.

Including the control variables demonstrates that all-women units continue to increase the odds of intermediate goal attainment at the 5% level or better, providing further support for Hypothesis 1c. Of the three goal variables, only the independence goals are not statistically significant, and that is the only goal variable with a negative coefficient. Both autonomous zone goals and democratic goals are significant at the 10% level or better, increasing the odds in groups that espouse these goals compared with those that do not. Increased rebel group size increases the likelihood of attaining intermediate goals and is statistically significant at the 5% level or better. Holding territory is also a positive factor, significant at the 10% level or better. Each of the three remaining variables has a statistically significant negative impact on the attainment of intermediate goals. More autocratic regime types negatively impact intermediate goal achievement at the 10% level or better. Increased conflict duration and lower GDP per capita are significant at the 5% level or better and negatively affect intermediate goal attainment.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Units

All-women non-combat units have a significant positive impact on a rebel group's odds of achieving intermediate goals, compared with groups without such units, a pattern similar to that

of leadership models. Frontline units show no significant impact but have a negative coefficient. These findings continue the support for Hypothesis 1c.

Adding the control variables keeps the all-woman non-combat unit significantly positive, but reduces the impact to 5% or better. Frontline units remain not a factor. Independence goals are again not significant with a negative coefficient. Autonomous zone goals remain statistically significant at the 10% level or better and positively impact a group's odds of attaining an intermediate goal. Similar to the leader models, the aim of changing the regime to a more democratic form loses statistical significance when the unit type is split. Rebel group size remains important in the women's unit models, as larger rebel group size improves the odds of intermediate goal attainment but reduces the significance to 10% or better. Groups that hold territory during the conflict continue to increase their odds of achieving intermediate goals, with significance at the 10% level or better. In this model, the final three variables all have negative effects on intermediate goal attainment and are statistically significant at the 10% level or better.

Analysis

When compared side by side, the AIC values of the leadership and unit models are nearly the same, as demonstrated by the similar support they provide for their respective hypotheses. A visual check of the models demonstrates the similarities in which variables are statistically significant, as well as which coefficients are significant. The participant models have higher AIC values, indicating that the data do not fit these models well and receive much less support than the leader and unit models.

The unit models demonstrate support for Hypothesis 1c across all four models. As with the leader models, when the types of units are broken out, the all-women non-combat units are the

type that are consistently statistically significant. Both models demonstrate that the most impactful type of goal is autonomous zone goals, which allow for multiple intermediate goals to be met. Democratic goals are statistically significant when any type of women's unit is being studied, but not when the type of unit is split. This finding lends further credence to the idea that representation matters when pursuing intermediate goals. Having a larger group that can work on multiple goals simultaneously, and groups that hold territory, continue to be a positive influence on intermediate goals. Regime type trending towards autocracy, increased conflict curation, and a lower GDP per capita are negative influences on a group's odds of attaining goals in both full models.

Discussion

These models demonstrate consistent and significant support for Hypotheses 1b and 1c. Women leaders and all-women units statistically significantly improve a group's odds of attaining an intermediate goal, with non-combat leaders and units specifically increasing those odds. These models provide the strongest support for their respective hypotheses across all model sets. Non-combat types keep women in the societal and cultural roles expected of them, supporting men in fighting and combat roles. While it could be a case of sticking with the norms, it could also be that the women are being recruited into roles that they succeed in outside of the rebel organization. Therefore, when they are recruited, they are recruited for their strengths. The Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional, or FMLN, in El Salvador recruited women based on their literacy, medical capabilities, and political training during the latter portion of the civil war in the 1990s (Viterna, 134-136, 184). Recruiting women according to their strengths allows for two significant impacts. First, when women are placed in positions they already know, such as political or financial agents, they can use their existing networks to better support the rebel organization.

This increases the probability of attaining goals. Second, the visibility of women in positions where they excel better positions the group to recruit more women.

There are trends observed across all three models. First, among the goal variables, the independence goals are never statistically significant. Creating an independent state may be so ambitious that rebel groups falter when attempting partial goals toward this end state. Regime type is consistently negatively signed and significant, suggesting that intermediate goal attainment is less likely as states become more autocratic. Every model also shows that increasing state GDP per capita reduces the probability of goal attainment, presumably because the state has more resources to combat the rebels and thwart achievement of rebel goals.

Conclusion

These models begin to examine the impact of women in rebel organizations and intermediate goals, leading to a hopeful, complete goal success. Women leaders and women units each provide strong support for the hypotheses and clearly demonstrate that the non-combat roles in these units are most impactful. Previous research showing that women are impactful in grassroots and political movements could be the cause of this as they are used to set the foundations of the rebel organization. Whether this is due to design or to the influence of norms is one future avenue of research.

Chapter 5 - Complete Goal Attainment

Introduction

Instead of focusing on specific goals and outcomes, this chapter examines whether women increase the probability of attaining a complete final goal. This is a step usually ignored, similar to the intermediate goal, because of its generality as opposed to the specificity of the next two chapters. Again, the concern is whether the goal was achieved, not its quality. In fact, in this chapter, the type of end goal is not even considered. All that is considered is that the group met its goal. Instead, these models are investigating which group descriptions and environmental variables help a group meet its goals. That leads to the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 2a: Rebel organizations with women documented as participating in any capacity have an increased probability of entirely achieving their stated outcome goal.

Hypothesis 2b: Rebel organizations with women leaders documented in any capacity have an increased probability of achieving their stated outcome goal.

Hypothesis 2c: Rebel organizations with women units documented in any capacity have an increased probability of achieving their stated outcome goal.

Following an overview of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, which successfully met its independence goals in 1993, the methodology will be reviewed. Then the three tables of women's roles and types will be explored, each with its own analysis and discussion. The chapter will end with a final discussion of the themes seen throughout.

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)

Officially founded as a political party on 4 April 1971, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) traces its roots to the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) of the 1960s (Connell 2001). Eritrea, historically a separate region that was an Italian colony from 1886 to 1941 and then a

British colony from 1942 to 1952 (Bernal 2001), was brought under Ethiopian rule in 1952 but managed to retain some autonomy. However, there were those who wished to end Ethiopian rule over the region from the very beginning. Following in the same vein as many of the separatist movements of the era, the ideological foundations of the ELF were leftist in nature, specifically following a Communist approach. The membership of the ELF was mixed, with Muslims coming from the lowlands and Christians from the highlands. China also became a major player as it sought to support the Communist-aligned ELF by training and indoctrinating multiple fighters in China (Connell 2001). The variety of religions, ideologies, and ethnicities led to severe infighting as each group attempted to take control. These multiple factions and influences caused the ELF to implode, leading to a clandestine meeting of those who would become known as the EPLF charter members - Isaias, Abu Bakr Mohammed Hassan, Umero, Ibrahim Afa, Mesfin Hagos, Ali Sayid Abdulla, Mahmoud Sherifo, Hassan Mohammed Amir, Ahmed Taha Baduri, Ahmed al-Keisi, Haile Wold'ensae, Romedan, and Alamin Mohammed Said (Connell 2001). The initial effort was to make the EPLF a coherent political entity and social force under a new national identity that acknowledged the multitude of people who were part of it, while using the vision of a new nationalist identity to unite the factions. The EPLF sought to mold what Eritreans would be like rather than acknowledge who they had been (Pool 2001). The infighting was so severe that the party nearly imploded in its first two years. The rest of the 1970s was spent expanding military capabilities and purchasing arms to create additional fighting units. The EPLF was also deliberate in educating individual fighters, creating a formal curriculum titled *General Political Education for Fighters* (Connell 2001). Divisions continued to negatively affect the EPLF despite multiple efforts to address the differences. While changes in direction, vision, and approach to class, gender, and religion were made, the enduring divisions were

difficult to overcome. To help resolve class issues, the EPLF promoted radical egalitarian policies and enforced strict discipline within the party (Pool 2001). The first party congress in 1977 did much to streamline the vision, but its implementation was difficult. Then came the famine of 1982-1983, which forced the different groups to work together to survive and pushed the EPLF to the forefront in addressing the famine. The Ethiopian government couldn't, or wouldn't, depending on the view, adequately address the growing hunger and crop losses, so the EPLF stepped in. By doing so, it demonstrated its ability to address concerns more effectively and promoted its vision to those affected by famine. At the second congress in 1987, a substantial reorganization of the structure and future elections, along with a completely revised National Democratic Program, was distributed to everyone for comment (Connell 2001). A provisional government was formed in 1991, setting the stage for the proclamation of April 1992, which defined Eritrean citizenship. Finally, in 1993, a final referendum declared Eritrea a separate nation from Ethiopia, and Eritrea was acknowledged by the United Nations (Pool 2001). The path towards Eritrea's independence in 1993 was never assured, as it had survived multiple decades of deep divisions.

Importantly, women were essential in all roles for the EPLF from the beginning. But as Victoria Bernal notes, women's inclusion was achieved through the repression of the domestic and the erasure of the feminine, yet this was seen as a significant achievement by the group at large (2000). The use of women as participants and leaders, and the creation of women's units, was in direct opposition to the submissive role women took in the EPLF's predecessor, the ELF (Mason 2001). As the EPLF gained power, it deliberately intervened in land reform, democratization, and gender equality (Connell 2001). Politically, women were not only encouraged to participate but were mandated through the creation of a quota system, which led to

many gendered law reforms, specifically targeting marriage laws. The increased participation and visibility of women was seen by the EPLF leadership as essential for liberation, and even made it unpatriotic to contest their inclusion (Cornell 2001). Militarily, women were prominent figures in the fight, signifying that Eritrea's independence would be fought to the last man and to the last woman. At the end of the conflict, around 30,000 women fighters, nearly a full third of the EPLF fighters, were demobilized (Bernal 2001). Other roles women served in the EPLF ranged from mechanics, drivers, midwives, and more, helping lay the foundation for the modern state of Eritrea.

Research Design

Operational Definition of the Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is *Complete Success*, which is a binary variable. This information comes from the REVMOD and is defined as those groups that achieve the “entirety or near entirety of its stated goal” (Acosta 2019). These groups receive the designation of 1. Groups that do not meet this threshold are assigned a value of 0. This differs from the interim goal, as it involves a complete or near-complete transfer of power from the state to the rebel organization. Near-complete indicates that the rebel organization is in power but may have decided to share power with a small minority to ensure it could meet its goal. Importantly, the goal itself, such as autonomous zone creation, does not matter. What matters is that power shifted completely to the rebel organization, whether through military capitulation, a political announcement, or sufficient participation in the government to win power. It does not dictate how the conflict ended; that will be examined later through analysis of peace agreements and rebel victories.

Operational Definition of the Independent Variables

The treatment seen in the Intermediate Goal Attainment models continues in these models.

Control Variables

Goal control variables are not used in this analysis because they may be correlated with the new dependent variable. Also, by not designating the specific goals of interest, the goals are not restricted, and all goals can be considered. In this chapter, I am more interested in which combination of group and conflict environment variables helps identify when a group will meet its goal, rather than the specific goal it meets. Models were again run to ensure there was no collinearity and that the regression R² values indicated a better fit of the variables, along with the AIC values for the Firth Logit regression. As a result of those models, the three ideological variables of *Leftist Ideology* (excluding Marxist and Communist), *Religious Ideology* (including all religious ideologies), and *Nationalist Ideology* were included. These types of ideological goals have been identified in previous literature as having an increased likelihood of goal attainment. The *rebel group size estimate* and *Territory* variables help to round out the group's descriptors. These two variables are again expected to aid the rebel group in its ultimate success. *Regime Type*, *Duration*, and *GDP per capita* are again used as explanatory variables for the conflict environment. More autocratic regimes, shorter conflict durations, and higher GDP per capita are expected to reduce a rebel group's success in achieving its ultimate goal.

Methods

As discussed in the Methodology chapter, Firth's logistic regression is used. This chapter demonstrates both reasons for that type of regression. Complete goal attainment is the rarest event among the four chapters of interest, and the small sample size is evident in the partial group success. When selecting the control variables for this chapter, the same steps as in the partial goal attainment chapter were taken to detect potential multicollinearity. However, since the goal-type variables were already removed to avoid potential multicollinearity with the dependent variable, there were fewer concerns. In the end, three goal variables were replaced with three ideological-type variables.

Table 5.1 Complete Goal Attainment Distribution

	Frequency	Percent
Attained Complete Success	10	13.89
No Complete Goal Attained	62	86.11
Total	72	100.00

Participation Discussion

Women Participants in Any Capacity

Model 1 begins the investigation into how women participants affect a rebel group's ability to completely meet their stated objectives. In this base model, women's participation is not statistically significant. Adding the control variables to Model 2 demonstrates again that women participants are not statistically significant. No ideological variable is significant, and each have negative coefficients. Continuing with the group descriptors, both the rebel group size estimate and the territory held are positive at the 10% level or better. Larger membership in a rebel group helps the group achieve its goals, as does holding territory at any point during the conflict. Regime

type, while negative, does not reach statistical significance. The duration is significant at the 10% level or better and indicates that for every year the conflict continues, the odds of achieving the goal in full decrease. As before, increasing state GDP per capita is associated with decreased rebel goal attainment. Both models provide no support for Hypothesis 2a.

Table 5.2 Cross-Tabulation of Complete Goal Attainment and Women's Roles

		Complete Goal Attainment		
		0	1	<i>Total</i>
Women's Participation				
	0	9	1	<i>10</i>
	1	53	9	<i>62</i>
Women's Frontline Participation				
	0	14	1	<i>15</i>
	1	48	19	<i>57</i>
Women's Non-Combat Participation				
	0	11	1	<i>12</i>
	1	51	9	<i>60</i>
Women Leaders				
	0	18	1	<i>19</i>
	1	44	9	<i>53</i>
Women Frontline Leaders				
	0	32	3	<i>35</i>
	1	30	7	<i>37</i>
Women Non-Combat Leaders				
	0	25	2	<i>27</i>
	1	37	8	<i>45</i>
Women's Units				
	0	22	2	<i>24</i>
	1	40	8	<i>48</i>
Women's Frontline Units				
	0	42	9	<i>51</i>
	1	20	5	<i>21</i>
Women's Non-Combat Units				
	0	29	2	<i>31</i>
	1	33	8	<i>41</i>

Table 5.3 Complete Goal Attainment Model Comparison for Women's Participation

Variables	Model 1 Base Model	Model 2	Model 3 Separated Base Model	Model 4
Women's Participation	0.117 (0.947)	-3.234 (3.180)		
Frontline Participation			0.619 (1.30)	0.437 (1.733)
Non-Combat Participation			-0.158 (1.330)	-2.003 (2.226)
Leftist Ideology		-0.346 (1.357)		-0.375 (1.322)
Religious Ideology		-0.990 (1.383)		-0.765 (1.243)
Nationalist Ideology		-0.903 (1.098)		-1.117 (1.087)
Rebel Size Estimate		0.000* (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Territory Held		2.053* (1.480)		1.625 (1.532)
Regime		-0.128 (0.142)		-0.111 (0.148)
Duration		-0.129* (0.090)		-0.109* (0.083)
GDP per capita		-0.000* (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)
Intercept	-1.846** (0.879)	4.308 (3.829)	-2.078*** (0.888)	2.588 (3.060)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	59.767	-11.653	61.483	-9.051
N	72	29	72	29

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Participants

Support for Hypothesis 2a is also not found in the disaggregated models. Separating non-combat participants from frontline participants does not result in either type of participation becoming statistically significant. Frontline women participants show a positive impact, while non-combat participants show a negative impact. Adding in the control variables does not change their statistical significance. Ideologies continue to demonstrate statistically insignificant negative impacts. Territory is no longer statistically significant, but it retains its positive impact, as does the rebel group size estimate. Of the three conflict environment variables, only conflict duration is significant. As the conflict continues, the odds of a group meeting its goals decrease, and this is

statistically significant at the 10% level or better. Regime type and GDP per capita both retain their negative coefficients but fall below the threshold of statistical significance.

Analysis

While the sample sizes of these models make it difficult to accurately pinpoint their exact impact, they still show trends. First, women's participation in any capacity does not have a significant impact, even if the type of participation is defined, not supporting Hypothesis 2a in any way. In examining the ideological variables, there is no association with a leftist ideology. As this is the first time the ideologies are introduced, this is an interesting finding. Anecdotally and in many projects, women are most strongly associated with leftist ideologies. Previous research models would have predicted that it would be significant in both full models. The rebel group size and territory held are significant in the non-specified full-participation model. Of the three final variables, conflict duration is significant in both full models, and GDP per capita is only significant in the unspecified women's role full model. The impact of these variables thus likely depends on conditional considerations.

Leadership Discussion

Women Leaders in Any Capacity

In the base models for women leaders without specified roles, women leaders do not affect a group's odds of fully meeting their goals. When the control variables are added, only one is statistically significant. The conflict duration is significant at the 10% level or better and shows that when a conflict continues year after year, the odds of the rebel organization completely meeting the goal decrease. Of the remaining variables, rebel group size estimate and territory show

a positive impact. All three ideologies, regime type, and GDP per capita demonstrate negative impacts. No support for Hypothesis 2b is found in either model.

Table 5.4 Complete Goal Attainment Model Comparison for Women's Leadership

Variables	Model 5 Base Model	Model 6	Model 7 Separated Base Model	Model 8
Women Leaders	0.968 (0.921)	0.657 (1.634)		
Frontline Leader			0.581 (0.741)	0.071 (1.552)
Non-Combat Leader			0.595 (0.817)	0.395 (1.370)
Leftist Ideology		-0.353 (1.314)		-0.352 (1.327)
Religious Ideology		-0.843 (1.327)		-0.695 (1.477)
Nationalist Ideology		-0.632 (1.193)		-0.760 (1.048)
Rebel Size Estimate		0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Territory Held		1.689 (1.446)		1.411 (1.349)
Regime		-0.117 (0.142)		-0.110 (0.151)
Duration		-0.107* (0.079)		-0.088 (0.070)
GDP per capita		-0.000 (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)
Intercept	-2.512*** (0.849)	0.360 (2.055)	-2.455*** (0.706)	0.479 (1.709)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	57.978	-13.298	58.471	-10.608
N	72	29	72	29

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Leaders

When leaders are separated into frontline and non-combat leaders, there is again no support for Hypothesis 2b, as neither type is statistically significant. When all control variables are added, they remain statistically insignificant with a positive coefficient. While statistically significant in the non-specified type model, duration is no longer statistically significant. Similar to the other

model, rebel group size estimate and territory are positive, while the ideologies, regime type, and GDP per capita are negative. This model also demonstrates no support for Hypothesis 2b.

Analysis

As clearly stated in the preceding paragraphs, there is no support for Hypothesis 2b. Of all the variables, only the duration is statistically significant in the non-specified type model, so, along with the participation models, there may be an influential time component to these models. Again, however, this result does not hold across all models. The lack of statistical significance for a leftist ideology continues to run counter to other research. Striking for this set of models is the lack of significance. Given that the leadership models for the intermediate goal attainment demonstrated strong support for their hypotheses, the lack of support in these models opens the door for research into how and why women are important to goal attainment during a conflict. Even with a small sample size, the stark difference suggests that something undefined is occurring that these models do not adequately capture.

Unit Discussion

Women Units in Any Capacity

The base model for an all-women's unit of any type starts out the same way as the other models in this chapter, with no statistical significance and no support for Hypothesis 2c. Adding the control variables to the model makes two variables statistically significant. Conflict duration is again significant at the 10% level or better, and longer conflict duration decreases the odds of a group meeting its goals completely. The rebel group size estimate demonstrates that larger groups increase a group's odds of completely meeting their goals and is significant at the 10% level or

better. Holding territory remains positive, while the ideologies, regime type, and GDP per capita keep their negative coefficients.

Table 5.5 Complete Goal Attainment Model Comparison for Women's Units

Variables	Model 9 Base Model	Model 10	Model 11 Separated Base Model	Model 12
Women's Unit	0.636 (0.766)	1.464 (1.599)		
Frontline Unit			-1.403* (0.940)	-5.799* (3.889)
Non-Combat Unit			1.334** (0.780)	1.546 (1.352)
Leftist Ideology		-0.002 (1.531)		-1.381 (1.547)
Religious Ideology		-1.348 (1.480)		-2.208 (1.811)
Nationalist Ideology		-0.265 (1.223)		-1.183 (1.326)
Rebel Size Estimate		0.000* (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Territory Held		1.376 (1.572)		2.122* (1.585)
Regime		-0.092 (0.161)		-0.191 (0.176)
Duration		-0.148* (0.101)		-0.117* (0.090)
GDP per capita		-0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Intercept	-2.197*** (0.667)	0.269 (1.558)	-2.279*** (0.664)	0.910 (1.684)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	58.417	-14.480	55.252	-13.614
N	72	29	72	29

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Wings

The base model for separating unit types shows that both types are statistically significant, but have different coefficients. In the first support found for any hypothesis in this chapter, non-combat all-women units increase a group's odds of completely achieving their goal and are statistically significant at the 5% level or better. Unfortunately, the frontline all-women

unit is statistically significant at the 10% level or better, but decreases a group's odds of reaching their goals completely.

When the control variables are added, both types of units retain their coefficients. The non-combat unit is no longer statistically significant. However, having a frontline women's unit significantly reduces the chances of a rebel organization achieving its goal, at the 10% level or better. Duration is again significant at the 10% level or better, and negatively impacts the group's odds of meeting its goal. The rebel group size estimate shows that larger groups continue to increase a group's odds of completely making its goal, significant at the 10% level or better. Ideologies continue to have a negative impact, alongside regime type and GDP per capita. Holding territory continues to show a positive, but not significant, impact on complete goal attainment.

Analysis

Model 11 has the first support for any hypothesis, specifically Hypothesis 2c. Having a non-combat women's unit is shown to have a positive impact, but only in the base model, suggesting that the variables used are not the best to describe how a non-combat unit affects complete goal attainment. Having a frontline women's unit is statistically significant in both the disaggregated base and full models, but it has a negative impact. The negative coefficient mirrors the intermediate women's unit models, suggesting a potential avenue of research into why a frontline women's unit would not be seen as helpful to a rebel organization. Duration is negatively impactful in both full models. Meaning that as the conflict continues, the government has more resources to escalate the conflict. The rebel size estimate demonstrates significance when the types of units are not specified, but the territory held is significant when the types are specified.

Chapter Discussion

The lack of support for any hypothesis except for Hypothesis 2c is remarkable, as this is a significant reduction in support for any hypothesis from the intermediate goal attainment models. The small support shows that there is a relationship between women's units and the odds of a group meeting its goals, but the variables used in these models do not capture it well. As women's units have not been studied much beyond Matfess and Loken's (2024) initial descriptive statistics work, there is much to be done in defining the relationship and understanding what all-women's units bring to rebel organizations.

Another remarkable finding in these models is that having a leftist ideology is not statistically significant. Past work by Gaibullov and Sandler (2014) suggests that groups with leftist ideologies are more likely to reach their goals and achieve victory. However, my findings do not support this claim.

While religious ideology was not statistically significant in these models, it did have a negative coefficient every time. Given that much of the media coverage of groups that fall under the rebel organization umbrella has focused on groups like al Qaeda, the Islamic State, Boko Haram, and the Irish Republican Army, religion has become synonymous with known groups. What this research has shown, though, is that religion does not automatically mean success.

The limited sample sizes in these models are a potential source of significant bias. While using Firth's logistic regression helps mitigate bias, further research with a larger sample size is needed. As the datasets are updated, new models can and should be run to reach better conclusions. Benjamin Acosta's work to expand our understanding of how often a group meets its goals, interim and final, is the first step. His work has also laid a strong foundation for future research avenues.

The most significant finding between these, the Intermediate and Complete Goal attainment, is the lack of impact by women. While this may be due to differences between ideological and goal variables, a stronger supposition is that once women have helped set the foundation, the men in charge may want to stay in charge and transform the rebel organization to stay in power. Even when a group espouses democratic aims, those in power still would like to stay in power.

Conclusion

Goals and outcomes are not synonymous, even though many researchers and lay people treat them as such. In the military, strategy is taught as three components: ends, ways, and means. In the world of conflict research, a distinction needs to be made between the goals as the ways and the outcomes as the ends. It is the other control variables that determine a group's success. I found through the data analysis that there is little relationship between gender and reaching an undefined goal, which is in stark contrast to the conclusions seen in the previous chapter. The potential for a relationship is found with women's units, but there has been little done with empirical studies of the impact of the women's units on outcomes. The big difference in outcomes provides a wealth of opportunities to study the impact of women's roles and types of roles on the conflict itself, not just the outcome.

Chapter 6 - Peace Agreements

Introduction

Peace agreements are a common way for researchers to quantify the quality of the end of a conflict. In doing so, women have been tied to the peace process, the number of peace agreements, and the duration of peace. But the research has rarely gone beyond women's participation. This chapter seeks to distinguish the types of roles women take and to expand the types of participation women engage in.

Research into peace agreements has focused on many aspects: how to negotiate and build a peace agreement, its durability, state-building, peacekeeping operations, and more. But little has been done to better understand how a group's goals affect the probability of a peace agreement. Instead, many researchers assume that the goals are less important than the end result. However, a group's goals are important to its vision and roadmap and help guide it towards the end of a conflict.

In this chapter, three hypotheses will be examined.

Hypothesis 3a: Rebel organizations with women documented participating in any capacity have an increased probability of reaching a negotiated end to the conflict.

Hypothesis 3b: Rebel organizations with a woman documented as a leader in any capacity have an increased probability of reaching a negotiated end to the conflict.

Hypothesis 3c: Rebel organizations with women's units documented in any capacity have an increased probability of reaching a negotiated end to the conflict.

An overview of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) begins the chapter. Following a discussion of the research design and variables, there will be three sets of four models, each aligned with the hypotheses above. Each set of models will be followed by an analysis of the results. The final portion will discuss the results.

The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M)

High in the Himalayan Mountains, with China to the North and India to the south, Nepal was a monarchy for centuries. Post-World War II saw the power change from the oligarch Rana clan to the restoration of the pre-Rana absolute Monarchy in 1960 (Santina 2001). Between 1960 and 1990, the monarchy imposed significant curtailments on personal and political freedoms, culminating in the first uprising, which led to a new constitution. This constitution, signed in 1990, increased the power of the parliamentary system while decreasing the power of the monarchy. While initially a hopeful change, this constitution led to economic stagnation, increased divisions between the people and political parties, and a lack of confidence in the politicians' ability to deliver on their promises. On 13 February 1996, the People's War kicked off as activists, sympathizers, and poor peasants ransacked government and police offices, burned loan papers that were increasingly more difficult to repay, and attacked foreign factories (Santina 2001). What followed was a decade of fighting that increased the country's visibility to the international community because of human rights violations and ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006.

During China's Cultural Revolution, Nepali Maoists sided with Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and leader of China for over 30 years. While similar in approach to Mao, there were some differences in ideological approaches. The CPN-M was established in 1986 as a "Marxist-Leninist-Maoist" party that was nearly entirely made up of intellectuals, not fighters or politicians (Santina 2001). As a party, it focused on organizing rural peasants against landlords, defeating the local police, establishing its own authority, and transforming the Nepali social structure into a socialist model. In the following 10 years, thousands were injured, with over 13,000 killed (Hachhethu 2009). Parallel governments at all levels were created, along with a highly

contested Jana Adalat (People's Court) that raised major concerns about human rights violations and prompted the United Nations to intervene (Hachhethu 2009). As the CPN-M was seen as communist and terrorist by outside governments, there was little outside support for them to rely on and in fact, the Nepalese government was far more successful in gaining international support (Hachhethu 2009). A coup in February 2005 opened the door to political reconciliation by the CPN-M with other political parties. In 2006, the CPN-M agreed to a peace agreement that brought back the House of Representatives, called for elections in support of a multi-party system, suspended the monarchy, and ended the violent struggle. The insurgency was officially declared over on 21 November 2006, with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the Interim Constitution was approved on 15 January 2007 (Hachhethu 2009).

The CPN-M boasted a verified guerrilla count of 19,602 people, with nearly 20% of those being women. The unverified guerrilla count was approximately 32,250, and the CPN-M claimed that 40% of those were women (Upreti and ShivaKoti 2018). Even if women did not meet the purported participation rates touted by the CPN-M, they were needed members in fighting units against the monarchy. Their impact is still being understood, as the post-conflict demobilization process has formally recognized only 3,846 women as having been a militant (Upreti and ShivaKoti 2018). Women's participation in the fighting was seen as counter-cultural, especially as the guerrilla war in Nepal was exceptionally brutal, with kidnapping, assassinations, and forced youth recruitment.

The Maoist group believed that women were needed in the struggle. These women fought in mixed gender units and also all women's units. Recruitment into the CPN-M was usually driven by family factors or by the group's propaganda (Mehrl 2023). Women also filled other roles, such as cook, food supplier, laundress, and sexual partner (Upreti and ShivaKoti 2018). Women were

able to rise to governor, or leadership positions in their villages. In these positions, they mobilized other women and occupied spaces traditionally reserved for men. Women had the largest impact in various community roles. Their work within communities and at the grassroots level reduced violence against civilians, a major concern (Lohani-Chase 2014; Mehrl 2023). Taking on traditionally masculine roles also allowed for nearly 16,000 men to take up arms against the Nepalese government (Upreti and Shivakoti 2018). The paradox of women's involvement, and the lack of understanding of the extent to which women impacted the fight, can be seen in support for women's rights since the conflict ended. While there has been a push for gender equality and women's rights at the high levels of governance, societal actors have tended to remain wedded to traditional cultural and social norms (Meyers 2025).

Research Design

For this investigation, the UCDP CTD provided the base group data and the peace agreement outcome information. As this investigation is looking at a specific type of rebel victory in which there is no power sharing, the REVMOD is not used because that dataset is only about the completion of goals. In not using the REVMOD, the available sample size is much larger. The WAAR again provided the roles and types of women in the organization.

Operational Definition of the Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is a positive conflict outcome for the rebel organization, and, for these models, the operational definition is a negotiated *Peace Agreement*. This agreement can be the first or last in a series of agreements, but it is a central part of what is signed and accepted by all or the main parties. The agreements are signed either during the last year of active conflict or

the first year of inactivity (Kreutz, Handbook, 3). A negotiated peace settlement is the culmination of work between the organization and the state, resulting in a situation in which the rebel organization feels comfortable enough to suspend its campaign. The peace agreement variable is binary, with groups that have reached a negotiated peace settlement designated 1 and all others 0. Peace agreements do not include ceasefire agreements. Ceasefire agreements do not address the main grievances of the rebel organization, as they are only focused on ending the violence. If a ceasefire agreement is followed by a peace agreement, then the conflict is considered terminated with the peace agreement and not the ceasefire agreement (Kreutz, Handbook 4). Information on groups that have successfully reached a peace agreement comes from the UCDP CTD.

Operational Definition of the Independent Variables

Women participants, leaders, and units are once again binary variables based on the available documentation and evidence. This continues to be true as well for frontline and non-combat role fulfillment.

Control Variables

These models combine the ideological variables and the goal variables seen in the two previous chapters. Using these two goal groupings provides a better description of a rebel organization that successfully negotiates a peace agreement. The environment is described using *Regime Type*, *Duration*, and *GDP per capita*.

Methods

The analysis uses Firth's logistic regression as the outcomes are rare events, as shown in Table 2. The outcomes of interest account for a small percentage of the dataset, and, as they are binary, the imbalance in outcome frequencies affects other logistic regression models. The larger sample size of these models allows for a more specific description of the impact each variable may have.

Akaike's information criterion (AIC) is used to determine which model has a better fit. While the dataset is large, it was not large enough to justify using the Bayesian information criterion (BIC) given the number of control variables and complexity. This allows for comparison within each set of independent variables and across sets.

Table 6.1 Peace Agreement Outcome Distribution

	Frequency	Percent
Peace Agreement Reached	63	12.52
No Peace Agreement	440	87.48
Total	503	100.00

Participation Analysis

Women Participation in Any Capacity

In the base model, women's participation in a rebel group increases the odds of a peace agreement by nearly 44% compared to groups without documented women's participation. This is statistically significant at the 10% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{.364}$, holding all other variables constant.

Table 6.2 Cross-Tabulation of Peace Agreements and Women's Roles

	Peace Agreement		
	0	1	<i>Total</i>
Women's Participation			
0	192	22	<i>214</i>
1	246	41	<i>287</i>
Women's Frontline Participation			
0	224	25	<i>249</i>
1	214	38	<i>252</i>
Women's Non-Combat Participation			
0	199	27	<i>226</i>
1	239	36	<i>275</i>
Women Leaders			
0	235	35	<i>288</i>
1	185	28	<i>213</i>
Women Frontline Leaders			
0	338	42	<i>380</i>
1	98	21	<i>119</i>
Women Non-Combat Leaders			
0	273	36	<i>309</i>
1	163	27	<i>190</i>
Women's Units			
0	267	37	<i>304</i>
1	171	26	<i>197</i>
Women's Frontline Units			
0	360	48	<i>408</i>
1	78	15	<i>93</i>
Women's Non-Combat Units			
0	287	41	<i>328</i>
1	149	21	<i>170</i>

When all variables are accounted for, having women participate in a rebel organization more than doubles the odds of a group reaching a peace agreement compared to a rebel group without women participating in any capacity. This is significant at the 5% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{.933}$, holding all other variables constant. Each ideology is statistically significant, but they all have negative coefficients. Leftist groups decrease their odds of reaching a peace by half, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.578}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at the 10%

level or better. Groups with a religious ideology reduce their odds of reaching a peace agreement by over 95%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-3.387}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at the 1% level or better. Groups with a nationalist ideology reduce their odds of peace agreement by one-third, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.499}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at the 10% level or better.

Table 6.3 Peace Agreement Model Comparison for Women's Participation

Variables	Model 1 Base Model	Model 2	Model 3 Separated Base Model	Model 4
Women Participant	0.365* (0.279)	0.933** (0.416)		
Frontline Participant			1.289*** (0.536)	2.375*** (0.740)
Non-Combat Participant			-0.989** (0.532)	-1.390** (0.717)
Leftist Ideology		-0.578* (0.387)		-0.567* (0.399)
Religious Ideology		-3.387*** (1.445)		-3.563*** (1.454)
Nationalist Ideology		-0.499* (0.358)		-0.473* (0.368)
Independence Goals		-0.226 (0.371)		-0.296 (0.381)
Autonomous Goal		0.288 (0.494)		0.390 (0.510)
Democratic Goals		0.270 (0.582)		0.242 (0.606)
Regime		0.011 (0.035)		0.007 (0.035)
Duration		-0.14 (0.013)		-0.016 (0.013)
GDP per capita		0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Intercept	-2.147*** (0.223)	-1.787*** (0.393)	-2.072*** (0.212)	-1.717*** (0.385)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	374.607	207.474	370.515	199.626
N	501	361	501	361

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

No other variable is statistically significant. Goals of independence and the duration show a negative relationship. Autonomous Zone goals and democratic regime change, as well as regime type and GDP per capita, show positive relationships.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Participants

Model 3 separates the independent variable for women participants into those on the frontline and those in non-combat roles. The two types of leadership are both statistically significant, but with opposite relationships. Groups with women participating in frontline combat increase the odds of a peace agreement 3.6 times that of groups without women on the frontlines. This is significant at the 1% level or better with an odds ratio of $e^{1.289}$, holding all other variables constant. Conversely, a group with women participating in non-combat capacities decreases the group's odds of reaching a peace agreement by two-thirds as compared to groups without women documented as participating in non-combat roles. This variable is significant at the 5% level or better with an odds ratio of $e^{-.989}$, holding all other variables constant.

With the variables added in for Model 4, the types of participation by women retain their significance and direction from Model 3. Groups with women's participation in front-line roles stay significant at the 1% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{2.375}$. Having women in frontline roles significantly increases the odds of a peace agreement by a factor of 11, holding all other variables constant. Groups with women's participation in noncombat roles are again significant at the 5% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{-1.390}$. Women in non-combat roles continue to have a negative effect on the odds of a peace agreement, decreasing the odds of a peace agreement to 25% as compared to a group with no women documented in non-combat roles.

The ideologies are again all statistically significant. Having a leftist ideology decreases the odds of a peace agreement in half, with an odds ratio of $e^{-0.567}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at the 10% level or better. A religious ideology is statistically significant at the 1% level or better and decreases the odds of a peace agreement to nearly zero, with an odds ratio of $e^{-3.563}$, holding all other variables constant. Those groups with a nationalist ideology just make the statistical significance of 10% level or better, decreasing the odds of a peace agreement by one-third, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.473}$, holding all other variables constant. No other variables are significant. Goals of independence and duration are negative factors. The remaining variables demonstrate positive impacts.

Analysis

Models 1 and 2 show support for Hypothesis 3a. In both models, women participating in any capacity reach statistical significance, with and without control variables. These models also begin to show trends similar to those seen in other models. Each ideology demonstrates a negative relationship. When leaders are separated into frontline and non-combat leaders, the differences remain statistically significant, and Models 3 and 4 also support Hypothesis 3a. However, when the two types of leaders are split, they take on different relationships. Both models demonstrate that groups with frontline leaders are more likely to reach a peace agreement. As women participate in combat, they can be used as a psychological tool against the government troops, increasing the visibility of the group and their goals. This can also demonstrate that the group is more willing and able to use any able-bodied person to achieve its goals, thereby signaling to the government that it is a legitimate foe. On the other hand, non-combat women leaders negatively impact the odds of a peace agreement. These findings are interesting because women have long been touted as

important and necessary participants in peace processes, even prompting the United Nations to lead the charge to incorporate them. Non-combat positions are also where women are expected to participate due to societal expectations, as these are the positions most associated with the care and support of members and civic engagement, all of which help create more opportunities for peace negotiations. This finding contradicts Loken's (2018) finding that female auxiliaries (her term for those in non-combat roles) do not have a statistically significant impact on a peace agreement.

Model 4's findings follow a path very similar to Model 2's regarding which variables are statistically significant. In both full models, the three ideologies are the only ones statistically significant, aside from women's roles and types.

Leader Analysis

Woman Leader in Any Capacity

Model 5 begins the leader models by demonstrating no statistically significant relationship of a group with a woman documented in a leadership capacity when compared to a group without a woman leader in relation to an outcome of a peace agreement. The next models include control variables, where having a woman leader remains not statistically significant, but it still demonstrates a positive impact. Having a religious ideology is statistically significant at the 5% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{-3.223}$, which reduces the odds of reaching a peace agreement by over 95% as compared to a group that does not have an ideologically religious basis, holding all other variables constant. Leftist ideology also demonstrates a negative relationship significant at the 10% level or better, reducing the odds of a peace agreement by one-third, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.507}$, holding all other variables constant. Nationalist ideologies are not significant, but have a

negative coefficient. No goal variable is statistically significant, and only independence goals have a negative coefficient. GDP per capita and regime type have a positive impact, but the effect is not significant. Duration is also not significant and has a negative sign.

Table 6.4 Peace Agreement Model Comparison for Women Leaders

Variables	Model 5 Base Model	Model 6	Model 7 Separated Base Model	Model 8
Woman Leader	0.093 (0.269)	0.410 (0.373)		
Frontline Leader			0.597** (0.355)	0.497 (0.437)
Non-Combat Leader			-0.059 (0.334)	0.395 (0.446)
Leftist Ideology		-0.507* (0.392)		-0.642* (0.406)
Religious Ideology		-3.223** (1.440)		-3.155** (1.437)
Nationalist Ideology		-0.312 (0.344)		-0.293 (0.344)
Independence Goals		-0.208 (0.370)		-0.269 (0.372)
Autonomous Goal		0.286 (0.491)		0.296 (0.493)
Democratic Goals		0.364 (0.572)		0.487 (0.581)
Regime		0.007 (0.034)		0.006 (0.035)
Duration		-0.009 (0.013)		-0.010 (0.013)
GDP per capita		0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Intercept	-1.966*** (0.179)	-1.560*** (0.369)	-2.054*** (0.179)	-1.599*** (0.351)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	376.244	211.664	371.993	208.419
N	501	361	498	359

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Leaders

Women frontline and non-combat leaders are separated in Model 7. In this base model, frontline leaders show a positive correlation, and it is statistically significant at the 5% level or

better. Those groups with a frontline leader documented as a woman increase their odds of a peace agreement by 80% compared to those without a woman frontline leader, with an odds ratio of $e^{.597}$, holding all other variables constant. Non-combat leaders have a negative, but not statistically significant relationship.

Model 8 shows that women frontline leaders drop out of statistical significance, but display a positive relationship, as does having a non-combat woman leader. Having a religious ideology is significant at the 5% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{-3.155}$ and reduces the odds of a peace agreement by over 95% compared to a group without a religious ideology, holding all other variables constant. Those groups with a leftist ideology also decrease their odds of a peace agreement. Those groups cut their odds in half, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.642}$, holding all other variables constant and significant at the 10% level or better. As with the non-specified full model, no other variables are significant. Nationalist ideology, independence goals, and duration have negative coefficients. The remaining variables show positive impacts.

Analysis

Unlike the base model for women participants, the base model for women leaders is not statistically significant and does not support Hypothesis 3b. Adding the control variables does not help build support either. These models align with Loken's (2018) and Metell's (2019) work on women leaders and their impact on peace negotiations. When the control variables are added in, they follow the same pattern that is seen in the women's participation models. Leftist and religious ideologies continue to negatively impact the chances of a successful peace negotiation.

The only support for Hypothesis 3b is found in Model 7, which is the base model where the two types of leaders are separated into frontline and non-combat leaders. However, this model

does not have the control variables, so its support of Hypothesis 3b is weak at best. What it does suggest is that there is a relationship between women frontline leaders and the successful negotiation of a peace agreement, but that relationship has not yet been clearly defined and may not be robust. Neither Loken (2019) nor Metell (2018) split women leaders into categories; instead, they treat that variable as a binary. When the control variables are added, though, both types of leaders become statistically insignificant. Religious ideology continues to negatively impact the chances of a peace agreement.

Comparing the leader models to the participant models using AIC demonstrates their difference. The participation models have the lowest AIC numbers across the board. The difference is most apparent in models that separate frontline and non-combat units.

Unit Analysis

Women's Unit with Any Mission

The base model, using the independent variable of the presence of an all-woman unit in the organization, shows a positive but not statistically significant relationship with reaching a peace agreement. The all-women's unit becomes a statistically significant variable at the 5% level or better when the control variables are added in. Having any type of women's unit nearly doubles a rebel group's odds of a peace agreement as compared to a group without a women's unit, with an odds ratio of $e^{.631}$, holding all other variables constant. In this model, leftist and religious ideologies continue to negatively impact the odds of a peace agreement. Significant at the 10% level or better, leftist ideologies decrease the odds by approximately one-third, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.539}$, holding all other variables constant. Religious ideologies are statistically significant at the 5% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{-3.307}$, holding all other variables constant, and reduce the odds of a

peace agreement to almost zero. Nationalist ideologies, independence goals, and duration have negative coefficients, while the remaining variables have positive coefficients.

Table 6.5 Peace Agreement Model Comparison for Women's Units

Variables	Model 9 Base Model	Model 10	Model 11 Separated Base Model	Model 12
Women's Unit	0.097 (0.272)	0.631** (0.370)		
Frontline Unit			0.473* (0.350)	0.403 (0.4011)
Non-Combat Unit			-0.159 (0.313)	0.286 (0.394)
Leftist Ideology		-0.539* (0.390)		-0.526* (0.395)
Religious Ideology		-3.307** (1.443)		-3.167** (1.441)
Nationalist Ideology		-0.333 (0.334)		-0.318 (0.342)
Independence Goals		-0.222 (0.372)		-0.199 (0.370)
Autonomous Goal		0.280 (0.492)		0.237 (0.492)
Democratic Goals		0.297 (0.579)		0.336 (0.573)
Regime		0.007 (0.035)		0.010 (0.035)
Duration		-0.011 (0.013)		-0.010 (0.013)
GDP per capita		0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Intercept	-1.965*** (0.174)	-1.579*** (0.362)	-1.976*** (0.170)	-1.515*** (0.358)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	376.258	209.930	370.06	210.483
N	501	361	498	359

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Units

When the types of units are separated into frontline and non-combat units, frontline women's units are statistically significant at the 10% level or better. Having these units increases a rebel group's odds of a peace agreement by 60% compared to those groups that do not have an

all-women frontline unit, with an odds ratio of $e^{.473}$, holding all other variables constant. Women's non-combat units have a negative coefficient, but it is not statistically significant.

The full model excludes frontline units from statistical significance and changes the coefficient for non-combat units. Once again, leftist ideologies reduce the odds of a peace agreement by just under half, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.526}$, holding all other variables constant, and significant at the 10% level or better. Religious ideology decreases the odds of a peace agreement to only 4%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-3.041}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at the 5% level or better. No other variable is statistically significant. The coefficients continue the pattern from the previous models.

Analysis

The strongest support for Hypothesis 3c comes from Model 10. This model demonstrates that having a women's unit, in any capacity or mission, increases the likelihood of a peace agreement. More support comes from the disaggregated base model, which indicates that having a frontline unit specifically increases the likelihood of a peace agreement. Still, the fact that results do not hold in the full disaggregated models casts doubt on the impact of women's units. The most that can be said is that these variables may have some potential impact, but it is neither robust nor consistent. In these models, leftist and religious ideology continue to Reduce the likelihood that peace agreements will be reached.

Comparing these models with the participation models shows that the base models behave similarly across the sets. The full participation models do have more support than the women's unit models. Compared with the leader models, the women's units and leader models have similar AIC values, indicating comparable fit.

Discussion

Women's participation in combat roles has a robust impact on the prospects of achieving peace agreements, but female leaders and units do not demonstrate a similar impact. The only controls that have consistent impacts are leftist and religious ideologies, both of which reduce the likelihood of a peace agreement. Since both measures are frequently associated with strident or fervent groups, this outcome was expected.

Conclusion

These three investigations into how women participants, leaders, and units affect the likelihood of peace agreements being met help improve our understanding of the relationship between the variables. The strongest support for the three hypotheses comes from the participation models. When women are documented as participating without specifying their capacity, or as frontline combatants, the chances of the peace agreement increase. This supports the findings of Loken (2018) and Metell (2019). When women are identified as participating in a non-combat role, they decrease the chances of a peace agreement, which does fall in line with Loken's work (2018). However, the final participation model shows a statistically significant relationship, whereas Loken (2018) does not.

The models for women leaders find little support for their impact on peace agreements. Only one model shows any support for Hypothesis 3b, but that support is weak at best. These models align more closely with Loken's (2018) findings, since the majority of coefficients for women leaders positive. All of Metell's (2019) models in a similar study demonstrate a negative coefficient for women leaders. The one thing that we do agree on is that women leaders do not have a statistically significant impact on peace agreements as an outcome.

The models for women's units forge a new path in the understanding of women and outcomes. Matfess and Loken (2024) were the first to provide the foundation of what types of units rebel organizations have and how they contribute to their organization's success. Their descriptions of specific units help create a picture of how they occupy space in a conflict. The models that I have provided begin to analyze how they affect the conflict itself. The strongest support for Hypothesis 3c comes from Model 10, in which all the control variables help to define the space in which a woman's unit of a non-specified mission positively impacts the odds of a peace agreement at a statistically significant level. The best comparison for this model is Model 2, in which the independent variable is the women participants of any type. These two models are very similar, with their Akaike Information Criteria scores being nearly identical, indicating that the models act similarly to each other. The second point of information from these models is that a woman's frontline unit is statistically significant in the base models with the types separated, but is not significant when the control variables are added in. The finding for women's unit is not robust, but given the base model's results, the relationship deserves further study in future research.

The control variables largely follow the pattern found in the earlier chapters. The three ideological variables have the greatest contrast with the intermediate goal attainment study. The nationalist ideology variable consistently shows a negative coefficient, but it is nowhere near statistical significance. Wood and Thomas (2017) and Henshaw et al. (2019) show that nationalist ideologies are not statistically significant, but they do have a positive coefficient. Even though there were concerns at the beginning of this project about potential multicollinearity with the independence goals, those concerns have proved to be unfounded. Having a religious ideology consistently reduced the likelihood of peace agreements, with each model demonstrating the negative impact. These findings are most similar to Wood and Thomas (2017). Metell (2019) also

finds a negative relationship, but no statistical significance, as does Henshaw et al (2019). Finally, the most surprising finding, in direct contrast to Wood and Thomas (2017), Henshaw et al. (2019), most of Metell (2019), and an assumption in much of the literature, is that leftist ideology had no impact on reaching a peace agreement. One of Metell's (2019) four models found that leftist groups were not significantly related to peace agreements, but this variable was statistically significant in her three other estimates.

The use of goal variables is novel to my study. The only other study to look at such goals is Loken (2018), who analyzed the separatist goal variable. Unfortunately, all three goal variables do not have any significant impact in these models. They do start the conversation on potential impacts, though. The two most radical goals, independence and the creation of an autonomous zone, have very different outcomes. Goals of creating a new state are consistently associated with negative outcomes in peace agreements. This is the most radical of the goal variables. Creating a new state may require more than just an agreement, making military action more likely to achieve it. Autonomous zone desires consistently demonstrate a positive relationship, which is consistent with the fact that this is a less drastic and more achievable goal than state takeover.

Chapter 7 - Rebel Victory

Introduction

Rebel victory has not been studied as much the peace agreements. When a rebel victory is discussed, it is assumed to be a military one. However, it could also be a political victory. While there is a battlefield death threshold for the groups counted in this project, there is always a chance that the victory is political, with military actions serving as side actions rather than a military victory where the combat and fighting take center stage.

Hypothesis 4a: Rebel organizations with women documented participating in any capacity have an increased probability of achieving a military victory.

Hypothesis 4b: Rebel organizations with women leaders documented in any capacity have an increased probability of achieving a military victory.

Hypothesis 4c: Rebel organizations with women units documented in any capacity have an increased probability of achieving a military victory.

The chapter will continue as follows. First, the Sandinista National Liberation Front is an example of a rebel organization that defeated the Nicaraguan government. Then there will be a discussion of the dependent variable and methodology. After the models for each hypothesis, there will be results and analysis, followed by a discussion of the results. A larger discussion will end the chapter, examining the three model sets together.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front

Founded in 1961, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, known in Nicaragua as Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), began as a political movement against the ruling Somoza family. The Sandinistas, as they are known in both English and Spanish, took their name from Augusto César Sandino, who led a rebellion against the United States occupation in the early

20th century (Gilbert 1988). Sandino continued to fight against US interventionism until his assassination in 1934 by Anastasio Somoza Garcia and the National Guard, a military group designed for Nicaragua's national security that was created by the US (Booth 1982). Somoza used the National Guard not only as an assassination squad, but also as the power backing for his successful presidential run in 1936, with the support of the United States. He successfully ran for president in 1936, which was quickly followed by a coup that used the National Guard to ensure his political survival and rule. Under Somoza's rule, the Nicaraguan economy would deteriorate due to the drop in export prices of cotton and coffee (Booth 1982). As a result of the economic instability, political fracturing occurred. The instability of the situation led to multiple attempts to oust Somoza from power, ultimately ending in his assassination in 1956 (Booth 1982). His son, Luis Somoza Debayle, became the next dictator of the nation until he resigned in 1963, and was succeeded by his brother, also named Anastasio Somoza Debayle, who rose to power and was ousted in 1979 (Booth 1982).

During the Somozas' reign, multiple opposition groups were founded, many of them youth and student groups. In the 1950s and 1960s, this was not a novel event, as multiple countries in the post-World War II era saw revolutionary and opposition groups form. Following in the footsteps of other organizations and inspired specifically by the Cuban Revolution, Carlos Fonseca, Tomás Borge, and Silvio Mayorga founded the FSLN (Booth 1982). This began as a political opposition, taking advantage of the fractured political arena to try and fight against the dictatorship. It was a leftist organization heavily influenced by Karl Marx (Gilbert 1988). By the early 1970s, the Sandinistas began military operations. The Managua earthquake in 1972 really gave the Sandinistas popularity, as they were able and willing to respond to the crisis in ways the government couldn't because of widespread corruption. Their rising political popularity and

military actions were influential in President Jimmy Carter publicly speaking out against Somoza, but not enough for President Carter to endorse the Sandinistas (Gilbert 1988). On 19 July 1979, the Sandinistas took over Managua and became the governing body of Nicaragua following Somoza and his allies fleeing the country (Booth 1982). The Sandinistas remain in power in Nicaragua to this day.

Women were recruited from the educated sector to fill specific roles within the FSLN, on the assumption that, having already violated social norms regarding women staying at home, they would be more willing to continue violating norms and join the FSLN (Mouchel 2023). The Sandinistas had their own women's organization. The group was established in 1977 and designed by the Sandinista leadership to mobilize women around issues of national concern, specifically rebuilding the economy and national defense (Ellsberg et al 1997). Mobilizing women was a deliberate step to draw attention to the FSLN's class struggle and to expand the labor force through education and greater opportunities (Mouchel 2023). First known as the Association of Women Confronting the National Problem (AMPRO-NAC) and later designated the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE) (Mouchel 2023), this women's group provided a space for women to join the Sandinistas, but women remained in a subservient position, following cultural norms, while also working to incorporate and further feminist principles (Heumann 2014). By 1981, AMNLAE was reported to have 25,000 members (Ellsberg et al 1997).

Before the successful overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, women entered the political sphere and made their mark within the FSLN. At a local level, they collected medical supplies, ran safe houses, and carried homemade bombs to their targets. More ambitious women protested at jails and barracks to demand the release of political prisoners (Chinchilla, 1990). Political demonstrations helped women rebel, bridging the gap between those who were already following

the FSLN and those who were not yet incorporated into the movement. Women in the FSLN were seen as less violent and more trustworthy than the men, and thus they tended to be able to mobilize more civilians, particularly other women, to the cause than men (Mouchel 2023). The most striking impact that women made was by enlisting as guerrilla fighters, making up approximately 30% of FSLN's fighting force, and participating in all levels of the movement (Mouchel 2023). In both types of recruitment, the FSLN enlisted largely urban and educated women, as they already operated outside the traditional gender roles and were able to move more freely between the traditional spaces of the home and family and the non-traditional space of the guerrilla movement.

Research Design

Following the setup of the peace agreement models, the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset (UCDP CTD, Kreutz 2010) served as the base dataset to which the other variables were added. The UCDP CTD provides information on conflict termination and duration. Information on groups with women leaders came from the Women's Activities in Armed Rebellion (WAAR) dataset (Loken and Matfess 2023). The Foundation of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) dataset provided the goals and ideologies of the groups (Braithwaite and Cunningham 2019). Regime type is from Polity5, and GDP per capita is from the Madison Project Database (2023). While women's participation is normally only associated with peace agreements, the inclusion of women combat leaders can increase Victories for Side B, or rebel victories.

Operational Definition of the Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is a positive conflict outcome for the rebel organization. In this chapter, the outcome is a rebel victory over the government (*Rebel Victory*), where the government

is forced to acquiesce to the rebels' demands. In this operationalization, the rebels have ousted the government or completely defeated and/or eliminated the government opposition (Kreutz, Handbook, 3). An assumption made here is that there is no power-sharing between the rebel organization and the previous government. Acknowledgment of the rebel victory is done through either public announcement or capitulation. As stated earlier, victory can be military or political in nature, but it is generally assumed to be military. This is a binary variable where those groups that have a documented victory over government forces are designated with 1 and all others 0.

Operational Definition of the Independent Variables

The binary variable convention is also used in this set of models.

Control Variables

The control variables are the same as those in the peace agreement models. The three ideological variables are leftist, religious, and nationalist. Goals include achieving independence, creating an autonomous zone, and changing the state regime to be more democratic. Finally, the conflict environment variables still look at regime type, duration, and GDP per capita.

Methods

The analysis is based on Firth's logistic regression. A rebel victory is an even rarer outcome than a peace agreement, occurring in only 8.15% of the dataset, compared with 12.52% for a peace agreement. The AIC value remains the primary comparison criterion. Not only does the AIC value help determine which model best fits a rare event, but it also helps compare the three sets of independent variables.

Table 7.1 Rebel Victory Outcome Distribution

	Frequency	Percent
Rebel Victory	41	8.15
No Rebel Victory	462	91.85
Total	503	100.00

Table 7.2 Cross-Tabulation of Rebel Victory and Women's Roles

	Rebel Victory		
	0	1	Total
Women's Participation			
0	185	29	214
1	275	12	287
Women's Frontline Participation			
0	219	30	249
1	241	11	252
Women's Non-Combat Participation			
0	197	29	226
1	263	12	275
Women Leaders			
0	256	32	288
1	204	9	213
Women Frontline Leaders			
0	347	33	380
1	111	8	119
Women Non-Combat Leaders			
0	275	34	309
1	183	7	190
Women's Units			
0	272	32	304
1	188	9	197
Women's Frontline Units			
0	372	36	408
1	88	5	93
Women's Non-Combat Units			
0	296	32	328
1	161	9	170

Table 7.3 Rebel Victory Model Comparison for Women Participants

Variables	Model 1 Base Total	Model 2	Model 3 Base Separated	Model 4
Women Participant	-1.254***	-0.918**		

	(0.351)	(0.499)		
Frontline Participant			-0.402 (0.642)	0.398 (0.923)
Non-Combat Participant			-0.802 (0.626)	-1.111 (0.913)
Leftist Ideology		0.382 (0.461)		0.340 (0.462)
Religious Ideology		-2.445** (1.453)		-2.575** (1.455)
Nationalist Ideology		-0.749* (0.502)		-0.800* (0.500)
Independence Goals		0.401 (0.469)		0.368 (0.471)
Autonomous Goal		0.676 (0.619)		0.686 (0.617)
Democratic Goals		0.017 (0.919)		-0.054 (0.919)
Regime		0.011 (0.038)		0.011 (0.037)
Duration		-0.038** (0.020)		-0.041** (0.020)
GDP per capita		-0.000 (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)
Intercept	-1.839*** (0.198)	-1.174*** (0.390)	-1.879*** (0.198)	-1.174*** (0.393)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	267.797	130.614	270.841	132.728
N	501	361	501	361

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

Participation Analysis

Women Participants in Any Capacity

The base model shows that the independent variable for women participating in a rebel group has a negative, statistically significant impact at the 1% level or better. In this base model, rebel groups with documented women participants decrease the odds of a rebel victory by approximately 70% compared to those without documented women participants, with an odds ratio of $e^{-1.254}$. Model 1 does not support Hypothesis 4a.

With the variables added into Model 2, women participants remain significant, but the significance level is now at the 5% level or better. A group with women participants in any capacity decreases the probability of a rebel victory by two-thirds, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.918}$, holding all

other variables constant. Having a religious ideology decreases the odds of a rebel victory to under 10% when compared to a group without a religious ideology, and is significant at the 5% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{-2.445}$, holding all other variables constant. Having a nationalist ideology also negatively affects a group's ability to achieve victory. These groups decrease their odds of victory by half, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.749}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at a level of 5% or better. A leftist ideology has a positive coefficient, but it is not statistically significant. None of the group variables are statistically significant, and all have positive signs. The longer a conflict endures, the less likely a group is to win. For every year a conflict continues, the odds of a rebel group achieving victory decrease by just under 5%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.038}$, holding all other variables constant, and is statistically significant at the 5% level or better. These results show no support for Hypothesis 4a.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Participants

Model 3 separates the participation roles into frontline and non-combat roles. Women frontline participants are not statistically significant. Groups with women documented in non-combat roles also decrease the odds of a rebel victory compared to those without women documented in these roles, and just barely miss the cutoff for statistical significance. These findings do not support Hypothesis 4a.

Model 4 is the final model for women's participation. In this model, neither participation type is statistically significant, providing no support for Hypothesis 4a. Religious ideologies are statistically significant at the 5% level or better and negatively impact a rebel group's odds of achieving victory. Groups with a religious ideology decrease a group's odds of victory to only approximately 7%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-2.575}$, holding all other variables constant. Nationalist

ideologies are statistically significant at the 10% level or better, reducing the odds of a peace agreement by half, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.780}$, holding all other variables constant. The three group goal variables are not statistically significant, and democratic aims is the only goal to negatively impact the outcome. Regime type has a positive coefficient, and GDP per capita has a negative coefficient. Duration negatively impacts the odds of a rebel victory by 4% each year the conflict continues, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.043}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at the 5% level or better.

Analysis

These four models provide no support for Hypothesis 4a. In fact, Models 1 and 2 yield findings that are directly opposed to the stated hypothesis. These findings are the opposite of the peace agreement participation models that had strong positive impacts of women, specifically frontline participants, in each model. The peace agreement and rebel victory models do agree that non-combat participants have a negative impact on both outcomes, but not at a statistically significant level. Those findings are also the opposite of Loken's (2018) findings, in which she found that both female combatants and auxiliaries are statistically significant in support of a rebel victory.

Religious ideology continues to negatively impact the rebel group's success. Having a leftist ideology continues to negatively impact the odds of a rebel victory, as seen in the peace agreement models, which differ from Wood and Thomas (2017). In these models, nationalist ideology has its first effect, reducing the odds of a rebel victory. Wood and Thomas's (2017) models show no statistically significant relationship between female combatants and the prevalence of nationalist ideology, which makes these findings even more interesting. None of the

goal variables reaches significance. In the two full models, duration has a negative impact, as supported by Braithwaite and Ruiz (2018). Interestingly, Wood and Thomas (2017) find that duration is statistically significant, as I do, but they find it is a positive variable. However, their model does not find duration to be statistically significant, which my models do. Differing findings from Braithwaite and Ruiz continue with GDP per capita and regime type, titled "Polity Score" by Braithwaite and Ruiz. Both variables are statistically significant in their models, but not in mine. We agree that GDP per capita has a negative coefficient, but differ on the significance of the polity score.

Leader Analysis

Women Leader in Any Capacity

Model 5 demonstrates a statistically significant negative relationship between a rebel group having a woman leader and that group reaching a military victory. The odds of a military victory decrease by two-thirds compared to a group without a woman leader, with an odds ratio of $e^{-1.003}$, holding all other variables constant. This finding does not support Hypothesis 4b.

Table 7.4 Rebel Victory Model Comparison for Women Leaders

Variables	Model 5 Base Total	Model 6	Model 7 Base Separated	Model 8
Women Leaders	-1.003***	-0.345		

	(0.381)	(0.512)		
Frontline Leader			0.654*	0.453
			(0.497)	(0.675)
Non-Combat Leader			-1.442***	-0.621
			(0.509)	(0.698)
Leftist Ideology		0.275		0.257
		(0.463)		(0.473)
Religious Ideology		-2.676**		-2.568**
		(1.454)		(1.450)
Nationalist Ideology		-0.984**		-0.937**
		(0.4783)		(0.482)
Independence Goals		0.353		0.286
		(0.463)		(0.465)
Autonomous Goal		0.585		0.584
		(0.608)		(0.608)
Democratic Goals		-0.093		-0.011
		(0.917)		(0.924)
Regime		0.012		0.012
		(0.038)		(0.038)
Duration		-0.046**		-0.045**
		(0.021)		(0.021)
GDP per capita		-0.000		-0.000
		(0.000)		(0.000)
Intercept	-2.066***	-1.250***	-2.119***	-1.270***
	(0.186)	(0.424)	(0.186)	(0.427)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	273.964	133.723	271.806	134.327
N	501	361	498	359

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

Once the control variables are added, having a documented woman leader in any capacity no longer reaches statistical significance, but the relationship remains negative. Religious ideologies demonstrate a strongly negative relationship to the group's potential military victory, decreasing the odds of a military victory by 93%, with an odds factor of $e^{-2.676}$, holding all other variables constant. Religious ideology is statistically significant at the 5% level or better. A nationalist ideology is statistically significant at the 5% level or better, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.984}$, holding all other variables constant, and reduces the group's odds of a rebel victory by two-thirds. Again, a leftist ideology is not statistically significant with a positive coefficient. No group goal variable is statistically significant. GDP per capita is also not statistically significant, and neither is regime type; however, GDP per capita shows a negative relationship, whereas regime type

shows a positive one. For every year that the conflict increases, the odds of a rebel organization's military victory decrease by approximately 5%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-0.046}$, holding all other variables constant, and is statistically significant at the 5% level or better. This model also does not support Hypothesis 4b.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Leaders

Women frontline and non-combat leaders are separated in Model 7. In this base model, frontline leaders show a positive correlation, statistically significant at the 10% level or better. Groups with women documented as frontline leaders increase their odds of a military victory by nearly twofold, with an odds ratio of $e^{0.655}$, holding all other variables constant, when compared to those groups without any documented women leading on the frontline. This is the first, and only, support for Hypothesis 4b. Non-combat leaders have a negative, statistically significant relationship at the 1% level or better. Groups with a documented woman as a non-combat leader have odds of a military victory that are over three-fourths as high as those without a documented woman leader, with an odds ratio of $e^{-1.442}$, holding all other variables constant.

Adding in the control variables reduces both types of leaders to statistical insignificance, but they keep their relationships from the base model. Women in frontline leadership positions have a positive relationship with a rebel victory, whereas women in noncombat leadership positions have a negative relationship with a rebel victory. When a group has a religious ideology, compared to those that do not, that group decreases its chances of a military victory to only about 8%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-2.567}$, holding all other variables constant, and the difference is statistically significant at the 5% level or better. Groups with a nationalist ideology also decrease their odds of a rebel victory by approximately two-thirds, with an odds ratio of $e^{-0.937}$, holding all

other variables constant, and this is statistically significant at the 5% level or better. For each year that the conflict continues, the odds of a group achieving military victory decrease by 5%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.049}$, holding all other variables constant, and is statistically significant at the 1% level or better. Leftist ideology, independence and autonomous zone creation goals, and the regime are not statistically significant but show a positive relationship. Democratic goals and GDP per capita are also not statistically significant, but they have negative coefficients.

Analysis

The only support for Hypothesis 4b comes from frontline leaders in Model 7. It drops to statistical non-significance in Model 8, raising questions about the impact of frontline female leaders on rebel victory. Model 5 and Model 7 non-combat leaders do not support Hypothesis 4b, and the full models do not indicate that the leader variables are statistically significant. These findings, excluding Model 7 frontline leaders, differ from those reported by Loken (2018). Her model suggests a positive, statistically significant relationship between rebel victory and female leadership. As with the participation models, a leftist ideology has a negative impact, and, in terms of leaders, it is not the relationship that Henshaw et al (2019) found. Their models show that leftist ideology is statistically significant in three of the four models. They also found that a nationalist ideology is not statistically significant, whereas in my estimates it is. Duration is not statistically significant in three of their models, whereas I find that duration has a strong negative impact on a group's victory when the leader is a woman. Findings from Henshaw et al (2019) are consistent with those presented here on the impact of GDP per capita. AIC results suggest that the participation models outperform these leader models.

In both the peace agreement and rebel victory leader models, a frontline leader is shown to potentially have a positive impact on both types of outcomes in the disaggregated base models. When the control variables are added in, these leader variables fall from statistical significance. Women non-combat leaders are significant to intermediate goal attainment, but not complete goal attainment. The partial attainment models do not have any ideological variables and show a significantly lower AIC. Following this, it may be that the goals or the ideologies are not as descriptive as desired, leading to the differing results. Future study should examine these various relationships further.

Unit Analysis

Women's Unit in Any Capacity

Model 9 is the first all-women unit base model and demonstrates a statistically significant negative relationship at the 5% level or better between a rebel group having an all-woman unit and that group achieving a military victory. The odds of a military victory decrease by nearly 60%, with an odds factor of $e^{-.861}$, holding all other variables constant. This model provides strong evidence against Hypothesis 4c.

The next model follows the pattern of adding all control variables. The presence of an all-women's unit drops out of statistical significance and switches coefficients from negative to positive. Groups with a religious ideology have only a 6% chance of military victory compared to groups without one, with an odds ratio of $e^{-2.867}$, holding all other variables constant; the difference is statistically significant at the 5% level or better. Those groups with a nationalist ideology reduce their odds of a military victory by approximately two-thirds, with an odds ratio of $e^{-1.064}$, holding all other variables constant, and this is significant at the 5% level or better. Every year the conflict

continues, a group's odds of a victory decrease by 5%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.053}$, holding all other variables constant. Duration is significant at the 1% level or better. All other variables are not statistically significant. Leftist ideology, independence goals, autonomous zone goals, and regime type are positive. Democratic aims and GDP per capita are negative. This model also does not support Hypothesis 4c.

Disaggregated Women Frontline and Non-Combat Women's Units

When all-women frontline and women non-combat leaders are separated in Model 11, both types show negative coefficients, but only the non-combat units are statistically significant. They are statistically significant at the 10% level or better and decrease the group's odds of a military victory by 42%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.540}$, holding all other variables constant. These results do not support Hypothesis 4c.

In the full model, both types of units switch coefficients to reflect a positive relationship, and the non-combat units become statistically insignificant. Groups with a religious ideology again negatively impact the odds of a rebel group military victory, reducing the odds by 96%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-3.045}$, holding all other variables constant, and is statistically significant at the 5% level or better. Nationalist ideologies also negatively impact a group's odds of victory by 70%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-1.150}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at the 1% level or better. Leftist ideology shows a positive coefficient, but is not statistically significant.

Table 7.5 Rebel Victory Model Comparison for Women's Units

Variables	Model 9 Base Total	Model 10	Model 11 Base Separated	Model 12
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Women's Unit	-0.861** (0.381)	0.204 (0.504)		
Frontline Unit			-0.212 (0.507)	0.210 (0.598)
Non-Combat Unit			-0.540* (0.407)	0.570 (0.528)
Leftist Ideology		0.145 (0.459)		0.070 (0.464)
Religious Ideology		-2.867** (1.464)		-3.045** (1.478)
Nationalist Ideology		-1.064** (0.485)		-1.150*** (0.490)
Independence Goals		0.296 (0.461)		0.282 (0.460)
Autonomous Goal		0.541 (0.606)		0.488 (0.618)
Democratic Goals		-0.201 (0.924)		-0.298 (0.926)
Regime		0.009 (0.038)		0.012 (0.038)
Duration		-0.053*** (0.022)		-0.060*** (0.022)
GDP per capita		-0.000 (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)
Intercept	-2.126*** (0.186)	-1.260*** (0.428)	-2.189*** (0.188)	-1.240** (0.434)
Akaike's Inf. Cri	276.186	134.071	278.954	133.035
N	501	361	498	359

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, and *** $p < .01$, one-tailed test.

No group goal is significant, and only democratic goals show a negative impact. GDP per capita is also not statistically significant, with a negative coefficient, while regime type is not significant, but with a positive coefficient. For each year that a conflict continues, the odds of a rebel victory decrease by 6%, with an odds ratio of $e^{-.060}$, holding all other variables constant, and is significant at the 1% level or better.

Analysis

No model in this set supports Hypothesis 4c, and models with statistically significant findings for all-women units indicate that these units reduce the odds of a rebel victory. These models do follow the participation and leader models in which variables are statistically

significant. Religious and nationalist ideologies continue to negatively impact a group's odds of a rebel victory, along with duration. Finally, similar AIC outcomes between the leader and unit models indicate a comparable fit to the data.

Discussion

In contrast to the results on peace agreements, the hypotheses regarding women's participation and rebel victory receive no consistent statistical support. The only statistically significant support is found in a base model with no control variables on frontline leaders in Model 7. All other women's variables with positive coefficients are present in the full models and switch from the negative relationships found in the base models. The peace agreement models found support for the impact of women's units, but the rebel victory models do not. In the latter models, the coefficients for women's units have a negative sign. These unstable coefficients indicate the need for more research on how women affect rebel group victory.

The Wald chi-square was not reported for the various model sets in this chapter or for the peace agreement models, but it is important to discuss them, as they affect how strongly the models support the hypothesis. In the peace agreement models, only two models had statistically significant Wald chi-square values. These were Model 3 (women participants disaggregated base model) and Model 4 (women participants disaggregated full model). In addition to the statistically significant findings for each participant type, these models fit the data quite well. All other models for peace agreements were not statistically significant, hence the decision to use AIC values for model comparison. All told, these results point to the need to continue researching the relationship between women in rebel groups and conflict outcomes.

In the peace agreement models, the only variable that consistently demonstrated statistical significance was religious ideology. Across those models, religious ideology negatively affected the group's odds of reaching a peace agreement. A similar relationship holds in rebel victory models as well. The full models consistently find that religious ideology reduces the likelihood of a rebel victory, presumably because the government is motivated to fight to stay in power against religiously motivated ideological enemies. Nationalist ideology also consistently reduces the odds of a rebel victory. The two ideologies being significant was unexpected, as I assumed that group goals would be more impactful. Goals are needed to help guide the groups towards their ultimate end, which is why I elected to include goal variables in estimates. However, as both sets of models demonstrate, goals are not as significant for a specific positive conflict outcome as is often believed.

Duration was the final variable to be consistently statistically significant. Each model found that the longer a conflict persisted, the lower the rebel group's odds of reaching victory. For rebel groups, this suggests that it is important to have a message and aim that resonate with the civilian population and build support quickly for the changes the group seeks to bring about. According to these models, if the group cannot swiftly achieve success or visible progress towards an outcome, it will begin to lose any advantage it has over the state government. On the other hand, it is advantageous to the state government to prolong the conflict. This allows the government to craft a message, build support for a counterattack among its supporters, and execute a military response with a larger material and support base than the rebel group. Perhaps, then, it takes more time for a state bureaucracy to begin moving, but once it is in motion, it is very difficult to defeat a mobilized state militarily, especially when those in power are threatened with losing their office.

Conclusion

These models build on prior work and deepen understanding of how women, as participants, leaders, and constituents of all-women units, help rebel groups achieve a rebel victory. There are two conclusions that can be drawn from these models, along with those for peace agreements. The first is a similarity in results. First, religious ideology, including Islamic and other religious ideologies, negatively impacts the odds of a positive conflict outcome for the rebel group. When a government is concerned about a potential positive outcome for a rebel group, it needs to understand with near certainty if the group's ideology is based on religion. This can be a strong indication of how a group may perform in a struggle against a state government, or it may alternatively be associated with greater government resolve. The second conclusion is that women are more strongly associated with peace negotiations than with outright victory in rebel groups' success. As more research is conducted, additional data and analysis can help clarify the differences between my work and that of Braithwaite and Ruiz (2018), Wood and Thomas (2018), Loken (2018), Henshaw et al. (2019), and Metell (2019).

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

The main question of whether women in rebel organizations, as participants, leaders, and in all-women units, affect outcomes and goal attainment finds mixed support across the models. I found the strongest support for my argument that women's roles and types do increase the probability of a specific outcome in the peace agreement models. There was also wide support within the participation models, as well as among frontline leaders and units, including units with a non-specified mission. Interestingly, the rebel victory models demonstrated the weakest support for my argument, with six of seven statistically significant relationships indicating that women's roles and types negatively affect the outcome of a rebel military victory. Only the base-separated frontline leader demonstrates an impact. The relationship between women's units and conflict outcomes provides new information for understanding how conflicts end and what groups may be more successful than others. According to these results, women's units are important to successful peace negotiations, but more research is needed to understand why and how they affect the path towards a peace agreement. There is also room for additional study to better understand why a frontline unit is more likely to be associated with a peace agreement. On the other hand, a woman's unit, specifically a non-combat unit, negatively impacts a rebel victory.

Beyond the relationship between women's roles, types, and outcomes, the most notable finding is that in every full model, religious ideology has a statistically significant negative impact on the prospects for a peace agreement or a rebel military victory. This finding supports previous research showing that when one side has a religious claim, the likelihood of a negotiated settlement is low (Svensson 2007) while acknowledging that religion provides a population with a cultural commonality that can create a pathway to peacebuilding (Silvestri and Mayall 2015). This leads to the first recommendation for further research. While it is difficult, as religion is not a monolith

but rather many pathways, there is a need to better understand how religion affects civil conflict outcomes. Religion has largely been associated with peacebuilding and negotiations, but little research has examined its effect on the likelihood of a rebel military victory.

I found little support for women's roles and types being significantly tied to a group's complete attainment of goals, with the only positive support in the base-separated women's non-combat unit, while the frontline unit in the same model is statistically significant in a negative direction. I found strong support for the first sub-section of the research questions in the interim and partial attainment models. In these models, women's participation was not significant. However, women leaders and women's units, particularly non-combat leaders and units, are crucial to achieving partial and interim goals. These findings, compared with the complete goal attainment models, show a disconnect. For women to be so important to the interim goals but not to the attainment of the complete goal begs for more research into what happened between the attainment of an interim goal and the end of the conflict. One potential explanation is that women are instrumental in establishing services and infrastructure that lead to the interim goals, but once those services and infrastructure are set, those roles can be filled by anyone, meaning they are not needed for complete goal attainment.

These results follow a new line of research begun by Benjamin Acosta but adjusts the focus to which types of groups and which elements within those groups are important to successful group outcomes. Acosta's foundational work describes how the group acts, whereas adding in the women's roles and types adds how the group is organized. By combining the two approaches, we can better describe what makes a rebel organization successful at what point during the conflict.

My research into goal attainment has generated more questions about what goal attainment means for a rebel organization. The stark difference I found between intermediate and complete

goal attainment shows that, at some point during a conflict, the impacts of women as leaders and gender-specific units change. There are a multitude of factors that can account for this, such as needing to rely less on the political structures that women put in place at the beginning of a conflict, or that as the characteristics of the conflict change with time, so do the needs of the organizations, including the reliance on women.

Many of my results regarding outcomes run counter to the studies that have been published. The foundation for the Women, Peace, and Security initiatives being driven by the United Nations consistently ties women in non-combat support roles to peace agreements. However, my results show that women's frontline participation often has a greater impact on outcomes than their non-combat roles. These results are also significantly different from Metell (2019) and Brannon et al (2024). In a divergence from the findings by Braithwaite and Ruiz (2018) and Loken (2018), my results suggest women's involvement in rebel organizations may present an obstacle to a rebel victory. It has become an assumption that women in rebel organizations help rebel organizations succeed, so this result was a surprise, but it helps to demonstrate that research has a long way to go to accurately describe how women impact conflicts when looking across different dependent variables. The fact that my results differ from these prominent studies shows that more research is needed. It also suggests that the operationalization of key explanatory and dependent variables can affect results, and that these variables must consequently be carefully calibrated across studies.

These results contribute to my critique of the limitations that exist with current data. The lack of temporal indicators in the data that I use as independent variables, such as when the women became participants or leaders, and when the women's units were created, means there is limited ability to further understand how these women impact goal attainment and outcomes. Knowing at what point in a conflict the women are documented as participating can help to better describe and

predict future conflicts. The control variables discussed in the methodology chapter also lack temporal components, which could increase their explanatory power. For example, if there was better data to more accurately describe when rebel-controlled territory either increased or decreased in size, or when a rebel organization increases membership or loses supporters, this would add needed precision to our analyses.

How to improve the datasets is the next question. One option might be scraping social media with the hope of improving this data and these variables, but using social media as a verification source brings its own set of concerns and limitations. The biggest advantage is the sheer amount of information it can provide, but that is also a major disadvantage, as that much information is difficult to manage, much less verify as accurate. Social media can help spread awareness and information faster and farther as people find information in archives and such, but, again, finding the specific type of information needed will be difficult. This is a problem for future research, but one that will hopefully be solved.

When crafting a government policy response, it is incredibly important for them to keep in mind that women participating in any role increases the odds of a peace agreement that is favorable to the rebel group. But it also indicates that women participating may increase the chance of a government military victory. What both results demonstrate, though, is that the government has to respond holistically and not focus on just one variable. Having women in an organization is beneficial in many ways, but it also depends on the interaction of women's participation and a myriad of other factors.

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