

# Rebel Governance of Marriage and Sexuality: An Intersectional Approach

KESHAB GIRI 

The University of Sydney, Australia

Extant research links forced marriage and sexual violence in rebel groups with their respective political projects, social control, and group cohesion. However, forced marriage and sexual violence are rare in many rebel groups, including the Maoists in Nepal who claimed to have a “progressive,” “scientific,” and “modern” framework for governing marriage and sexuality. In the light of this puzzle, I ask, what does a noncoercive/nonviolent rebel governance of marriage and sexuality mean for a rebel group’s political project of social control and power? What is the gendered impact of such governance? Importantly, how does it impact female combatants at the intersection of multiple oppressions? Using abductive analysis of extensive interviews with female ex-combatants and their leaders, I build a theoretical explanation about the noncoercive/nonviolent governance of marriage and sexuality that is not just linked to the formation, consolidation, and legitimation of political agendas, but also enabled social control and political power for the Maoists. However, this further marginalized those female combatants who were already disadvantaged. I employ a feminist intersectional framework while critically reflecting on my own positionality. The implications of these findings extend beyond Nepal, illuminating dynamics of rebel governance and the complexity of war and postwar social organization.

La investigación existente vincula el matrimonio forzado y la violencia sexual en los grupos rebeldes con sus respectivos proyectos políticos, con el control social y con la cohesión grupal. Sin embargo, el matrimonio forzado y la violencia sexual son infrecuentes dentro de muchos grupos rebeldes, incluidos los maoístas en Nepal que afirmaron tener un marco «progresista», «científico» y «moderno» para regir el matrimonio y la sexualidad. En vista de este rompecabezas, nos preguntamos, ¿qué significa un sistema de gobernanza rebelde no coercitiva/no violenta del matrimonio y la sexualidad para el proyecto político de control social y de poder de un grupo rebelde? ¿Cuál es el impacto en términos de género de dicha gobernanza?, y, sobre todo, ¿cómo afecta a las mujeres combatientes que se encuentran en la intersección de múltiples opresiones? Utilizando un análisis abductivo de extensas entrevistas con mujeres excombatientes y sus líderes, construimos una explicación teórica sobre la gobernanza no coercitiva/no violenta del matrimonio y la sexualidad que no solo está vinculado a la formación, consolidación y legitimación de las agendas políticas, sino que también permitió el control social y el poder político para los maoístas. Sin embargo, esto marginó aún más a las mujeres combatientes que ya estaban en desventaja. Empleamos un marco interseccional feminista mientras reflexionamos críticamente sobre nuestro propio posicionamiento. Las implicaciones de estos hallazgos se extienden más allá de Nepal, iluminando la dinámica de la gobernanza rebelde, así como la complejidad de la guerra y la organización social de la posguerra.

La recherche associe encore le mariage forcé et les violences sexuelles au sein des groupes rebelles à leurs projets politiques, leur contrôle social et leur cohésion interne. Néanmoins, force est de constater que ce sont des phénomènes rares dans de nombreux groupes rebelles. Les maoïstes du Népal revendiquaient notamment le caractère «progressiste», «scientifique» et «moderne» du cadre de leurs pratiques de mariage et de sexualité. Face à cette énigme, je m’interroge sur la signification d’une gouvernance rebelle non coercitive et non violente du mariage et de la sexualité au sein du projet politique de contrôle social et de prise de pouvoir d’un groupe rebelle. Quelles sont les conséquences de ce type de gouvernance selon les genres? Plus précisément, quels sont ses effets sur les combattantes soumises à de multiples oppressions? À l’aide d’une analyse abductive de longs entretiens avec d’anciennes combattantes et leur chef, je produis une explication théorique de la gouvernance non coercitive et non violente du mariage et de la sexualité qui dépasse les liens avec la formation, la consolidation et la légitimation des programmes politiques. Cette gouvernance aurait également permis aux maoïstes de contrôler la société et d’obtenir le pouvoir politique, tout en renforçant la marginalisation des combattantes déjà désavantagées. J’emploie un cadre interseccional féministe tout en réfléchissant à ma propre positionnalité de façon critique. Les implications de ces résultats dépassent le Népal. Elles mettent en lumière la dynamique de gouvernance rebelle et la complexité de l’organisation sociale pendant et après une guerre.

## Introduction

The feminist insight that “the personal is political” demonstrates that supposedly mundane private affairs<sup>1</sup> such as marriage and sexuality are deeply embedded in larger political

contestations and practices of power. Traditionally, the state has been the focus of such inquiry (Peterson 1992, 2014, 2020); however, recent research has begun to explore the significance of the governance of private affairs by rebel groups. While the regulation of intimacy is a constitutive feature of successful nation building/state formation in critical feminist international relations (IR) scholarship (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Peterson 2020), formation of state to govern as a state (Cunningham and Loyle 2020, 4) or at least to mimic a state (Arjona, Nelson, and Mampilly 2015, 10; McConnell 2016, 165–66; Klem and Maunaguru 2017) is

Keshab Giri is a lecturer in International Relations at The University of Sydney. His research interests include gender and war, women in political violence, intersectionality, violent extremism, leftist insurgencies, critical security studies, rebel governance, governance of intimacy in rebel group, and armed conflicts in South Asia and Southeast Asia.

<sup>1</sup>For this research, I focus on only two components of the private sphere: marriage and sexuality. Marriage and sexuality here refer to the constellation of intimate relationships encompassing sensual, sexual and reproductive activities, and conjugal relations. I exclude other activities that may fall within the private

sphere such as observance of faith-based activities and rituals, lifestyle and routine, other familial relationships apart from conjugal relations, and so on.

what rebel groups aspire for. The question therefore arises: how do the politics of marriage and sexuality matter in rebel governance that ultimately seeks to emulate a state?

The literature on forced marriage and sexual violence largely tends to focus either on the organizational and interpersonal dimensions of forced marriage and sexual violence within the “victim–perpetrator” and “weapon of war” frameworks (Baaz and Stern 2009, 2013; Kirby 2015; Jacobs 2020; Revkin and Wood 2021; Sarwari 2021) or their governance within the rebel group is analyzed within the instrumental framework: minimizing in-group conflict and promoting interdependence (Kramer 2012; Marks 2014), preventing the libidinal withdrawal (Goodwin 1997), and enhancing cohesion and loyalty (Cohen 2013). Nevertheless, some research has gone further to study the link between forced marriage and political projects and their objectives (Baines 2014), and between the repertoires of sexual violence and social control in a group (Marks 2014) and violent state building (Ahram 2019).

Yet, while these studies advance useful insight on links between forced marriage/sexual violence and instrumentation/political underpinnings and call attention to the centrality of marriage and sexuality in politics of war, these works place violence and coercion at the heart of their analysis. To gain a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between marriage and sexuality and rebel governance, we need to go beyond violence/coercion. It is through nonmaterial actions such as discourses and practices of rule that produce and reify political power and authority (Foucault 1982). Hence, the study of marriage and sexuality in rebel governance should not only examine remunerative and coercive aspects but also include noncoercive normative structures and practices.

Second, forced marriage and sexual violence within rebel groups are not universal (Wood 2009). Many rebel groups do not either use forced marriage or permit sexual violence within or outside the rebel group. While other groups such as Lord’s Resistance Army allow forced marriage but strictly prohibit some forms of rape and sexual violence (Annan et al. 2009), the Maoist insurgency in Nepal neither forced its cadres and combatants into marriage explicitly nor permitted sexual abuse and violence in policy or practice inside and outside the group (see Gayer 2013, 2014). The Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) (Silkin 1983), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) (Wood 2009), and Frente Farabundo Marti para Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador (Wood 2009) are other examples of rebel groups that strictly prohibited sexual violence and rape in terms of policy and practice.

Given this milieu, a few important questions arise: what does a noncoercive/nonviolent<sup>2</sup> rebel governance of marriage and sexuality mean for a rebel group’s political agendas, social control, and politics of power within the group? What are the gendered impacts of such noncoercive governance of marriage and sexuality? Importantly, how does this governance impact women combatants at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression? I examine the governance of marriage and sexuality in the Maoist insurgency

<sup>2</sup> While I use the term noncoercive/nonviolent, I do not mean to imply the total absence of coercion/violence, including the structural and discursive violence, but rather their rarity in material forms. Moreover, I build on the perception of nonviolence/noncoercion of interviewees who stressed freedom of love and marriage, and no restriction of sexual relationship between married combatants. Many primary and secondary data I analyzed also attested to such experiences (Yami 2007; Gayer 2013, 2014). Similarly, the Maoists were open to the same-sex marriage and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual+ (LGBTQIA+) recognition in the constitution (UNDP/USAID 2014).

in Nepal (1996–2006) to construct a theoretical explanation using abductive analysis that accounts for the puzzle of noncoercive/nonviolent governance. I argue that the rebel group still effectively governs marriage and sexuality noncoercively/nonviolently to form, consolidate, and legitimize its political agendas, and instrumentalize them for social control and power accumulation. However, such governance reproduced gendered forms of insecurity and marginalization in private and public spheres, particularly for those female combatants at the intersection of multiple oppressions such as gender, caste, class, ethnicity, social status, and educational status.

I use a feminist intersectional framework that offers a critical theoretical lens to examine how politics of power embedded into the governance of marriage and sexuality reproduces a gendered hierarchy of power impacting women already at the margin<sup>3</sup> disproportionately. Similarly, I combine abductive analysis and reflexive feminist research methodology with critical reflections on positionality, power dynamics, and potential limitations.

The first section of this paper synthesizes three bodies of literature—feminist IR scholarship, rebel governance, and ethnographic studies—to highlight the significance of the private sphere in the study of war and rebel governance and demonstrate how my research adds to each of these bodies of literature. A brief discussion on the case selection of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal is followed by a discussion of the puzzle of noncoercive/nonviolent governance of marriage and sexuality in the Maoist insurgency couched in a broader narrative of “science,” “progress,” and “modernity.” Next, I lay out the design of the study followed by the intersectional theoretical framework. In the subsequent analysis, I show how the Maoist noncoercive/nonviolent governance of marriage and sexuality operates in relation to their broader political ambition of social control and political power accumulation while marginalizing the women combatants at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression in the group. I use this analysis to build the theoretical claim that Maoist rebels pursue noncoercive governance of marriage and sexuality to extend social control and political power. The final section concludes the discussion while highlighting the implications of research and suggesting avenues for future research on this topic.

### Study of Marriage and Sexuality in the Rebel Group

Despite shared interests in the private sphere in its various connections to violent political contestation in the context of war, scholarships from feminist IR (particularly critical feminist IR), rebel governance, sociology, and anthropological studies rarely come together in conversation with each other on this topic. Feminist scholars directly address the significance of the private sphere in understanding larger politics at the state level. Rebel governance research also recognizes the political significance of the private sphere in the governance of the population. Similarly, some works on sociology and anthropology explore the importance of understanding social order and intimate/quotidian relationships to understand the war in totality. An interdisciplinary approach to this topic, through a synthesis of these three bodies of literature, offers a productive approach for the systematic and nuanced exploration and advancement of research on the governance of marriage and sexuality in the rebel group and its larger political significance.

<sup>3</sup> Marginalized women here refer to women from a lower caste, lower class, ethnic minority, lower education attainment, and remote rural areas.

For many years, feminist scholars have been pushing for further investigation of the private sphere as a center of political contestation and governance of women's bodies for the construction of sociopolitical order. They have repeatedly emphasized the study of the private sphere, such as conjugal order and sexuality, to understand the larger power politics at play at national and international levels (Enloe 2000, 195–203; MacKenzie 2012; Peterson 2020; Hanisch n.d). Militarization of the private sphere is another critical line of inquiry in feminist research to understand IR (Enloe 1993, 2000). Similarly, other feminist scholars highlight the significance of strict regulation of gender, women's bodies, sexual relations, and reproductive practices in relation to national projects seeking to capture state power and collective national imagining or repel a threat to nationhood (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Yuval-Davis 1997). Furthermore, the entanglement between "modern" state formation and regulation of sex compels V. Spike Peterson to claim that "making state makes sex" (Peterson 2014, 390).

What happens to women's bodies does not constitute a mere act of violence because of structural and systemic forces; it is equally an enactment of particular political and cultural ideas (Butler 1988). Cynthia Cockburn characterizes acts of sexual violence and rape during the war as political communication from one group of men to another centering the question of masculinity (Cockburn 2009, 159). Similarly, the purity of a woman is deeply connected to the purity of a nation; hence, rape dilutes that purity (D'Costa and Hossain 2010). Moreover, Nayanika Mookherjee calls rape a "spectral wound" to the national body (Mookherjee 2015). The bodies of women and violence against these bodies are deeply enmeshed in nationalistic discourses.

Below the state level, an understanding of the rebel governance of marriage and sexual violence yields vital insight into critical processes that accompany the ambitious nation-building process. Rebel groups often seek to emulate material and institutional features of the state (Arjona, Nelson, and Mampilly 2015, 10; McConnell 2016, 165–66; Klem and Maunaguru 2017). In doing so, they also enact habitus of conjugal order and sexual and gender-based violence of the state before them (Wood 2009, 2018). However, rebel groups also innovate novel modes and frames of governance of private spheres. Ariel Ahram argues, "sexual violence rends the pre-existing fabric of life while tightening the binding strictures of the nascent familial state. Sexuality, then, stands as the frame on which new statehood itself is cinched" (Ahram 2019, 189).

However, there seems to be a lack of synergy between feminist scholarship and rebel governance literature on exploring the centrality of marriage and sexuality in rebel governance. While existing rebel governance literature also focuses on noncoercive/nonviolent tools of governance, it omits examination of the establishment of the social order through regulation of marriage and sexuality, a core component of feminist scholarship, advocacy, and activism. Arjona (2014, 1375; 2016, 182–83) suggests that the rebel governance, which she calls "rebelocracy," goes beyond security and taxation. This means that rebel groups often rely on violence to control and govern the territory (Kalyvas 2006), but they also engage in restoring a semblance of order and normalcy through various other means, for example, the establishment of foreign diplomacy (Huang 2016b), creation of a judiciary/legal system (Loyle 2020), provision of public good and welfare (Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2014; Arjona, Nelson, and Mampilly 2015; Huang 2016a; Stewart 2018), and constructing a system of revenue (Revkin 2020). Ana

Arjona goes further to argue that "rebelocracy" involves creating a "wartime social order," a set of rules that structure human interaction, social relations, and private conduct in a given community during wartime (Arjona 2014, 1374–75). Yet, it is not known whether the "rebelocracy" entails noncoercive instruments of governance and how that configures into the experiences of women during and after the war.

While rebel governance literature does broadly recognize the microlevel dynamics such as the governance of social relations and private conduct forming a vital part of "rebelocracy," the discussion of the political nature of regulations of private conducts and intimate social relations and their linkage and significance in broader political agendas and power politics needs further exploration. Rebel governance scholars point to the conceptual and methodological challenges in the formalization of informal norms, values, and practices that are essential in rebel governance, particularly for political institutional arrangements (Mampilly and Stewart 2020, 24). However, not exploring these everyday informal institutions, rules, and practices further relegates vital microlevel processes into the black box of rebel governance.

Some sociological and ethnographic studies, however, do study the extent to which quotidian networks and personal relationships, deeply ingrained into the broader political climate of rebellion, influence political agency and sustain political struggle (Parkinson 2013; Viterna 2013). Further, social movement scholars have long insisted on marriage and sexuality or the emotional constitution of social movements as a fertile field of inquiry (see Goodwin 1997; Goodwin, Jasper, and Colletta 2000; Shah 2013). Activists, cadres, or combatants in a rebel group may come together not only (or not primarily) by shared material/nonmaterial interests, social positions, and ideologies, but also by powerful effectual ties of empathy, family, friendship, and camaraderie that spring from, and are reinforced by, face-to-face interactions (Goodwin 1997; Gidwani and Paudel 2012; Shah 2013).

My research enriches emerging conversation across all these three disciplines. First, it adds to the critical feminist IR scholarship by redirecting focus on the private sphere to understand political agendas, and politics of control and power in a situation of war. Beyond the presentation of social governance as a set of apolitical organizational processes in making war, a deeper exploration of these formal/informal social infrastructures, value systems, and practices in the rebel group and their political significance enriches critical feminist research. Second, rebel governance scholars stress the need for further research on the impact of rebel governance on social processes, and social relationships can be a productive area of research (Arjona, Nelson, and Mampilly 2015, 3–4). I show that an equally productive line of inquiry would also be to explore how the nonviolent/noncoercive governance of intimate social relationships informs the complex working of politics of gender and power at the microlevel during and after the war. Moreover, I study the differentiated impact on groups of women at the intersection of multiple oppressions. Finally, in the atmosphere of intractability of civil war in recent times (Von Einsiedel et al. 2017, 4), following sociological and anthropological inquiry into how rebel groups create social order through the governance of marriage and sexuality is fundamental to our understanding of both the complex dynamics and composite processes and consequences of war.



## Toward a Theory of Noncoercive/Nonviolent Governance of Marriage and Sexuality: The Case of Nepal

*Case Selection: The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal*

The case of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal is significant in three major ways. First, rebels were broadly considered to be successful in achieving their political objective to establish a republican governing system (Lawoti 2010, 3). Second, one of the defining features of the insurgency was a relatively higher level of participation of women in both combatant and noncombatant roles (Manchanda 2004, 2010). Maoists claim that the proportion of women combatants was as high as 40–50 percent of the total force (Manchanda 2004); however, the official United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) numbers are about 20 percent (3,846 out of 19,602) (Arino 2008, 8). Apart from being combatants, women were prominently active in the Maoists' sister organizations such as All Nepalese Women's Association (Revolutionary) (ANWA (R)), parallel government structure, and ad hoc institutions set by Maoists such as the local government, the judiciary, and the cultural front (Yami 2007).

The Maoists gained significant support among women as they brought a progressive social agenda that promised to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (ICTJ 2010, 24). Before launching the insurgency, the Maoists submitted a forty-point memorandum to the government with an ultimatum (Thapa 2003, 391). The nineteenth point called for the end of patriarchal exploitation and discrimination against women and property right for the daughters.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the Maoists insurgency in Nepal can reveal significant theoretical insights to explore the gendered impact of noncoercive/nonviolent rebel governance of marriage and sexuality in the aftermath of conflict. The Maoists sought to govern marriage and sexuality in the rebel group as well as in the territory they controlled (Gayer 2013, 2014). Unlike similar rebel groups around the world, the Maoists permitted marriage, did not proscribe sexual relationships, and allowed family. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) compelled its combatants to sign an "abstinence contract" requiring the combatants to abstain from love and sexual relationship (Käser 2021). The Maoists in India saw that sexual relationships between combatants were seen as a problem for the movement leading them to pursue anti-natalist policies (Vindhya 2000, 176; Sinha Roy 2011, 123). The LTTE in Sri Lanka allowed marriage only after the LTTE leader Prabhakaran got married in 1984 (Herath 2007, 135–36). The EPLF also banned marriage earlier in the conflict only to be allowed at the later stage of the conflict (Wilson 1991). In the case of Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) in Columbia, contraception was compulsory, and many women combatants were forced to abort in case of pregnancy (Giraldo-Gartner 2020).

### *The Puzzle of Noncoercive/Nonviolent Rebel Governance of Marriage and Sexuality*

The attempts by the Maoist leaders to frame the insurgency in "scientific," "progressive," and "modernist" narratives and discourses are enmeshed within parallel rhetoric on the governance of marriage and sexuality to which the Maoists used the same characterizations: "scientific," "progressive," and "modernist." The attempt here is not to discuss the semantics and accuracy of these terms; rather I look at how the

Maoists borrowed and used these terms to frame gender relations and to govern marriage and sexuality to formulate, further, and fortify their political project. The Maoists sought to substantiate these claims by glossing their governance of marriage and sexuality in these terms. During the insurgency, "science," "modernity," and "progress" were often used interchangeably (Snellinger 2010). For the Maoist leaders, "science"/"progression"/"modernity" meant demolishing centuries-old feudal structures and religious-cultural norms and values along with economic structures (Karki and Seddon 2003, chapter 3) including old societal norms, values, cultural codes, and practices of marriage to liberate women (Gayer 2013, 2014; Gogoi 2017, 52).

Such linear conception of time and temporalities concerning marriage and sexuality directly relate to power and violence. Certain conceptions of time endorse efforts of domination, subordination, and elimination that characterize heteropatriarchal politics. Often, these imply the idea that the specific ways of living, knowing, loving, worshipping, producing, and reproducing are archaic and regressive to justify the forced catching up, control, or elimination of those designated as temporal anachronisms. These ideas were often invoked to ostracize traditional values and practices regarding marriage and sexuality in Maoist stronghold areas such as Thabang in Nepal (Zharkevitch 2019) and elsewhere. Appeals to tradition and modernity are powerful forms of ideological authorization, and that implicit in the tradition/modernity binary is a paradoxical conception of time as both linear and hierarchical (Alexander 2005, 193).

However, irrespective of the immense discursive power and symbolic violence involved, rebel governance initiatives, particularly the attempt to transform the gender relations to liberate women, are often met with hostility and create challenges for rebel groups, often requiring them to come up with an intensive mode of governance (Stewart 2021, 8–9). Rebel governance of intimacy incurs potential political costs as it seeks to disrupt existing gender relations. Moreover, it involves expending of scarce resources and more organizational capacity and potentially puts at stake the reputation of the rebel group even when it is noncoercive/nonviolent. Despite numerous costs, it may not bear tangible benefits in the short term and may even fail to recoup the expended costs over the long term. Moreover, rebels who govern extensively are victorious at the same rate as rebel groups that do not (Stewart 2021, 14).

Therefore, the puzzle remains why would any rebel group invest intensively in the noncoercive/nonviolent governance of marriage and sexuality? Ignoring the political and ideational motivations for governance of marriage and sexuality and their impacts—or analyzing through a narrow instrumental, tactical, or military strategy—only offers a limited view of how rebel groups formulate and consolidate their political projects and priorities. Further, it obscures how the rebel groups entangle the public and private for greater mobilization toward their military and political objectives.

Possible reasons for the rebel governance of marriage and sexuality may include symbolic reasons, practical considerations, and revolutionary objectives of rebel groups. Apart from material and coercive components of rebel governance, nonmaterial and symbolic tools, rituals, and practices are vital for the legitimacy of the rebel governance (Mampilly 2011). Isabel Käser (2021) indicates that one of the many possible explanations for the "abstinence contract" in PKK where combatants are not allowed to engage in libidinal activities or sexual relationships was to reassure the parents and relatives of female combatants that their

<sup>4</sup>The full text of the demands can be found in Karki and Seddon (2003, 183–87).

“honor” and “chastity” will not be breached. Another explanation tells that rebel groups with transformative objectives tend to create fundamentally new political institutions (Skocpol 1979, 4–5) and seek to restructure the society fundamentally along racial, gender, religious, class, or ethnic lines (Tilly 1998, 6).

While these explanations are useful in deciphering the puzzle above, repurposing V. Spike Peterson’s argument from “genealogy of sex/gender” (Peterson 2014, 390) offers vital insight: *making rebel group also makes sex/gender*; that is, the construction of the narrative that a rebel group is an unrivaled and legitimate force seeking to supplant state often relies on shaping and reshaping private spheres. Marriage and sexuality are not a mere side effect of governance but a key location where subjectivities are formed and controlled (Käser 2021), which are vital to the political objectives of the rebel group. Moreover, intimate, sexual, and family life are intricately enmeshed in political projects such as nationhood, ethnicity, and religion require their collective reproduction in biological, legal, and cultural terms work through sex, gender, and marriage (Hasso 2014, 121).

*“Scientific,” “Progressive,” and “Modern”: A Radical Maoist Movement*

The Maoists placed gender and conjugal order at the heart of “scientific,” “progressive,” and “modernist” rhetoric of their political project. By doing so, they claimed that their articulation of gender relations sets them apart from the other communist parties in Nepal and leftist rebel groups beyond Nepal. The Maoists accused other communist parties in the country of not being progressive enough as they lacked “scientific dialectical materialism” (Karki and Seddon 2003, 97). The Maoists designated women as the main category of oppressed people who benefitted from participating in the Maoist insurgency (Lecomte-Tilouine 2009, 65) by freeing themselves from patriarchal constraints that limited them within households. For Maoists, their ability to appeal to women and draw them out of their homes to fight alongside their husbands was itself a progressive act. A former top-ranking Maoist woman leader exemplified how the Maoists emerged as the most progressive communist party differentiating themselves from other Communist parties by keeping marriage and gender relations at the core of such distinction:

In the past, the communist party, particularly, in Mashal,<sup>5</sup> used to give loud slogans on women’s rights and equality... At that time, merely supporting a husband who is a whole-timer political cadre or leader was a progressive act for a wife... We broke away from this tradition. Before the start of the people’s war, I still remember, the party summoned all the wives of leaders to say that women should also join the people’s war along with their husbands to fight together. Only playing the supporting role is not enough. Therefore, we broke all the traditions including the conceptions of gender equality in the Communist party.<sup>6</sup>

The Maoists also based claim to have taken on the mantle of Communist revolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with their progressive governance of marriage and sexuality. The Maoist insurgency began at a time when leftist movements were failing around the world and the socialist block had crumbled, leading Francis Fukuyama to declare victory for Western

liberal democracy over communism (1989). The Maoists in Nepal asserted that the “Prachanda Path,” a syncretic Marxist adaptation named after the Maoist leader, was the most refined form of Marxism attuned to “science,” “progress,” and “modernity” (Karki and Seddon 2003).

The Maoist governance of marriage, sexuality, and reproduction sets them distinct from other leftist insurgents outside Nepal with similar ideological orientations (Gayer 2013, 348). The Maoists contended that their approach to marriage, sexuality, and reproduction was “scientific,” “progressive,” and “modern” because they not only allowed marriage and relationships, but also did not restrict reproduction unlike other rebel groups in the region. Two of the former higher-ranking Maoist female leaders elaborate,

Naxalites in India have to vow not to have babies while in the group. Still today, they don’t allow babies. In LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam), they had the policy not to let combatants have babies.<sup>7</sup> We did not put a restriction on this matter. Prohibiting biological needs is not scientific.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, the Maoists consistently keep insisting that their movement was carefully thought out with a progressive stance on marriage and sexuality without any force and coercion. They characterized themselves different from leftist groups in Asia such as the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia where forced marriage was seen as a part of their ideology to purge so-called class enemies (Jacobs 2020) or the PKK where the combatants were punished for marrying or engaging in sexual activities (Käser 2021). During the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, if male and female combatants were in love and willing to marry each other, the party would readily approve their union. Manu, who got married during the insurgency, explained:

We fell in love during the insurgency in 2004. We didn’t have to hide it because we were not bounded by “purano pichhadiyeko manasikata” [old backward mindset]. What mattered was whether we know each other well and loved each other, The party [Maoist] readily accepted our request for the conjugal union. We did “pragatisheel vivah” [progressive marriage]. Fifteen other couples got married at the same time by putting vermilion on the forehead and exchanging guns. The party was supportive.<sup>9</sup>

Despite risks involved in the rebel governance of marriage and sexuality, the Maoists in Nepal governed through seemingly noncoercive/nonviolent discursive power of “science,” “progress,” and “modernity” in seeking to consolidate and legitimate their political project, both internally and externally. The paper delves deeper into specific mechanisms of social control and political power that prompted the Maoists for such governance and its impact on women through feminist intersectional lens in the analysis section.

## Methodology

This paper draws from interviews conducted with thirty-nine participants in Nepal between 2017 and 2018. Of these, twenty-seven were female ex-combatants, four were experts on female combatants in the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, and the remaining eight were top Maoist leaders including six female Maoist leaders. All names have been changed for

<sup>7</sup> LTTE only allowed marriage in 1984 after Prabhakaran, the LTTE leader, got married. Sexuality was still seen as evil (Herath 2007, 135–37).

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Rumila and Karuna (date: 21/12/2017).

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Manu (date: 04/01/2018).

<sup>5</sup> One of the many communist parties in Nepal.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Rumila and Karuna (date: 21/12/2017).

anonymity. I traveled mostly to rural areas covering ten districts of Nepal sprawling from the Eastern part of Nepal to the Mid-West, and from mountainous districts to the North to plains to the South.<sup>10</sup> Out of twenty-seven female ex-combatants, ten came from higher caste backgrounds, four from the Dalit (or the “untouchable” caste), and thirteen were indigenous nationalities.<sup>11</sup> All of the Maoist leaders I interviewed came from an educated higher caste and middle-class background. I used snowballing sampling to get to a greater pool of female ex-combatants from marginalized backgrounds. Having this diverse sample allowed me to explore the experiences of female ex-combatants using an intersectional lens.

I used the abductive analysis to make theoretical sense of the data. The abductive analysis encourages building of a theory to understand anomalous and surprising empirical findings through a systematic methodological analysis. It requires “theoretical sensitivity” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 46) meaning the possession of theoretical insight into an area of research and ability to make something of insights. While similar to induction approach, the abduction looks for theories while induction seeks for facts (Peirce 1958, 217–18). Abduction analysis also foregrounds the researcher’s positionality in terms of researcher’s cultivated intellectual position.

In terms of methodology, abductive data analysis consists of iterative rounds of revisiting coding and memo, defamiliarizing, and alternative casing in light of theoretical knowledge (Timmermans and Tavory 2012). The researcher’s ability to revisit the interviews with theoretical sensibility allows the researcher to harness temporal lag in the service of theory building. This revisiting can lead the researcher to defamiliarization where the data in the interview transcripts that are invisible or taken for granted suddenly become possible focal points in theory building. While defamiliarization makes something hidden the focal point, and revisiting allows returning to the same observation trans-situationally, a researcher’s theoretical sensitivity and breadth can “case” the interview data in different theoretical ways (Tavory and Timmermans 2009).

All my interviewees, except one, were married. I asked simple questions such as—“when did you get married?”; “how do you characterize your marriage?”—followed by further probing questions. Generally, my respondents were very enthusiastic when asked about “progressive” marriage during the insurgency, which they saw as a marker of revolutionary identity. However, this was not immediately clear to me. Getting into the field for my research, marriage and sexuality were not the primary focus of my fieldwork. My primary focus was to explore complex experience of war in the continuum by female combatants based on their intersecting identities. However, there was interesting and surprising regularity in the way female ex-combatants and their leaders spoke about the marriage and sexuality during the war and its aftermath.

After reanalyzing and recoding the interview data carefully, a distinct pattern emerged in the characterization of marriage and sexuality based on rank and intersectional identity. My “theoretical sensitivity” on theories of rebel governance; feminist intersectionality, feminist theorization of nationhood, statehood, and war; gendered theories of forced marriage and sexual violence during war;

**Table 1.** Preliminary codes grouped into dominant themes

<i>Preliminary codes</i>	<i>Dominant themes</i>
Scientific theory of revolution	Discourse: science/progress/modernity
Refined communist movement	
Progressive force in Nepal	
Modern/progressive norms and practices	
Marriage approval	Social control
Enforcement of rules and moral codes	
Politics of martyrdom	
Appeal among marginalized groups	Political power
Legitimation	
Moral power	
Divorce	Intersectionality and marginalization
(caste/class/ethnicity/education)	
Ostracization/stigma	
(caste/class/ethnicity/education)	
Reproductive labor	

and sociological theories of libidinal withdrawal in revolution alerted me to the theory-building possibility in the empirical data. It helped me to “case” the interview data in a new theoretical framework of noncoercive/nonviolent rebel governance of marriage and sexuality. After carefully analyzing/reanalyzing and coding/recoding the interview data, I finalized a list of thirteen preliminary codes, which I grouped into four dominant themes as shown in table 1.

The abductive analysis focuses on the “theoretical sensibility” of the researcher. However, I go further to highlight my “multiplex” identity, which generates useful insights into sociopolitical situatedness of the researcher and its implications for the knowledge production. In the following two sections, I elaborate on the concepts of intersectionality and positionality that contribute to the theory-building exercise I undertake in this paper.

### Intersectionality

Untangling politics of power and social control embedded into the governance of the private sphere and exploring its gendered impact through an intersectional lens require theory and methods sensitive to the complex working of power not just in analysis but also in research design and process. A feminist intersectional lens helps to understand how regulation of the intimate private sphere has caused a differentiated impact on different bodies, demanding an inquiry into the political nature of the public/private divide. Failure to attend to this dimension further depoliticizes the divide and obscures the operation of power in a continuum between the public and private. The creation of a state, a central locus of political activity, relies and builds on this divide (Peterson 2014). Feminist scholars have long rejected the separation of “public” from “private” (Elshtain 1987; Das 1996). In this view, the “personal is political” is an acknowledgment that the harms and oppressions experienced in the private sphere are translated to and reinforced by larger political structures. I, therefore, attend to the critical feminist IR scholarship’s demand to understand how this “central locus of political activity” is not only gendered but also simultaneously implicated in many systems of oppression such as caste, class, ethnicity, social status, educational attainment, and geography.

Originated in Black feminism, the intersectional approach sought to include both gender and race in their

<sup>10</sup>These are Rolpa, Rukum, Banke, Dang, Arghakhanchi, Rupandehi, Chitwan, Sunsari, Lalitpur, and Kathmandu.

<sup>11</sup>See Hoefler (1979) for the detailed exposition of caste-based hierarchical structure.



simultaneity to understand Afro-American women's experiences instead of a unidimensional framework (Crenshaw 1989, 139). As intersectionality extended to more axes (such as ethnicity, nationality, and religion), it risked developing into a mechanical additive model that can be essentialist and deterministic (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 2005, 62–63). How do different systems of oppression intersect in dynamic and complex ways without being mechanically additive? Many scholars have shown how intersectional analysis could be more nuanced and dynamic encapsulating the complexity (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992; McCall 2001; Anthias 2005; Collins 2009). I find this approach useful for my research because it not only recognizes common experiences of oppression for women as a group, but also stimulates us to emphasize the heterogeneous constitution of the group. This is particularly useful in the Nepalese context because of the vast diversity in terms of culture, ethnicity, and social formations (Höfer 1979) allowing intersectional analysis concerning groups (intercategorical) and within a single group (intracategorical) (McCall 2005).

Overall, the intersectional theoretical framework informed by critical feminist scholarship studying the private/public sphere provides a critical lens to explore the noncoercive/nonviolent governance of sex and marriage by the Maoists in Nepal in its relation to politics of control and power aimed at taking over heteropatriarchal Nepalese state. It also enables me to examine how such governance creates and perpetuates hierarchical norms, practices, and structures that have differentiated impact on women as per their caste, class, ethnicity, social status, and geographical location.

### Positionality

While the feminist intersectional framework brings to focus the experiences of women under multiple simultaneously intersecting identities (Giri 2021), a critical reflection on the researcher's intersecting identities also contributes to greater transparency in the knowledge production process (Giri 2022). In combination of abductive analysis, I use feminist research methodology characterized by critical reflexivity with focus on my positionality and power dynamics. Emphasizing “value neutrality” in research (Harding 1987, 127), feminist scholars have suggested to center a researcher's situatedness, to be aware of the complex nature of gender construction, and adopting a reflexive process of knowledge creation by paying attention to blind spots and near-sightedness (Davis 2014).

My position as a heterosexual cis male researcher from the same cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and, in many cases, social background interviewing the women ex-combatants demands a critical reflection of my position in knowledge production as it is socially located and mediated by power relations (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002, 112; Flood 2013, 65; Giri 2022). Except for women Maoist leaders, I interviewed female ex-combatants in groups or accompanied by their friends or family to moderate the power imbalance. Because of my gender, as well as for ethical reasons concerning the risk of re-traumatization, and to mitigate the power imbalance, I prioritized this approach to the interview. On the other hand, my cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and class affinity also enabled me to talk to people. Two Maoist female leaders and a few female ex-combatants made it explicit to me that they “trusted” me with their stories because of my national identity as Nepali and my lived experience during the Maoist insurgency.

However, my gender identity also inhibited me to ask questions surrounding sexual violence as it is considered culturally sensitive for a male researcher asking questions on such an issue. Issues of sexual violence and domestic violence in the Maoist insurgency in Nepal have been highlighted by some scholars (Lecomte-Tilouine 2009; Sharma and Tamang 2016). Moreover, group interviews are often not suitable to delve into research participants' private matters such as experiences of marriage and sexuality that could have been further compounded by the interviewer's effect on the female ex-combatants and social desirability bias (Halperin and Heath 2012, 248–49).

For example, while sexual violence committed by the state constitutes a disproportionate number of cases, there has been silence on similar acts by rebel groups (Sharma and Tamang 2016). Even 16 years after the end of the insurgency in Nepal, ordeal of women survivors of sexual violence for justice continues (Budhathoki 2022). Although sexual violence during the insurgency came up during my interviews with an expert on the Maoist insurgency in Nepal,<sup>12</sup> female ex-combatants were reluctant to speak on this issue.

### Social Control and Political Power

Although the Maoist characterization of governance of marriage and sexuality within the group was laden with terms such as “science,” “progress,” and “modern” that defied the traditional norms and practices, the core mechanism of social control and accumulation of power through the institution of marriage and governance of sexuality continued as before. The Maoists utilized the “libidinal politics,” an act of a group of politicizing and militarizing affectual and sexual ties to amass power (Goodwin 1997), as a vital part of emotional and psychological control over the combatants. In other words, the Maoists became a “greedy institution”<sup>13</sup> that sought to govern not only the sexual practices of the combatants but also their emotional and psychological beings by monopolizing the commitments of its members. Through the governance of marriage and sexuality within the group, the Maoists replaced the traditional institution of marriage with elaborate codes and rules, instrumentalized marriage and sexuality to gain and contain combatants, utilized the politics of martyrdom, and constructed moral order to control bodies, attain, and maximize political power.

The Maoists reconstructed the new institution of marriage with elaborate codes and rules predicated on pulverizing the traditional institution of marriage and its associated norms, values, and practices. Sarala, one of the female ex-combatants that I interviewed, explained that the revolution and ideology were of paramount importance in marriage and relationships. Marriage and relationships should actively instill and sustain them. She explained,

Party [Maoist] was above individual concerns and problems. It was everything for us— Our home, family, guardian, and educator. If we fell in love, we had to declare it to the party. Party would approve. In the marriage ceremony, we used to vow that our ideological commitment would be the center, the relationship was peripheral.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, marriage was utilized as a tool to bolster the commitment and loyalty of newlywed members toward the

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Krishna (date: 22/11/2017).

<sup>13</sup> An institution that seeks maximum control over its members (see Coser 1974).

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Sarala (date: 22/01/2018).

Maoist Party. Maoist party was depicted as above marriage, as fidelity to the party was framed as more important than fidelity toward marriage. It was not uncommon to divorce a husband or wife if he/she was found to be disloyal to the party. For example, Kamala Dong, a female ex-combatant, divorced her husband after he was found to have gone against the Maoist party policies (Dong 2064 BS, 112 cited in Rai 2017, 197). Similarly, the Maoist party supplanted traditional institutions such as family and society. Through such control, the Maoists created a sustainable emotional and psychological repository for the continuity of war.

Once married, the “revolutionary” couple would rarely have time to be together. They were often separated and were deployed in different commands in different parts of the country. My extensive conversation on this matter with one Maoist female ex-combatant and a journalist who covered the Maoist insurgency revealed that this was also a way to prevent “libidinal withdrawal” (Goodwin 1997). It was a careful strategy to prevent “love” from weakening solidarity and commitment to the Maoist movement. In my interview, Maoist female leader Rumila frankly remarked that the combatants were learning to read and write quickly because of the separation. She elaborated,

They used to be separated from each other for a long time as they were fighting on different fronts. They didn't have phones as we have now. Writing letters was the only way to express their feelings to each other. This was a win-win for them and the revolution.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the Maoists exploited traumatic events, such as death, to invoke “martyrdom” as a credential of the revolutionary. The loss of a partner in combat was used by the Maoists as an opportunity to engender a sense of vengeance and anger in the widow/widower against the government forces (Yami 2007, 24). Maoists actively encouraged the remarriage of a widow or widower, breaking a taboo in the society (Adhikari 2006, 76–77; Rai 2017, 208). In their memoirs, Samana D.C. and Sharda Pun, both female ex-combatants, remarried after losing their husbands during the Maoist insurgency (D.C. 2064 BS and Pun 2064 BS cited in Rai 2017, 208–209). Although Sharda Pun lost two husbands in the Maoist insurgency, her loyalty and dedication toward the Maoists remain unchanged,

The revolution needs sacrifices for liberation. This necessity has been fulfilled by both of my spouses. In the departure of both of my husbands, thoughts and ideology continue to multiply. From here on, the entire party revolution and the family of people's war martyrs will become a source of inspiration for me. (Pun 2064 BS, 174 cited in Rai 2017, 209)

Martyrdom as a space to deepen affective attachment and consolidation of solidarity not only retained the bereaved combatant, but also depicted the Maoists as the progressive party for breaking the feudal tradition. Maoist combatants' feelings and emotions of love and loss within the private spheres were carefully formatted and often mobilized for the collective action in the name of “progress” and “modernity.”

Still, the radicalization of conjugal relationships was in many ways constituted a continuity of hegemonic gender norms and sexual moralities of the old tradition, even enforced more strictly than before. While they promoted love and sex as a natural and biological need, they also emphasized the need to act against sexual anarchism

(Yami 2007, 29). For example, premarital and extramarital sex, polygamy, remarriage before the divorce, or loss of the partner was duly punished.<sup>16</sup> Such punishments ranged from demotion and political reeducation to expulsion.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, the Maoists were deeply concerned with ignominy, notoriety, and unwanted deviation arising from extramarital affairs among Maoist leaders. The Maoist party decided to make it compulsory for Maoist leaders to have their wives join them after an extramarital affair between two top leaders, Ram Bahadur Thapa “Badal” and Pampha Bhusal.<sup>18</sup> Before this event, it was encouraged but not enforced. On the other hand, security forces tried to project the image of the Maoist female combatants as mere objects of sexual gratification for the male combatants (Yami 2007, 59; Gayer 2013, 358).

In such a situation, the reinvention of strict codes and ethos governing marriage and sexuality under the “science,” “progress,” and “modernity” discourse shielded them from the accusation of promiscuity and vulgarity in Nepalese society. The Maoist governing ethos regarding gender, romance, and sexuality were primarily guided by traditional heteropatriarchal values, sexual propriety, conjugal order, and patriarchal ideas about purity, honor, and shame. This tendency to inscribe “honor” and “shame” on female bodies also constitutes a prime location of body politics in other progressive-looking rebel groups such as Naxalites (Roy 2012) and the PKK (Käser 2021). This not only enabled control and produced power through existing heteropatriarchal values and practices, it also rendered female combatants at the margin further marginalized even after the peaceful resolution of the war.

### Intersectionality and the Governance of Marriage and Sexuality

Although the governance of marriage and sexuality enabled the Maoists to control its cadres and combatants and amass power, it created a hierarchical power structure and norms further marginalizing female ex-combatants, particularly those at the margin. Similarly, the impact of these governing structures and norms permeated in a continuum even after the war. The “progressive” and “scientific” rhetoric of marriage and sexuality reinforced rather than erasing the structural inequality against women combatants. There was no equitable share of reproductive labor burden between married male and female combatants. Although reproductive rights were unrestricted during the insurgency, the Maoists lacked a fair, coherent, and consistent plan to manage and reintegrate the women combatants into the group once they had children. A former Maoist female company commander, Ganga, elaborated:

Once they would have a baby, they were compelled to withdraw into domestic affairs. My friend Sita left her career as a combatant once she got a baby. She had to look after the baby anyhow until the baby was one year old. From that perspective, they [female combatants] felt that they could not fulfill the duties of the party limiting them in the kitchen. Many came back [to rebel group] after giving birth to a child. But it was difficult for them. Many others simply left.<sup>19</sup>

Ganga had forsaken any thought of having children during the war as it would have shattered her hopes of

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Hisila Yami in Gayer (2013, 351–52).

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Rumila and Karuna (date: 22/11/2017).

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Rumila and Karuna (date: 22/11/2017).

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Ganga (date: 12/12/2017).

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Rumila (date: 22/11/2017).



getting to the higher echelon of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). She only had a baby once she was in cantonment during the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process. Laila, the highest-ranked female commander (Deputy Brigade Commander) in the PLA, argues,

We need to take eight months' leave during pregnancy. During that time, time progresses fast. Men's responsibility is finished after sexual intercourse. Because of it, women lag in society... Therefore, we put this proposal to the Maoist chairman. We decided not to marry. Even if we marry, we will not give birth to the child soon. Those women who followed this managed to play a greater role. Practically, women must take leave for a certain period. During that period, things change. It is difficult to do catch up for women. ... They must wait for some time. Once they secure their future, they can marry and plan accordingly. I got married only after the peace process in 2007.<sup>20</sup>

Bimala Budha, a former female ex-combatant from Rolpa, was bitter about the divide within the insurgency itself where its leadership, often from a well-to-do family (usually leaders), could find someone/somewhere to look after their children without letting it interfere with their work. People like her, coming from a lower-class background, had to end their career and political ambitions once they got a child. Similarly, she was also frustrated that her husband who was junior to her could continue to be combatant while she had to leave despite her seniority and long experience. When I met her in Dang, a district in western Nepal, she was tending her small patch of vegetables in her backyard. Her husband was in Qatar for overseas employment. She detailed,

How is it possible that the Maoist revolution can have two classes- Baburam<sup>21</sup> and Hisila<sup>22</sup> can send their child to India for study, but we couldn't afford to raise our children? How come my husband who joined the insurgency later than I would continue to be in the PLA, but I had to dash my dreams? I could not understand.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, in trying to escape the traditional society that burdened them with family and children to look after, female combatants met the exact fate. They were "doubly burdened"—expected to complete their motherhood roles while proving their self-worth by engaging in combat on the battlefield (Gogoi 2017, 51). Pregnancies were considered to be a disciplinary action that prevented them from advancing their careers (Gayer 2013, 342). The Maoists held a conservative position on sexuality and reproductive rights in many ways often reproducing the traditional gender relations leaving female combatants to take on the sole burden of child-rearing in many cases and dashing their leadership aspirations (Lecomte-Tilouine 2009; Manchanda 2010, 7).

Moreover, many female ex-combatants from the lower caste, lower classes, and uneducated backgrounds suffered because of intercaste marriages during the insurgency in the rebel group. Rita, a female ex-combatant from a higher class educated background, reflected that unlike her comrades from a lower caste, poor, and uneducated back-

grounds, she did not face caste-based discrimination and violence:

One of my friends was a Tamang [an indigenous group considered to be located lower in the Hindu caste hierarchy]. Her husband was from a Brahmin [higher caste] family. Therefore, her husband got married to a Brahmin girl later, abandoning her... I know many poor female ex-combatants with no educational qualification in a similar situation like my friend who are working in massage parlors to survive. Many have gone abroad for employment in precarious and dangerous sectors.<sup>24</sup>

Such a precarious situation was not shared by their male counterparts, their leaders, or even female combatants from higher caste/class/social status and educated backgrounds (Goswami 2015). Many female ex-combatants from a lower caste were rejected by their husband's family members for intercaste and interethnic marriage because they married without their family's consent (Rayamajhi 2011). Many male combatants divorced and abandoned their wartime wives to fit into their families and communities (Sthapit and Doneys 2017, 44). For many female ex-combatants from lower caste and ethnic minority groups, there was no community left for them to reintegrate with. Surprisingly, intercaste marriage was not a problem for the bridegroom's family if the bride belonged to a higher caste (Gogoi 2017, 57–58). Karuna, a former Maoist female leader, explained to me,

There was a strange phenomenon after the Maoist insurgency. A lot of marriages forged during the war broke apart, particularly inter-caste marriages. I have myself compiled data on this to which the Maoist party turned a blind eye, and so was government. I have interviewed female ex-combatants whose lives have been destroyed and they are living with stigma and trauma. Female ex-combatants or cadres from lower caste often get kicked out by their husband and their in-laws. Surprisingly, I find when women are from upper-caste and good backgrounds, marriage somehow sustains.<sup>25</sup>

Yet, when the Maoists came to power after the peaceful resolution of the conflict, they ignored these issues even though it affected hundreds of female ex-combatants from the lower caste and ethnic minority groups (Rayamajhi 2011). They immediately declared the insurgency as "successful" and "transformative" for all Nepali women.<sup>26</sup>

The Maoists sought to actively govern marriage and sexuality noncoercively/nonviolently not only to form, consolidate, and validate their political agendas but also as a tool for social control and political power attainment. Such governance produced unequal consequences felt most acutely in the aftermath of the war by the female combatants at the intersection of caste, class, ethnicity, and social and educational status.

## Conclusion

Existing research establishes linkages between forced marriage and sexual violence and various rebel political projects of control, cohesion, and nation building. However, the empirical puzzle of noncoercive/nonviolent governance of marriage and sexuality in the Maoist insurgency in Nepal defies existing explanations. Using

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Laila (date: 20/12/2017).

<sup>21</sup> Second-ranked Maoist leader during the Maoist insurgency.

<sup>22</sup> One of the top two female leaders in the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. She is the wife of Baburam Bhattarai.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Bimala (date: 04/01/2018).

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Rita (date: 21/11/2017).

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Karuna (date: 22/11/2017).

<sup>26</sup> This narrative of the positive transformation of gender relations in Nepalese society came consistently in my interviews with Maoist leaders.

abductive analysis, this article builds the theoretical framework of “noncoercive/nonviolent governance of marriage and sexuality” to link such governance by the Maoists in Nepal to their political agenda, social control and politics of power, and marginalization of women at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression. Despite the claim of governing marriage and sexuality in “scientific,” “progressive,” and “modern” ways devoid of coercion and violence, the Maoists in Nepal instrumentalized the governance of the private sphere for social control and accumulating power that disproportionately affected female combatants.

The main contribution of this paper lies in building a theoretical explanation for the puzzle of noncoercive/nonviolent governance of marriage and sexuality using intersectional framework and abductive analysis. It does so by underlining the generative synergy between the rebel governance literature and feminist IR scholarship highlighting the gendered and intersectional nature of rebel governance of marriage and sexuality with a critical inquiry into the core sociocultural infrastructure of heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity. The noncoercive/nonviolent regulation of marriage and sexuality enabled the Maoists to build “total institutions” (Coser 1974) facilitating social control and power accrual. However, it contributed to women combatants’ oppression and exploitation by reproducing and reinforcing heteropatriarchal and heteronormative values and nuclear family with female combatants taking the burden of social reproduction (Peterson 1985; Fraser and Nicolson 1988; Butler 2002; Hedström 2022). It disproportionately impacted the female combatants at the intersection of multiple oppressions affecting their relationships in social and intimate spheres even after the war.

Female ex-combatants’ experiences of war and “postwar” peace in the private sphere in Nepal resonate with feminist IR scholars’ claim on the private sphere as a political sphere of power contestation revealing continuity of multiple “chains of violence”—from direct and visible to systemic and structural (see Cockburn 2004; Alden 2010; Bayard De Volo and Hall 2015; Braithwaite and D’Costa 2018) and from war to “postwar” (see Alden 2010; Giri 2021). Moreover, the feminist intersectional lens shows that female ex-combatants from a lower class, lower caste, and ethnic minorities were disproportionately impacted by the burden of social reproduction, ostracization, alienation, and many problems with reintegration after the war (Giri 2021). Yet, the insurgency was characterized as one of the success stories, and elite leaders, both male and female, came to the position of power and influence after the war.

The findings also reaffirm the refrain call from feminist IR scholars that the dichotomy and hierarchy between private/public affairs, social/political order, moral/political order, and emotional/rational constitution are artificial and political (Enloe 2000, 195–203; MacKenzie 2012; Peterson 2014, 2020; Hanisch n.d.). The findings align with deep ethnographical works in sociology and anthropology that unpack complex microlevel intimate social processes during and after the war and their consequences (Goodwin 1997; Gidwani and Paudel 2012; Shah 2013). What makes a study of the institution of marriage and regulation of sexuality in rebel governance a unique site for “feminist curiosity” (Enloe 2004) is that they need to create institutions and regulations from ground zero. Such creations are rife with contestation and conformity with the existing institutions and regulations on marriage and sexuality. As such, they are important sites for studying political order emanating from formal and informal structures of gendered power and authority.

The paper is also significant in offering a reflexive account of the “multiplex” positionality of the researcher and its bearing on the research process and outcome. The paper reinforces the feminist assertion that the knowledge production process is not value neutral, but rather a complex negotiation between the researcher, the field, and research participants mediated by multilayered contexts and power dynamics. Beyond foundational commitment to reflexive practice with honest reckoning of limitations and vulnerability in feminist fieldwork, its implications travel further afield in challenging hegemonic epistemological and methodological assumptions by acknowledging the partiality (not universality) and situatedness (non-fixity) of knowledge, and fostering an accountable and ethical knowledge production.

This paper also contributes to the rebel governance literature in two major ways—it offers a theoretical framework explaining the puzzle why rebel groups may persist with supposedly radical restructuring of the private sphere even though it can be costly with no guarantee of solid returns (Stewart 2021, 8–9) and, second, it follows on the call of rebel governance scholars (Arjona, Nelson, and Mampilly 2015) to explore the lingering impact of rebel governance on social and intimate relations.

The findings from this study have significant implications for security policy and understanding of the armed conflict. Security policies mainly focus on political motivations and ideological orientations, military structures, and economic sources of the rebel groups. As this research showed, marriage and sexuality can be powerful noncoercive/nonviolent tools of governance for rebel groups. Apart from in-depth understanding of political–ideological projects of insurgents, regulation of marriage and sexuality can enlighten various other conflict dynamics such as recruitment, retainment of combatants/cadres, and sexual violence in armed conflict. As such, mutual exclusion of private and public spheres does not yield us a holistic understanding of the politics and micropolitics of war and peace.

Future research could focus on the scope conditions for the development of rebel governance system and institutions on marriage and sexuality: why some rebel groups pursue governance of marriage and sexuality in the way they do (coercive/noncoercive, traditional/non-traditional) while others do not? Similarly, a comparative study can reveal interesting variations and broader patterns of rebel governance of marriage and sexuality.

### Acknowledgements

This paper has benefitted from presentations at Workshop on, Under-Researched Aspects of Gender and Security 2022 at the University of Amsterdam, South Asian Studies Association Australia seminar, 2020; Australia; and 22nd Biannual Asian Studies Association Australia Conference 2018 at the University of Sydney, Australia; and 25th IPSA World Congress of Political Science 2018, Brisbane, Australia. I would like to thank Laura Shepherd, Megan Mackenzie, Ryan Griffiths, Sarah Phillips, Monika Barthwal-Datta, and Nicole Wegner for their helpful comments and suggestions. I am grateful to all the interviewees for their valuable time and for sharing their experiences. Finally, I am grateful to the editors for their careful and expert handling of the manuscript.

### Supplementary Information

Supplementary information is available at the *International Studies Quarterly* data archive.

## References

- ADHIKARI, INDRA. 2006. "Women in Conflict: The Gender Perspective in Maoist Insurgency." In *Nepal: Facets of Insurgency*, edited by Lok Raj Baral, 60–84. New Delhi: Adroit Publishers.
- AHRAM, ARIEL I. 2019. "Sexual Violence, Competitive State Building, and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 13 (2): 180–96.
- ALDEN, AMIE. 2010. "A Continuum of Violence: A Gendered Analysis of Post Conflict Transformation." *POLIS Journal* 3 (2010): 1–37.
- ALEXANDER, JACQUI. 2005. *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- ANNAN, JEANNIE, CHRISTOPHER BLATTMAN, DYAN MAZURANA, AND KRISTOPHER CARLSON. 2009. "Women and Girls at War: 'Wives', Mothers and Fighters in the Lord's Resistance Army." Accessed April 21, 2023. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237426348\\_Women\\_and\\_Girls\\_at\\_War\\_Wives\\_Mothers\\_and\\_Fighters\\_in\\_the\\_Lord's\\_Resistance\\_Army](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237426348_Women_and_Girls_at_War_Wives_Mothers_and_Fighters_in_the_Lord's_Resistance_Army).
- ANTHIAS, FLOYA. 2005. "Social Stratification and Social Inequality: Models of Intersectionality and Identity." In *Rethinking Class: Culture, Identities, and Lifestyle*, edited by Fiona Devine, Mike Savage, John Scott and Rosemary Compton, 24–25. London: Palgrave.
- ANTHIAS, FLOYA, AND NIRA YUVAL-DAVIS. 1989. *Woman-Nation-State*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 1992. *Racialised Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle*. London: Routledge.
- ARINO, MARIA V. 2008. "Nepal: A Gender View of the Armed Conflict and the Peace Process." ECP, Barcelona. Accessed 21 April, 2023. <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/89517>.
- ARJONA, ANA. 2014. "Wartime Institutions: A Research Agenda." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58 (8): 1360–89.
- . 2016. *Rebelocracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- ARJONA, ANA, NELSON KASfir, AND ZACHARIAH MAMPILLY, eds. 2015. *Rebel Governance in Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- BAAZ, MARIE E., AND MARIA STERN. 2009. "Why Do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence, and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC)." *International Studies Quarterly* 53 (2): 495–518.
- . 2013. *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond*. London: Zed Books.
- BAINES, ERIN. 2014. "Forced Marriage as a Political Project: Sexual Rules and Relations in the Lord's Resistance Army." *Journal of Peace Research* 51 (3): 405–17.
- BAYARD DE VOLO, LORRAINE, AND LYNN K. HALL. 2015. "I Wish All the Ladies Were Holes in the Road: The US Air Force Academy and the Gendered Continuum of Violence." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 40 (4): 865–89.
- BRAITHWAITE, JOHN, AND BINA D' COSTA. 2018. *Cascades of Violence: War, Crime and Peacebuilding across South Asia*. Canberra: ANU Press.
- BUDHATHOKI, ABHASH. 2022. "Justice Is a Far Cry from Reality for Sexual Violence Survivors of the Nepal Civil War." *Online Khabar*, February 13, 2022. Accessed February 13, 2022. <https://english.onlinekhabar.com/nepal-war-sexual-violence-justice.html>.
- BUTLER, JUDITH. 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40 (4): 519–31
- . 2002. "Is Kinship Already Heterosexual." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13 (1): 14–44.
- COCKBURN, CYNTHIA. 2004. "The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace." In *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, edited by Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, 24–44. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- . 2009. "The Continuum of Violence." In *Cultures of Fear: A Critical Reader*, edited by Uli Linke and Danielle T. Smith, 158–73. London: Pluto Press.
- COHEN, DARA K. 2013. "Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009)." *American Political Science Review* 107 (3): 461–77.
- COLLINS, PATRICIA H. 2009. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- COSER, LEWIS A. 1974. *Greedy Institutions: Patterns of Undivided Commitment*. New York: The Free Press.
- CRENSHAW, KIMBERLE. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989 (1): 139–67.
- CUNNINGHAM, KATHLEEN G., AND CYANNE E. LOYLE. 2021. "Introduction to the Special Feature on Dynamic Processes of Rebel Governance." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65 (1): 3–14.
- DAS, VEENA. 1996. "Sexual Violence, Discursive Formations, and the State." *Economic & Political Weekly* 3 (35–37): 2411–23.
- DAVIS, KATHY E. 2014. "Intersectionality as Critical Methodology." In *Writing Academic Texts Differently: Intersectional Feminist Methodologies and the Playful Art of Writing*, edited by Nina Lykke, 17–29. New York: Routledge.
- D' COSTA, BINA, AND SARA HOSSAIN. 2010. "Redress for Sexual Violence before the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh: Lessons from History and Hopes for the Future." *Criminal Law Forum* 21 (2): 331–59.
- ELSHTAIN, JEAN B. 1987. *Women and War*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- ENLOE, CYNTHIA. 1993. *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- . 2000. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. London: University of California Press.
- . 2004. *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- FLOOD, MICHAEL. 2013. "Negotiating Gender in Men's Research among Men." In *Men, Masculinities and Methodologies*, edited by Barbara Pini and Bob Pease, 64–76. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- FOUCAULT, MICHEL. 1982. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry* 8 (4): 777–95.
- FRASER, NANCY, AND LINDA NICHOLSON. 1988. "Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism." *Theory, Culture & Society* 5 (2–3): 373–94.
- GAYER, LAURENT. 2013. "Love-Marriage-Sex' in the People's Liberation Army: The Libidinal Economy of Greedy institution." In *Revolution in Nepal: An Anthropological and Historical Approach to the People's War*, edited by Marie Lecomte-Tilouine, 333–66. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- . 2014. "The Problem of 'Physical Relations' within the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of Nepal." *Politix* 3 (109): 85–115.
- GIDWANI, VINAY, AND DINESH PAUDEL. 2012. "Gramsci at the Margins: A Pre-history of the Maoist Movement in Nepal." In *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*, edited by Michael Eker, Gillian Hart, Stefan Kipfer and Alex Loftus, 258–78. Chichester: Wiley.
- GIRALDO-GARTNER, VANESA. 2020. "Victims, Revolutionaries, or Heroic Mothers? The Debate of Reproductive Politics in the FARC." *Politics and Anthropological Review*, Accessed November 15, 2022. [https://polarjournal.org/2020/11/24/victims-revolutionaries-or-heroic-mothers-the-debate-of-reproductive-politics-in-the-farc/#\\_ftn1](https://polarjournal.org/2020/11/24/victims-revolutionaries-or-heroic-mothers-the-debate-of-reproductive-politics-in-the-farc/#_ftn1).
- GIRI, KESHAB. 2021. "Do All Women Combatants Experience War and Peace Uniformly? Intersectionality and Women Combatants." *Global Studies Quarterly* 1 (2): 1–11. doi:10.1093/isagsq/ksab004.
- . 2022. "Can Men do Feminist Fieldwork and Research?" *International Studies Review* 24 (1): viac004.
- GLASER, BARNEY G., AND ANSELM L. STRAUSS. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. New York: Aldine.
- GOGOI, AMRITA P. 2017. "Troubled identities: women ex-combatants in post-conflict Nepal." In *Women, Peace and Security in Nepal: From Civil War to Post-Conflict Reconstruction* edited by Ashild Kolås, 64–79. London and New York: Routledge.
- GOODWIN, JEFF. 1997. "The Libidinal Constitution of a High-Risk Social Movement: Affective Ties and Solidarity in the Huk Rebellion, 1946 to 1954." *American Sociological Review* 62 (1): 53–69.
- GOODWIN, JEFF, JAMES JASPER, AND FRANCESCA POLLETTA. 2000. "The Return of the Repressed: The Fall and Rise of Emotions in Social Movement Theory." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 5 (1): 65–83.
- GOSWAMI, ROSHMI. 2015. *UNSCR 1325 and Female Ex-Combatants: Case Study of the Maoist women of Nepal*. New York: UN Women.
- HALPERIN, SANDRA, AND OLIVER HEATH. 2012. *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- HANISCH, CAROL. n.d. "The Personal Is Political." *Woman's World* 2 (1).
- HARDING, SANDRA G., ed. 1987. *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- HASSO, FRANCES S. 2014. "Bargaining with the Devil: States and Intimate Life." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 10 (2): 107–34.
- HEDSTRÖM, JENNY. 2022. "Militarized Social Reproduction: Women's Labour and Parastate Armed Conflict." *Critical Military Studies* 8 (1): 58–76.
- HERATH, TAMARA. 2007. "Women Combatants and Gender Identity in Contemporary Conflicts: The Case of the LTTE." PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- HÖFER, ANDRÁS. 1979. *The Caste Hierarchy and State in Nepal: A Study of the Muluki Ain of 1854*. Patan: Himal Books.
- HUANG, REYKO. 2016a. *The Wartime Origins of Democratization: Civil War, Rebel Governance, and Political Regimes*. New York: Cambridge University Press.



- . 2016b. “Rebel Diplomacy in Civil War.” *International Security* 40 (4): 89–126.
- INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRANSNATIONAL JUSTICE (ICTJ). 2010. “Across the Lines: The Impact of Nepal’s Conflict on Women.” Advocacy Forum and International Centre for Transnational Justice, Kathmandu.
- JACOBS, RACHEL P. 2020. “Married by the Revolution: Forced Marriage as a Strategy of Control in Khmer Rouge Cambodia.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 24 (3): 357–79.
- KALYVAS, STATHIS N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- KARKI, ARJUN, AND DAVID SEDDON. 2003. *The People’s War in Nepal: Left Perspectives*. New Delhi: Adroit Publishers.
- KÄSER, ISABEL. 2021. *The Kurdish Women’s Freedom Movement: Gender, Body Politics and Militant Femininities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- KIRBY, PAUL. 2015. “Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict: The Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and Its Critics.” *International Affairs* 91 (3): 457–72.
- KLEM, BART, AND SIDHARTHAN MAUNAGURU. 2017. “Insurgent Rule as Sovereign Mimicry and Mutation: Governance, Kingship, and Violence in Civil Wars.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59 (3): 629–56.
- KRAMER, SOPHIE. 2012. “Forced Marriage and the Absence of Gang Rape: Explaining Sexual Violence by the Lord’s Resistance Army in Northern Uganda.” *The Journal of Politics & Society* 23 (1): 11–49.
- LAWOTI, MAHENDRA. 2010. “Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal.” In *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari, 3–30. London: Routledge.
- LECOMTE-TILOUINE, MARIE. 2009. “Fighting with Ideas: Maoist and Popular Conceptions of the Nepalese People’s War.” In *Armed Militias of South Asia: Fundamentalists, Maoists and Separatists*, edited by Jaffrelot Christopher and Laurent Gayer, 65–89. London: Hurst Publishers.
- LOYLE, CYANNE E. 2020. “Rebel Justice during Armed Conflict.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65 (1): 108–34.
- MACKENZIE, MEGAN H. 2012. *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security, and Post-Conflict Development*. New York: New York University Press.
- MAMPILLY, ZACHARIAH. 2011. *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during Wartime*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- MAMPILLY, ZACHARIAH, MEGAN A., AND STEWART. 2020. “A Typology of Rebel Political Institutional Arrangements.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65 (1): 15–45.
- MANCHANDA, RITA. 2004. “Maoist Insurgency in Nepal Radicalizing Gendered Narratives.” *Cultural Dynamics* 16 (2–3): 237–58.
- . 2010. “Women’s Question in Nepal’s Democratic Post Conflict Transition: Towards a Policy Research Agenda.” *Peace Prints: South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 3 (1): 1–18.
- MARKS, ZOE. 2014. “Sexual Violence in Sierra Leone’s Civil War: ‘Virgination’, Rape, and Marriage.” *African Affairs* 113 (450): 67–87.
- MCCALL, LESLIE. 2001. *Complex Inequality: Gender, Class and Race in the New Economy*. New York: Routledge.
- . 2005. “The Complexity of Intersectionality.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture in Society* 30 (3): 1771–1800.
- MCCONNELL, FIONA. 2016. *Rehearsing the State: The Political Practices of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile*. Malden, MA: Wiley.
- MOOKHERJEE, NAVANIKA. 2015. *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories, and the Bangladesh War of 1971*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- PARKINSON, SARAH E. 2013. “Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War.” *American Political Science Review* 107 (3): 418–32.
- PEIRCE, CHARLES SANDERS. 1958. “Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce.” In *Science and Philosophy*, vol. 7, edited by A.W. Burks. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- PETERSON, ABBY. 1985. “The Revolutionary Potential of the ‘Private’: A Critique of the Family as a Revolutionary Force Position.” *Acta Sociologica* 28 (4): 337–48.
- PETERSON, V. SPIKE, ed. 1992. *Gendered States: Feminist (Re) Visions of International Relations Theory*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- . 2014. “Sex Matters: A Queer History of Hierarchies.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 16 (3): 389–409.
- . 2020. “Family Matters in Racial Logics: Tracing Intimacies, Inequalities, and Ideologies.” *Review of International Studies* 46 (2): 177–96.
- RAI, KAILASH. 2017. “Heroic Tales: Memoirs by Maoist Women.” In *Political Change and Public Culture in Post-1990 Nepal*, edited by Michael J. Hutt and Pratyoush R. Onta, 197–222. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- RAMAZANOGLU, CAROLINE, AND JANET HOLLAND. 2002. *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*. London: SAGE.
- RAYMAJHI, ARUNA. 2011. “Love in a Time of War.” *Nepali Times*, July 22–28. Accessed August 12, 2021. <https://archive.nepalitimes.com/news.php?id=18398>.
- REVKIN, MARA R. 2020. “What Explains Taxation by Resource-Rich Rebels? Evidence from the Islamic State in Syria.” *The Journal of Politics* 82 (2): 757–64.
- REVKIN, MARA R., AND ELIZABETH J. WOOD. 2021. “The Islamic State’s Pattern of Sexual Violence: Ideology and Institutions, Policies and Practices.” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6 (2): oga038.
- ROY, SRILA. 2012. *Remembering Revolution: Gender, Violence and Subjectivity in India’s Naxalbari Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- SARWARI, MEHWISH. 2021. “Impact of Rebel Group Ideology on Wartime Sexual Violence.” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6 (2): oga040.
- SHAH, ALPA. 2013. “The Intimacy of Insurgency: Beyond Coercion, Greed or Grievance in Maoist India.” *Economy and Society* 42 (3): 480–506.
- SHARMA, MANDIRA, AND SEIRA TAMANG, eds. 2016. *A Difficult Transition: The Nepal Papers*. New Delhi: Zubaan.
- SILKIN, TRISH. 1983. “Eritrea.” *Third World Quarterly* 5 (4): 909–14.
- SINHA ROY, MALLARIKA. 2011. *Gender and Radical Politics in India: Magic Moments of Naxalbari (1967–1975)*. Oxon: Routledge.
- SKOCPOL, THEDA. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SNELLINGER, AMANDA. 2010. “The Repertoire of Scientific Organization: Ideology, Identity and the Maoist Student Union.” In *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari, 73–91. London: Routledge.
- STEWART, MEGAN A. 2018. “Civil War as State-Making: Strategic Governance in Civil War.” *International Organization* 72 (1): 205–26.
- . 2021. *Governing for Revolution: Social Transformation in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- STHAPIT, LORINA, AND PHILIPPE DONEYS. 2017. “Female Maoist Combatants during and after the People’s War.” In *Women, Peace and Security in Nepal: From Civil War to Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, edited by Ashild Kolas, 33–49. London: Routledge.
- TAVORY, IDDO, AND STEFAN TIMMERMANS. 2009. “Two Cases of Ethnography: Grounded Theory and the Extended Case Method.” *Ethnography* 10 (3): 243–63.
- THAPA, DEEPAK, ed. 2003. *Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.
- TILLY, CHARLES. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- TIMMERMANS, STEFAN, AND IDDO TAVORY. 2012. “Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis.” *Sociological Theory* 30 (3): 167–86.
- UNDP/USAID. 2014. “Being LGBT in Asia: Nepal Country Report.” Bangkok.
- VINDHYA, U. 2000. “Comrades-in-Arms: Sexuality and Identity in the Contemporary Revolutionary Movement in Andhra Pradesh and the Legacy of Chalam.” In *A Question of Silence? The Sexual Economies of Modern India*, edited by Mary E. John and Janaki Nair, 167–91. London: Zed Books.
- VITERNA, JOCELYN. 2013. *Women in War: The Micro-Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- VON ENSIEDEL, SEBASTIAN, LOUISE BOSETTI, JAMES C.C. SALIH, AND WILFRED WAN. 2017. “Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict.” Occasional Paper No 10.
- WILSON, AMRIT. 1991. *The Challenge Road: Women and the Eritrean Revolution*. London: Routledge.
- WOOD, ELIZABETH J. 2009. “Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?” *Politics & Society* 37 (1): 131–61.
- . 2018. “Rape as a Practice of War: Toward a Typology of Political Violence.” *Politics & Society* 46 (4): 513–37.
- YAMI, HISILA. 2007. *People’s War and Women’s Liberation in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Janadhvani Publication.
- YUVAL-DAVIS, NIRA. 1997. “Women, Citizenship and Difference.” *Feminist review* 57 (1): 4–27.
- ZHARKEVICH, INA. 2019. *Maoist People’s War and the Revolution of Everyday Life in Nepal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.