Guerrilla Shadows on Gender: The Lingering Effects of the Peruvian Internal Armed Conflict on Women's Political Aspirations

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Abstract

How does political violence affect women's electoral aspirations? This study examines the impact of Peru's Internal Armed Conflict on women's political representation using Truth and Reconciliation Commission data combined with municipal electoral records from six election cycles (1980-1995). Employing TWFE models that exploit within-district temporal variation in violence exposure, I distinguish between recent violence and cumulative violence exposure since 1980. Results reveal that violence affects women's electoral success but not candidacy rates. Recent violence increases women's chances of winning office by 8.4 percentage points, while cumulative violence reduces electoral success by 3.3 percentage points. Effects vary significantly by perpetrator: Shining Path violence increases women's electoral prospects, while state violence shows negative effects. These patterns persist decades after the conflict ended, with only Shining Path violence legacies continuing to reduce women's political advancements through 2022, while state violence shows no lingering effects.

Keywords: internal armed conflict, Peru, guerrilla, electoral behavior, female candidates

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1 Introduction

How does political violence during conflicts affect women's political participation, particularly their political aspirations? When studying the effects of wars, terrorism, genocides, or guerrilla warfare, scholars have mainly focused on three arenas: gender-based sexual violence during conflict, gender and peace processes, and gender-specific issues during post-conflict, e.g., women's participation in the decision-making structures of the transition, or reparations for atrocities committed against women during the conflict period (Bouta, Frerks, and Bannon, 2005). Less attention has been given to how an ongoing conflict impacts women's political behavior in countries that continue to hold elections despite experiencing political turmoil. Examining how women's participation is affected by conflicts is important not only because it helps us understand particular dynamics of the conflict itself, such as power structures and the impact on civilian populations, but also because it provides insights into broader issues related to gender equality and the long-term stability and peacebuilding efforts in affected regions. Moreover, the consequences of conflict on women's political advancements may persist even after the cessation of the conflict and the establishment of a functioning democratic regime.

The relationship between conflict and women's political participation reveals competing theoretical predictions. On one hand, conflict should reduce women's political engagement through both supply and demand mechanisms: violence may deter women from seeking office (Alizade et al., 2025), while voters may favor traditionally masculine leadership during crisis periods (Damann, Kim, and Tavits, 2024). Yet empirical evidence also documents opposing trends. Many post-conflict countries, such as Nicaragua and Rwanda, have more women in legislatures than the global average (Hughes and Tripp, 2015; Bakken and Buhaug, 2021). Thomas and Bond (2015) shows that organizational changes during conflicts can increase the 'demand' for women, while Yadav (2021) demonstrates how conflict might promote women's agency and empowerment. Similarly, Donno, Fox, and Kaasik (2022) find that some regimes advance women's rights to achieve international legitimacy during

political instability. Nevertheless, these gains often prove temporary, as male elites seek to restore 'normality' through the reassertion of traditional gender roles once conflicts end (Aoláin, Haynes, and Cahn, 2011). Existing research has largely examined violence as producing static effects, often overlooking how these relationships may evolve as conflicts progress and communities adapt to sustained violence exposure.

Previous scholarship has found that including women in politics after a conflict reduces the risk of its recurrence (Shair-Rosenfield and Wood, 2017), and also that the gender composition of legislatures has an impact on conflict conclusion (Best, Shair-Rosenfield, and Wood, 2019; Hughes, Krook, and Paxton, 2015). This extensive research on post-conflict outcomes contrasts with the limited attention given to women's political behavior during ongoing conflicts. The focus on transitional processes and post-conflict institutional design has left significant gaps in our understanding of how violence affects women's political participation while conflicts are actively unfolding. For instance, Colombia's internal conflict has generated substantial research on gender-sensitive provisions in the 2015 peace agreement (Berry and Lake, 2023), yet comparatively little attention has been given to how the decades of ongoing violence shaped women's political behavior and electoral participation throughout the conflict period, with the recent exception of Rivera, Tappe Ortiz, and Koos (2025). This pattern reflects broader methodological challenges of studying active conflicts.

This paper examines how the relationship between political violence and women's political aspirations evolves during ongoing conflict by analyzing temporal variation in violence effects across Peru's Internal Armed Conflict (IAC) starting in 1980. Rather than treating conflict as producing uniform effects throughout its duration, I test whether the impacts of violence on women's electoral engagement follow distinct patterns as communities experience sustained exposure and develop adaptive responses to continued violence. Specifically, I assess how recent violence exposure (acts in the 1-2 years before elections) and cumulative violence exposure (total acts since conflict onset) differentially affect both the supply of female candidates and their electoral success. Additionally, I examine whether these temporal patterns vary by perpetrator,

comparing violence by state forces versus insurgent groups to test whether different sources of violence generate distinct evolutionary patterns in their effects on women's political aspirations. Peru provides an ideal setting for this analysis because it maintained regular municipal elections every three years throughout the conflict period, creating substantial temporal and cross-sectional variation in violence exposure. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's systematic documentation of violence provides detailed and geographically precise data on political violence, enabling the identification of temporal violence effects through within-district variation over time.

Using municipal fixed effects models that exploit within-district temporal variation across elections from 1980 to 1995[1], I find that recent and cumulative violence have distinct effects on both candidate supply and electoral outcomes, with patterns that differ by perpetrator type. Recent violence increases the probability that women are elected when they run for office, while cumulative violence reduces this probability. The effects are driven primarily by *Sendero Luminoso* (SL) violence rather than state violence: recent SL attacks increase both women's candidacies and electoral success, while cumulative SL violence reduces both. These patterns indicate that acute violence may create temporary opportunities for women's political aspirations, while prolonged exposure to violence erodes these gains. Additionally, I also test whether conflict exposure has lingering effects, examining post-2002 electoral patterns. I find that the effects of violence transform over time. While recent SL violence created mobilization opportunities during the active conflict period, only the negative effects persist in the post-conflict era, with SL violence reducing women's electoral success and access to competitive positions through 2022 despite gender quota implementation. State violence, by contrast, shows no such persistent effects, demonstrating perpetrator-specific legacies of violence.

I contribute to the literature on conflict and gendered political outcomes in two ways. First, I demonstrate that the timing of violence exposure matters: recent

[1]Although the conflict did not officially end until 2000, I use 1995 as the cut-off point as it is the election before the gender quota implementation in 1997.

violence and cumulative violence exposure affect women's political aspirations differently, revealing that a district's violence history shapes how communities respond to new violence. This temporal approach moves beyond existing work that treats conflict as producing static effects, including García-Ponce (2022) pre/post quota analysis in Peru. Second, I provide evidence on how ongoing conflict influences women's political behavior in electoral democracies, moving beyond the post-conflict focus that currently dominates the scholarship. These findings suggest that theories of conflict and political behavior must distinguish between immediate and historical violence exposure rather than treating all conflict exposure as equivalent.

2 Women's Political Aspirations in Violent Contexts

The literature on women and conflict has focused on economic vulnerabilities and social role transformations, with scholars documenting both the devastating economic impacts on women as vulnerable populations (Byrne, 1996) and the potential for empowerment through wartime role shifts that disrupt traditional gender hierarchies (Webster, Chen, and Beardsley, 2019). Recent research examining formal electoral participation during ongoing conflicts reveals that civilian-targeted violence can specifically deter women's political candidacies (Stratton, Wright, and Hinojosa, 2025). Understanding how conflict affects women's political participation requires examining both supply-side mechanisms that influence women's willingness to seek office—or the extent to which parties are willing to nominate women—and demand-side mechanisms that shape voters' receptiveness to female candidates.

2.1 Conflict and Women's Political Participation: Existing Approaches

The effects of conflict on how women participate in the public sphere more generally, and in political arenas more specifically, have revolved around both mobilizing and withdrawing effects. A mobilizing mechanism can occur through collective action pathways. Bellows and Miguel (2006) show that households experiencing more intense war violence are more likely to attend community meetings and join local political groups, while Blattman (2009) finds that witnessing violence increases community leadership among ex-combatants. These mobilization effects appear to operate through necessity-driven participation, where violence creates urgent community needs that draw individuals into organizational roles.

However, when moving beyond grassroots organizations to institutional politics, evidence has documented more instances of women retreating from political life. Wood (2024) finds that pre-election violence significantly reduces women's legislative representation, creating gendered distortions that deter women from seeking candidacy,

bias party elites against nominating female candidates, and encourage voters to favor male candidates perceived as stronger on security issues. Stratton, Wright, and Hinojosa (2025) extend this analysis to ongoing conflict in Afghanistan's 2010 and 2018 legislative elections, finding that provinces with higher civilian-targeted violence had significantly fewer women candidates while overall candidate numbers remained unaffected, demonstrating that ongoing violence has specifically gendered effects on political participation. The reasons for this are perhaps not just related necessarily to women seeking fewer political offices, but winning fewer seats (Hadzic and Tavits, 2021).

In addition to these mixed effects when considering grassroots or formal politics, and the supply and demand of women as political candidates, there has been a lack of attention in understanding the different effects that violence might have throughout the conflict period. The predominant methodological approach relies on cross-sectional comparisons or single time points rather than analyzing temporal variation within conflicts (Brück et al., 2016). This has limited our understanding of whether immediate versus sustained violence exposure might operate through different mechanisms, despite theoretical reasons to expect such variation based on community adaptation processes and how voter preferences might evolve with sustained conflict exposure.[2]

2.2 Supply-Side Mechanisms: Women's Candidacy During Wartime

Conflict creates both barriers and opportunities for women's political participation through multiple pathways that affect their willingness and ability to seek electoral

[2]For instance, for the Colombian case, Krakowski (2017) argues that communities adapt differently to conflict depending on the balance of power between armed groups, and communities' capacity for collective action. As Kaplan (2017) has also documented, communities may manage to achieve some civilian autonomy when exposed to sustained conflict, even up to the point of armed resistance that might help them to cope better with conflict exposure. In terms of voting behavior, Gallego (2018) showed that paramilitary violence reduces electoral competition and benefits non-traditional third parties, although the effects of violence on electoral preferences remain unclear. Research examining not conflict, but protests, has found that these manifestations of discontent enable blame attribution, thereby diminishing the electoral success of the incumbent party (Castro and Retamal, 2024).

office. The barriers to women's political entry during conflict operate through both individual and structural mechanisms. Individual factors include women's tendency toward conflict avoidance, which can reduce political interest when politics is perceived as power-focused competition (Schneider et al., 2016; Wolak, 2022). Structural barriers emerge from the disproportionately higher costs of political candidacy for women, particularly the intersection of domestic responsibilities with political demands that can deter sustained political engagement (Ashworth, Berry, and Mesquita, 2023; Lawless and Fox, 2005).

Conflict intensifies these barriers through the militarization of society and reinforcement of traditional gender roles. When states respond to internal threats by increasing militarization, this process depletes women's access to political power as societies socialize men and women into different security-oriented roles that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs about gendered capacities for maintaining security (Schroeder, 2017). Sexual violence during conflict compounds these barriers, as women face both direct victimization from combatants, government forces, and sometimes even peacekeepers (Nordås and Rustad, 2013; Ostby, 2016), and increased caregiving responsibilities for affected family members. These traumatic experiences can create lasting psychological barriers to political agency.

However, conflict also creates opportunities for women's political mobilization through multiple mechanisms. Instrumental incentives emerge when political parties and insurgent groups strategically recruit women candidates to symbolize changing the status quo and leverage feminine stereotypes regarding peacefulness, particularly as rebel groups transition into political parties (Brannon, 2023). Post-conflict reconstruction processes often involve international advocacy for gender equality and the adoption of gender quotas as manifestations of inclusive governance (Anderson and Swiss, 2014; Hughes, Krook, and Paxton, 2015), as evidenced in countries like Nepal, where the post-conflict quota system substantially increased women's representation.[3]

[3]However, as Hamal (2024) points out, the insertion of this top-down quota in Nepal has failed to achieve actual inclusion, but rather has continued reproducing persistent gender roles and hierarchies, translating patriarchal power into new forms in the public sphere.

Collective threats can also mobilize women's political participation. The threat of conflict-related sexual violence targeted at women as a group can lead to political mobilization as women demand greater representation to improve their social and political conditions (Agerberg and Kreft, 2020; Kreft, 2019). This mechanism operates through shared vulnerability that creates collective political interests among women who may otherwise lack common political goals.

Group effects represent another mobilization pathway, emerging from collective identities formed during conflict. Female ex-combatants can develop group identities during warfare that become valuable assets for political reintegration, as documented in Guatemala, where former female fighters maintained organizational cohesion that facilitated later political participation (Hauge, 2008). Beyond combatant roles, conflict transforms community engagement and makes traditional gender power relations more flexible as societies restructure. Women's wartime participation in community organizations in countries like Bosnia and Rwanda served as stepping stones to formal political participation (Berry, 2018). A greater participation in the workforce has also served as a coping mechanism during conflict (Menon and van der Meulen Rodgers, 2013). Therefore, wartime violence may have a strong impact on individuals not only through trauma and socialization, but also through broader societal and community experiences (Barceló, 2021).

While studies document post-conflict increases in women's representation, these findings primarily reflect institutional changes (quotas, reconstruction processes) and long-term norm shifts rather than individual candidacy decisions during active violence periods. Therefore, even when conflict may create long-term opportunities for women's political integration, the immediate effect on candidacy decisions operates through individual risk calculations that favor political withdrawal during periods of active violence. In that line, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Supply Side Hypothesis: Political violence reduces women's candidacies for public office.*

2.3 Demand-Side Mechanisms: Electoral Support for Women During Conflict

Electoral support for women candidates during conflict is shaped by how violence affects voter preferences and the salience of gendered candidate attributes. Violence against civilians can suppress overall voter turnout as potential voters may avoid political participation to prevent targeting (Alacevich and Zejcirovic, 2020), but conflict also transforms the criteria voters use to evaluate candidates, often disadvantaging women by reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes.

Voter evaluations of female candidates emerge from the intersection of partisan cues and societal attitudes about women's roles, with gender playing a particularly significant role during periods of conflict (Box-Steffensmeier, Boef, and Lin, 2004; Sharrow et al., 2016). During political unrest, voters tend to perceive male candidates as possessing essential qualities like strength and assertiveness, while viewing women as less capable of handling security challenges (Lawless, 2004). This creates a systematic bias where voters rely on gender stereotypes regarding traits, beliefs, and issue expertise when evaluating candidates (Sanbonmatsu, 2002).

The militarization that accompanies conflict intensifies these gendered perceptions by reinforcing beliefs about differential male and female capacities for leadership during crisis periods. When states increase militarization in response to internal threats, societies socialize men and women into different security-oriented roles that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs about gendered abilities to maintain security, with these perspectives persisting even after conflicts end (Kronsell, 2012; Schroeder, 2017).

However, conflict can also create opportunities for female candidates under specific conditions. Women from former rebel parties may benefit from representing a departure from established political norms and can leverage perceptions of trustworthiness and accountability often associated with female politicians (Brannon, 2023). The aftermath of conflict often generates demands for national unity and reconciliation, making inclusive governance that incorporates women's representation

more appealing to voters. International involvement in post-conflict reconstruction frequently includes advocacy for gender equality, which can influence both institutional changes like gender quotas and voter acceptance of women candidates (Anderson and Swiss, 2014; Hughes, Krook, and Paxton, 2015).

Nevertheless, systemic barriers in voter support persist even when women do achieve candidacy. In some electoral systems, particularly those with closed party lists, female politicians may be perceived as illegitimate tokens rather than substantive representatives, potentially reinforcing perceptions that women are included primarily to fulfill quota requirements rather than as transformative political actors (Falch, 2010). Therefore, even when post-conflict periods may generate demand for inclusive governance and norm change, these mechanisms operate differently during active conflict when immediate security concerns override longer-term governance preferences. In that line, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Demand Side Hypothesis: Political violence reduces women's chances of electoral success.*

2.4 Temporal Patterns of Conflict Effects

Understanding how conflict affects women's political participation requires examining temporal variation in violence exposure and its differential impacts on both supply and demand-side mechanisms. The timing, duration, and sequencing of violence exposure create distinct pathways through which conflict shapes political behavior, with effects that may strengthen, weaken, or qualitatively change over time.

Temporal variation in conflict effects operates through several mechanisms that specifically affect women's political participation. Immediate effects operate through direct psychological responses, including fear, threat perception, and risk assessment that influence individual candidacy decisions and voter preferences in proximate elections (De Juan and Pierskalla, 2014). These immediate responses are amplified by information cascades, where news of violence against political actors spreads rapidly through communities, creating demonstration effects that discourage political

participation even among those not directly targeted (van Baalen, 2023). Cumulative effects develop as repeated violence exposure creates different outcomes: communities may develop adaptation mechanisms and organizational learning (Kaplan, 2017) that facilitate women's political engagement, or alternatively, sustained violence may entrench deterrent effects through normalized fear and rigid gender role enforcement (Williams, Ghimire, and Snedker, 2018).

Research demonstrates that conflict effects vary significantly based on temporal proximity and exposure duration. De Juan and Pierskalla (2014) find that both early conflict violence and recent exposure significantly reduce political trust, while violence occurring in intermediate periods shows no effect, suggesting that temporal closeness and formative exposure create distinct psychological impacts. Similarly, Barceló (2021) demonstrates that wartime and postwar experiences jointly shape long-term civic engagement, with wartime exposure creating persistent effects independent of postwar reconstruction processes. This temporal persistence indicates that violence exposure during politically formative periods may create lasting changes in political behavior that extend beyond immediate deterrent effects.

The persistence versus decay of violence effects appears to depend on both the nature of exposure and community responses. Rozenas, Schutte, and Zhukov (2017) show that communities subjected to greater deportation intensity in the 1940s remain significantly less likely to vote for pro-Russian parties decades later, demonstrating how indiscriminate violence can create enduring political legacies. However, Lupu and Peisakhin (2017) find that violence effects vary across generations, with direct exposure victims showing different political behaviors than their descendants, suggesting that some conflict effects may weaken through intergenerational transmission while others persist through cultural and institutional mechanisms.

For women's political participation specifically, temporal patterns may create competing dynamics. Initial violence exposure likely creates strong deterrent effects through heightened security concerns and reinforced traditional gender roles. as previously mentioned. However, sustained conflict may eventually trigger adaptation

mechanisms as communities develop coping strategies, women gain experience in non-traditional roles due to necessity, and political organizations learn to accommodate changing social realities. The critical question becomes identifying the temporal thresholds at which deterrent effects transition to mobilization effects, and whether these thresholds differ for supply-side (candidacy) versus demand-side (voter support) mechanisms. Considering this, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Temporal Persistence Hypothesis: The effects of political violence on women's political aspirations weaken over time within districts as communities adapt to sustained conflict exposure.*

2.5 Perpetrators of Violence

As the case of the Marikana massacre in South Africa illustrates, state violence can prompt the foundation of new opposition parties and carry significant electoral costs for incumbents (De Kadt, Johnson-Kanu, and Sands, 2024). De Kadt, Johnson-Kanu, and Sands (2024) show that the mechanisms are multiple: incumbents who preside over state violence may be held electorally accountable by voters, but this depends on the existence of a credible opposition party that can channel disaffected voters. These results replicate in other settings, such as Taiwan (Chiou and Hong, 2021) and India (Sudduth and Gallop, 2023). As the case of Colombia demonstrates, in municipalities where the FARC played a more prominent role, the occurrence of killings of women activists is associated with an increase in the vote share for women candidates (Rivera, Tappe Ortiz, and Koos, 2025).

Why does the type of perpetrator matter? State violence breaks the social contract between the government and its citizens. When the state kills its own people, it creates political openings for opposition groups seeking alternatives (De Kadt, Johnson-Kanu, and Sands, 2024). Women candidates may benefit from this backlash since voters view them as less connected to violent governance. Insurgent violence works differently. Armed groups often target political participation directly, making candidacy dangerous (Rivera, Tappe Ortiz, and Koos, 2025). They operate outside electoral rules and can threaten anyone who challenges their authority. These contrasting mechanisms suggest

that the source of violence fundamentally shapes how communities respond and whether women find political opportunities or face additional barriers to participation. Therefore, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *Perpetrator Hypothesis: State violence increases women's political aspirations, while insurgent violence decreases women's political aspirations.*

3 The Internal Armed Conflict in Peru

The denomination of Internal Armed Conflict (IAC) applied to the Peruvian case began to be officially used by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación* in Spanish, hereinafter CVR) which acted from 2001 to 2003 to investigate the crimes associated with the violent internal conflict that ranged from Fernando Belaúnde presidency starting in 1980, to the end of Alberto Fujimori's term in 2000. After twelve years of military rule, known as the Military *docenio*, the 1980s began with the promise of the establishment of a new democratic regime, something that until then was relatively new for the Andean country, which had gone from one authoritarian regime to another. The guerrilla that started along with the first general elections in May 1980 took the country by surprise. A worsening of economic conditions and an escalation of conflict, both at the hands of armed groups and the state, characterized the country in the two following decades.

3.1 Guerrilla Forces in Peru

The Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso, SL) was a Marxist-Maoist group that emerged from a split in the Communist Party of Peru[4] towards the end of the 1960s. It originated at the Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga, where Abimael Guzmán, the undisputed leader of SL, taught. The first attack perpetrated by Sendero Luminoso occurred on May 17, 1980, on the eve of the first democratic election after more than a decade of military rule. A group of Senderistas burned electoral materials the day before the general elections in the district of Chusqui, a small rural town in the department of Ayacucho. This attack inaugurated what was known as the "age of terror", a two-decade violent conflict that not only involved Sendero's participation but also other extremist groups, such as the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (*Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru*, MRTA). Despite this coexistence with other groups, 54 percent of all deaths during the conflict are attributed to SL (Hillel and Vergara, 2019).

[4]Therefore, also referred to as PCP-SL – Partido Comunista del Perú, Sendero Lumonoso.

Some scholars have argued that the Shining Path limited the possibility of a left turn by "creating an emergency situation which resulted in a constitution that locked in a neoliberal economic model [...] with a correspondingly limited electoral democracy" (Cameron, 2019). Even when the pernicious effects of Sendero and the overall guerrilla violence in Peruvian democracy are indisputable and still tangible today, the quantification of these effects in terms of gender inequalities remains to be unveiled. The Shining Path boasted of being one of the few extremist groups with more gender equality within its ranks, where women occupied high positions of power. Even though this was the case to some extent[5], Sendero was never a group with aspirations in the institutional arena. Therefore, any advancements by women in the institutional political sphere can hardly be attributed to SL's cause.

3.2 State and Insurgent Violence

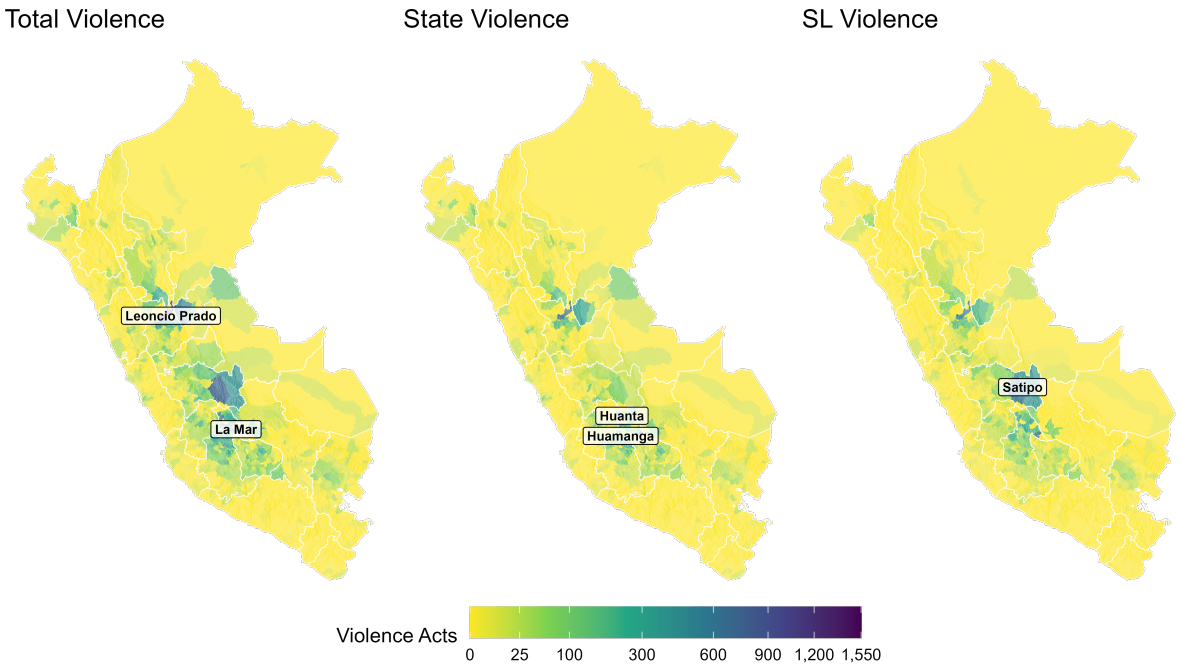
The CVR report acknowledged the existence of cases of human rights violations perpetrated by state forces during the duration of the internal conflict. The state not only responded late to incidents of political violence that started in 1980, reacting only when the activities of insurgent groups became more lethal and visible, but also the government's commitment to the respect of human rights declined throughout the response process (Maldonado, Merolla, and Zechmeister, 2019). This meant that guerrilla violence was accompanied by a brutal state response and, in many cases, it was targeted at the wrong groups. The Sinchis, a special unit within the Peruvian Police created to fight terrorism and counterinsurgency, led to multiple episodes of racist and gendered violence against local peasants (Rénique and Lerner, 2019).

Armed actors composed of civilians were also active during the years of the conflict, which mainly consisted of rural self-defense forces known as *comités de autodefensa* (self-defense committees) or *rondas campesinas* (peasant patrols) (Schubiger and Sulmont,

[5]Some of the leaders and top members of Sendero were women, although that did not prevent the group from committing severe actions of gender violence, mostly against women in rural communities, many of them underage.

2019). Figure 1 shows the distribution of state killings and Shining Path killings across Peru. The disparities in violence based on demographics and territories show deep and historical divisions within the country (Hillel and Vergara, 2019). Sendero leveraged local and regional settings, along with the urban-rural divide (Smith, 1994).

Figure 1: Number of Violent Events per District



Note: Information corresponds to violence between the years 1980 to 1995 based on information systematized by Manrique-Vallier, Ball, and Sulmont (2019) on reports from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other sources. The labeled provinces are located as follows: Huamanga, Huanta, and La Mar in Ayacucho department (where Sendero activity started); Leoncio Prado in Huánuco department; and Satipo in Junín department.

3.3 Peruvian Municipal Electoral System

Peru's municipal system consists of 1,891 district municipalities as of 2020[6], each constituting an independent electoral constituency. Municipal elections were held every three years during the conflict period (1980, 1983, 1986, 1989, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2002), with voters electing both a mayor and a municipal council (*regidores distritales*).

[6]Lambras was the last district created in December 2020 by the Law N° 31092. In the 1981 Census, 1,680 districts were documented, increasing to 1,793 for the 1993 Census.

Municipal councils are composed of 5 to 14 councilors elected for three-year terms, with the exact number determined by district population size (Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales, 2005).

Elections follow a closed-list system where voters cast ballots for political parties rather than individual candidates. Council seats are allocated using the D'Hondt proportional representation method, while the mayoral candidate heading the list with the most votes becomes mayor (Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales, 2005). These electoral rules remained consistent throughout the conflict period, providing stable institutional conditions for analyzing how violence affected women's political participation across time and space.

The municipal level offers several analytical advantages for examining conflict effects on women's political participation. The large number of municipalities creates substantial cross-sectional variation in conflict exposure, from districts experiencing intense violence to those remaining peaceful. Municipal elections also capture local-level political dynamics where women's roles in community organizations and social movements would most directly translate into formal political participation during ongoing conflict. Additionally, the regular electoral schedule throughout the violence period provides temporal variation, allowing analysis of how changing conflict intensity affected women's political engagement within the same localities over time.

4 Empirical Strategy

This study analyzes municipal elections across Peru's districts from 1980 to 1995, leveraging substantial temporal and spatial variation to identify conflict effects on women's political aspirations. Municipal elections occurred every three years throughout the conflict period, creating six electoral cycles (1980, 1983, 1986, 1989, 1993, and 1995) that capture both the escalation and decline of Peru's internal armed conflict. The analysis stops at 1995 to avoid confounding effects from the gender quota implemented in 1997.

The electoral dataset was constructed by web-scraping candidate information from Peru's National Electoral Jury's online database (Infogob). I coded candidate gender using name-based identification methods.[7] The dataset encompasses both mayoral and council candidates across all districts, with each district serving as an independent electoral constituency throughout the analysis period.

4.1 Data Sources and Variables

Dependent Variables: Women Candidates and their Electoral Success The first dependent variable is the proportion of female candidates nominated for office in each election. The second dependent variable is the proportion of elected officials who are women in constituencies where at least one woman was a candidate.[8]

Independent Variable: Extent of Political Violence The main independent variable captures the extent of political violence at the district level for municipal elections. I use data from Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which systematically documented violent events during the internal armed conflict period,

[7] Electoral results from 2002 include candidate gender data, which I used to assign gender for 1980-1995 candidates. For the remaining unclassified candidates, I used common name patterns and manual inference. These methods effectively classified 98% of candidates.

[8] Peru uses a closed-list electoral system where voters select entire party lists rather than individual candidates. The first candidate on each list becomes mayor if the list wins, while subsequent candidates fill city council (*regidores*) positions. For this reason, I cannot obtain information on the vote share at the candidate level.

including killings, forced disappearances, torture, kidnapping, and sexual violence, with detailed information on victims, perpetrators, and event types. The CVR provides comprehensive and geographically precise documentation of political violence, enabling identification of temporal violence effects through within-district variation over time.

I construct the violence measure as the cumulative number of violent acts perpetrated by state forces and insurgent groups up to each election year, distinguishing between perpetrator types to test differential effects. This approach captures both recent violence exposure (acts in the 1-2 years before elections) and cumulative violence exposure (total acts since conflict onset) to examine how different temporal patterns of violence affect women's political aspirations. As a robustness check, I also examine complementary data sources based on contemporaneous newspaper reports to assess whether findings vary depending on documented versus publicly reported violence, since many killings occurred in isolated areas with limited media coverage, particularly affecting populations with low literacy rates and limited Spanish language proficiency in Andean regions.

Additional Variables In addition, I control for population (obtained from the 1981 and 1993 census), and sociodemographics at the department and district level, such as percentage of indigenous population and percentage of illiteracy.

4.2 Estimation

I employ a two-way fixed effects estimation strategy that exploits within-district temporal variation in violence exposure across the six electoral cycles. The identification relies on comparing electoral outcomes in the same district during periods of different violence intensity, controlling for time-invariant district characteristics and election-specific shocks.

The empirical approach centers on distinguishing between immediate and historical violence effects. This design tests whether sustained conflict exposure creates adaptation or exhaustion effects that alter how communities respond to new violence episodes. By separating these temporal dimensions, the analysis can identify whether violence operates

through different mechanisms depending on timing and duration of exposure.

My main specifications estimate:

$$P\ women\ candidates_{d,t} = \eta_d + \theta_t + \delta_1 Recent\ Violence_{d,t} + \delta_2 Cumulative\ Violence_{d,t} + \beta_1 \mathbf{X}_{d,t} + \epsilon_{d,t} \quad (1)$$

$$P\ women\ elected_{d,t} = \eta_d + \theta_t + \delta_1 Recent\ Violence_{d,t} + \delta_2 Cumulative\ Violence_{d,t} + \beta_1 \mathbf{X}_{d,t} + \epsilon_{d,t} \quad (2)$$

where $Recent\ Violence_{d,t}$ measures violent acts in district d during the two years preceding election t, and $Cumulative\ Violence_{d,t}$ captures total violence exposure since 1980. $P\ women\ candidates_{d,t}$ represents the proportion of female candidates, while $P\ women\ elected_{d,t}$ measures the proportion of women elected among districts where women competed.

The district fixed effects η_d control for time-invariant characteristics that correlate with both violence exposure and women's political aspirations. Election-year fixed effects θ_t account for national political dynamics affecting all districts simultaneously. The vector $\mathbf{X}_{d,t}$ includes time-varying controls such as population, indigenous population, and illiteracy rates.

The coefficients δ_1 and δ_2 identify differential effects of immediate versus sustained violence exposure. If $\delta_1 > \delta_2$, this suggests adaptation effects where communities become less responsive to violence over time. If $\delta_2 > \delta_1$, this indicates cumulative mobilization where sustained exposure amplifies violence effects. Standard errors are clustered at the district level to account for serial correlation.

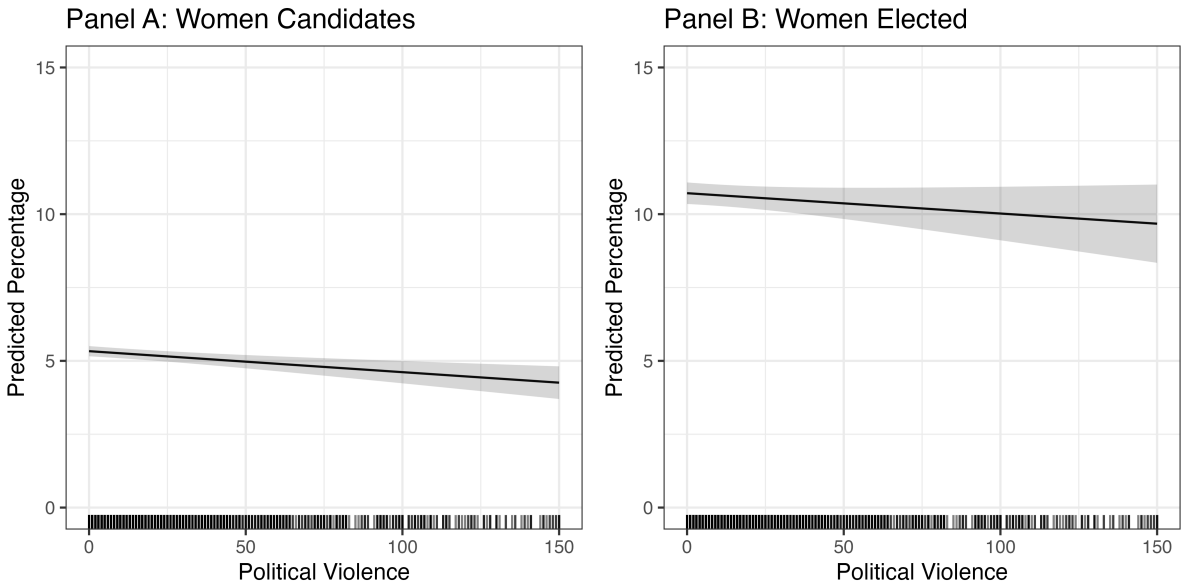
Additionally, I examine post-conflict electoral patterns from 2002 onward to explore whether districts with different historical violence exposure show persistent differences in women's political representation. This analysis is descriptive and correlational rather than causal, given intervening institutional changes such as gender quota implementation.

5 Results

5.1 The Effect of Conflict on Female Candidates

The empirical evidence reveals a divergence between supply-side and demand-side effects of political violence on women's political aspirations. Following Figure 2, Hypothesis 1 receives no empirical support: violence exposure demonstrates no discernible impact on women's propensity to seek electoral office (panel A). In contrast, there is evidence supporting Hypothesis 2: violence exerts substantial influence on women's electoral prospects once candidacies are secured (panel B). Most notably, sustained exposure to political violence systematically undermines women's electoral success, with each additional unit of cumulative violence reducing the probability of electoral victory by 3.3 percentage points (PP), a robust effect that persists across different model specifications (see Table D.1).

Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities of the Effect of Cumulative Violence on Women's Political Aspirations



Note: Predicted probabilities of women candidates (left panel) and women elected (right panel) as a function of cumulative political violence at the district level. The x-axis represents the cumulative level of political violence since 1980, while the y-axis shows the predicted percentage. The shaded area represents the 95% CI. The tick marks on the x-axis indicate the distribution of cumulative political violence across districts. Based on pooled OLS models for visualization; main results using fixed effects models available in Table D.1.

This finding aligns with theoretical expectations regarding voter behavior during protracted conflict periods, where sustained exposure to violence may reinforce traditional gender stereotypes about leadership capacity and security expertise, thereby creating systematic electoral disadvantages for women candidates (Glaurdić and Lesschaeve, 2023). The magnitude of this effect is considerable given the relatively low baseline rates of women's electoral success, suggesting that districts with extensive violence histories create particularly inhospitable electoral environments for women candidates. Importantly, this pattern emerges despite the absence of any corresponding effects on candidacy rates themselves, as shown in Figure 2, indicating that violence operates primarily through voter preferences rather than through deterring women from political entry.

The political landscape during Peru's IAC reveals important patterns in women's political aspirations and participation that extend beyond simple deterrent effects. While previous literature has argued that the IAC weakened the partisan left through the destruction of leftist party infrastructure, with many politicians abandoning politics amid the climate of fear (Levitsky, 2019), the evidence on women's participation presents a more complex picture. Table B.1 shows that the largest parties by total candidates—including Partido Aprista Peruano, Acción Popular, and Partido Popular Cristiano—maintained relatively low proportions of women candidates (8.5-9.0%). However, smaller parties demonstrated substantially higher rates of women's inclusion, with some regional and independent movements nominating women at rates exceeding 35%. This shows that while established parties may have maintained traditional nomination patterns even during conflict, newer or smaller political organizations were more willing to incorporate women candidates. The persistence of women's candidacies across different party types, even in violent contexts, indicates that the supply-side mechanisms may have operated differently than the broader pattern of political withdrawal documented for leftist politicians, with women finding alternative pathways to political participation through non-traditional party vehicles.

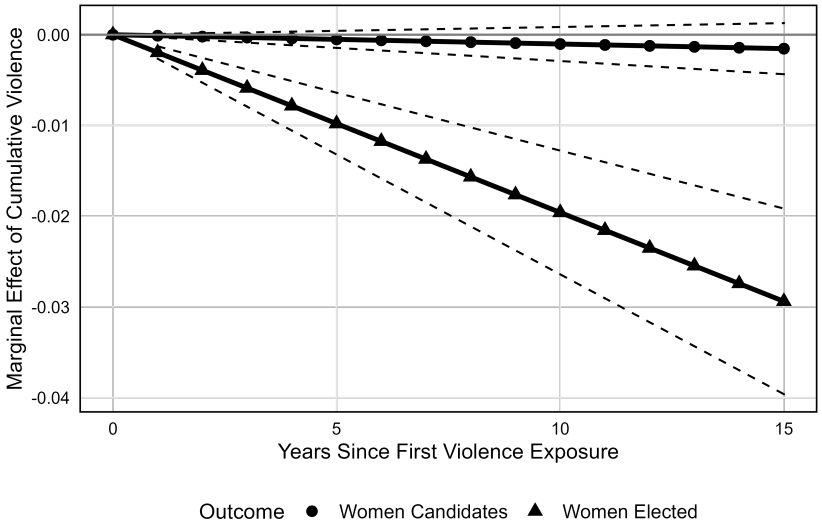
5.2 Temporal Persistence

Beyond immediate effects, sustained conflict exposure may fundamentally alter how communities respond to violence. Hypothesis 3 on temporal persistence receives partial support, revealing asymmetric adaptation patterns between supply and demand-side effects. Table D.2 demonstrates that temporal adaptation occurs exclusively for women's electoral success, not for candidacies. The interaction term between cumulative violence and years since first violence exposure is significant for elected women, but statistically insignificant for women candidates. This indicates that communities do develop adaptation mechanisms over time, but these operate through voter behavior rather than candidate recruitment or women's willingness to seek office. Importantly, I find that recent violence (1-2 years ago) has a positive effect on women's electoral success, while older violence shows no effect, and cumulative violence interacted with time shows negative effects. This reveals a temporal pattern where immediate violence exposure may create short-term electoral opportunities for women candidates, perhaps by disrupting traditional political networks or creating demands for change, but sustained exposure over many years creates increasingly negative electoral environments.

Figure 3 visualizes this differential adaptation pattern through the marginal effects of cumulative violence at different temporal distances from initial exposure. The plot shows how the impact of cumulative violence on women's political aspirations changes as more years pass since a district first experienced violence. For women candidates (circles), the marginal effect remains essentially flat near zero across all time periods, confirming no temporal adaptation in candidacy patterns. In contrast, for women elected (triangles), the marginal effect starts near zero at initial exposure but becomes increasingly negative over time, reaching approximately -0.03 by 15 years post-exposure. This represents a substantial decline: for every additional violent act in a district's history, women's electoral success decreases by 3 percentage points after 15 years of sustained exposure. Given that baseline women's electoral success rates average around 4.5% in the sample (Table B.2), this effect represents approximately a

67% relative decrease in women's chances of winning office, demonstrating how prolonged conflict exposure creates increasingly hostile electoral environments for women candidates.

Figure 3: Temporal Adaptation to Violence



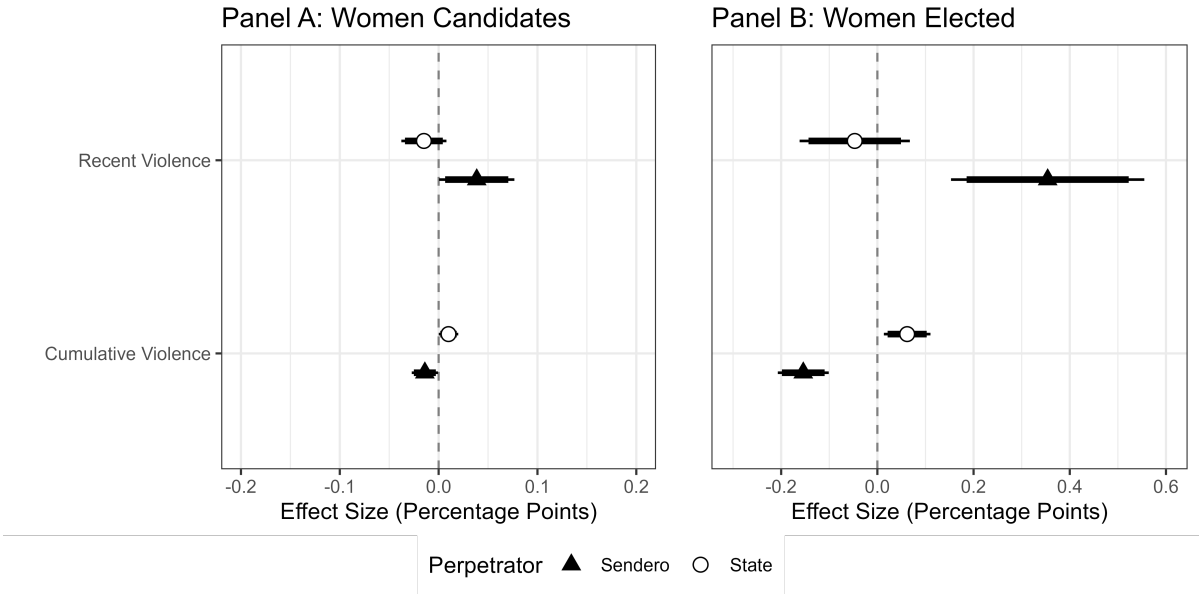
Note: Marginal effects plot showing how the impact of cumulative violence on women's political aspirations changes over time within districts. Circles represent effects on the percentage of women candidates; triangles represent effects on the percentage of women elected (conditional on districts with women candidates). The dashed lines represent 95% confidence intervals around these estimates. All models include district and year fixed effects with standard errors clustered at the district level. Full models available in Table D.2.

5.3 Type of Actor

Are these results explained by the perpetrator of the political violence? Hypothesis 4 receives strong empirical support, demonstrating that perpetrator identity fundamentally shapes how violence affects women's political participation. The results in Table D.3 reveal significant differences between state and SL violence across both candidacy and electoral outcomes. Recent Sendero violence increases both women's candidacies and their electoral success, while recent state violence shows negative but non-significant effects on both outcomes. This pattern contradicts my theoretical prediction in Hypothesis 4, as recent insurgent violence appears to create mobilization opportunities rather than deterrent effects, while state violence shows the expected negative (though non-significant) effects.

Figure 4 reveals stark differences between perpetrator types. Recent Sendero violence produces large positive effects on electoral success (around 0.35 PP) while cumulative Sendero violence generates substantial negative effects, revealing that insurgent violence creates short-term opportunities but long-term harm. State violence effects are consistently smaller, with cumulative state violence showing modest positive effects that may reflect eventual mobilization responses to sustained repression. These contrasting temporal patterns indicate that the political context and legitimacy of violence perpetrators creates different pathways for women's political engagement.

Figure 4: Violence Effects by Perpetrator Type on Women's Political Aspirations



Note: Coefficient plots showing the effects of violence by perpetrator type on women's political participation. Panel A shows effects on the percentage of women candidates; Panel B shows effects on the percentage of women elected (conditional on districts with women candidates). Recent violence refers to acts in the two years preceding each election; cumulative violence refers to total acts since 1980. Thick lines represent 90% confidence intervals; thin lines represent 95% confidence intervals. All models include district and year fixed effects with standard errors clustered at the district level. Full models available in Table D.3.

Violence Data Sources: Comparing CVR with newspaper reports To assess the robustness of my findings, I examine whether the effects vary depending on the violence data source. My primary analysis relies on the CVR report, which provides comprehensive documentation of atrocities during the IAC. However, the CVR was compiled retrospectively after the conflict ended, which raises concerns about whether

this information accurately reflects what voters knew during electoral periods. If violence affects political behavior through information and perception channels (Milliff, 2023), then contemporaneous reporting may provide a more appropriate measure of violence exposure.

I therefore construct an alternative violence dataset using newspaper coverage from the conflict period. This compilation draws from multiple sources: DESCO's 1989 report documenting national press coverage from July 1980 through May 1988, supplemented by DESCO's subsequent monthly reports (CEDOC) to capture violent events up to November 1995 (the election month). I extract information on event dates, locations, perpetrator types, and targets, supplemented with newspaper clippings from the National Library of Peru and the LUM Museum archives. Additional details on these data sources are provided in Appendix C.

The two datasets differ substantially in scope and coverage. The CVR dataset contains 11,529 violent events, while the newspaper dataset includes 56,268 events (see Table C.1). This difference reflects both the broader temporal coverage of newspaper reporting and the different documentation standards between post-conflict truth commission investigations and contemporaneous media coverage. The newspaper data captures events that were publicly known during the electoral periods, while the CVR data provides more complete documentation of violence that may not have been widely reported at the time.

The robustness check using contemporary newspaper data reveals both consistencies and important differences compared to the CVR-based findings (see Table C.2). The core pattern for electoral success remains consistent across data sources: recent violence positively affects women's electoral prospects while cumulative violence has negative effects. However, the magnitudes and directions differ substantially. Using CVR data, recent violence increases women's electoral success by 8.4 PP, while the newspaper data shows a barely detectable positive effect of 0.3 PP that is only weakly significant. For cumulative violence, both sources show negative effects on electoral success, but the CVR data indicates a larger negative impact (-3.3 PP) compared to the newspaper data

(which shows a precisely estimated zero effect).

The most striking difference emerges in the candidacy results. While CVR data shows no significant effects of violence on women's candidacies, the newspaper data reveals small negative effects of recent violence and positive effects of cumulative violence. This shows that contemporaneous information about violence may have influenced candidacy decisions differently than the complete post-conflict documentation would suggest. The newspaper data captures what was publicly known during electoral periods, potentially reflecting more immediate responses to visible violence rather than the comprehensive pattern of victimization documented by the truth commission.

The stark differences in coverage patterns between the data sources also help explain these divergent results (see Table C.1). Urban areas like Lima are heavily overrepresented in newspaper coverage (43,077 reports versus 418 CVR acts), while rural and remote departments like Ucayali and Apurímac received zero newspaper coverage despite significant CVR-documented violence (276 and 837 acts, respectively). This uneven reporting likely introduces geographic and urban biases into the newspaper-based violence measures.

These differences highlight the importance of information coverage in mediating violence effects on political behavior. The much smaller effects found using newspaper data likely reflect incomplete contemporaneous reporting, as many violent events in remote areas went unreported in national media. The fact that both data sources show similar directional effects for electoral success, despite different magnitudes, provides confidence in the core findings. The newspaper-based results, while statistically detectable, are practically negligible compared to the CVR effects, demonstrating that comprehensive documentation of actual violence exposure, rather than just publicly reported incidents, better captures the true impact on political behavior.

5.4 Lingering Effects

As Hadzic and Tavits (2021) argue, people may perceive post-war politics as more combative and aggressive, which could reduce women's political engagement after

conflict termination. Even when it is difficult to discern whether women's political participation decreased during the post-conflict era using existing data[9], it is possible to assess if the effects of conflict on women's political aspirations persist after the conflict ended.

Using 2002 as the first post-conflict election[10], and electoral data from six municipal elections spanning 2002 to 2022 consisting of 433,164 candidates from 2,771 parties, I examine whether districts with higher violence exposure continue to show reduced women's political participation two decades after the conflict ended. The post-conflict analysis reveals a striking transformation in how violence legacies operate compared to the active conflict period. While recent Sendero violence created short-term mobilization opportunities for women during the 1980s and 1990s, only the negative long-term effects persist in the post-conflict era. Violence effects persist but operate through specific mechanisms and vary by perpetrator type. Table 1 shows that Sendero Luminoso violence creates lasting negative effects, reducing women's electoral success by 0.03 PP and women's access to competitive positions (top-2 on party lists) by 0.02 PP per violent act. State violence, in contrast, shows no significant effects on women's post-conflict political aspirations.

These perpetrator-specific effects represent meaningful long-term impacts given that they persist across multiple electoral cycles in the post-conflict period, with districts experiencing extensive Sendero violence (100+ acts) showing women's electoral disadvantages that are 2-3 percentage points larger than in peaceful districts.[11] This temporal evolution points to immediate disruptive effects of insurgent violence that may create political opportunities during active conflict faded over time, while the deeper cultural and institutional changes that disadvantage women proved more enduring. These results are consistent with recent research finding that insurgent violence has particularly profound effects on women's political aspirations due to fears

[9]Compared to other countries, like Chile, where polling stations were segregated by gender up to 2012.
[10]When the CVR was created in the year 2001, it was mandated to investigate the crimes committed between 1980 and 2000, setting 2000 as the endpoint.
[11]Calculated as: 100 acts × 0.027 PP (electoral success) = 2.7 PP additional disadvantage; 100 acts × 0.024 PP (top-2 access) = 2.4 PP additional disadvantage.

of further retaliation from armed groups and increased demand for masculine norms in politics (Rivera, Tappe Ortiz, and Koos, 2025).

Table 1: Violence Effects on Women's Political Aspirations in the Post-Conflict Period (2002-2022)

	Women Elected (%)	Women Mayors (%)	Women Top List (%)
State Violence	−0.005	−0.019	−0.018
	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.018)
Sendero Violence	−0.027**	−0.017	−0.024*
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)
District Size	−0.139	0.346	0.501**
	(0.413)	(0.224)	(0.194)
Number of Parties	0.168**	0.467***	0.277***
	(0.066)	(0.061)	(0.050)
Num.Obs.	9609	9608	9609
R2	0.468	0.333	0.652
R2 Adj.	0.367	0.206	0.585
RMSE	9.30	8.86	7.08
FE Districts	✓	✓	✓
FE Year	✓	✓	✓

Note: Dependent variables: percentage of women among elected officials (Column 1), proportion of women as mayor candidates (Column 2), and proportion of women in top-2 list positions (Column 3). Violence measures based on cumulative acts across the full conflict period. Standard errors clustered at the district level. * p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01

These lingering effects demonstrate that conflict's impact on gender and politics extends far beyond the immediate period of violence, but operates through specific mechanisms that vary by perpetrator type. The transformation from the mixed effects observed during the conflict period to the consistently negative post-conflict legacy of Sendero violence illustrates how the mechanisms through which violence affects

women's political aspirations evolve over time. The persistence of Sendero Luminoso effects across six post-conflict elections indicates that insurgent violence during the 1980s and early 1990s created lasting changes in political behavior and institutions that continue to disadvantage women's political aspirations. Notably, state violence shows no such persistent effects, suggesting that the political legacies of different types of violence follow distinct pathways.

These persistent negative effects emerge despite the implementation of gender quotas in 1997, suggesting that quotas alone were insufficient to overcome the deeper institutional and cultural legacies of insurgent violence. The finding that electoral competition consistently benefits women's representation (with each additional party increasing women's participation as political candidates by 0.17-0.47 PPs) provides a counterpoint, showing that more open and competitive political environments can help overcome some barriers to women's political engagement. This demonstrates how conflict can reshape political landscapes in ways that create enduring but selective disadvantages for women's political aspirations long after peace is formally established, highlighting the importance of addressing perpetrator-specific legacies of violence in post-conflict reconstruction efforts while also promoting electoral competition as a mechanism for expanding women's political opportunities.

6 Conclusion

This study examines how political violence affected women's electoral aspirations during Peru's Internal Armed Conflict, revealing that violence operates through distinct mechanisms depending on timing, perpetrator identity, and temporal exposure patterns. Using municipal fixed effects models that exploit within-district variation across six electoral cycles from 1980-1995, I find that violence primarily affects women's electoral success rather than their willingness to seek office. The null effects on candidacy rates contradict theoretical expectations about supply-side deterrence, while the significant effects on electoral outcomes reveal that violence shapes voter behavior in ways that systematically disadvantage women candidates.

The temporal and perpetrator analyses reveal important distinctions in these patterns. Recent violence creates short-term electoral opportunities for women, while cumulative violence exposure generates persistent electoral penalties. This temporal asymmetry operates differently across perpetrator types: Sendero Luminoso violence produces immediate positive effects followed by long-term negative consequences. In contrast, state violence shows the opposite pattern, with cumulative exposure eventually mobilizing women's political participation. These findings challenge simple deterrence narratives and reveal that violence effects depend critically on political context and the legitimacy of those wielding violence.

Perhaps most striking are the persistent effects that extend decades beyond the conflict's end and the fundamental transformation in how violence legacies operate over time. Analysis of post-2002 electoral data reveals that Sendero Luminoso violence exposure during the 1980s and early 1990s continues to suppress women's political aspirations through 2022, spanning six electoral cycles and persisting despite the implementation of gender quotas in 1997. Crucially, while recent Sendero violence created mobilization opportunities during the active conflict period, only the negative long-term effects persist in the post-conflict era, suggesting that the immediate disruptive effects faded while deeper cultural and institutional changes proved more enduring. State violence, by contrast, shows no such lingering effects, reinforcing the

perpetrator-specific nature of violence legacies.

The analysis also reveals that electoral competition consistently benefits women's representation, with each additional competing party increasing women's participation as political candidates by 0.17-0.47 PP, suggesting that more open political environments can help overcome some barriers to women's political engagement. As studies have shown that having more women on the ballot improves women's turnout (Coman and Shair-Rosenfield, 2025), further research is warranted in order to understand the community effects of conflict that might put women candidates at a disadvantage.

These findings have important implications for understanding the gendered political legacies of conflict and designing effective post-conflict interventions. The evidence that violence effects operate primarily through voter behavior rather than candidate selection points to the need for interventions that address community attitudes and electoral dynamics rather than focusing solely on encouraging women's political participation. The perpetrator-specific nature of persistent effects suggests that post-conflict reconstruction efforts must account for different types of violence legacies, with particular attention to areas affected by insurgent violence. The temporal evolution of violence effects—from mixed impacts during active conflict to consistently negative post-conflict legacies—shows that addressing conflict's gendered political consequences requires understanding how these mechanisms change over time. The persistence of negative effects two decades after peace and their resistance to institutional reforms like gender quotas underscores that addressing conflict's gendered political consequences requires sustained, long-term efforts that go beyond immediate post-conflict reconstruction. Simultaneously, promoting electoral competition emerges as a promising mechanism for expanding women's political opportunities in post-conflict settings. Understanding these patterns is crucial for designing policies that can break the cycle of conflict-induced political exclusion and promote more inclusive democratic governance in post-conflict societies.

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Supplementary Information

Guerrilla Shadows on Gender:
The Lingering Effects of the Peruvian Internal Armed Conflict on Women's Political Aspirations

September 2025

A Elections in Peru

Peru's return to democracy in 1980 marked a significant expansion of electoral participation compared to the previous democratic period. In the 1963 presidential and congressional elections—the last ones held before the military dictatorship: only literate citizens older than 21 years could vote (18 years for married and emancipated individuals), with voting becoming optional at age 60. The 1980 democratic transition brought universal suffrage: all men and women older than 18 years gained voting rights, including illiterate citizens, with optional voting beginning at age 70 (Aragón, Cruz, and Sánchez, 2019).

This electoral expansion occurred alongside the establishment of regular municipal elections, which had been suspended during military rule. Congressional representatives are elected through multiple electoral districts corresponding to Peru's departments. For the 1980 congressional elections, the electoral districts comprised Lima Province, the remaining provinces of Lima department, the constitutional province of Callao, and each of the other departments, totaling 25 electoral districts. This number increased to 26 in the 1985 elections when the Department of Ucayali was created in June 1980.

A.1 Distrital Elections in Peru

Following the end of military dictatorship in 1979 and the promulgation of a new constitution by the Constituent Assembly, Peru restored local elections in 1980 alongside congressional elections. This marked the return of democratic governance at the municipal level after years of military rule. The political configuration that emerged from this democratic transition was characterized by three main political forces: the AP-PPC bloc, the *Aprismo*, and the left grouped in the Izquierda Unida bloc (Bensa Morales, 2002).

Peru's municipal system operates through district-level elections held every three years. Municipal councils consist of mayors and *regidores* (councilors), with council size ranging from 6 to 40 members depending on the district's territorial jurisdiction.

Elections follow a closed-list system where voters select party lists rather than individual candidates. The candidate heading the list that receives the most votes becomes mayor, while *regidores* are allocated using the D'Hondt proportional method for lists receiving more than 5% of votes.

The number of districts varied over time due to administrative changes. While the 1981 and 1993 censuses officially recorded different numbers of districts, the National Electoral Jury (JNE) electoral records systematically present fewer districts, reflecting discrepancies between administrative divisions and electoral constituencies.

Table A.1: Departments, Districts, and Regidores in Peru

Department	**1980 Electoral**	**1981 Census**	**1983 Electoral**	**1986 Electoral**	**1989 Electoral**	**1993 Electoral**	**1993 Census**	**1995 Electoral**
Amazonas	66	78	72	76	68	77	83	76
Áncash	131	154	136	136	98	133	165	142
Apurímac	57	69	61	39	28	65	76	73
Arequipa	99	105	97	76	89	89	107	100
Ayacucho	84	102	34	53	47	73	109	73
Cajamarca	94	109	98	93	93	110	125	110
Callao	5	6	5	5	5	3	6	5
Cusco	85	101	84	75	80	92	106	93
Huancavelica	81	90	69	81	60	60	93	84
Huánuco	57	68	60	49	26	54	74	58
Ica	33	39	33	36	37	36	43	36
Junín	109	122	112	108	66	108	123	112
La Libertad	64	72	65	60	33	64	80	64
Lambayeque	28	32	29	28	29	29	33	30
Lima	117	166	156	147	121	134	171	144
Loreto	28	37	35	37	38	38	45	32
Madre de Dios	2	9	4	2	4	5	9	7
Moquegua	14	20	16	17	17	17	20	17
Pasco	24	27	24	22	18	23	28	22
Piura	51	61	53	54	55	56	64	55
Puno	83	95	86	89	35	84	106	94
San Martín	62	69	63	60	56	67	77	62
Tacna	21	23	21	22	13	20	26	22
Tumbes	8	11	8	9	9	9	12	9
Ucayali	-	15	6	7	5	6	12	9

Note: Ucayali was founded in 18 de junio de 1980, after the elections that took place that year; hence the lack of electoral data for 1980.

Table A.2: Number of Candidates by Department and Election Year

Department	**1980**	**1983**	**1986**	**1989**	**1993**	**1995**	**Total**
Amazonas	396	1,190	645	846	1,437	766	5,280
Áncash	1,341	2,093	1,898	1,188	2,575	1,022	10,117
Apurímac	557	876	520	416	1,334	523	4,226
Arequipa	4,432	1,581	1,412	1,326	2,531	1,428	12,710
Ayacucho	866	449	480	391	1,164	1,137	4,487
Cajamarca	1,144	1,530	1,078	1,447	1,890	680	7,769
Callao	330	345	240	49	257	46	1,267
Cusco	853	1,430	1,178	1,191	2,759	567	7,978
Huancavelica	532	1,127	1,035	990	1,476	1,118	6,278
Huánuco	448	787	523	193	1,083	506	3,540
Ica	846	856	820	704	1,283	336	4,845
Junín	818	1,934	1,797	464	3,598	1,339	9,950
La Libertad	648	934	806	570	1,503	451	4,912
Lambayeque	231	815	545	748	1,162	185	3,686
Lima	3,077	2,648	3,764	5,241	3,057	3,833	21,620
Loreto	216	636	661	1,034	1,215	393	4,155
Madre de Dios	12	67	30	98	154	43	404
Moquegua	229	364	231	360	320	102	1,606
Pasco	186	433	332	205	736	132	2,024
Piura	512	1,021	1,050	1,224	2,065	361	6,233
Puno	984	1,677	1,514	451	2,087	1,316	8,029
San Martín	558	1,124	766	808	1,427	556	5,239
Tacna	248	460	251	327	468	324	2,078
Tumbes	144	187	226	191	172	54	974
Ucayali	-	96	96	54	406	54	706
Total	**19,608**	**24,660**	**21,898**	**20,516**	**36,159**	**17,272**	**140,113**

B Descriptive Statistics

Table B.1: Parties with most candidates and women candidates

Party	Total	Women	Proportion
Top 5 by Total Candidates			
Partido Aprista Peruano	27540	2339	0.085
Acción Popular	20812	1759	0.085
Partido Popular Cristiano	10484	944	0.090
Izquierda Unida	9963	549	0.055
Frente Electoral Izquierda Unida	5999	337	0.056
Top 5 by Women Proportion			
Lista Indep. Frenatraca	141	54	0.383
Movimiento Regional Arequipa Unida	303	111	0.366
Partido Democrático Somos Perú	163	58	0.356
Fuerza Democrática	211	75	0.355
Alianza Electoral Unidad Nacional	126	44	0.349

Table B.2: Women Success Ratio per Department

Department	Observations	Avg % Candidates	Avg % Elected	Avg Success Ratio
Callao	42	10.72	8.52	0.75
Arequipa	654	10.64	4.29	0.57
Lambayeque	228	7.52	6.18	0.72
Lima	1026	7.43	5.86	0.81
Piura	390	6.71	5.75	0.84
Ica	258	6.23	5.58	0.91
Junin	738	5.82	4.52	0.74
Tumbes	78	5.69	5.77	1.17
La Libertad	498	5.66	5.26	0.89
Amazonas	504	4.95	3.82	0.77
Ancash	996	4.70	4.07	0.88
Moquegua	120	4.63	3.33	0.70
Tacna	168	4.21	3.87	0.93
Cajamarca	762	4.16	3.72	0.84
Pasco	174	4.02	3.64	0.79
Cusco	672	3.95	3.44	0.84
San Martin	462	3.83	3.02	0.71
Madre De Dios	66	3.34	0.00	0.00
Huancavelica	600	3.26	2.99	0.84
Apurimac	504	3.24	2.92	0.87
Loreto	318	3.13	2.76	0.84
Huanuco	504	3.06	2.60	0.88
Ayacucho	714	2.73	2.33	0.82
Puno	660	2.18	1.94	0.80
Ucayali	102	2.03	0.00	0.00

Note: Observations correspond to the number of districts per year.

C Violence in Newspapers

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) provides crucial retrospective documentation of Peru's internal conflict, it is important to understand what information about violence was available to the public in real-time during the conflict period. The CVR data, collected through testimonies between 2001-2003, represents a post-conflict reconstruction of events based on victims' and witnesses' memories years after the violence occurred. To complement this retrospective view, newspaper documentation offers insights into which violent events became public knowledge as they happened, reflecting the information environment that shaped contemporary perceptions and decisions during the conflict.

One important source for such real-time documentation is DESCO (Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo), an NGO research center that systematically compiled violence reports from national newspapers (DESCO Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo, 1989). They published a two-volume dossier based on national written press, such as daily newspapers and weekly publications, that DESCO's Data Bank has compiled daily since July 1980. DESCO's chronology provides a comprehensive record of violent incidents during Peru's internal conflict period.

The database categorizes incidents by type of violence, location, date, and number of victims across different categories. The data collection methodology relied on daily monitoring of major national newspapers and weekly publications, ensuring broad geographic and temporal coverage of violent events throughout the conflict. To digitize this historical documentation, I employed optical character recognition (OCR) techniques using `tesseract` with Spanish language support to extract text from the original PDF documents. The extraction process involved converting PDF pages to high-resolution images (600 DPI) followed by image preprocessing to enhance text recognition accuracy. I then developed custom parsing algorithms to structure the extracted text into a standardized database format, identifying date patterns, geographic locations, and incident descriptions. Location names were standardized

against official Peruvian administrative boundaries (INEI shapefile) to ensure geographic consistency across the dataset. This digitization process yielded 3,305 structured incident records from the chronology covering 1980-1988. The raw chronology looks like the following Figure C.2:

Figure C.1: Screenshot of DESCO Chronology

809FECHA PROVINCLA		ACCION	OBJETIVO	FA	FP	CIV	PT
MAYO 1980		Asaltan	Local Jurado Elec	.	.	.	.
18/05	Cangallo		toral de Chuschi				
		Dinamitan	Antena de radar de Corpac en				
18/05	Huamanga		Ayacucho				
		Asaltan	Guardia Civil que custodiaba a la	.	.	.	.
20/05	Lima		embajada de				
			Nicaragua				
JUNIO 1980		Incendian	Municipalidad de San	.	.	.	.
13/06	Lima		Martín de Porres				
		Dinamitan	Tumba de Velasco				
15/06	Lima						
JULIO 1980		Dinamitan	Oficina Zonal cie Educación de				
04/07	Huamanga		Ayacucho				
		Incendian y Sabotean	Seguro Social, tuberías de agua y				
Entre 07-	Pasco		ferrocarril				
13/07		Intentan volar	Reservorio de Centromín				
08/07	Yauli		en La Oroya				
		Dinamitan	Un tramo de (9mts.) de línea				
14/07	Pas.co		de ferrocarril				
		Asaltan	Polvorín				
1-15/07	Huanta	Lanzan bomba	Casa de Vocal de Corte				
19/07	Lima		Superior de Lima, Luis				
			Camero, ex diputado aprista				
		Asaltan	Mina Benito Melgarejo en	.	.	.	.
19/07	Huamanga		Ayacucho				
		Lanzan 2 bombas	Local PAP en Comas				
19/07	Lima						
		Asaltan	2 locales AP en Villa El				
20/07	Lima		Salvador				
		Pintan paredes Ilamando	Ayacucho	.	.	.	.
20/07	Huamanga	a la guerra popular					
		Dinamitan	Municipio en Ayacucho				
20/07	Huamanga	Roban	Proyecto Majes	.	.	.	.
21/07	Arequipa	Lanzan bomba	Local Federación	.	.	.	.
24/07	Lima		de Pescadores				

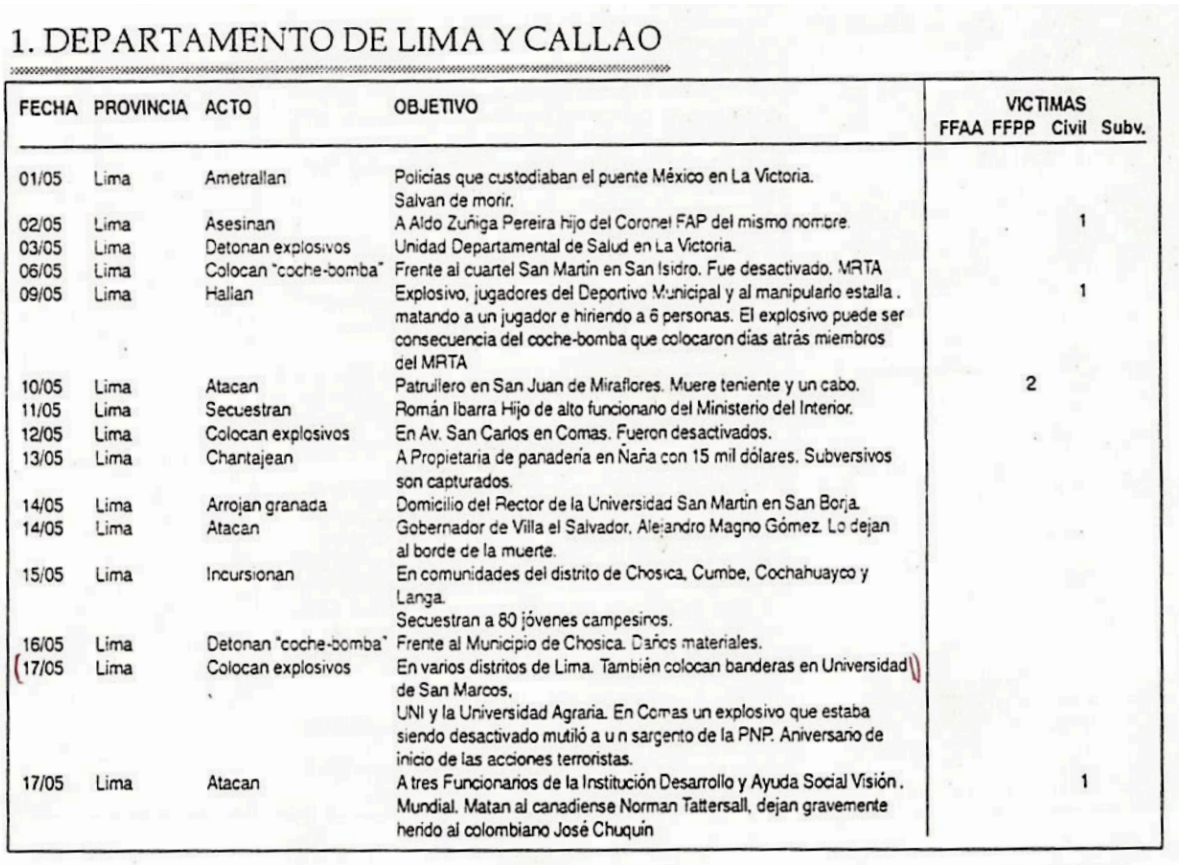
FA = Fuerzas Armadas FP = Fuerzas Policiales C1V = Civiles PT = Presuntos Terroristas

Note: The columns FA/FP/CIV/PT account for the number of victims in each category (FA: Armed Forces; FP: Police Forces; CIV: Civilians; PT: Alleged Terrorists).

As the dossiers cover the period from May 1980 to December 1988, I used DESCO's

monthly reports published from May 1991 to November 1995 to complement the data. These reports maintain the same level of granularity as their dossier. The monthly reports are available online at the Digital Library of the UNMSM: https://cedoc.sisbib.unmsm.edu.pe/biblioteca-digital/reporte-desco?pagina=1#search. I applied the same OCR and parsing methodology to these 55 monthly PDF reports, adapting the extraction algorithms to handle different table formats used across the time period. The monthly reports yielded an additional 4,747 structured incident records covering 1991-1995. Both datasets were then combined into a unified violence database spanning 1980-1995, with clear source attribution and standardized geographic and temporal coding. Figure C.2 displays a screenshot of a monthly report.

Figure C.2: Screenshot of DESCO Monthly Reports



1. DEPARTAMENTO DE LIMA Y CALLAO

FECHA	PROVINCIA	ACTO	OBJETIVO	VICTIMAS FFAA	FFPP	Civil	Subv.
01/05	Lima	Ametrallan	Policías que custodiaban el puente México en La Victoria. Salvan de morir.				
02/05	Lima	Asesinan	A Aldo Zuñiga Pereira hijo del Coronel FAP del mismo nombre.			1	
03/05	Lima	Detonan explosivos	Unidad Departamental de Salud en La Victoria.				
06/05	Lima	Colocan "coche-bomba"	Frente al cuartel San Martín en San Isidro. Fue desactivado. MRTA				
09/05	Lima	Hallan	Explosivo, jugadores del Deportivo Municipal y al manipularlo estalla. matando a un jugador e hiriendo a 6 personas. El explosivo puede ser consecuencia del coche-bomba que colocaron días atrás miembros del MRTA			1	
10/05	Lima	Atacan	Patrullero en San Juan de Miraflores. Muere teniente y un cabo.		2		
11/05	Lima	Secuestran	Román Ibarra Hijo de alto funcionario del Ministerio del Interior.				
12/05	Lima	Colocan explosivos	En Av. San Carlos en Comas. Fueron desactivados.				
13/05	Lima	Chantajean	A Propietaria de panadería en Ñaña con 15 mil dólares. Subversivos son capturados.				
14/05	Lima	Arrojan granada	Domicilio del Rector de la Universidad San Martín en San Borja.				
14/05	Lima	Atacan	Gobernador de Villa el Salvador, Alejandro Magno Gómez. Lo dejan al borde de la muerte.				
15/05	Lima	Incursionan	En comunidades del distrito de Chosica, Cumbe, Cochahuayco y Langa. Secuestran a 60 jóvenes campesinos.				
16/05	Lima	Detonan "coche-bomba"	Frente al Municipio de Chosica. Daños materiales.				
17/05	Lima	Colocan explosivos	En varios distritos de Lima. También colocan banderas en Universidad de San Marcos, UNI y la Universidad Agraria. En Comas un explosivo que estaba siendo desactivado mutiló a un sargento de la PNP. Aniversario de inicio de las acciones terroristas.				
17/05	Lima	Atacan	A tres Funcionarios de la Institución Desarrollo y Ayuda Social Visión Mundial. Matan al canadiense Norman Tattersall, dejan gravemente herido al colombiano José Chuquín			1	

Note: The columns FA/FP/CIV/PT account for the number of victims.

The combination of these two sources still produces a gap of slightly over two years,

from January 1989 to April 1991. To document events of political violence during this period, I used archival data obtained from the National Library of Peru that also reports newspaper conflict events, complemented with archival data obtained from APRODEH (Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos), a Peruvian human rights organization, provided by the LUM Museum in Lima. The objective was to maintain the same data structure as DESCO, recording the date, province, type of act, and number of victims. After combining all these data sources, I obtained the following breakdown of violence by department.

Table C.1: Department-Level Comparison – CVR vs Newspaper Violence Reports, 1980-1995

Department	CVR Total	Newspaper Total
Amazonas	19	0
Ancash	202	636
Apurimac	837	0
Arequipa	22	551
Ayacucho	4844	3724
Cajamarca	33	264
Callao	61	364
Cusco	274	232
Huancavelica	631	665
Huanuco	1034	1238
Ica	41	0
Junin	1470	3093
La Libertad	71	429
Lambayeque	61	368
Lima	418	43077
Loreto	14	42
Madre De Dios	6	0
Moquegua	0	0
Pasco	129	390
Piura	238	140
Puno	394	660
San Martin	449	300
Tacna	3	77
Tumbes	2	18
Ucayali	276	0
Total	11529	56268

Note: Only violent acts commited up to 1995.

Table C.2: Robustness Check: CVR vs Newspaper Violence Data

	CVR: Candidates	CVR: Elected	N: Candidates	N: Elected
Recent Violence (CVR)	0.005	0.084***		
	(0.006)	(0.031)		
Cumulative Violence (CVR)	0.000	−0.033***		
	(0.002)	(0.007)		
Recent Violence (Newspaper)			−0.008***	0.003*
			(0.002)	(0.002)
Cumulative Violence (Newspaper)			0.003***	0.000
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Log Population	0.378**	0.435	0.373**	0.365
	(0.178)	(0.341)	(0.180)	(0.343)
Literacy Rate (%)	0.000	−0.019	0.001	−0.014
	(0.020)	(0.053)	(0.020)	(0.053)
Indigenous Language (%)	−0.004	0.010	−0.004	0.012
	(0.011)	(0.028)	(0.011)	(0.027)
Num.Obs.	9213	3538	9213	3538
R2	0.353	0.431	0.357	0.429
R2 Adj.	0.213	0.118	0.218	0.113
AIC	65 027.5	27 737.7	64 970.8	27 755.6
BIC	76 746.6	35 501.2	76 689.9	35 519.1
RMSE	6.90	8.55	6.88	8.57
FE District	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE Year	✓	✓	✓	✓

CVR stands for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; N stands for newspapers data. Standard errors clustered at the district level. * p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01

D Full Results

D.1 Main Results: The Effect of Conflict on Female Candidates

Table D.1: Main Results: The Effect of Conflict on Female Political Participation

	Candidates Basic	Candidates Full	Elected Basic	Elected Full
Recent Violence	0.004	0.005	0.085***	0.084***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.030)	(0.031)
Cumulative Violence	−0.001	0.000	−0.033***	−0.033***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Log Population		0.378**		0.435
		(0.178)		(0.341)
Literacy Rate (%)		0.000		−0.019
		(0.020)		(0.053)
Indigenous Language (%)		−0.004		0.010
		(0.011)		(0.028)
Num.Obs.	11 238	9213	4067	3538
R^2	0.351	0.353	0.425	0.431
R^2 Adj.	0.221	0.213	0.123	0.118
AIC	78 436.2	65 027.5	31 837.8	27 737.7
BIC	92 211.0	76 746.6	40 691.7	35 501.2
RMSE	6.71	6.90	8.59	8.55
FE District	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE Year	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Dependent variables: Columns 1-2 show percentage of women candidates; Columns 3-4 show percentage of women elected (conditional on women candidates). Standard errors clustered at district level. * p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01

D.2 Temporal Adaptation

Table D.2: Temporal Adaptation in Violence Effects on Women's Political Participation

	Women Candidates	Women Elected
Violence 1-2 Years Ago	0.003	0.057**
	(0.006)	(0.028)
Violence 3-5 Years Ago	0.003	−0.002
	(0.003)	(0.010)
Cumulative Violence × Years Since First Violence	0.000	−0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Num.Obs.	11 238	4067
R^2	0.351	0.425
R^2 Adj.	0.220	0.123
AIC	78 437.8	31 839.0
BIC	92 220.0	40 699.1
RMSE	6.71	8.59
FE District	✓	✓
FE Year	✓	✓

Note: Standard errors clustered at the district level. * p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01

D.3 Type of Perpetrator

Table D.3: Violence Effects by Perpetrator Type on Women's Political Participation

	Women Candidates (Basic)	Women Candidates (Full)	Women Elected (Basic)	Women Elected (Full)
Recent State Violence	−0.013	−0.015	−0.018	−0.047
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.062)	(0.058)
Recent Sendero Violence	0.035*	0.039**	0.317***	0.354***
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.102)	(0.102)
Cumulative State Violence	0.007	0.010**	0.032	0.062**
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.028)	(0.025)
Cumulative Sendero Violence	−0.011**	−0.014**	−0.122***	−0.154***
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.029)	(0.027)
Log Population		0.382**		0.427
		(0.179)		(0.350)
Literacy Rate (%)		−0.001		−0.023
		(0.020)		(0.053)
Indigenous Language (%)		−0.003		0.010
		(0.011)		(0.027)
Num.Obs.	11 238	9213	4067	3538
R^2	0.351	0.353	0.427	0.435
R^2 Adj.	0.221	0.213	0.125	0.122
AIC	78 437.4	65 028.1	31 828.1	27 721.2
BIC	92 226.9	76 761.4	40 694.5	35 497.1
RMSE	6.71	6.90	8.57	8.52
FE District	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE Year	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Standard errors clustered at district level. * p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01

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