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Ethnic and Gender Hierarchies in the Crucible of War

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Recent scholarship shows war can catalyze reforms related to gender power imbalances, but what about reforms related to ethnic inequalities? While war can disrupt the political, social and economic institutions at the root of ethnic hierarchy—just as it can shake up the institutions at the root of gender hierarchy—war is also prone to have either a *reinforcing effect* or a *pendulum effect*. Our project uses data from the Varieties of Democracy project to examine specific manifestations of changes in gender and ethnic civil-liberty equality (1900–2015). Interstate war, but not intrastate war, tends to be followed by gains in ethnic civil-liberty equality, and intrastate war tends to be followed by long-term gains in gender civil-liberty equality. Wars with government losses are prone to lead to improvements in civil-liberty equality along both dimensions. In considering overlapping gender and ethnic hierarchies, we find that when wars open up space for gains in gender equality, they also facilitate gains in equality for excluded ethnic groups.

If ethnic and gender power imbalances are deeply embedded into a society's institutional and normative fabric, major disruptions such as war might be required to disrupt equilibria of political, social, and economic power. However, establishing more egalitarian equilibria in the wake of armed conflict is far from automatic. Indeed, recent studies highlight both the potential for war to reduce gender inequality and the challenges preventing the consolidation of gender-equality gains in the long run (Tripp 2015, 2016; Schroeder 2017; Berry 2018; Webster, Chen, and Beardsley 2019).

We consider how ethnic hierarchies respond to war differently than, and interactively with, gender hierarchies.[1] Although wars can shake up social and political orders to open up space for movements toward gender and ethnic equality, they are also likely to perpetuate a vicious cycle of ethnic exclusion and conflict. We consider how intrastate wars in particular can retrench ethnic power inequalities: either groups in power strengthen existing ethnic power differentials as a response to war in a *reinforcing effect*, or a previous hierarchical ordering is replaced by a new, reversed hierarchical ordering in a *pendulum effect*. We also consider the overlap of gender and ethnic inequalities and the potential for gender equality gains to be reached along with changes in ethnic (in-)equality.

We focus on differential access to civil liberties as one particular manifestation of ethnic and gender hierarchies. Using fixed-effects models with data from 1900 to 2015, we find that interstate war increases ethnic civil-liberty equality, while intrastate war increases gender civil-liberty equality. Outcomes in which the government loses are especially ripe for changes in the social orders. We also find that when gender civil-liberty equality has increased, ethnic civil-liberty equality also increases following war. To the extent that these hierarchies overlap, reductions in one during war enhance reductions in the other. Finally, an analysis of excluded ethnic groups finds that governmental wars, not territorial wars, tend to increase excluded groups' access to power.

Social Hierarchies in the Shadow of War

We define domestic social hierarchy as the presence of a legitimated power differential held by a group (or groups) over others.[2] There are many possible dimensions of social hierarchy, including (but not limited to) gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, or the intersection of two or more identities. We focus on two: gender and ethnicity, discussed in turn below.

Although social hierarchy manifests in many ways, we focus on formalized power inequalities, specifically groups' differential access to *de jure* civil liberties. Domestic configurations of social power often become codified into

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[1] Gender hierarchy, here, pertains to a male-dominant power imbalance maintained through gendered norms and differential values placed on particular dominant masculinities and subordinate femininities. We explore below how the reduction of gender to binary categorization is one means by which gender power imbalances are recreated (Sjoberg 2014; Hagen 2016; Loken, Lake, and Cronin-Furman 2018).

[2] For a discussion of gender hierarchy at the systemic level, see Sjoberg (2012).

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law—e.g., specifying social groups' access to civil liberties—as one of the bases by which differential social power is expressed and experienced. That is, some groups have greater access to civil liberties *because* they had greater social power at the time the formal rules were legislated. Those groups are able to subdue challenges to their dominance *through* denying other groups various civil liberties, including political representation, freedom of assembly, and access to economic resources. In these ways, social power is mutually constitutive with political power. Formal laws related to differential access to civil liberties both reflect and perpetuate social hierarchies.

A Key Difference Across Hierarchies: Mobilization

To build our argument for how war affects gender and ethnic hierarchies, we start with the stylized fact that wars are rarely, if ever, explicitly and exclusively fought along gender lines, i.e., where subordinate gender groups violently mobilize against a dominant gender group(s). In contrast, wars fought along ethnic lines abound.

Although armed conflict is gendered, non-dominant gender groups (e.g., women and men that do not have characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinities, and individuals with gender identities that do not conform to cisgender norms or gender binaries) rarely take up arms against the group in power (e.g., men with characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinities) while examples abound of excluded ethnic groups in armed rebellion. This is not to say that non-dominant gender groups rarely mobilize in peaceful or militant protest against a given gender hierarchy. Indeed, women's protest movements have catalyzed social upheaval and changes in gender power equality worldwide (Mageza-Barthel 2015; Tripp 2015; Marks and Chenoweth 2019).[3] Moreover, women and other non-dominant gender groups have mobilized along cross-cutting identity groupings such as religion and class (Crenshaw 1991; Yuval-Davis 2011), for the sake of peace (Berry 2018), or to engage in contentious politics (Murdie and Peksen 2015). Women have also participated in armed conflict in a variety of roles (Goldstein 2001; Thomas and Bond 2015; Sjoberg 2016; Karim and Beardsley 2017). When non-dominant gender groups have challenged gendered power imbalances or participated as armed actors, however, they have tended to do so without mobilizing as an armed group taking up arms against forces preserving the gendered status quo.[4]

We note two challenges for non-dominant gender groups to mobilize to form cohesive armed rebel groups. First, the collective action problem is stark: within any given country, the population that does not identify as male and that does not have characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinities, is large and heterogeneous, including ethnic, age, class, and even gender cleavages. Existing work has shown that women are not unified when considering most political objectives (Reingold 2003). Second, societies dominated by men and various masculinities have been in place for so long and been so successful at maintaining gender hierarchy that non-dominant gender groups have been socialized to ignore violence as a means to pursue equality (Goldstein 2001).

These challenges to gender-based violent collective action underscore key means by which gender hierarchies perpetuate: through the conflation of gender and sex and through the reduction of both to binary categories. Conceptually, gender is different from sex. Sex is biological, assigned at birth, and diverse, including male (XY chromosomes), female (XX chromosomes) and intersex. Gender pertains to, as Sjoberg states, "social characteristics that are associated with perceived membership in biological sex classes" (Sjoberg 2014, 13). This means that gender (and gender identity) is more than a binary of masculine/feminine characteristics (or male/female identities). Rather there are many genders—including multiple masculinities and femininities—and types of gender identity. In practice, however, it is a norm in most societies to reduce gender and gender identity to binary categorizations, which itself perpetuates the gender power imbalances at the root of the norm (Barrett 1996; Sivakumaran 2007; Wilcox 2009; Cockburn 2010; Kronsell 2012; Sjoberg, 2012, Tripp, Ferree, and Ewig 2013; 2014). Indeed, key challenges related to collective action along gender lines, in partial contrast to collective action along ethnic lines, stem from the perpetuation of the notion that there is one alternative group (female) to the dominant group (male) even though such a grouping belies tremendous within-group diversity.

From the stylized fact that gender rebellions are rare while ethnic rebellions are common, we argue that warfare has different implications for changes in gender equality than changes in ethnic equality. Subordinate gender groups are perceived by those in—and out of—power to pose little risk of becoming a cohesive fighting force that would threaten the dominant group's physical security, whereas many subordinate ethnic groups do carry that risk. Although the potential for non-dominant gender groups to disrupt existing social hierarchies can concern the dominant group, the level of existential threat to the dominant group is lower without the potential for violent rebellion. When ethnic hierarchies are disrupted, former dominant-group members are often killed, exiled, or persecuted. We are unaware of dominant men facing similar potential consequences amidst upheaval to gender hierarchies.

The Implications of War: Gender Hierarchies

How might these mobilization differences affect the gendered outcomes of war? We build on the existing work of Tripp (2015) and Webster, Chen, and Beardsley (2019) to argue that war can contribute to a more equal gender power balance through social and political transformations. During war, as combatants fight and casualties mount, non-dominant gender groups have the opportunity to participate in roles that had previously been out of reach, including service in the security sector and as rebel combatants (see, e.g., Meintjes, Turshen, and Pillay 2001; Wood 2008; Hughes 2009; Stiehm and Sjoberg 2010; Mageza-Barthel 2015; Wood and Thomas 2017; Berry 2018; Braithwaite and Ruiz 2018; Thomas and Wood 2018).[5] For example, in El Salvador, the FMLN not only explicitly promised to protect women from sexual violence but also deliberately recruited them as rebels, providing key

[3] For a number of essays on militant feminism, see Colvin and Karcher (2018).

[4] This is not to say that war is not gendered, as men and others who benefit from a masculine-dominant order may use war-making as a means to maintain their hegemony (Barrett 1996; Hudson and Den Boer 2002; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Cockburn 2010; Bjarnegård and Melander 2011). Relatedly, militarization is often tied to the entrenchment of patriarchal norms and other forms of gender hierarchy (Stiehm 1982; Elshtain 1987; Pateman 1988; Enloe 1989, 1993, 2016; Barrett 1996; Goldstein 2001; Higate 2003; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Wilcox 2009; Moran 2010; Kronsell 2012; MacKenzie and Foster 2017). The gendered nature of conflict actualizes itself in many ways (Goldstein 2001).

[5] See Evans (2014) for additional discussion about how times of crisis increase the desirability for women to be more full societal participants.

opportunities for leadership and helping to change gender norms (Viterna 2013; Wood, 2010, 2019). Women's roles in anti-war movements might enable them to move into influential political and social roles (Cockburn 2010; Tripp 2015; Wood, 2008, 2015; Kreft 2019). Moreover, the peacemaking and peacebuilding processes can enable international actors to help domestic actors implement reforms addressing inequalities in the rights, representation and security of non-dominant gender groups (Bush 2011; Anderson and Swiss 2014; Anderson 2015; Huber and Karim 2018).

Whether war leads to openings for gendered reforms depends on the type of war (inter- or intrastate), whether or not a regime change occurs, and how deeply (if at all) social roles change during war (Webster, Chen, and Beardsley 2019). Many wars do not lead to openings for gender equality. Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) during war also has potentially countervailing implications for post-war gender hierarchies.[6] Victims of SGBV face many significant challenges during and after the war: access to physical and psychological care, PTSD, ostracism and social isolation, and even the erasure or denial of their trauma (Sivakumaran 2007; Wood 2010; Cohen, Green, and Wood 2013; Dolan 2017; Theidon 2017).[7] Even if wars tend to, on average, lead to gains in gender equality, it is thus important to not create an illusion that war is expected to produce net gains for non-dominant gender groups.

Additionally, an important limitation to lasting reform exists because non-dominant gender groups are not perceived as existential security threats to the dominant group. While the lower chance of violent mobilization makes civil liberties gains less threatening, it also makes backsliding more likely. For example, since non-dominant gender groups have historically been unable to form cohesive armed groups explicitly challenging gender power imbalances, they struggle to hold policymakers accountable for following through on initial efforts. This means that gains in gender equality are likely to be limited to the short term. From Rwanda to Bosnia to Bangladesh to Peru, it has been all too common for women's gains to be temporary (Pankhurst, 2003, 2012; Berry, 2015, 2017, 2018). Political leaders can often pay lip service to advocating for greater rights and inclusion of non-dominant gender groups but then fail to implement because the groups struggle to threaten accountability.

The Implications of War: Ethnic Hierarchies

Turning to war's relationship with ethnic power imbalances, our first expectation is that intrastate war is unlikely to reduce ethnic hierarchy.[8] Intrastate conflicts are unlikely to mitigate domestic ethnic hierarchies in the same ways that war might mitigate gender hierarchies for several possible reasons related to the heightened potential for excluded ethnic groups to mobilize as armed groups.

One possibility is for war to produce a *reinforcing effect*, where the dominant ethnic group grows because of war. If the group(s) in power prevails or otherwise becomes locked in a stalemate, it is likely to refuse to implement ethnic-power reforms or actually further exclude a group that mobilized in opposition. Status quo powers could hesitate to make concessions and reward treasonous activity. Moreover, war has the potential to exacerbate insecurity and fear. Existing work has considered why negotiations are so difficult in ethnic conflicts due to mistrust among group members that another group will use any power and coercive resources against them (Posen 1993; Lake and Rothchild 1996; Fearon 1998; Snyder and Jervis 1999). Constructivist scholars have also emphasized how group identity can preclude cooperation (Stein 2001; Kaufman 2006) and how the salience of ethnic identity and political violence are mutually constitutive (Kaufmann 1996; Wimmer 2002; Brubaker 2004). The outbreak of war along ethnic lines reifies the importance of ethnic identity and reinforces the sense by the status quo powers that there is a real security risk for granting excluded groups greater access to the state's coercive capacities.

In addition to issues of mistrust, civil war can increase ethnic power disparities. Population displacements during civil war can be severe for vulnerable, excluded groups and exacerbate economic inequalities (Bisogno and Chong 2002). Fragmentation and factionalism during intrastate wars can prevent group consensus on key power-sharing issues and can produce internal competition and infighting (Fjelde and Nilsson 2012; Vogt 2016). Additionally, SGBV – especially when targeted at males of a marginalized ethnic group—can be used in war to emasculate an ethnic group, reinforcing their status as "less then" and "weaker" (Sivakumaran 2007).

Even if the rebellion succeeds, the new dominant group might replace the existing ethnic hierarchy with a new one, producing a *pendulum effect*. New governments often punitively repress previous regime supporters to consolidate power. Indeed, the fear of the tables being turned when a rival group gets power relates to the reinforcing effect above in which status quo powers fear giving up power over the coercive apparatus (Petersen 2002; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013). The expectation is that a change in which group(s) has power will lead to repression in the other direction rather than adoption of power equality.

The reinforcing and pendulum effects are enhanced by incentives for actors in power to maintain distinct reputations as uncompromising ethnic warriors. Existing work has considered the importance of elites in fomenting ethnic grievances as a means to galvanize a base of support (Kuran 1998; de Figueiredo Jr. and Weingast 1999; Stein 2001). Elites that ultimately compromise with a rival group that they had made out to pose an existential threat would be at risk for abandoning the very cause that elevated them to their leadership positions (Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013). Winning groups might be especially reluctant to compromise on their projection of dominance after engaging in SGBV or other actions intended to humiliate the losing ethnic group.

Turning to interstate wars, we expect that, in contrast, interstate wars generally open up the potential for lasting reforms for greater ethnic equality. This is especially true for wars against a state adversary not closely tied to the major ethnic divisions in a state.[9] Two mechanisms could contribute to the reforms. First, when ethnicity is not

[6] The use of SGBV in this instance is meant to acknowledge that individuals that fall throughout the gender spectrum can and do perpetrate this form of violence (Sjoberg 2016). Additionally, regardless of who perpetrates these actions, they can have implications for gender hierarchy, as they are gendered acts in an of themselves.

[7] For an excellent discussion of the additional challenges imposed by silence on victims of SGBV, see Theidon (2017). For discussion of the potential for SGBV to catalyze women's mobilization across class, gender, and/or religious lines, as was the case in Liberia in 2003, see Kreft (2019) and Agerberg and Kreft (2020).

[8] We are interested in intrastate conflict broadly—rather than purely ethnic conflicts—because even civil conflicts fought over other issues or cleavages have the potential to activate ethnic identities. For example, the Guatemalan civil war was primarily fought over economic inequality and land rights, but indigenous identities became increasingly salient during the conflict. Some of our analyses below do make an effort to distinguish between ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars.

[9] We would thus not expect reforms to become more likely in interstate wars that do overlap with the ethnic divisions in a state, such as the Russia-Georgia war.

related to the sides taken in a war, then war can disrupt social and political institutions while reforms pose less of a threat to the dominant group's security. Economic or military needs might drive the government to offer excluded group members previously unavailable opportunities (e.g., the chance to serve in the military). Second, the "rally 'round the flag" effect could explain how interstate conflict increases the salience of being a citizen of a state fighting a common enemy, which attenuates the salience of existing ethnic cleavages (Sambanis, Skaperdas, and Wohlforth 2015). The national identity's salience could overshadow the group identity's salience.

Lastly, as with gender hierarchies, we anticipate that ethnic-group mobilization potential also affects the durability of any post-conflict equality gains, though we expect the relationship here to be more mixed. On the one hand, we expect ethnic groups to be more able to hold other groups accountable for any promised reforms. If a status quo power fails to follow through on its promises, then there is a greater risk that the affected groups will pursue their outside option and use violence to punish. If those in power anticipate that potential, they will have more incentive to implement the promised reforms. This logic is akin to the spiral equilibria described by Fearon and Laitin (1996) as one pattern of interethnic relations in which rival groups refrain from violence against one another in part because they know full well how costly violent escalation can be.

On the other hand, commitment problems abound in interethnic conflicts due to issues of mistrust and changing ethnic power balances (Lake and Rothchild 1996; Fearon 1998). Additionally, many power sharing agreements struggle with implementation (Roeder and Rothchild 2005; Mukherjee 2006). To get a deterrence effect in the vein of the spiral equilibria from Fearon and Laitin (1996), the ethnic groups in question need to be able to resolve their collective action problems and provide credible threats for mobilization. When an ethnic group cannot mobilize to punish a violation of a reform commitment, backsliding will be common. For example, the Zoot Suit Riots—in which several violent confrontations took place between US Navymen and predominantly Mexican-American youth in Los Angeles from June 3–8, 1943—demonstrate the potential for backsliding. Despite a broadening of rights through the integration of the military during WWII, Mexican-Americans in the US experienced racism and race-related violence. In the midst of interstate war, mobilization efforts are often necessary for the promotion of rights among racial and ethnic minorities. Both in the past and present, Latinx groups, which exhibit substantial heterogeneity, have not effectively mobilized as a cohesive political bloc (Calvo and Rosenstone 1989), much less a viable security threat able to exercise an outside option and hold the dominant groups accountable for promises of equal rights and access to power. Perhaps the lack of mobilization potential has reduced the urgency of whites in the US to fully support reforms addressing ethnic power disparities.

The Effects of War: Overlapping Outcomes

Norms regarding social power along gender and ethnnonationalist lines are not formed independently (Collins, 1998, 2017; Yuval-Davis 2004; Wilcox 2009). When considering the potential for war to open up space for movement toward gender equality, one possibility is that when war restructures the sources of political and social power, it allows for broader egalitarian reforms to occur. The effects of war on gender and ethnic equality might be complementary. Just as non-dominant gender groups might find space for more accommodation, so might ethnic groups that had been excluded in the preexisting order. Moreover, synergies could open up in which movements of non-dominant gender groups advocate not just for their own rights, but also for the rights of other marginalized groups, either out of solidarity or to strategically build an alliance. The reverse could also hold—ethnic minority groups might try to build a broader movement as new social and political bargains become possible. Hartzell and Hoddie (2020), for example, find that ethnic power sharing agreements contribute to broader equality in access to power and distribution of resources. Complementary gains are particularly likely when a war ends in government loss—a political crisis can spur new configurations of groups that governmental leaders depend on, potentially including both ethnic and gender non-dominant groups.

In contrast, we also posit the potential for gains in gender equality to be competitive with the gains for excluded ethnic groups. During the mobilization and deployment of armed forces, men tend to be uprooted, and non-dominant gender groups can have greater opportunities to serve in new roles (Meintjes, Turshen, and Pillay 2001; Hughes 2009; Stiehm and Sjoberg 2010; Berry, 2015, 2018; Hughes and Tripp 2015; Mageza-Barthel 2015; Tripp 2015; Wood, 2008, 2015). The uprooted men in these cases might be from less privileged ethnic groups. War could thus empower individuals from non-dominant gender groups, especially when the newly empowered individuals are from otherwise privileged ethnic groups that move into roles vacated by men from politically powerless ethnic groups. This dynamic could contribute to long term decreases in power access for already marginalized ethnic groups.

Related, existing scholarship notes that any gains in gender equality might only be realized for those of the dominant ethnic groups. Indeed, Crenshaw (1989) first coined the term "intersectionality" to draw attention to the erasure of black women from frameworks that focus only on sex or race discrimination: individuals who simultaneously belong to multiple disadvantaged groups are often disproportionately disadvantaged. In the context of our framework, this means that we must also consider the possibility that gains for ethnic-majority individuals from non-dominant gender groups come at the expense of ethnically marginalized individuals also from non-dominant gender groups. The feminizing of certain peoples across gender, class, race, ethnic, etc., lines, to the point that their subordination and oppression are taken for granted is central to this notion of intersectionality (Peterson 2010). Berry discusses one manifestation of this phenomenon—hierarchies of victimhood in Bosnia and Rwanda—in which aid and assistance is only provided in post-war contexts to the most severe victims, pitting people of certain cleavages and victimhoods against each other (Berry 2017). These dynamics can also be observed in the context of indigenous women's roles in statewide women's movements (Picq 2014) and differences in implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Global North and the Global South (Haastrup and Hagen 2019). To illustrate how this broader dynamic of gains for women in certain groups at the expense of women in marginalized communities might play out, we now turn to an illustrative case: Rigoberta Menchú and the Guatemalan civil war.

Rigoberta Menchú

The case of Rigoberta Menchú Tum, the Guatemalan activist and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, underscores three points relevant to our analysis: the greater challenges faced

by women of minority ethnic groups, differences in mobilization ability for ethnic versus gender groups, and the opportunity for institutional reform created by a governmental loss.

Born in 1959 in northeastern Guatemala, Menchú grew up in a Quiché[10] peasant family against the backdrop of Guatemala's civil war (Burgos-Debray 1985), which was fought (1960–1996) in large part due to severe land inequality and in which indigenous communities suffered the brunt of state-led violence (United Nations 1999). Menchú's activism started early and encompassed (at different times) advocacy for both women's rights and indigenous rights. As a young teenager, she became involved in social reform activities through a local arm of the Catholic Church, focusing initially on women's rights. She grew frustrated with the lack of progress—and, in particular, with the resistance that many women had to challenging traditional gender norms (Burgos-Debray 1985).

As her dissatisfaction with a lack of traction grew, and as her own family directly experienced the government's repression, her advocacy efforts shifted.[11] In 1979, Rigoberta Menchú joined the CUC (Committee of Peasant Unity) to advocate for peasant and indigenous rights. She made more progress, and, consequently, faced more backlash from the government. She fled Guatemala in 1981, going first to Mexico. There, she started her international work to bring attention to the Guatemalan government's atrocities against indigenous communities. Her autobiography (as told to anthropologist Elizabeth Burgos-Debray) was published in 1983 and attracted significant international attention, raising awareness of the plight of Guatemalan indigenous groups. Throughout the 1980s, Menchú worked as one of the members of the Guatemalan Committee for Patriotic Unity and was one of the two indigenous members of the group; according to Stiehm (2018), "the issue of diversity and multiculturalism was constantly debated." She advocated in front of the United Nations. Most notably, she helped pass a resolution on Guatemalan human rights, which placed substantial pressure on the Guatemalan government. Ultimately, she hoped to pass a Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and although she was unsuccessful, her efforts earned her the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 (Stiehm 2018).[12]

Menchú's experience highlights the challenges facing women of disadvantaged ethnic groups. First, indigenous women had a very different experience during Guatemala's civil war than did their non-native counterparts, many of whom were wealthier, lived in urban areas, and were not as frequently subjected to sexual violence as indigenous women.[13] Second, as our argument suggests, Menchú had more success organizing around an indigenous identity than around a gendered one: she was able to network with other indigenous activists outside of Guatemala and successfully lobby the United Nations, but little concrete progress was made for women's rights. This success was also partly due to the fact that the Guatemalan war was not based on an ethnic cleavage but rather an economic (peasant-landowner) divide that overlapped with indigenous identities. Third, the Guatemalan government's losses in the conflict opened up opportunities for reform and meant that it had a hard time resisting pressure from the international community to improve indigenous rights; it was unsuccessful in blocking the UN resolution.

[10] The Quiché people are one of twenty-two indigenous groups in Guatemala.

[11] Her father, brother, and mother were all tortured and killed for their mobilization against the government (Burgos-Debray 1985).

[12] Menchú's own experience as an activist was tainted by controversy, as anthropologists and literary scholars – particularly David Stoll – questioned the truthfulness of her autobiography (Stoll 2007). Most literary scholars agree that, although Menchú might not have personally witnessed all of the events that she narrated, the details were largely correct (Stoll 2007; Smith 2010). As Smith (2010) points out, this accusation fits into stereotypes of indigenous peoples as liars.

[13] Menchú's autobiography contained many accounts of indigenous women being forced to provide sexual favors for the military.

Summary of Expectations

In developing expectations for how war affects structures of social power, we have distinguished between intrastate wars and interstate wars, and among war outcomes. Interstate conflicts could open up space for excluded ethnic groups, and potentially excluded gender groups, to be invited into the fold as the state mobilizes against a common enemy. The pressure for broad openings in access to social and political power will be greatest when the government loses the war, and, relatedly, when regime change occurs. Meanwhile, for intrastate wars, when the government in power prevails, there is a high potential for a reinforcing effect in which the incumbent ethnic powers retrench and consolidate power. When the government loses an intrastate conflict, there is a potential for a pendulum effect in which a new ethnic hierarchical ordering replaces an existing one. Regarding gender power imbalances, intrastate conflicts, especially ones that result in regime change, provide a strong potential for gains in gender equality. Table 1 reviews how we expect ethnic and gender hierarchies to change (or not) after conflict, depending on the type of conflict and the outcome of the conflict. We do not have strong prior expectations about whether gains in gender equality will complement or compete with gains in ethnic equality.

Research Design

Our quantitative study analyzes changes in equal access to civil liberties along ethnic and gender lines that follow from periods of war. Our data use a country-year unit of analysis and cover all states in the international system from 1900 to 2015.

We investigate two dependent variables: changes in ethnic civil-liberty equality and changes in gender civil-liberty equality. By focusing on changes in civil-liberty restrictions, which are measured along both ethnic and gender lines, we can directly compare war's differential impacts on ethnic power imbalances and gender power imbalances. Our dependent variable for change in ethnic civil-liberty equality comes from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project and captures social group equality with respect to civil liberties (v2clsocgrp). This variable relates to the question, "Do all social groups, as distinguished by language, ethnicity, religion, race, region, or caste, enjoy the same level of civil liberties, or are some groups generally in a more favorable position?" (Coppedge et al. 2016). The social-group civil liberties variable aggregates over four components of civil liberties—access to justice, property rights, freedom of movement, and freedom from forced labor—and ranges from 0 ("members of some social groups enjoy much fewer civil liberties than the general population") to 4 ("members of all salient social groups enjoy the same level of civil liberties").

For change in gender civil-liberty equality, we use the gender civil liberties index (v2x_gencl) from the V-Dem Project (Coppedge et al. 2016). This variable also captures a range of civil liberties, each of which is designed to address how the ability to control personal decisions can

Table 1. Summary of expectations

Condition	*Expectation, gender hierarchy*	*Expectation, ethnic hierarchy*
Interstate War, Gov. Loss	Enhanced gains in (short-term) equality	Enhanced gains in equality
Intrastate War, Gov. Loss	Enhanced gains in (short-term) equality	Pendulum effect
Interstate War, Gov. Prevails	Modest gains in equality	Modest gains in equality
Intrastate War, Gov. Prevails	Modest gains in equality	Reinforcing effect

engender women's empowerment (Sundström et al. 2017). More specifically, it ranges from 0 to 1 and aggregates four sub-measures: freedom of domestic movement for women (v2cldmovew), freedom from forced labor for women (v2clslavef), property rights for women (v2clprptyw), and access to justice for women (v2clacjstw). V-Dem generates these scores by using "assessments from thousands of country experts who provided ordinal ratings for dozens of indicators" (Sundström et al. 2017).[14]

We are interested in how war might change civil liberties over time, so we use the change in civil-liberty equality from the previous to current or future years as our dependent variable.[15] Using differences in civil-liberty equality has two added benefits: it helps control for country-specific, temporally fixed factors that influence how egalitarian a country is overall, and it produces stationary dependent variables.

We recognize that these measures of the dependent variables raise a few issues.[16] For one, the focus on civil liberties captures only one manifestation of social power imbalances. The lived experiences for non-dominant gender and ethnic groups might be profoundly different from the civil-liberty protections that are formalized but not well enforced. Additionally, the gender civil-liberty equality variable treats gender as binary and thus overlooks the aspects of gender power imbalances that do not map well to women's power. We lose the ability to consider the full spectrum of gender identities and the privileging of some masculinities and femininities over others. We accept these limitations and still posit that an analysis of how war correlates with changes in these variables is instructive. Improvements in these measures are necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for fully realized gains in gender and ethnic equality. For non-dominant gender and ethnic groups to experience realized gains in social power, they must have equal standing in their access to civil liberties. Related, for gender power imbalances to be fully reduced, women must have equal access to civil liberties as men. Moreover, since state policymakers tend to reduce conceptions of gender power imbalances to equality between women and men, and our concern is in how war leads to state-level changes, our measure of changes in gender civil-liberty equality is a reasonable, though imperfect, outcome measure relevant to war's impact.

Because we are interested in how wars within and between countries can influence domestic hierarchies, we have two main independent variables: a dummy variable for interstate war and a dummy variable for intrastate war.[17] Both come from the Correlates of War (Version 4.1) data (Sarkees and Wayman 2010) and are supplemented by UCDP's Armed Conflict data from 2008 to 2015 (Pettersson and Wallensteen 2015).

Since a war's outcome, as we argue above, crucially shapes how much of the political order is likely to be reconsidered, we also include dummy variables for whether the government in power has won, lost, or faced a less clear outcome in a given year. Again, the data for most of the time period comes from the Correlates of War (Version 4.1) data (Sarkees and Wayman 2010), with the data from 2008 to 2015 coming from the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset (Version 2–2015) (Kreutz 2010).[18] In models with these outcome variables, we also include dummy variables for whether a war has just started (the current year is experiencing war but the previous one did not) and for whether a war is ongoing (both the current and previous years experienced war) to be able to compare the different outcomes at termination to different baselines (*no war, new war, and ongoing war*).

We include several control variables. We control for the lag and change of the electoral democracy index using the *Polyarchy scores* (v2x_polyarchy) from the V-Dem project because more democratic countries might be less conflict-prone, more equal, and generally responsive (Vogt 2016; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Wucherpfennig 2018).[19] Likewise, because economic development (or lack thereof) can influence both conflict and levels of equality, we control for the lag and change in economic growth using a variable for logged energy consumption, from the National Materials Capabilities Data in the COW project (Singer 1988). We also control for the *calendar year*, in order to account for overall trends towards equality, particularly for women's empowerment.

With dependent variables measured in changes, we use linear regression models with fixed effects at the country level. The use of fixed effects controls for all time invariant factors that shape the extent to which some countries have different baseline trajectories in the changes of civil liberties available to women and ethnic minorities. We also generate standard errors that are robust to clustering at the country level, to account for additional sources of within-country autocorrelation.

Results and Discussion

The Effects of War

To facilitate the presentation of our results, here we present the marginal effects for our key variables. Tables and

[14] Sundström et al. (2017) provides an excellent discussion of the advantages of this variable over many existing indicators of women's empowerment.

[15] For example, if we are looking at Syria in 2000, we would use the change from 1999 to 2000. A model that uses the same time frame but looks at war's future effects in 10 years would take the difference from 1999 to 2010.

[16] As a scope condition, our findings might not apply to other manifestations of gender and ethnic power imbalances.

[17] An alternative measure might avoid treating war as a dichotomy and thus account for how there are tremendous differences in the levels of violence experienced within the war category, as well as within the non-war category. A full theoretical and empirical treatment of how violence severity—and differences in whether the severity is experienced on the battle field, amongst non-combatants, or both—shapes both gender and ethnic hierarchies is beyond the scope of this paper.

[18] We considered the potential to explicitly model compromise settlements as having distinct relationships with changes in social hierarchies, but there are too few cases to study. From the Correlates of War data we draw, there are only six cases of compromise outcomes out of 70 intrastate wars, and there are only four cases out of 217 in the interstate wars.

[19] We also use *Polity scores* (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) as robustness checks.

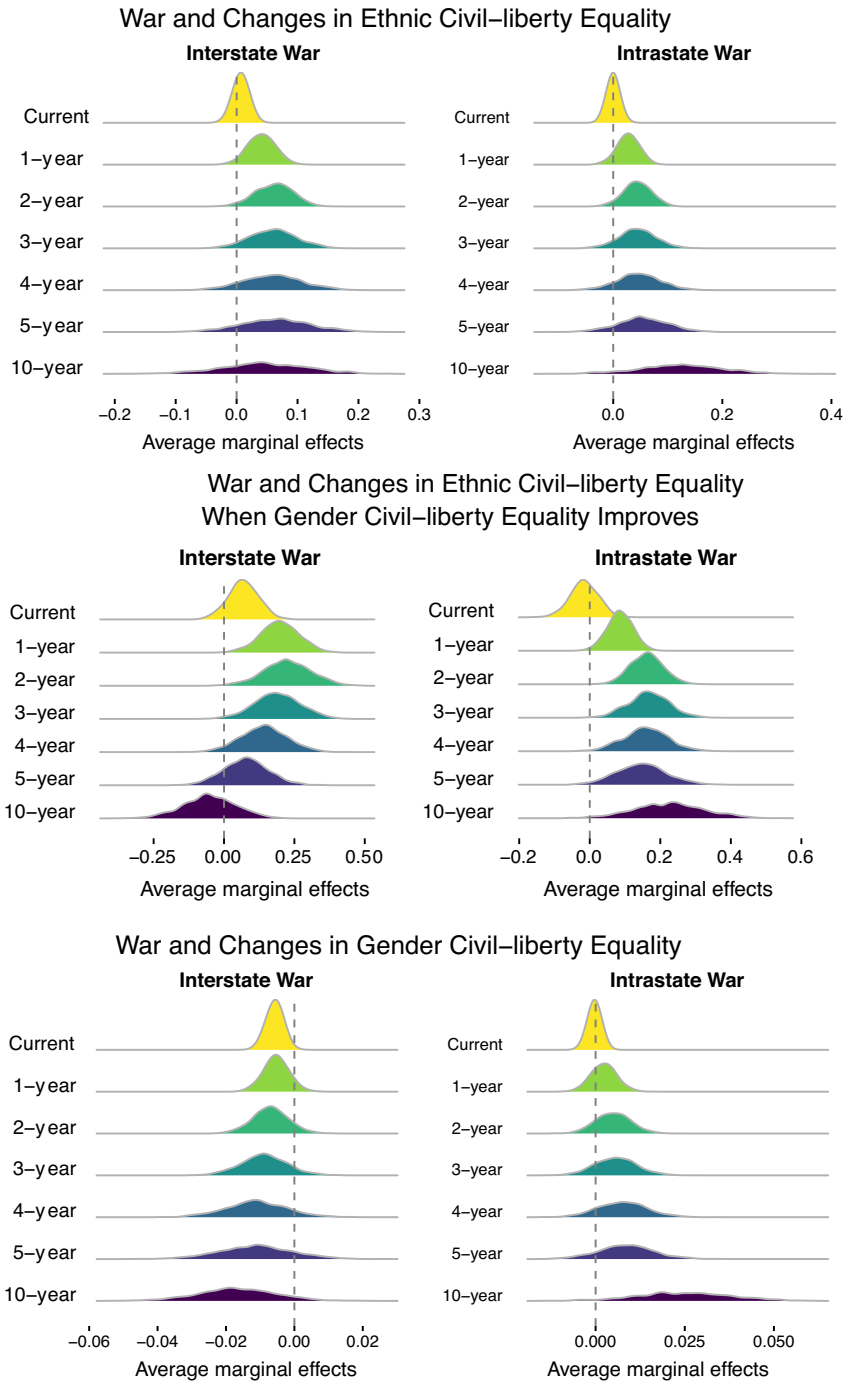

Figure 1. *Note:* Marginal effects are computed via 1,000 simulations. Rescaled coefficients for all variables are displayed in figure A1 in the appendix.

figures with all of the models' estimated coefficients are in the appendix. Following Hanmer and Ozan Kalkan (2013) and Webster, Chen, and Beardsley (2019), we take the posterior distribution of the model parameters and run 1,000 simulations via an observed-value approach to obtain the marginal effects. That is, for each simulation, we only vary the value of the variable of interest (e.g., our war variable) from its minimum (e.g., 0) to its maximum (e.g., 1) while holding all other covariates at their observed values in the sample data. We then take the average of the estimated marginal effects over all cases in the sample. This procedure is repeated 1,000 times, which results in a distribution of the estimated average effect in the population over these 1,000 simulations. Therefore, a positive value in the distribution, for example, suggests that war is positively associated with the increase in civil liberties. In doing so, we are better able to represent the uncertainty of the effect of war resulting from model mis-specification and estimates (Hanmer and Ozan Kalkan 2013).

Figure 1 shows how war correlates with forward changes in the civil liberties of all social groups (top panel) and gender civil-liberty equality (bottom panel). To investigate the potential for a conditional effect based on overlapping competition or complementarity, it also considers war's

impact on forward changes in ethnic civil-liberty equality when gender civil-liberty equality has increased (middle panel).

Starting with the top panel of figure 1, we find that most values of the average marginal effects are distributed on the right side of the $x = 0$ vertical line, suggesting interstate war tends to be associated with improvements in civil liberties for all ethnic groups in the short and medium terms. The average marginal effects for intrastate conflict are smaller and estimated with more uncertainty. The results are consistent with the expectations that political bargains over ethnic-group political rights are more likely in the wake of interstate war.

Turning to the middle panel, which considers the potential for the effect of war on ethnic civil-liberty equality to be conditioned by whether the gender civil-liberty equality improved, we observe that both interstate and intrastate war tend to be followed by gains in ethnic-group equality when there have been gains in gender equality. When considering the overlap of social power inequalities for non-dominant gender and ethnic groups, it appears that there is a *complementary* relationship.

We do not, however, see much evidence for the expectation that interstate conflict is followed by gains in gender civil-liberty equality. We see more evidence that intrastate conflict does, especially in the medium to long run. The finding from the existing work that war leads to medium-term *de facto* improvements in women's empowerment that may not endure resonates with our findings here that the impact of war on women's *de jure* improvements in empowerment is limited.[20] The relationship between war and changes in the equitable access to civil liberties across both gender and ethnic lines is more fully explored when we consider the war outcomes.

War Outcomes and Changes in Civil Liberties

In models that take into account different war outcomes' effects on civil liberties (presented in figures A2–A5 in the appendix), we observe that periods in which a war ends in government loss are most strongly related to improvements in civil liberties for both excluded ethnic groups and non-dominant gender groups. The other outcome types have more ambiguous relationships with changes in ethnic and gender civil liberties. "Draws"—which include stalemates, compromises, and turns toward ongoing but less violent conflict—might even have an effect in which restrictions on the civil liberties of some ethnic groups are retrenched.

The findings comport well with the expectation that major social change can only come about when the existing power structures face an existential threat, or indeed are replaced. When governments lose a war, regime change often co-occurs or at least becomes more likely, whether through regular or irregular means. If a regime does survive a loss, it might consider major reforms to establish new sources of political support. New political and social bargains thus become possible as new regimes and new constitutions take root. For example, the Qing dynasty of China started implementing a range of political, economic, and military reforms immediately following its defeat in the invasion by the "Eight-Nation Alliance" in 1900. This period of the so-called New Policies Reform (1901–1912) rapidly transformed Confucian China into a modern state (Esherick 2012), even sweeping out gendered social practices such as women's footbinding that had lasted for more than one thousand years (Mackie 1996). Notably, the direction and magnitudes of the marginal effects related to the impact of government losses are consistent for all periods. The changes in ethnic and gender empowerment following governmental loss do not appear to attenuate. The bargains struck in the wake of government losses appear to establish enduring reforms in the structuring of civil liberties.

To further assess our expectations in table 1 surrounding war outcomes, figure 2 separates intrastate and interstate wars in considering the relationships between the government loss outcomes and changes in civil liberties for excluded ethnic groups and women. We observe that both interstate losses and intrastate losses lead to positive gains in gender civil-liberty equality—with intrastate losses having an even stronger association than interstate losses. For changes in ethnic civil-liberty equality, interstate losses have a positive and significant association, but not intrastate losses.

One implication from these findings is consistent with our theoretical expectation that trust issues in the wake of civil war are starker for ethnic reforms than gender reforms. Intrastate conflicts affect the political and social power of non-dominant gender groups and ethnic minorities differently. When governments lose an intrastate conflict, the victors do not necessarily rush to implement egalitarian ethnic reforms but rather assert the power of a new group. The new group might not trust the willingness of the former group(s) in power to abide by legitimate participation in the political process, and may also face pressures from within to take punitive action against groups associated with repression. We see some evidence of a *pendulum effect* in which war losses do not translate to more rights for all people groups.

The observed relationship between war losses and changes in civil liberties raises the potential for regime change to be an intermediate variable between war and openings for reforms toward ethnic equality. Indeed, in analyses not shown, wars increase the likelihood of irregular regime change, as defined by the Archigos data (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009). Figure 3 takes the model from the top panel of figure 1 and adds a dummy variable for whether irregular regime change has occurred. The results indicate that the occurrences of both interstate and intrastate war have similar relationships with changes in ethnic civil-liberty equality even with the potential intermediate variable included. But it is also striking that irregular regime change is associated with positive increases in greater civil liberties for all ethnic groups. Regime change appears to have an independent ability to open up the possibility of ethnic equality, as new constitutions are adopted and old orders are replaced. War need not be the vehicle by which such regime change occurs on the path to reform.

As a robustness check, we also consider the potential for variation in SGBV to be either a confounding variable or a conditioning variable (Agerberg and Kreft 2020). We use the December 2019 version of the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict dataset (Cohen and Nordås 2014) and add a binary measure of sexual violence during war into our country-year data for the period from 1989 to 2015. Using the same models we had for figure 1, we do not find that the marginal effect of war—both in terms of the direction and the magnitude—in the presence of sexual violence is different from the marginal effect of war in the absence of sexual violence, as shown in figure A8 in the

[20] See Webster, Chen, and Beardsley (2019) for a fuller discussion about differences in how interstate and intrastate conflict affect women's empowerment. Our results here that intrastate conflict has a stronger positive relationship with changes in gender civil liberties is consistent with the existing work, and resonates with the findings below that changes in gender power imbalances are starker when there is a full shakeup of the social order, as during intrastate conflict and government losses.

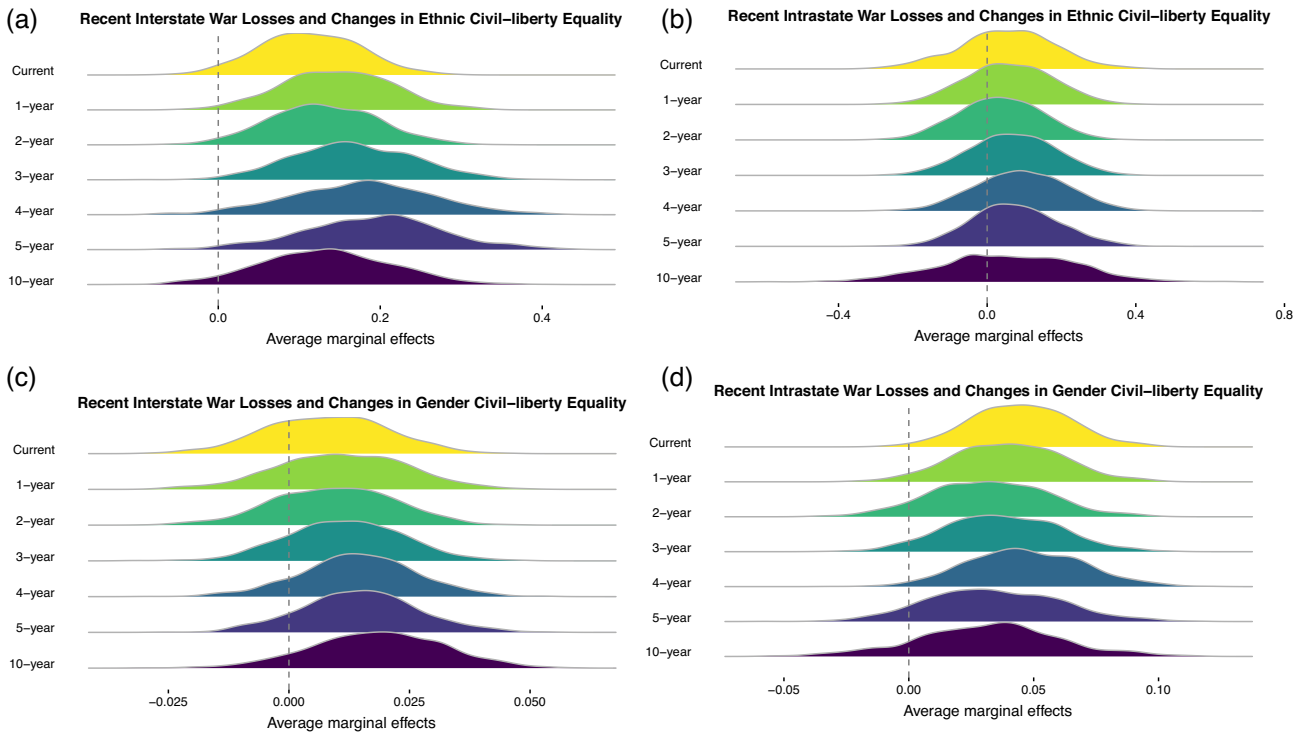

Figure 2. *Note:* Rescaled coefficients for all variables are displayed in figure A9 in the appendix. Marginal effects are computed via 1,000 simulations.

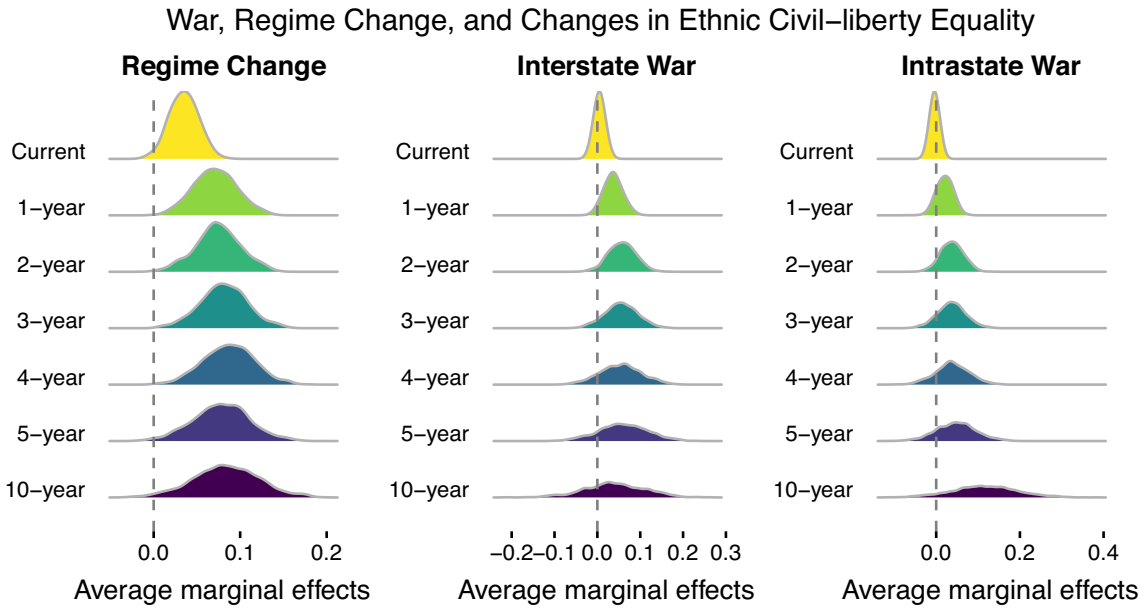

Figure 3. *Note:* Rescaled coefficients for all variables are displayed in figure A6 in the appendix. Marginal effects are computed via 1,000 simulations.

appendix. This analysis of the role of SGBV—though limited to the post-Cold War period—further lends credence to our main argument regarding the impact of war on civil liberties.

Extension: Group-Level Analyses

The analyses thus far have used a country-year unit of analysis with aggregate measures of changes in ethnic civil-liberty equality. Moreover, we have lumped all intrastate wars together and have not distinguished between conflicts over government and conflicts over territory, nor have we distinguished between the occurrence of *any* conflict within a country and a group-specific conflict. We now use a more disaggregated approach to consider changes in the political power held by discrete ethnic groups as periods of war come and go.

We use the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) Data (2018 Version) to define ethnic groups worldwide and to measure their access to political power (Vogt et al. 2015). The data

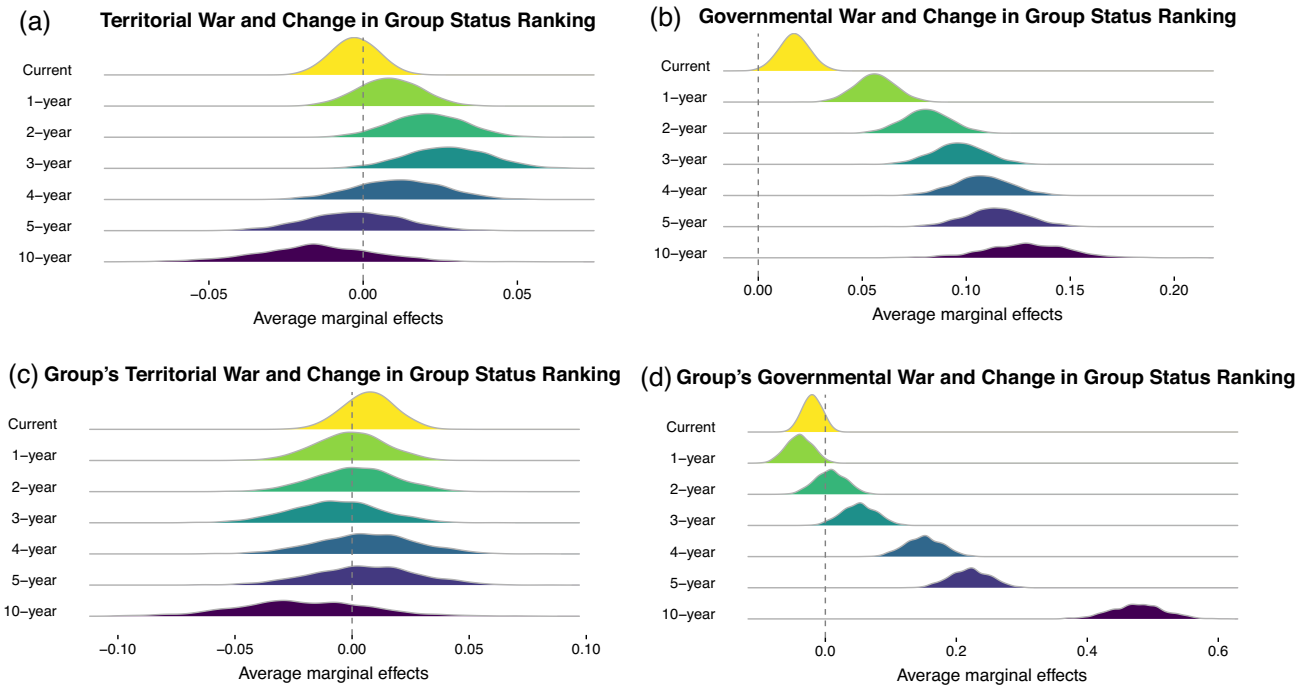

Figure 4. *Note:* Rescaled Coefficients for all variables are summarized in table A1 in the appendix. Marginal effects are computed via 1,000 simulations.

cover the period from 1946 to 2017.[21] The outcome of interest measures whether groups that were excluded from political power in the previous year experience a change in their status ranking as an excluded group in the year under observation. The EPR dataset measures groups' access to state power at the national level with an ordinal scale of 1–7, which comprises the categories of monopoly ("7"), dominance ("6"), senior partner ("5"), junior partner ("4"), self-exclusion ("3"), powerless ("2"), and discrimination ("1").

To assess the differential impacts that territorial and government wars have on changes in ethnic groups' access to power, we use dummy variables for whether a war over territory or a war over government occurred within a country in a given year, from the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset (Version 2-2015) (Kreutz 2010). These variables are not mutually exclusive because some conflicts exhibit characteristics of both territorial and governmental wars. To distinguish between groups that participated in a war and groups that merely reside in a country that experienced war, we use dummy variables from the ACD2EPR Dataset (2018 version) for whether a group was directly involved as a warring party in a given year. Consequently, we measure civil wars at the country level with the UCDP data, while we measure specific groups involved in ethnic wars at the group level with the ACD2EPR Data.[22] We also control for whether the country is democratic (i.e., polity score greater than or equal to six) and the population size of the country—two variables likely to shape the potential for exclusion and the propensity for war—as well as the calendar year. Finally, we control for whether the country holds presidential/executive and/or legislative/parliamentary elections in a given year. By controlling for national elections, we are assessing the relationship between war and changes in group power that is separate from the electoral process. Data on elections are from the National Election Across Democracy and Autocracy Dataset (NELDA) (Hyde and Marinov 2012).

Because of the grouped nature of the data—ethnic groups within countries—we use multilevel varying-intercept models with standard errors clustered at the country level (Gelman and Hill 2007). Since all the observations are of groups that had been excluded in the previous period and the dependent variable is measured as the change in an ordinal scale that measures a group's status ranking, a positive coefficient means that there is a movement away from a lower ranking to a higher ranking in terms of power access at the national level. Again, we use 1,000 simulations based on the posterior distributions of model parameters to compute marginal effects for the dummy variables of each war type, which are depicted in figure 4.

The results in figure 4 indicate that governmental wars but not territorial conflicts are associated with reductions in the exclusion of a group. Major challenges to the central government have the greatest potential to restructure nation-wide social and political power orders, leading to real changes in political power for ethnic out-groups. At the same time, governmental conflicts are often less clearly about ethnicity per se, such that interethnic bargaining potentially faces less formidable challenges than in territorial conflicts. Moreover, the results in panel (d) further suggest that although a group's status ranking can downgrade immediately amidst a governmental war in which the group itself is involved as a warring party, its status ranking can be significantly improved in the medium and long term. These findings contrast with Cederman, Gleditsch, and Wucherpfennig (2018), who do not find strong evidence at the country-year level that political instability—measured as post-conflict periods and ongoing civil war—increases the probability of inclusive shifts. The findings, however,

[21] Due to other data constraints, our final analysis covers 1946–2012. Removing variables to extend the analysis to 2017 produces results consistent with those presented. Data originate from the GROW^{UP} platform (Girardin et al. 2015).

[22] By definition, UCDP intrastate conflicts are not necessarily ethnic wars unless rebel organizations express their political aims (at least partly) in the name of an ethnic group and a significant number of members of the group participated in civil conflicts (Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch 2011).

resonate with the findings of Koos (2016), who finds that armed rebellion does increase the potential for marginalized ethnic groups to overcome deprivation.[23]

The results thus comport well with the expectation that wars with a salient ethnic dimension, which are predominantly territorial conflicts, are at greatest risk for stoking mistrust and fear along ethnic lines. When the fighting falls strongly along ethnic lines, status quo ethnic powers are reluctant to concede political power to excluded groups. A reinforcing effect works to prevent meaningful reforms to the ethnic power balance as the status quo powers dig in their heels.[24]

As a robustness check, we again use fixed-effects OLS regression with standard errors clustered at the country level. The results are shown in figure A7 in the appendix and are largely consistent with figure 4.

Conclusion

The empirical findings confirm that war has different effects on social hierarchies depending on the type of hierarchy, type of war, and the type of outcome of war. Consistent with the understanding of war as a source of societal shakeup that allows for a renegotiation of social norms and institutions, we see that reforms related to gender and ethnic inequality appear to be mutually complementary and supportive.

Although this study has found that war can open up the potential for excluded ethnic groups to gain greater access to civil liberties, it does not follow that war is an efficient vehicle in the pursuit of equality. One important implication of this study is that regime change, even in the absence of war, can similarly enhance the rights of excluded ethnic groups. General efforts to promote the causes of democracy and to support non-violent protests against repressive regimes can and do similarly catalyze improvements in ethnic inequality (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). This study does not change the reality that war is hell to all of those affected, especially to marginalized gender and ethnic groups, even if they experience on-average civil liberties gains in the wake of war.

Another important implication follows from the finding that improvements in a polity's ethnic inclusiveness can complement improvements in a polity's gender inclusiveness and vice versa. A growing literature stresses how important gender mainstreaming can be during peace processes (Bush 2011; Anderson and Swiss 2014; Anderson 2015; Huber and Karim 2018; Webster, Chen, and Beardsley 2019). As gender is mainstreamed during peace processes, the causes of excluded ethnic groups can also be mainstreamed, so that crucial opportunities for reform can be seized while social, political, and economic institutions are being reimagined, renegotiated, and rebuilt in the wake of war. The case of Rigoberta Menchú is also instructive in pointing to the potential for traction related to gender equality when activists have gained traction related to ethnic equality.

Further work would do well to explore the additional manifestations of changes in gender and ethnic power imbalances that are not well captured by our civil liberties measures. Importantly, this study only captures on-average changes after war, which will poorly capture the lived experiences of many individuals living through times of upheaval. Their narratives are instructive to provide a full representation of how war affects changes in social power.

Further work might also consider how warfare affects social hierarchies at the systemic level (Sjoberg 2012). Colonialism especially had a profound impact on the structuring of gender and ethnic power imbalances across the globe (Schmidt 1991; Vogt 2018), and understanding the relationship between war and the rise and decline of colonialism would add to our understanding of the social implications of war.

[23] Our findings differ from Koos (2016) in not restricting the outcome variable to be a dichotomous indicator of movement from exclusion to inclusion.

[24] The positive marginal effects for governmental conflict do not imply a type of pendulum effect because the coefficients would have to be much larger for average groups to jump all the way from excluded to dominant.

Supplementary Information

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

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