

# Militarized Elections and Citizen's Support for Democratic Rights: Evidence from India\*

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## Abstract

Across the world, many citizens go to the polls amidst armed threats from both state and non-state actors. How do militarized elections affect citizens' willingness to accept restrictions on their democratic rights? We argue that when forming opinions about appropriate limits to state powers citizens navigate competing threats from state and non-state actors. Whereas the display of state coercive force should make citizens more protective of their civil and political rights, threats from armed non-state actors should make citizens more likely to accept that these rights are restricted. We embed a vignette experiment with a selective information prime in a 2019 post-election survey of 1,080 Indian citizens across two states affected by armed insurgency. We find that being primed on a heavy state-military presence makes citizens more reluctant to accept restrictions on their civil and political rights, but the effect is only found among politically marginalized groups. In the presence of violent non-state threats, however, citizens become more likely to support policies that curtail their democratic rights.

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# Introduction

With the spread of democracy to nearly all corners of the world, popular elections – the cornerstone of democratic governance – are increasingly held in countries with armed conflict, severe human rights violations, or other forms of political violence (Flores and Nooruddin 2016; Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014). Almost a quarter of all elections since 1990 took place in countries affected by armed conflict<sup>1</sup> and more than half of all elections since 1946 saw instances of state intimidation and repression.<sup>2</sup> How do the security challenges facing many electoral democracies influence citizens’ willingness to accept restrictions on their political and civil rights?

Elections represent particularly salient times for shaping popular attitudes towards institutions and their representatives (e.g. Moehler 2009; Norris 2014) and a time when the most symbolic feature of democracy, i.e., voting, is in full display. At the same time, electoral periods also correlate with a heightened risk of violence by both state and non-state actors (Harish and Little 2017). In many of cases, the backdrop of repression and dissent are deeply intertwined with the electoral contest, as state and non-state actors both use violence, threats, and coercion to influence elections (Condra et al. 2018; Gallego 2018; Staniland 2015). Many political leaders across the world use electoral insecurity as a pretext to dismantle democratic institutions, crackdown on the opposition, enact restrictions on freedom of association and expression, and strengthen the power of the executive (Jenkins 2020; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). Yet, we know little about how the electorate in this context makes trade-offs between the security challenges they encounter and the liberal democratic features of their political environment. Whereas studies have examined how electoral periods shape patterns of state repression (e.g. Davenport 1995, 1997), insurgent behavior (e.g. Matanock and Staniland 2018; Staniland 2015) and overall levels of political violence (Harish and Little 2017), the political consequences of militarized elections remain little understood. Existing work has

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<sup>1</sup>Defined here as either during active conflict or within two years after the conflict ended. Data from NELDA (Hyde and Marinov 2012) and UCDP (Sundberg and Melander 2013).

<sup>2</sup>Data from V-dem (Coppedge et al. 2020).

primarily studied the impact of non-state threat on behavioral outcomes such as vote choice or turn-out (Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa 2018; Birnir and Gohdes 2018; Condra et al. 2019; Gallego 2018; Kibris 2011; Tezcür 2015; Weintraub, Vargas, and Flores 2015). A significant gap remains concerning how the militarization of elections affects the political attitudes that often underpin and reinforce the behavioral expressions of democratic citizenship.

Most existing research on the formation of political attitudes in the wake of violence focuses on behavior by *either* state or non-state actors (Davenport et al. 2019). Yet, by featuring both state repression and non-state dissent, many militarized electoral environments present challenging trade-offs for citizens who must navigate competing concerns for security and protection. On the one hand, endorsing restrictions on civil liberties and political rights might help to mitigate threats from armed non-state challengers. Yet, on the other hand, expanding the room for the regime to transgress on these rights also renders citizens more vulnerable to the threats of repression from the state itself. Navigating these competing concerns, we expect that militarized threats from state agents will make citizens more reluctant to accept restrictions on their civil and political rights. If such threats take place in the context of a violent non-state threat, however, we expect citizens to re-evaluate the importance of their political rights vis-á-vis order and safety, and thus become more likely to accept restrictions on political and civil rights in the name of electoral security.

We test these expectations with data from a vignette experiment, centered on a selective information prime, which we embed in a 2019 post-election survey of 1,080 individuals in two Indian states affected by an armed insurgency – Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. We randomly assign all individuals to one of three experimental conditions: a control group receiving a neutral introductory vignette, a treatment group receiving information about the heavy security force presence in the militarized electoral environment, and a treatment group that, in addition, also receives information about a threat from an armed non-state actor. We survey citizens for whom these competing threats to their security are a real concern and whose political attitudes are formed in the presence of both state repression and violent

dissent. We examine how priming them on different features of this environment affects their willingness to accept restrictions on their political rights and freedoms.

Contrary to our expectations, the selective information on state coercion does not shift citizens' attitudes regarding the rightful limits of state authority to transgress democratic rights. Yet, this is not driven by an overall indifference across the electorate. Rather, an exploratory sub-group analysis based on several indicators of political marginalization suggests that citizens' responses are conditioned by identities that reflect national-level political and social cleavages. Respondents who do *not* belong to the government's political constituency become *more* likely to defend political rights and freedom when informed about state coercive actions. We find that when state coercion takes place against the backdrop of an armed non-state threat, citizens overall become more likely to accept such violations. This effect is, again, most pronounced for those who are not part of the government's political constituency. In sum, marginalized groups react to state-induced insecurity by reasserting their commitment to democratic rights. Yet, in a context where their security is threatened by non-state actors, this group is also the one most likely to condone the state transgressing on democratic rights to enhance societal safety and order.

This study makes important contributions to our knowledge about the popular underpinnings of democratic retrenchment. Many democracies have recently come under threat from popularly backed leaders that dismantle democratic institutions and transgress on citizens' democratic rights (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Lührmann and Lindberg 2019). Rather than acting as a check on incumbents that subvert democracy, voters in many countries rally their support behind leaders that expand on their own powers, place restrictions on political rights and civil liberties, and use repression to enforce them. Contributing to our knowledge of the drivers of these processes, our results suggest that democratically elected leaders can draw on the support of citizens to weaken democratic rights in times of security crises. Yet, we show that the extent to which they can do so depends on both the nature of militarized threats and the individual-level characteristics of voters. Specifically, our results suggest

that voters who, due to their political affiliations and socio-economic standing, are the most vulnerable to physical abuse by state and non-state actors, are also the ones who most conspicuously navigate the trade-off between freedom and safety to protect themselves from the most imminent threat.

## Existing research

Militarized elections refer to an electoral environment characterized by the visible presence of armed actors on the state and/or non-state side who intervene in elections through threat, coercion or violence.<sup>3</sup> This can range from heavily armed state security forces at polling stations, to acts of state repression against opposition actors, violent attacks by non-state actors against electoral infrastructure, or armed clashes between political party supporters. How does such a militarized electoral environment influence citizens' support for protecting political and civil rights? Studies have examined how militarized threats and violence influence outcomes such as vote-choice and turnout (e.g., Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa 2018; Berrebi and Klor 2006; Birnir and Gohdes 2018; Condra et al. 2019; Gallego 2018; Kibris 2011; Montalvo 2011; Tezcür 2015; Weintraub, Vargas, and Flores 2015), but less is known about the consequences of militarized elections for citizens' democratic attitudes more broadly.

Some existing studies suggest that militarized threats and violence influence citizens' evaluation of the rightful limits to government authority. Studies on terrorism, for example, indicate that threats from *out-groups* might be associated with intolerance, discriminatory attitudes, and stronger support for restrictions on their political rights (for a review see e.g. Piazza 2015). Terror attacks by non-state actors have been found to influence citizens' willingness to compromise with the protection of civil liberties, accept domestic human rights

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<sup>3</sup>Staniland (2015) defines this as elections where “at least two contenders use violence and its threat to try to coerce or displace opponents, manipulate voting, and/or intimidate the press and other observers”, whereas Jenkins (2020) uses it to refer to heavy state military presence in electoral environments, even in contexts where there is no simultaneous insurgent threat.

violations (e.g., Conrad et al. 2018; Davis and Silver 2004; Huddy, Feldman, and Weber 2007), and shift attitudes in favor of authoritarian orientations more broadly, for example in support of the use of force in politics or for right-wing parties (Berrebi and Klor 2006; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Kibris 2011; Tezcür 2015).

Besides focusing on terrorist violence specifically, a limitation in existing work is that much of the evidence comes from surveying public opinion in the United States or other consolidated democracies. This raises questions about generalizability. Norms that restrain the use of coercion in domestic affairs are in this context more deeply rooted compared to other countries with weaker democratic institutions. Citizens have generally more limited exposure to state repression, and overall display higher confidence in institutionalized accountability mechanisms. Their outlook on the state and its coercive apparatus could be far more ambiguous in contexts where a higher prevalence of state coercion shapes citizen interaction with and perception of the state and its repressive apparatus. Consistent with such a conjecture, some studies find that citizens' trust in state institutions, including the executive and security forces, is lower where the state has been involved in armed conflict (e.g. De Juan and Pierskalla 2016; Deglow and Sundberg 2021; Grosjean 2014; Hutchison and Johnson 2011; Voors and Bulte 2014). There is, however, also contrasting research showing that citizens become *more* willing to expand the discretionary powers of the regime in the wake of state violence (e.g. Borzyskowski, Kuhn, and Daxecker 2021; Dyrstad 2013). While these studies recognize the coercive role of the state, they still evaluate citizens' reaction to threat by considering actions by *either* the state or non-state opposition, or without distinguishing between the two. A limitation, following from reliance on mainly observational data, is also that examining the impact of distinct coercive tactics by governments and non-state actors becomes difficult. Recent work by Lupu and Wallace (2019) is one of few studies that examine citizen support for governments' human rights violations explicitly within both a repression and dissent nexus. They propose that a government's use of violence against an opposition group will diminish public approval of the regime but government violence used

in response to violent dissent will leave public approval less affected, and examine this with survey experiments in Israel, India, and Argentina. We add to this line of work by examining not regime approval but, more directly, citizens' willingness to compromise with democratic rights for enhanced security and protection.

## Theory

A long tradition of scholarly work recognizes that while the state is the most central institution for providing social order in modern societies through the projection of its coercive force (e.g. Bates, Greif, and Singh 2002; Hobbes 2017; Weber 1946), its overwhelming capacity for violence also makes the state the largest source of threat to its citizenry (Olson 1993; Rummel 1994). Hence, an equally influential idea in the writings on the state is the notion of a social contract whereby citizen acquiescence to state authority is conditional on the state not leveraging this overwhelming force against the interest of its citizens (e.g. Levi 2006; Locke 1988; Rousseau 2004). Building on this tradition, civil and political rights can be conceptualized as an exchange of citizen compliance for government restraint (Besley 2020). The balance between the two, i.e., how much discretionary power citizens accept with the state and how much they consent to state transgressions on their rights and freedoms, depends on the risks they perceive to their well-being and societal order. We argue that militarized elections make these trade-offs particularly salient. Elections represent a mechanism for delegating “the right to rule” and are focal points for shaping public attitudes toward the state. When elections occur against the backdrop of violent politics, citizens' concerns regarding the appropriate limits of state power come to the fore.

During elections in many non-consolidated democracies and autocracies, the state's coercive agents have a dual role (e.g., Condra et al. 2019). On the one hand, they are responsible for protecting the integrity of elections through upholding law and order and ensuring citizens' right to cast their vote freely in the absence of threats and intimidation. On the other

hand, security forces are also deployed to repress political challenges to the state and protect the current political order. Existing research from, for example, Egypt, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia testify to various ways incumbent regimes have strategically used security forces as repressive agents during elections (Blaydes 2010; LeBas 2006; Smith 2012). Regimes might rely on security forces to intimidate the electorate to disenfranchise opposition supporters, attempt to coercively mobilize their own vote, or quell popular resistance where results are contested (Hassan 2017; Staniland 2015).

Sometimes, but not always, state-militarized elections are set against the backdrop of armed threats from non-state actors. In this context, the dual role of security forces often becomes particularly salient. Heavy security force deployments by state agents might be required to secure elections and reduce threats from armed non-state actors. Yet, state militarization of the electoral environment, through more visible and extensive deployment of security forces during electoral periods, might itself be perceived as a threat by voters (e.g. Condra et al. 2019; Jenkins 2020). State repression is an integral aspect of counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism efforts to quell domestic threats. It entails militarized, unaccountable, and, at times, abusive conduct by police and armed forces, which oftentimes estranges the civilian population (Condra et al. 2019; Deglow and Sundberg 2021). Coercive measures by police and the military are, moreover, rarely restricted only to the dissenters (Davenport 2015; Young 2013). Instead, it often entails violence applied more indiscriminately also to the civilian population (e.g., Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay 2004).

We expect information about the state's use of coercive force to render civilians more restive and ambivalent in their political interactions with the state. Rather than perceiving the electoral involvement of security forces as safeguarding their political rights, citizens are likely also to consider the risks of being targeted with repression. Specifically, a heavy display of state coercive force during elections should not only challenge public perceptions that the electoral process evolves in a free and fair manner, which itself can spill over to wavering support for the regime, but it could also more fundamentally shape political attitudes towards



the state and its coercive powers. The latent threat of harm presented, for example, by armed personnel patrolling in local communities or deployed at polling stations, is likely to breed feelings of resentment towards the actors that leverage this threat (Hatz 2019). It could also shape citizens’ considerations regarding what they perceive as legitimate bounds on state authority. Consequently, we expect citizens to become more vigilant about their political and civil rights in a context where the state displays its coercive force. Condemning government efforts to curtail liberal democratic principles and, with that, reducing the risk of future harm represents a rational response in the face of threat. This argument leads to our first hypothesis:<sup>4</sup>

**Hypothesis 1:** Information about state coercion reduces citizens’ acceptance of government violations of political and civil rights.

We expect that the effect of receiving information about state use of coercive force will be mitigated by knowledge about other security threats. Citizen acquiescence to state authority and acceptance of its monopoly on the use of coercive force builds on the notion that the state can offer a safeguard from other threats and from general disorder (e.g., Hobbes 2017; Locke 1988). When such a threat is manifest, for example, when armed non-state actors target civilian communities or violently challenge the authority of the state, we argue that the willingness of citizens to expand on the powers of the state to deal with threat is likely to increase, compared to when such a threat is not present. Citizens caught “between a rock and a hard place” – i.e., confronted with the state’s use of coercive force on the one hand and violent opposition to the state on the other – will see the state’s coercive efforts to be more legitimate. As long as the state’s actions are within the realm of what is deemed to be a proportional and targeted response to violent dissenters, citizens should

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<sup>4</sup>The theoretical expectation is pre-registered prior to researchers’ access to data. For pre-analysis plan see <https://egap.org/registration/6148>. We have slightly revised the formulation of the hypotheses to match the terminology adopted in the study.

be likely to support state coercion to deal with threat (Davenport et al. 2019). Citizens’ support for liberal democratic rights is contextual and may be secondary to concerns for their own safety and security (Davis and Silver 2004). We, therefore, propose that the presence of armed non-state challengers will enhance public approval of state coercion, even where the state represents a credible source of threat to the citizenry. The quest for security will enhance citizens’ willingness to trade off civil and political rights that under normal circumstances help protect citizens from state transgressions and underpin their ability to hold the government accountable. This argument reasons with studies showing stronger public support for state human rights violations in the presence of salient threat (e.g. Conrad et al. 2018; Lupu and Wallace 2019), and studies that show how stability-seeking and authoritarian preferences often increase in the wake of terrorist attacks. (e.g. Bonanno and Jost 2006; Echebarria-Echabe and Fernández-Guede 2006; Landau et al. 2004). This argument leads to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2:** Citizens’ acceptance of government violations of political and civil rights is higher where state coercion occurs in the context of a violent non-state threat.

## Case background

To test our hypotheses, we use data from a vignette experiment embedded in a 2019 post-election survey of 1,080 individuals across two Indian states that held elections against the backdrop of a low-intensity armed insurgency: Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. India’s 17th Lok Sabha election was held between 11 April and 19 May 2019. Nationally, the elections were a race between the two largest political parties – Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the center-left Indian National Congress (INC) – where the incumbent won. This was also the predominant partisan cleavage

in Chhattisgarh, while the Jharkhand elections saw significant vote-shares to a few minor parties including the Communist Party of India. Yet, the BJP received the largest vote share in both states and also provided the state governors by the time of the national election.

Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are relevant contexts for understanding how militarized elections influence whether the public is willing to reject or approve the expansion of executive powers for two main reasons. First, the election in these two states took place against the backdrop of both state repression and threats from armed non-state actors. Both states are affected by an ongoing low-intensity Maoist insurgency. The insurgents have a supporter base predominantly among the traditionally marginalized low castes and indigenous tribal people. In 2006, the government declared the Maoist insurgency the country’s “single biggest internal security challenge ever faced” (Times of India 2006). The conflict was at its height around 2010, with a downward trend up to 2016. Yet, in 2019 it was the country’s second most fatal conflict (UCDP 2020). Conflict intensity varies within Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, with some parts of the states being severely affected while others to a lesser extent or not at all.<sup>5</sup>

The Indian state deployed more than 300,000 central paramilitary and police officers across the country to secure polling stations during the 2019 election (The Economic Times 2019b). This militarization of the election was also visible in areas where armed non-state actors challenged the state, seen in the influx of central paramilitary forces to secure polling stations, as well as the visible presence and activities of counterinsurgency forces (The Economic Times 2019a). The insurgents, in turn, sabotaged elections in both states through violent and non-violent means, including calls for election boycotts, violent attacks on political candidates and polling stations, as well as voter intimidation. Focusing on the electoral context in these two states thus allows us to assess how individuals navigate threats stemming from both government repression and armed non-state challengers and how this, in turn, affects citizens’ willingness to accept or reject the expansion of discretionary state power.

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<sup>5</sup>We control for conflict intensity in respondents’ geographic vicinity in robustness tests (Table A12, appendix).

A second motivation for studying Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh is that these represent credible cases for studying attitudes toward the appropriate limit of state power. The 2019 election was important for India’s democratic future in general. The country has been in a state of democratic recession, particularly since Narendra Modi was elected Prime Minister in 2014. Beginning with the gradual undermining of fundamental civil liberty rights, the Hindu-nationalist policies of the BJP government have in recent years also led to the decline in the quality of important democratic institutions and the free and fairness of elections, visible in a downward trend in the country’s overall democracy ratings (Alizada et al. 2021, 20; Freedom House 2021). Hindu nationalism was also visible in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, which are both parts of the Hindi belt and were, by 2019, traditional bastions of the BJP (The Hindu 2019). The extent to which individuals either play into the hands of or stand up against a government that infringes on citizens’ political rights and civil liberties is thus a particularly salient concern for Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, and for India’s democratic trajectory more broadly.

## **Data and research design**

The states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand were chosen strategically based on their experience with the Maoist insurgency and state repressive efforts, both of which manifest in the context of elections. Below the state level, we employed a clustered, stratified, multi-stage random selection procedure using the latest census data (2011) for population size and rural/urban breakdown. In each state, we selected ten districts with probability proportional to size random sampling. Within each district, we randomly selected nine primary sampling units (villages in rural areas and wards in urban areas) after stratification on rural/urban breakdown with probability proportional to size. Households were chosen based on a random walk, and individuals within households were chosen using a simple random selection technique in combination with a 50/50 gender quota. For the study, we interviewed 6 people per PSU,

resulting in two respondents per experimental condition in each PSU. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and were paper-based. For an in-depth discussion of ethical considerations and steps taken to protect the integrity of our respondents, see the supplementary appendix (section A).

## Experimental design

In the vignette experiment, which consists of a selective information prime, we randomly assign 1,080 individuals to three equally sized experimental conditions (N=360): a control group receiving no treatment; a treatment group being primed on militarized elections by state security forces; and a treatment group being primed on militarization of elections by state security forces in the context of a violent non-state threat. The treatment assignment was randomized at the individual level, blocked at the level of the primary sampling unit, and maintained a 50/50 gender split.

All individuals in each condition first receive the same introductory vignette, simply reminding them of the election: *“As you know, the 2019 Lok Sabha national election in India was just concluded, seeing a race between prime minister Narendra Modi’s BJP and the main opposition party Congress (INC).”* The two treatment groups receive an experimental prime. The first treatment condition provides information about a heavy central security force presence during the elections: *“Ahead of the elections, tens of thousands of security forces and CRPFs were sent to this area. As the state went to the polls, government police personnel and central paramilitary forces were deployed on a war footing, heavily armed and engaging in cordon and search operations.”*<sup>6</sup> The second treatment condition, in addition to the neutral prime and the information about state coercion, also includes information about an insurgent attack on an incumbent BJP political party convoy: *“The security forces maintained a very high state of alert after Maoist insurgents, in one out of several deadly*

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<sup>6</sup>While law and order is the primary responsibility of each state’s police force (The Constitution of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/pdf1/S7.pdf>), their lack of resources and capabilities means that central armed police forces (in particular the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) (Subramanian 2007, 110, 112)) are both involved in counterinsurgency and deployed to secure polling stations during elections.

*attacks, killed a BJP legislator and four other people with a road-side explosive.*” To enhance the credibility of the prime and to avoid deception, we formulated these vignettes based on incidents that have occurred during the election campaign, that were reported in the news, and that therefore should be a realistic scenario for respondents.

After the treatment vignettes, we measure our outcome variable by asking all respondents to what extent they agree or disagree with several statements regarding government policies that extend the power of the executive and restrict political rights and civil freedoms. This includes infringements on the right to vote (item 1), freedom of the press (item 2), and freedom of assembly (item 3): “With this in mind, we would now like to read a list of statements to you. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements:”

- To prevent violent elections, the government should be allowed to restrict the number of polling stations in areas where the support for the Maoist cause is alleged to be high.
- To uphold electoral security, the government should be allowed to detain journalists that are critical of the security forces’ anti-Naxalite campaign.
- To prevent violent elections, the government should be allowed to use violence against civilians participating in a protest, strike or political meeting that is supportive of the Maoist cause.

## Measurement and estimation

We construct our outcome variable as an additive index that sums for each individual the responses across all three survey items.<sup>7</sup> The survey items have a four-point Likert answer scale (0=strongly disagree, 1=somewhat disagree, 2=somewhat agree, 3=strongly agree).

The resulting additive index takes on any value between 0 and 9, with higher values indicating

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<sup>7</sup>Table A.2 in the appendix shows summary statistics disaggregated by experimental condition for all variables included in the analysis.

a greater willingness to expand on the discretionary powers of the executive to transgress on citizens’ political rights and freedoms. Figure A.1 in the online appendix shows the distribution of all items. “Do not know” responses and refusal to answer any of the items are coded as missing values (N=171). Regressing our treatment assignment on item non-responses for each of our three outcome items, we find that there is no systematic difference in the likelihood of item non-response across our experimental conditions (Figure A3a). Disaggregating item non-responses across experimental conditions by a range of respondent characteristics related to key demographics (Table A4), political marginalization and conflict intensity (Table A3), we also do not find any evidence that it predicts *who* is not responding. Hence, while decreasing sample size due to missing values leads to a loss of information, it does not introduce bias. Finally, we show that item non-response is unlikely to be driven by a too complex experimental setup or technical outcome questions, as respondents with a, perhaps, lower cognitive capacity (the low educated and socio-economically weak) are not more likely to self-censor (Figure A3b and A3c).

To test hypothesis 1, we construct our treatment variable as a binary indicator that is coded 0 for individuals in the control group and 1 for individuals receiving the state coercion prime. To test hypothesis 2, we construct a variable where individuals receiving the state coercion prime are coded 0, and individuals receiving the combined state coercion and insurgent violence are coded 1.

Our statistical analysis also accounts for a set of demographic individual-level characteristics that are likely to influence political attitudes: *age* (integer), *sex* (binary, 0=men), *urban/rural residency* (binary, 0=rural), *socio-economic status* (continuous), *education*(categorical, 0=low educated), *religion* (categorical, 0=Hindu), and *caste* (categorical, 0=scheduled castes). We use these variables to assess the integrity of randomization in our treatment assignment by testing whether the three experimental groups are balanced across these variables (Figure A2) and to adjust our treatment effects to get more precise estimates. The survey items and data used to measure these variables, as well as the details on the construction of the

variables, are displayed in Table A.1.

We test our hypotheses by regressing our dependent variable on our treatment variables in two separate models. For hypothesis 1, we estimate the average treatment effect of state militarized elections by comparing individuals in the control group to those receiving the state coercion prime. For hypothesis 2, we estimate the average treatment effect of state militarized elections in the presence of violent dissent by comparing individuals who receive the state coercion prime to those who receive the combined prime on state coercion and an insurgent violent threat.

## Analysis

Table 1 presents the results from our ordinary least square models that form the basis for evaluating hypotheses 1 and 2. For each hypothesis, we run two different models: a bivariate model (Models 1 and 3), and a covariate-adjusted model (Models 2 and 4). Models 1 and 2 report the average treatment effects for the state coercion prime. This is a test of our first hypothesis suggesting that state militarization of the electoral environment is likely to be associated with citizens' lower willingness to accept government violation of democratic rights and freedoms. In both models, the coefficient for our treatment is negative, as expected, but not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that citizens' willingness to accept government violation of democratic rights is higher where state coercion occurs in the context of a violent non-state threat. Model 3 tests this hypothesis. The coefficient for the combined treatment is positive, indicating that individuals who receive information about state coercion in the context of violent threat from an insurgent actor are more likely to support policies that allow the government to transgress on democratic rights, in comparison to individuals who only receive information on state coercive presence. The effect is statistically significant in the bivariate model, but slightly less precisely estimated in the covariate-adjusted model (Model 4,  $p=0.073$ ).



While the effect size is with an increase of 0.365 (bivariate model) and 0.347 (covariate-adjusted model) on our 9-point additive scale appears relatively modest, recall that our treatment merely consists of exposure to a selective information prime, administered in an environment where respondents' already have knowledge of security threats from state and non-state actors.

**Table 1** Average Treatment Effects (OLS)

	Hypothesis 1		Hypothesis 2	
	1	2	3	4
State coercion	-0.206 (0.184)	-0.248 (0.193)		
State coercion + insurgent violence			0.365* (0.185)	0.347 (0.193)
Age		0.003 (0.008)		0.001 (0.008)
Women		-0.123 (0.196)		-0.042 (0.194)
Urban		0.058 (0.249)		0.370 (0.256)
Socio-econ. status		-0.036 (0.026)		-0.027 (0.026)
Medium education		0.007 (0.243)		0.195 (0.241)
High education		0.332 (0.368)		0.413 (0.358)
Scheduled Tribe		-0.579 (0.483)		-0.057 (0.440)
Other Backward Classes		-0.468 (0.477)		-0.296 (0.437)
Other caste (General)		-0.066 (0.552)		-0.626 (0.509)
Muslim		-0.298 (0.482)		-0.526 (0.464)
Christian		-0.728 (0.394)		-0.900* (0.414)
Other		-0.670 (0.558)		-0.755 (0.530)
Constant	6.103*** (0.129)	6.723*** (0.669)	5.897*** (0.130)	6.078*** (0.624)
Observations	572	533	556	528
$R^2$	0.002	0.032	0.007	0.034
Adjusted $R^2$	0.000	0.008	0.005	0.009

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## Exploratory sub-group analysis

We do not find support for our expectation that individuals should become less likely to support an expansion in state discretionary powers when primed on state coercion. Does this mean that citizens are indifferent to a militarized electoral environment where the state displays its coercive force? To address this question, we conduct an exploratory subgroup analysis that examines heterogeneous treatment effects. It is possible that the degree to which citizens perceive state militarization as a threat depends on citizens' existing relationship with the state, which is shaped by societal and political cleavages. These affect citizens' experiences with, as well as their expectations towards, state security forces (e.g. Curtice 2021; González 2021; Nanes 2021). Politically marginalized groups are possibly more likely to interpret state display of coercive force as a threat. In societies affected by political violence and dissent, the state uses its coercive institutions selectively to maintain the political status quo (Enloe 1980; Weitzer 1995). In such contexts, marginalized populations are more repressively policed in general (e.g. Ben-Porat and Yuval 2012). Security forces are also likely to enforce security selectively by protecting the incumbent's constituents' interest in pursuing electoral gains (Wilkinson 2004). Hence, it is possible that individuals belonging to politically marginalized populations might be more susceptible to reacting negatively to a heavy security force presence during elections and to be particularly unlikely to grant the executive more leeway to curtail democratic rights.

In the context of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, several cleavages could be relevant for denoting political marginalization. On the one hand, national political cleavages along ethno-religious identities could matter. One of the main societal divisions in India is sectarian. Particularly since the election of the Modi-led BJP government in 2014, India has been in a state of increasing Hindu nationalism (Alizada et al. 2021). The BJP has taken populist and authoritarian measures to marginalize non-Hindus (Kenny 2017) and has exploited communal violence in attempts to increase its vote share (Brass 2003; Wilkinson 2004). This polarization along sectarian lines is also observable among India's state security forces,

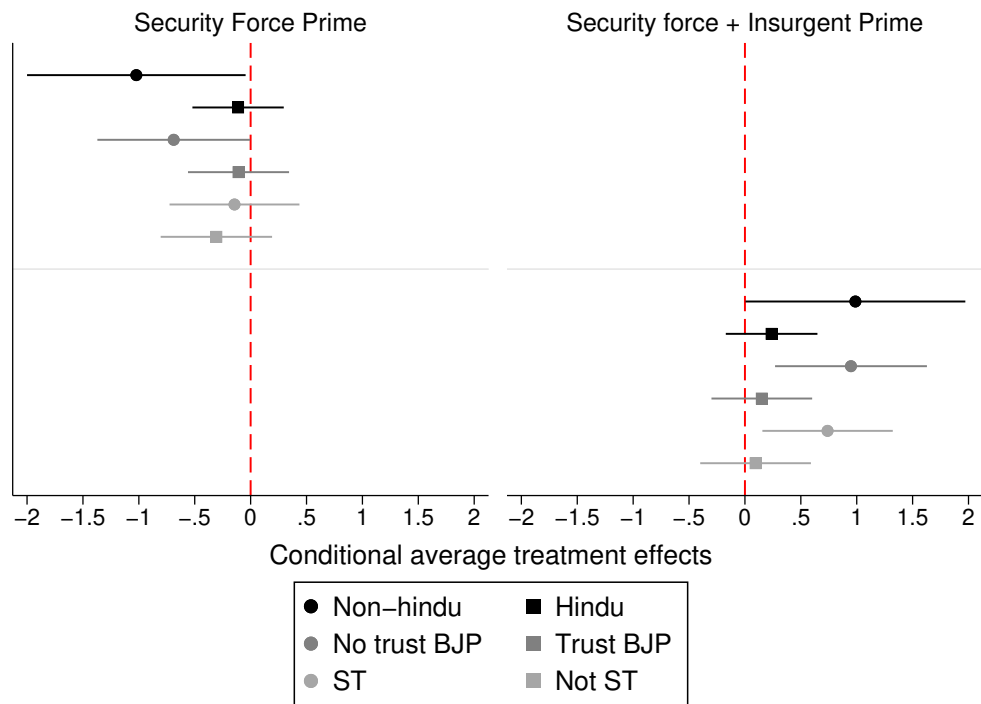
where the police have been criticized for their partisan behavior in favor of the Hindu population and bias against other religious groups (e.g. Brass 2003; Jaffrelot 2010). Thus, individuals belonging to sectarian groups other than Hinduism might be more fearful of a state-militarized electoral environment than Hindus. On the other hand, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand also have a large marginalized tribal population from which the Maoist insurgents traditionally have drawn support (Shah 2019). Individuals belonging to the scheduled tribes are more likely to be suspected as Maoist supporters by the state and, therefore, more vulnerable to state repression. They might thus be more likely to reject government transgression on democratic rights when primed on a heavy security force presence.

We construct variables for both indicators of marginalization, one operating at the national and one at the local level. The variable *Hindu* is coded 1 for individuals who report being Hindu, whereas any other sectarian identity group is coded 0. Because our sample includes few individuals not Hindus, particularly in Chhattisgarh, we construct a second variable that proxies these national political cleavages and who has a relatively similar distribution across the two states. The variable *Trust in BJP* denotes whether an individual reports to trust the BJP “a lot” or “somewhat (coded 1) vs. “just a little” or “not at all” (coded 0).<sup>8</sup> To proxy marginalization as a consequence of belonging to insurgent constituencies, we code a variable *Not ST* that is coded 0 for individuals who report to belong to the scheduled tribe caste, whereas all other individuals are coded 1.

We estimate the conditional average treatment effect (CATE) for each marginalized group by including an interaction term between the state coercion prime and the dummy denoting marginalization, alongside each component term. The coefficient for the state coercion treatment thus denotes the CATE for each subgroup (i.e., the effect of the treatment when the other component term equals zero, meaning non-Hindu, not trusting the BJP, and belonging to scheduled tribes). The results are displayed in Figure A5 based on covariate-adjusted models. A full regression table is presented in the appendix (Table A5).

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<sup>8</sup>We do not use self-reported vote choice or party affiliation, as these variables have a lot of missing values.



**Figure 1:** Conditional average treatment effects of state coercion (left) and state coercion + insurgent violence (right) by political marginalization status (based on covariate adjusted models in Table A5; 95% confidence intervals).

Marginalization seems to condition citizens' responses to the state coercion prime, but only when proxied by identities that reflect marginalization along *national* level cleavages related to ethno/religious/political belonging. The treatment effect is negative and statistically significant for both non-Hindus and those that do not trust the BJP, meaning that individuals belonging to these groups decrease their willingness to condone executive transgression of political rights and civil liberties when receiving information about the state's coercive display. With a negative change of 1 and 0.688 on our additive scale, these effects are also quite substantive. For Hindus and those trusting the BJP, receiving a state coercion prime does not seem to affect their willingness to support government violations of democratic rights and freedoms: the effect is close to zero and not statistically significant. Belonging to insurgent constituencies does also not seem to condition the effect of the state coercion prime. The effect of the state coercive display treatment is very small and statistically non-significant for both respondents belonging to scheduled tribes and those belonging to other castes.<sup>9</sup>

We also examine conditional average treatment effects for the combined state coercion and insurgent violent condition. Theoretical expectations here are less clear. On the one hand, segments of the politically marginalized might be more supportive of the insurgents' cause (particularly the scheduled tribes). On the other hand, they might also be particularly vulnerable to heightened insecurity. For schedule tribes, while being insurgent constituents, they are likely also the ones suffering the most from the ongoing insurgency and, therefore, the group most willing to trade their rights for security.

Distinguishing politically marginalized and non-marginalized populations, we find that the effect of the combined prime on militarized elections is largely driven by a shift amongst the marginalized group, as seen in the right panel in Figure 1. Primed on state coercion in the context of violent non-state threats, non-Hindus, those not trusting the BJP, and those belonging to scheduled tribes become more willing to accept restrictions on democratic rights

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<sup>9</sup>The results are similar when using a dummy that codes both scheduled tribes and scheduled castes as marginalized (Table A6).

compared to the condition with only the state coercion prime. Effect sizes are substantial, ranging from 0.988 to 0.949 and 0.739, respectively. This suggests that groups which, due to their socio-political and economic status are most vulnerable to violence and repression, also are most likely to accept government transgressing on democratic rights, even if it involves granting more discretionary power with the regime.

## **Robustness tests and alternative explanations**

We report several robustness tests in the supplementary appendix. For our main models testing hypotheses 1 and 2, findings remain robust when including PSU-clustered standard errors and for PSU-level fixed effects (Table A7). The results for our exploratory subgroup analysis also remain very similar. However, the treatment effect among those not trusting the BJP is a bit less precisely estimated (Table A8 and A9). Results are also largely robust to the inclusion of state dummies, with slightly more uncertainty around the treatment effects for hypothesis 2 and among respondents not trusting the BJP (Table A10 and A11).

While surveying a conflict-affected population that realistically navigates competing threats from state and non-state actors renders credibility to our results, it also raises some questions about their interpretation. We address this in several ways. First, because conflict intensity might shape political attitudes, and individuals might interpret the biased treatments in light of their own experience with, and exposure to, state security forces and insurgents' activities, we account for conflict intensity in each respondent's spatial vicinity. While the proximity to violence variable is balanced across experimental conditions (Figure A2), it might still be systematically related to political marginalization, which is not randomized. To exclude that the subgroup differences are driven by confounding, we show results when controlling for the intensity of violence (based on UCDP geo-referenced event data set (Sundberg and Melander 2013), see section J). For both hypotheses, as well as for the exploration of subgroup effects, the direction and size of the effect of the treatments remain. While statistical significance levels are identical for hypothesis 1 and for the heterogeneous

treatment effect of the combined security and insurgent prime among all subgroups, the coefficient for hypothesis 2, as well as the heterogeneous treatment effect of state coercion information treatment among non-Hindus and those with low trust in the BJP is estimated with a bit more uncertainty.

Next, regarding our exploratory subgroup analysis, it might be that marginalized, compared to non-marginalized individuals report higher support for government transgression on democratic rights in the context of violent insurgent threat because they fear government retaliation. This is, however, unlikely, as marginalized populations report lower acceptance in the context of state coercion – opposite to what we would expect if preference falsification was present. We also show that there is no systematic differences between respondents belonging to marginalized and non-marginalized groups that would indicate preference falsification when it comes to survey questions that probe the extent to which these might fear political repercussions (Table A14). Asking whether people have to be careful about what they say about the government, the only marginalized groups that are more likely to agree than their non-marginalized counterparts are those with low trust in the BJP. Non-Hindus, on the other hand, are less likely to agree compared to Hindus, which is the opposite of what we would expect. For the marginalized group for which we would expect the strongest agreement here due to being the clearest insurgent constituency – scheduled tribes – we find no systematic difference to respondents from other castes.

## Conclusion

How do citizens navigate competing threats from state and armed non-state actors when forming opinions about the appropriate role of the state when it comes to upholding democratic rights and freedoms? We study this question in the context of elections, first, because elections represent particularly salient periods for shaping citizens’ political attitudes and second because electoral periods often become central theatres for armed contention between



state and non-state actors in weak democracies. We leverage data from a vignette experiment embedded in a post-election survey of 1,080 individuals across two conflict-affected states of India. Surveying citizens who already reside in a context where both state and non-state actors engage in violence, any effects we identify from selectively priming them with information about the most salient source of threat is likely to represent a conservative estimate.

We do not identify an overall effect of the state coercion prime. Exploratory sub-group analysis suggests, however, that politically marginalized groups become more critical of violations of democratic rights and freedoms when made aware of state coercive actions in their vicinity. We also find significant treatment effects in the expected direction for the combined state coercion and violent insurgency prime. Exploratory analysis suggests that it is, again, mainly marginalized populations that become more likely to support policies that allow the state to transgress on democratic rights. Our interpretation is that it is these populations that bear the highest cost of the ongoing insecurity and thus most conspicuously navigate the trade-off between freedom and safety to protect themselves from the most imminent threat.

These findings confirm, but also nuance, existing research. First, in line with recent work, our results indicate that violent elections can shape citizens' political preferences. Yet, in contrast to most previous work that has studied voter turnout and -choice, we also identify effects on political attitudes more broadly, relating to how citizens view government violations of political rights and civil liberties. This is an important finding because it reveals that security threats in an electoral context can affect the micro-level underpinnings of support for democratic governance. Meanwhile, our findings also suggest that how security threats affect democratic attitudes seems to depend on both the source of the threat and the characteristics of the individual exposed to it. Politically marginalized populations seem to navigate security threats much more carefully than their non-marginalized counterparts and more susceptible to perceive threats to elections — both from the state and armed non-state

actors – as a risk. For populations that are more closely politically aligned with the state, its display of coercive force may not bear the same implication and render less of an imprint on their attitudes. Which particular population segment is likely to remain indifferent, stand up against, or support governments that violate democratic rights may be related to how these groups position themselves in relation to state power. Our findings, therefore, speak to both the literature on the importance of electoral integrity for attitude formation more generally and the literature on the role that group identities play in conditioning the effects of threat perception more specifically. Ultimately, our study makes an important contribution to current debates about challenges to democracy by showing that democratically elected leaders may capitalize on contentious electoral environments to gather support for policies that undermine democratic rights.

We assess our research question using data from one specific case, so what is the generalizability of our findings? We argue for the internal validity of our experiment above, referring to treatments that mimic incidents that happened during the election and should be perceived as realistic by respondents. Yet, looking beyond the particular context, our treatment vignettes also resemble features of state militarization and violent non-state threats that occur during electoral processes in many countries across the globe. With upcoming elections, political leaders in non-consolidated electoral democracies often make use of and exaggerate security threats to shift public opinion in their favor, as a pretext to mobilize the state’s coercive apparatus and to motivate assembling more discretionary powers in the hands of the executive (e.g. Jenkins 2020). Alerting voters of violent non-state threats in the context of an election might, therefore, be exactly what political leaders would do to create rally-round-the-flag effects that make people more willing to expand the executive’s power and restrict democratic rights. We thus expect that our findings have implications for a range of contexts where citizens must carefully navigate competing threats by state and non-state actors.

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# Supplementary Appendix

## Militarized Elections and Citizen Support for Democratic Rights: Evidence from India

### Contents

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### A Ethical considerations

We received ethics approval for the survey and vignette experiment from the *Anonymized ERB* on 6 May 2019 (ID no *anonymized*). In each step of the process, we followed the “do

no harm principle”, taking a number of precautions to avoid putting respondents and the enumerators at risk (Wood 2006). First, to ensure that the survey does not violate local norms and customs, we partnered with the Lokniti Programme at the Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS; New Delhi India), India’s foremost public opinion research institute with vast experience of large-scale surveys on sensitive topics, also in the selected survey sites. Both our survey questionnaire and the vignette experiment were reviewed by our local partner to ensure that no questions were included that could harm respondents or enumerators. Second, relying on CSDS ensured that enumerators were carefully trained to be able to navigate the situation on the ground. This was important to both ensure that enumerators were interacting with respondents in line with local customs, but also that the enumerators themselves were comfortable conducting interviews in the specific context. Third, to avoid deception, we designed our experimental vignette based on incidents that happened during the election and were reported in the media. This was important to avoid misrepresenting actors’ behavior and not to spread rumors. We debriefed respondents at the end of the survey interview and stressed our own commitment to non-violence. To ensure that our survey and the embedded experiment would not intervene with the election, we conducted the survey two months after the election results were announced. Fourth, the enumerators conducted all survey interviews based on informed consent. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey, how they were selected (randomly), that their identity would not be revealed, and that they could end their voluntary participation in the interview whenever they like. Finally, we ensure confidentiality not only at the individual level but also at the community level by not revealing any information in our replication material that could link individuals to small geographical areas. This implies that we do not provide location data such as geo-codes and provide as the smallest geographical unit the name of the district in which a survey respondent was interviewed. Districts are large geographical units, making it impossible to trace specific communities and individuals. For PSUs, we only provide random numerical codes, no names.

## B Coding of pre-treatment covariates

**Table A1** Survey items for key demographic variables.

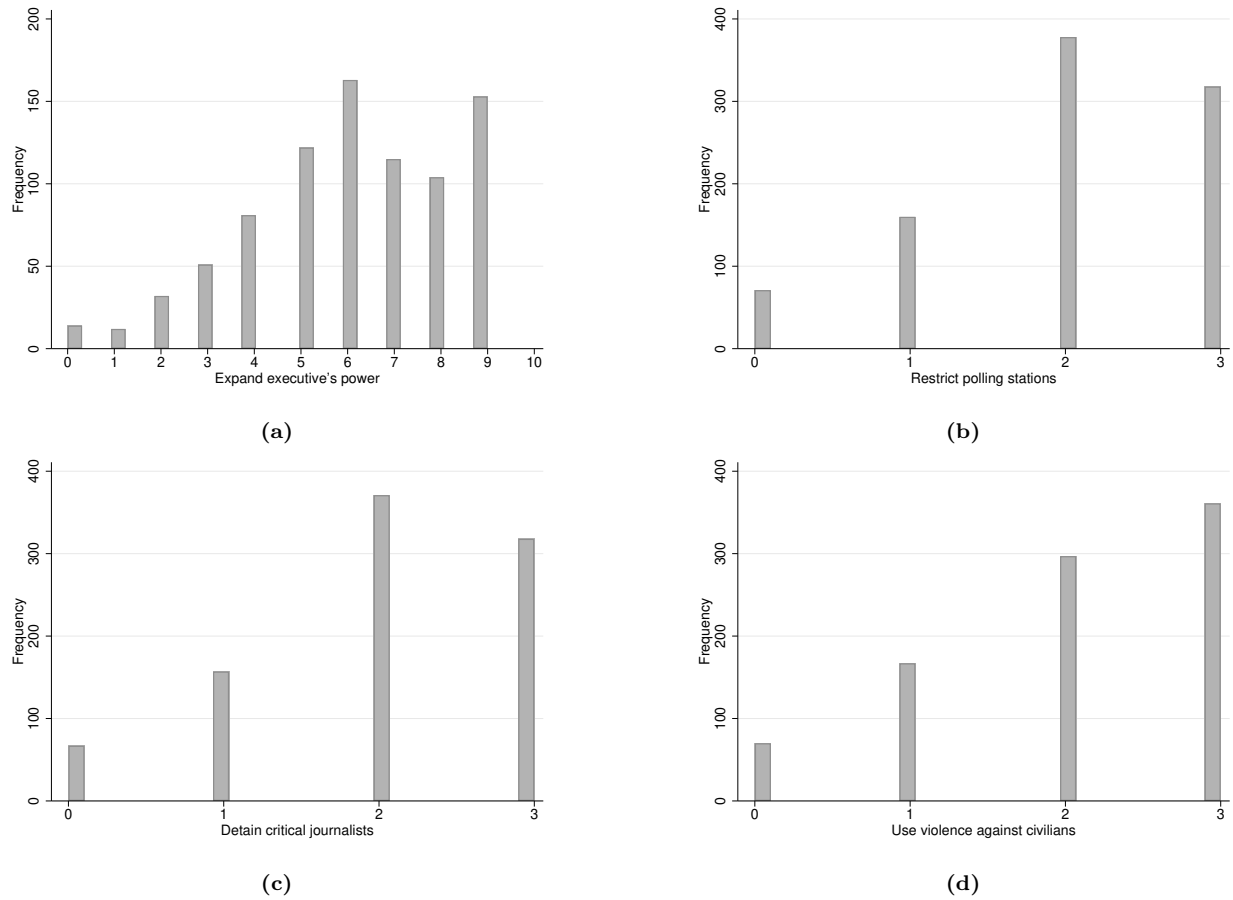
Variable	Survey item/data source	Scale
<i>Age</i>	How old are you?	Continuous
<i>Women</i>	Record gender of respondent (by enumerator)	0=Male 1=Female
<i>Urban</i>	Recorded by enumerator	0=Urban 1=Rural
<i>Socio-economic status</i>	Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: a. Gone without enough food to eat? b. Gone without enough clean water for home use? c. Gone without medicines or medical treatment? d. Gone without enough fuel to cook your food? e. Gone without a cash income?	Additive index (0-20) based on: 0=Never 1=Just once or twice 2=Several times 3=Many times 4=Always
<i>Religion</i>	What is your religion?	Categorical: 1=Hindu 2=Muslim 3=Christian 4=Other
<i>Caste</i>	What is your cast group?	Categorical: 1=Scheduled Caste (SC) 2=Scheduled Tribes (ST) 3=Other Backward Classes (OBC) 4=Other (General)
<i>Education</i>	Up to what level have you studied?	Categorical: 0=low education 1=medium education 2=High education
<i>Conflict intensity</i>	UCDP-GED	Categorical: 0=a lot of violence (more than 5 events/20km) 1=some violence (up to 5 events/20km) 2=no violence (no events/20km)

## C Descriptive statistics

**Table A2** Descriptive statistics disaggregated by experimental condition.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	%	N
<i>Control group</i>						
Willingness to accept restrictions	6.10	2.23	0	9	–	291
Age	38.97	12.81	18	75	–	359
Women	0.5	0.50	0	1	–	360
Urban	0.22	0.41	0	1	–	360
Soc. econ. status	3.97	3.98	0	18	–	350
Low education	–	–	–	–	25.66	87
Medium education	–	–	–	–	61.95	210
High education	–	–	–	–	12.39	42
Scheduled caste	–	–	–	–	5.57	20
Scheduled tribes	–	–	–	–	42.06	151
Other backward classes	–	–	–	–	42.34	152
Other castes (general)	–	–	–	–	10.03	36
Hindu	–	–	–	–	87.71	314
Muslim	–	–	–	–	3.63	13
Christian	–	–	–	–	5.87	21
Other religions	–	–	–	–	2.79	10
A lot of violence (20km)	0.12	0.32	0	1	–	360
Some violence (20km)	0.26	0.44	0	1	–	360
No violence (20km)	0.62	0.49	0	1	–	360
<i>State coercion</i>						
Willingness to accept restrictions	5.89	2.16	0	9	–	281
Age	39.49	12.97	18	90	–	360
Women	0.5	0.50	0	1	–	360
Urban	0.22	0.41	0	1	–	360
Soc. econ. status	3.07	3.94	0	16	–	351
Low education	–	–	–	–	31.76	108
Medium education	–	–	–	–	55.59	189
High education	–	–	–	–	12.65	43
Scheduled caste	–	–	–	–	4.47	16
Scheduled tribes	–	–	–	–	46.37	166
Other backward classes	–	–	–	–	38.55	138
Other castes (general)	–	–	–	–	10.16	38
Hindu	–	–	–	–	88.27	316
Muslim	–	–	–	–	3.35	12
Christian	–	–	–	–	5.31	19
Other religions	–	–	–	–	3.07	11
A lot of violence (20km)	0.12	0.32	0	1	–	360
Some violence (20km)	0.26	0.44	0	1	–	360
No violence (20km)	0.62	0.49	0	1	–	360
<i>State coercion + insurgent violence</i>						
Willingness to accept restrictions	6.26	2.20	0	9	–	275
Age	40.38	13.18	18	90	–	359
Women	0.50	0.50	0	1	–	360
Urban	0.22	0.42	0	1	–	360
Soc. econ. status	3.81	4.05	0	20	–	360
Low education	–	–	–	–	27.99	96
Medium education	–	–	–	–	57.43	197
High education	–	–	–	–	14.58	60
Scheduled caste	–	–	–	–	6.94	25
Scheduled tribe	–	–	–	–	40.83	147
Other backward classes	–	–	–	–	41.39	149
Other castes (general)	–	–	–	–	10.83	30
Hindu	–	–	–	–	86.94	313
Muslim	–	–	–	–	4.44	16
Christian	–	–	–	–	5.28	19
Other religions	–	–	–	–	3.33	12
A lot of violence (20km)	0.12	0.32	0	1	–	360
Some violence (20km)	0.26	0.44	0	1	–	360
No violence (20km)	0.62	0.49	0	1	–	360

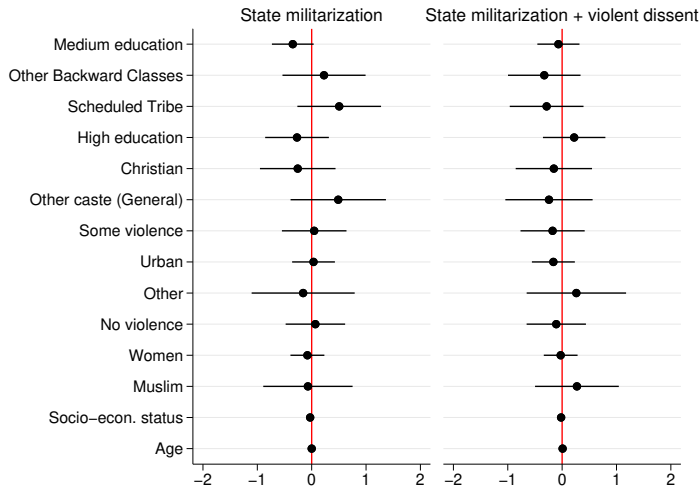
## D Distribution of outcome items



**Figure A1:** Distribution of responses to the additive index (panel a) and for each outcome item separately (panels b-d).

## E Covariate balance

In order to assess the integrity of our random treatment assignment, we conduct balance tests where we regress the treatment assignment (control group, state coercion, state coercion + insurgent violence) on a set of key demographic variables using a multinomial regression model with the control group as reference (Gerber and Green 2012). These include *age* (intefer), *gender* (0=male), *rural/urban* (0=rural), *socio-economic status* (continous) *education* (0=none), *caste* (0=Scheduled Castes), and *religion* (0=Hindu). We also include an indicator for conflict intensity within each respondents spatial vicinity (0=a lot of violence, 1=some violence, 2=no violence). As Figure A2 shows, none of the corresponding coefficients reach conventional statistical significance levels, indicating that these variables are balanced across experimental conditions.



**Figure A2:** Treatment assignment as predictor for item non-responses with the control group as reference and 95% confidence intervals. Multinomial logistic regression.

## F Analysis of item non-responses

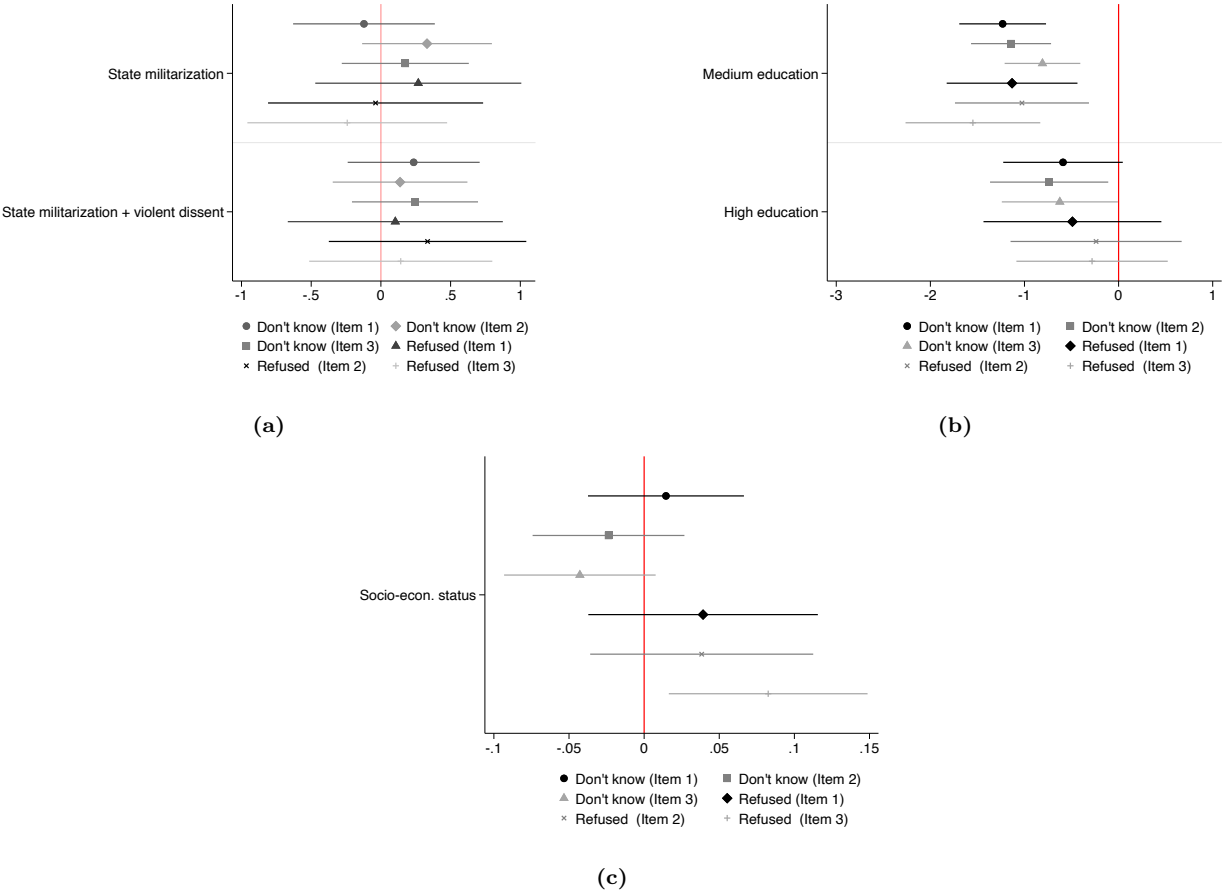
When constructing our dependent variable, we code “Do not know” responses and refusal to answer on any of the items as missing values (N=171). To assess whether item non-responses bias our results, we run several tests. First, we regress the treatment assignment (0 = control, 1 = state coercion, 2 = state coercion + insurgent violence) on item non-responses for each of our three outcome items (0 = answered, 1 = don’t know, as well as 0=answered, 1 = refused) in separate logistics regression models. As the coefficient plot in Figure A3a shows, we find that there are no systematic difference in the likelihood of item non-response across our experimental conditions. This indicates that while the decrease in sample size due to missing values leads to a loss of information, it does not seem to introduce bias.

Second, we show that item non-responses overall are not driven by respondent characteristics that may indicate their cognitive capacity to follow the experiment or answer the outcome questions. We proxy this with education level (Figure A3b) and socio-economic status (Figure A3b), and use these as predictors of item non-response. While respondents with medium levels of education are less likely not to respond compared to those with low education, there is no clear pattern indicating a systematic differences between low and highly educated individuals. Likewise, socio-economic status does not seem to predict item non-responses.

Finally, while treatment assignment does not affect *how many* respondents choose not to answer the outcome questions, it could still affect *who* chooses not to answer. This introduces bias if these individual level characteristics also predict respondents’ willingness to compromise with civil liberties and political rights (our outcome). We thus assess whether there are systematic differences in item non-responses between control and each of our treatment groups by the following respondent characteristics: political marginalization (Hindu, trust in BJP, and not scheduled tribes), general demographics (gender, education, socio-economic status, and rural/urban residency), as well as proximity to violence. To assess this, we run linear probability models interacting treatment assignment with these respondent



characteristics and regressing this, alongside the respective component terms, on item non-response for each outcome. For sake of simplicity, we use only one general measure that indicates whether a respondent has either answered “don’t know” or refused to answer. As Tables A3 and A4 show, we largely do not find evidence for this concern. As the statistically non-significant component terms of both our treatments indicate, there is no difference between control and treatment groups in item non-responses for politically marginalized groups (Table A3, Model 1-9). The same applies to their non-marginalized counterparts (not displayed in the table, but code available in replication material). The same is true for all demographic variables (Table A4, Model 1-12), as well as violence (Table A3, Model 10-12).



**Figure A3:** Treatment assignment (control group as reference, panel a), education (high education as reference, panel b) and socio-economic status (panel c) as predictors of item non-responses. Logistic regression models, displayed are 95% confidence intervals.

**Table A3** Differences in item-non response across treatment assignemnt, by political marginalization and exposure to violence

	Hindu			Trust BJP			Not scheduled tribes			Violence		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State coercion	-0.021 (0.075)	-0.045 (0.078)	-0.068 (0.081)	0.016 (0.045)	0.071 (0.046)	0.039 (0.048)	0.009 (0.039)	0.022 (0.041)	0.020 (0.042)	0.027 (0.033)	0.049 (0.034)	0.036 (0.035)
State coercion + insurgent violence	-0.004 (0.073)	0.018 (0.076)	0.102 (0.079)	0.028 (0.044)	0.036 (0.045)	0.061 (0.047)	0.025 (0.040)	0.032 (0.042)	0.080 <sup>+</sup> (0.044)	0.049 (0.033)	0.049 (0.034)	0.049 (0.035)
Hindu	0.072 (0.056)	0.104 <sup>+</sup> (0.058)	0.104 <sup>+</sup> (0.060)									
State coercion × Hindu=1	0.026 (0.080)	0.086 (0.083)	0.083 (0.086)									
State coercion + insurgent violence × Hindu=1	0.037 (0.078)	0.008 (0.081)	-0.082 (0.084)									
Trust BJP				0.010 (0.038)	0.015 (0.039)	-0.009 (0.041)						
State coercion × Trust BJP=1				-0.033 (0.055)	-0.079 (0.056)	-0.052 (0.059)						
Not scheduled tribes							-0.060 (0.037)	-0.039 (0.039)	-0.035 (0.040)			
State coercion × not_st=1							-0.016 (0.052)	0.009 (0.054)	-0.024 (0.057)			
State coercion + insurgent violence × not_st=1							0.005 (0.053)	-0.011 (0.055)	-0.083 (0.057)			
Some violence										0.128* (0.042)	0.108* (0.044)	0.086 <sup>+</sup> (0.046)
High violence										0.129* (0.058)	0.121* (0.060)	0.170* (0.063)
State coercion × vio20=1										-0.123* (0.060)	-0.092 (0.062)	-0.100 (0.065)
State coercion + insurgent violence × vio20=1										-0.124* (0.060)	-0.113 <sup>+</sup> (0.062)	-0.070 (0.065)
State coercion × vio20=2										0.045 (0.082)	0.046 (0.085)	-0.012 (0.089)
State coercion + insurgent violence × vio20=2										0.070 (0.082)	0.046 (0.085)	-0.001 (0.089)
Observations	1076	1076	1076	1052	1052	1052	1077	1077	1077	1080	1080	1080
$R^2$	0.009	0.017	0.012	0.003	0.004	0.005	0.010	0.004	0.012	0.031	0.023	0.022
Adjusted $R^2$	0.005	0.013	0.008	-0.002	-0.001	0.001	0.005	-0.000	0.007	0.024	0.016	0.015

Standard errors in parentheses

<sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table A4** Differences in item-non response across treatment assignemnt, by demographics

	Gender			Education			Socio-econ. status			Urban/rural		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State coercion	0.028 (0.037)	0.056 (0.038)	0.056 (0.038)	-0.088 <sup>+</sup> (0.048)	-0.044 (0.051)	-0.044 (0.051)	0.011 (0.035)	0.056 (0.038)	0.056 (0.038)	-0.004 (0.030)	0.022 (0.031)	0.022 (0.031)
State coercion + insurgent violence	0.017 (0.037)	0.000 (0.038)	0.000 (0.038)	0.006 (0.050)	-0.026 (0.052)	-0.026 (0.052)	0.018 (0.035)	0.021 (0.038)	0.021 (0.038)	0.007 (0.030)	0.022 (0.031)	0.022 (0.031)
Women=1	0.078* (0.037)	0.050 (0.038)	0.050 (0.038)									
State coercion × Women=1	-0.056 (0.052)	-0.050 (0.054)	-0.050 (0.054)									
State coercion + insurgent violence × Women=1	0.017 (0.052)	0.050 (0.054)	0.050 (0.054)									
Medium education				-0.202* (0.043)	-0.214* (0.045)	-0.214* (0.045)						
High education				-0.074 (0.063)	-0.085 (0.066)	-0.085 (0.066)						
State coercion × Medium education				0.127* (0.059)	0.115 <sup>+</sup> (0.062)	0.115 <sup>+</sup> (0.062)						
State coercion × High education				-0.009 (0.087)	-0.007 (0.091)	-0.007 (0.091)						
State coercion + insurgent violence × Medium education				0.023 (0.060)	0.071 (0.063)	0.071 (0.063)						
State coercion + insurgent violence × High education				-0.037 (0.086)	-0.025 (0.090)	-0.025 (0.090)						
Socio-econ. status							0.006 (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)			
State coercion × Socio-econ. status							-0.007 (0.006)	-0.010 (0.007)	-0.010 (0.007)			
State coercion + insurgent violence × Socio-econ. status							-0.002 (0.006)	-0.000 (0.007)	-0.000 (0.007)			
Urban=1										-0.015 (0.044)	-0.003 (0.046)	-0.003 (0.046)
State coercion × Urban=1										0.016 (0.062)	0.039 (0.064)	0.039 (0.064)
State coercion + insurgent violence × Urban=1										0.078 (0.062)	0.015 (0.064)	0.015 (0.064)
Observations	1080	1080	1080	1022	1022	1022	1052	1052	1052	1080	1080	1080
$R^2$	0.012	0.009	0.009	0.045	0.040	0.040	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.002	0.002
Adjusted $R^2$	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.037	0.032	0.032	-0.002	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.003	-0.003

Standard errors in parentheses  
<sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

# G Exploratory subgroup analysis

**Table A5** Conditional Average Treatment Effects (OLS) by Subgroups

	Hindu				Trust BJP				Scheduled Tribes			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State coercion	-1.000*	-1.022*			-0.478	-0.688*			-0.116	-0.144		
	(0.491)	(0.498)			(0.326)	(0.348)			(0.278)	(0.296)		
State coercion + insurgent violence			0.975*	0.988*			0.870*	0.949*			0.718*	0.739*
			(0.490)	(0.501)			(0.326)	(0.346)			(0.287)	(0.297)
Hindu	0.095	0.125	1.021*	1.102*								
	(0.374)	(0.386)	(0.372)	(0.385)								
State coercion x Hindu	0.926 <sup>+</sup>	0.910 <sup>+</sup>										
	(0.530)	(0.538)										
State coercion + insurgent violence x Hindu			-0.716	-0.750								
			(0.529)	(0.543)								
Trust BJP					0.554*	0.286	0.899*	0.956*				
					(0.269)	(0.291)	(0.283)	(0.300)				
State coercion x Trust BJP					0.345	0.580						
					(0.394)	(0.416)						
State coercion + insurgent violence x Trust BJP							-0.698 <sup>+</sup>	-0.798 <sup>+</sup>				
							(0.395)	(0.415)				
Not ST									0.417	0.302	0.289	0.060
									(0.262)	(0.295)	(0.262)	(0.291)
State coercion x Not ST									-0.129	-0.162		
									(0.372)	(0.389)		
State coercion + insurgent violence x Not ST											-0.615	-0.644 <sup>+</sup>
											(0.377)	(0.390)
Pre-treatment covariates	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	570	533	555	528	568	529	546	519	571	533	555	528
$R^2$	0.015	0.036	0.021	0.037	0.026	0.050	0.026	0.056	0.009	0.028	0.012	0.036
Adjusted $R^2$	0.010	0.014	0.016	0.014	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.028	0.003	0.006	0.006	0.013

Standard errors in parentheses; <sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table A6** Conditional average treatment effects (OLS) for combined measure of scheduled tribes and castes

	Hypothesis 1		Hypothesis 2	
	1	2	3	4
State coercion	-0.205 (0.264)	-0.282 (0.281)		
State coercion + insurgent violence			0.742* (0.268)	0.765* (0.277)
Not STSC	0.251 (0.259)	0.073 (0.288)	0.270 (0.261)	0.090 (0.290)
State coercion x Not STSC	0.019 (0.370)	0.074 (0.385)		
State coercion + insurgent violence x Not STSC			-0.724+ (0.372)	-0.785* (0.384)
Age		0.003 (0.008)		0.002 (0.008)
Women		-0.135 (0.196)		-0.029 (0.193)
Urban		0.106 (0.248)		0.305 (0.252)
Socio-econ. status		-0.036 (0.026)		-0.023 (0.025)
Medium education		0.033 (0.243)		0.180 (0.239)
High education		0.384 (0.367)		0.423 (0.355)
Muslim		-0.275 (0.482)		-0.526 (0.461)
Christian		-0.797* (0.390)		-0.890* (0.408)
Other		-0.598 (0.549)		-0.869+ (0.521)
Constant	5.971* (0.188)	6.202* (0.498)	5.766* (0.184)	5.786* (0.480)
Observations	571	533	555	528
$R^2$	0.006	0.026	0.014	0.040
Adjusted $R^2$	0.000	0.004	0.009	0.017

Standard errors in parentheses

+  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.01$

## H PSU level fixed effects and clustered standard errors

Table A7 Average and Conditional Treatment Effects (OLS) with PSU fixed effects and clustered standard errors

	Hypothesis 1				Hypothesis 2			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
State coercion	-0.206 (0.168)	-0.183 (0.151)	-0.248 (0.179)	-0.229 (0.156)				
State coercion + insurgent violence					0.365* (0.179)	0.344* (0.169)	0.347+ (0.191)	0.399* (0.177)
Age			0.003 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.008)			0.001 (0.009)	-0.007 (0.009)
Women			-0.123 (0.170)	-0.221 (0.164)			-0.042 (0.166)	-0.175 (0.180)
Urban			0.058 (0.376)				0.370 (0.349)	
Socio-econ. status			-0.036 (0.032)	-0.065* (0.029)			-0.027 (0.027)	-0.021 (0.034)
Medium education			0.007 (0.261)	-0.106 (0.248)			0.195 (0.242)	-0.035 (0.280)
High education			0.332 (0.379)	0.033 (0.371)			0.413 (0.369)	-0.245 (0.404)
Scheduled Tribe			-0.579 (0.627)	-0.770 (0.573)			-0.057 (0.503)	0.400 (0.556)
Other Backward Classes			-0.468 (0.619)	-0.412 (0.569)			-0.296 (0.500)	0.122 (0.557)
Other caste (General)			-0.066 (0.629)	-0.018 (0.629)			-0.626 (0.541)	0.253 (0.624)
Muslim			-0.298 (0.523)	-0.905+ (0.501)			-0.526 (0.471)	-1.493* (0.620)
Christian			-0.728 (0.445)	-0.230 (0.443)			-0.900* (0.394)	-0.729 (0.538)
Other			-0.670 (0.470)	-1.264+ (0.719)			-0.755+ (0.383)	-1.263 (0.868)
Constant	6.103** (0.161)	6.092** (0.104)	6.723** (0.787)	7.185** (0.703)	5.897** (0.149)	5.907** (0.117)	6.078** (0.706)	6.287** (0.722)
PSU clustered	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
PSU fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	572	572	533	533	556	556	528	528
$R^2$	0.002	0.004	0.032	0.052	0.007	0.011	0.034	0.041
Adjusted $R^2$	0.000	-0.408	0.008	-0.397	0.005	-0.412	0.009	-0.411

Standard errors in parentheses

+  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table A8** Conditional Average Treatment Effects (OLS) by subgroups with clustered standard errors

	Hindu				Trust BJP				Not scheduled tribes			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State coercion	-1.000*	-1.022*			-0.478	-0.688 <sup>+</sup>			-0.116	-0.144		
	(0.406)	(0.420)			(0.326)	(0.366)			(0.216)	(0.233)		
State coercion + insurgent violence			0.975*	0.988*			0.870*	0.949*			0.718**	0.730**
			(0.442)	(0.463)			(0.344)	(0.372)			(0.247)	(0.259)
Hindu	0.095	0.125	1.021**	1.102**								
	(0.364)	(0.393)	(0.332)	(0.352)								
State coercion x Hindu	0.926*	0.910*										
	(0.421)	(0.440)										
State coercion + insurgent violence x Hindu			-0.716	-0.750								
			(0.485)	(0.512)								
Trust BJP					0.554 <sup>+</sup>	0.286	0.899**	0.956**				
					(0.309)	(0.336)	(0.298)	(0.318)				
State coercion x Trust BJP					0.345	0.580						
					(0.418)	(0.453)						
State coercion + insurgent violence x Trust BJP							-0.698 <sup>+</sup>	-0.798 <sup>+</sup>				
							(0.407)	(0.425)				
Not ST									0.417	0.302	0.289	0.412
									(0.297)	(0.330)	(0.269)	(0.566)
State coercion x Not ST									-0.129	-0.162		
									(0.317)	(0.329)		
State coercion + violent dissent x Not ST											-0.615 <sup>+</sup>	-0.662 <sup>+</sup>
											(0.333)	(0.350)
Age		0.003		0.002		0.004		0.003		0.002		0.002
		(0.008)		(0.009)		(0.008)		(0.009)		(0.008)		(0.009)
Women		-0.119		-0.034		-0.105		0.026		-0.139		-0.055
		(0.163)		(0.164)		(0.171)		(0.171)		(0.169)		(0.166)
Urban		0.042		0.367		0.122		0.490		0.075		0.362
		(0.376)		(0.348)		(0.383)		(0.345)		(0.373)		(0.347)
Socio-econ. status		-0.036		-0.029		-0.035		-0.033		-0.035		-0.025
		(0.032)		(0.027)		(0.031)		(0.027)		(0.032)		(0.027)
Medium education		-0.008		0.174		-0.021		0.216		0.027		0.183
		(0.260)		(0.238)		(0.255)		(0.242)		(0.259)		(0.240)
Scheduled Tribe		-0.623		-0.104		-0.539		-0.030				0.000
		(0.630)		(0.505)		(0.623)		(0.493)				(.)
Other Backward Classes		-0.451		-0.297		-0.431		-0.231				-0.326
		(0.615)		(0.499)		(0.615)		(0.496)				(0.506)
Other caste (General)		-0.072		-0.623		-0.077		-0.626				-0.660
		(0.625)		(0.540)		(0.639)		(0.532)				(0.545)
Muslim						-0.346		-0.540		-0.305		-0.531
						(0.530)		(0.467)		(0.513)		(0.474)
Christian						-0.707 <sup>+</sup>		-0.877*		-0.718		-0.892*
						(0.423)		(0.366)		(0.449)		(0.393)
Other						-0.631		-0.698 <sup>+</sup>		-0.567		-0.796*
						(0.458)		(0.381)		(0.435)		(0.384)
Clustered SE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	570	533	555	528	568	529	546	519	571	533	555	528
R <sup>2</sup>	0.015	0.036	0.021	0.037	0.026	0.050	0.026	0.056	0.009	0.028	0.012	0.039
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.010	0.014	0.016	0.014	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.028	0.003	0.006	0.006	0.013

Standard errors in parentheses  
<sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table A9** Conditional Average Treatment Effects (OLS) by subgroups with clustered standard errors

	Hindu				Trust BJP				Not scheduled tribes			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State coercion	-1.011*	-1.013*			-0.248	-0.467			-0.081	-0.118		
	(0.428)	(0.428)			(0.291)	(0.304)			(0.236)	(0.246)		
State coercion + insurgent violence			1.145*	1.181*			0.697*	0.820*			0.679*	0.703*
			(0.468)	(0.483)			(0.330)	(0.351)			(0.272)	(0.284)
Hindu	0.191	0.169	1.437**	1.521**								
	(0.385)	(0.391)	(0.459)	(0.477)								
State coercion x Hindu	0.973*	0.916 <sup>+</sup>										
	(0.467)	(0.468)										
State coercion + insurgent violence x Hindu			-0.931 <sup>+</sup>	-0.926 <sup>+</sup>								
			(0.510)	(0.531)								
Trust BJP					0.545*	0.313	0.649*	0.709*				
					(0.264)	(0.277)	(0.309)	(0.323)				
State coercion x Trust BJP					0.045	0.311						
					(0.362)	(0.374)						
State coercion + insurgent violence x Trust BJP							-0.420	-0.514				
							(0.412)	(0.432)				
Not ST									0.296	0.563 <sup>+</sup>	-0.072	-0.119
									(0.293)	(0.323)	(0.327)	(0.592)
State coercion x Not ST									-0.141	-0.176		
									(0.324)	(0.332)		
State coercion + insurgent violence x Not ST											-0.571	-0.523
											(0.366)	(0.382)
Age		-0.000		-0.004		0.002		-0.004		-0.001		-0.006
		(0.008)		(0.009)		(0.008)		(0.009)		(0.008)		(0.009)
Women		-0.183		-0.158		-0.214		-0.096		-0.237		-0.182
		(0.161)		(0.179)		(0.164)		(0.179)		(0.163)		(0.180)
Socio-econ. status		-0.066*		-0.026		-0.064*		-0.031		-0.065*		-0.022
		(0.028)		(0.034)		(0.029)		(0.033)		(0.029)		(0.034)
Medium education		-0.139		-0.025		-0.122		-0.048		-0.116		-0.024
		(0.247)		(0.278)		(0.249)		(0.277)		(0.247)		(0.280)
Scheduled Tribe		-0.767		0.388		-0.697		0.355				0.000
		(0.570)		(0.552)		(0.573)		(0.550)				(.)
Other Backward Classes		-0.473		0.043		-0.283		0.220				0.073
		(0.564)		(0.554)		(0.567)		(0.549)				(0.558)
Other caste (General)		-0.160		0.160		0.003		0.244				0.209
		(0.623)		(0.617)		(0.624)		(0.615)				(0.624)
Muslim						-0.869 <sup>+</sup>		-1.494*		-0.909 <sup>+</sup>		-1.496*
						(0.499)		(0.613)		(0.500)		(0.620)
Christian						-0.138		-0.721		-0.159		-0.746
						(0.452)		(0.533)		(0.441)		(0.538)
Other						-1.122		-1.167		-1.076		-1.337
						(0.716)		(0.853)		(0.699)		(0.868)
PSU fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	570	533	555	528	568	529	546	519	571	533	555	528
R <sup>2</sup>	0.025	0.056	0.034	0.047	0.023	0.067	0.026	0.058	0.006	0.049	0.020	0.046
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	-0.387	-0.387	-0.386	-0.399	-0.392	-0.387	-0.408	-0.407	-0.413	-0.398	-0.407	-0.408

Standard errors in parentheses

<sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$



# I Regression with state dummies

**Table A10** Average Treatment Effects (OLS) with state dummies

	Hypothesis 1		Hypothesis 2	
	1	2	3	4
State coercion	-0.189 (0.183)	-0.214 (0.191)		
State militarization + insurgent violence			0.357 <sup>+</sup> (0.184)	0.330 <sup>+</sup> (0.191)
Age		0.003 (0.008)		0.002 (0.008)
Women		-0.119 (0.194)		-0.037 (0.193)
Urban		-0.085 (0.249)		0.284 (0.256)
Socio-econ. status		-0.047 <sup>+</sup> (0.026)		-0.037 (0.026)
Medium education		0.150 (0.243)		0.336 (0.244)
High education		0.467 (0.365)		0.546 (0.358)
Scheduled Tribe		-0.478 (0.478)		0.059 (0.438)
Other Backward Classes		-0.351 (0.473)		-0.212 (0.435)
Other caste (General)		0.125 (0.548)		-0.477 (0.507)
Muslim		-0.060 (0.480)		-0.330 (0.465)
Christian		-0.368 (0.402)		-0.657 (0.419)
Other		-0.303 (0.560)		-0.447 (0.536)
Constant	5.822** (0.152)	6.172** (0.677)	5.629** (0.151)	5.612** (0.638)
State dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	572	533	556	528
$R^2$	0.022	0.057	0.028	0.050
Adjusted $R^2$	0.019	0.031	0.024	0.024

Standard errors in parentheses

<sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table A11** Conditional Average Treatment Effects (OLS) by subgroups with state dummies

	Hindu				Trust BJP				Scheduled Tribes			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
State coercion	-1.029*	-1.034*			-0.461	-0.621 <sup>+</sup>			-0.102	-0.100		
	(0.488)	(0.491)			(0.321)	(0.343)			(0.276)	(0.292)		
State coercion + insurgent violence			0.988*	0.987*			0.946**	0.976**			0.754**	0.740*
			(0.487)	(0.497)			(0.323)	(0.343)			(0.284)	(0.294)
Hindu	-0.170	-0.231	0.814*	0.867*								
	(0.382)	(0.392)	(0.376)	(0.390)								
State militarization x Hindu	0.974 <sup>+</sup>	0.964 <sup>+</sup>										
	(0.526)	(0.531)										
State militarization + violent dissent x Hindu			-0.738	-0.768								
			(0.525)	(0.539)								
Trust BJP					0.695**	0.432	1.017**	1.027**				
					(0.268)	(0.289)	(0.282)	(0.299)				
State militarization x Trust BJP					0.337	0.526						
					(0.388)	(0.411)						
State militarization + violent dissent x Trust BJP							-0.806*	-0.851*				
							(0.392)	(0.412)				
Not ST									0.399	0.325	0.271	0.046
									(0.259)	(0.291)	(0.260)	(0.289)
State militarization x Not ST									-0.127	-0.174		
									(0.368)	(0.384)		
State militarization + violent dissent x Not ST											-0.683 <sup>+</sup>	-0.683 <sup>+</sup>
											(0.374)	(0.387)
Age		0.003		0.003		0.005		0.004		0.003		0.003
		(0.008)		(0.008)		(0.008)		(0.008)		(0.008)		(0.008)
Women		-0.110		-0.028		-0.105		0.031		-0.140		-0.038
		(0.192)		(0.193)		(0.192)		(0.191)		(0.193)		(0.192)
Urban		-0.107		0.278		-0.023		0.405		-0.058		0.234
		(0.248)		(0.255)		(0.246)		(0.254)		(0.247)		(0.252)
Socio-econ. status		-0.046 <sup>+</sup>		-0.039		-0.043 <sup>+</sup>		-0.042 <sup>+</sup>		-0.047 <sup>+</sup>		-0.033
		(0.025)		(0.026)		(0.026)		(0.025)		(0.026)		(0.025)
Medium education		0.137		0.316		0.131		0.356		0.170		0.308
		(0.242)		(0.241)		(0.240)		(0.240)		(0.243)		(0.242)
Scheduled Tribe		-0.513		0.016		-0.412		0.102				
		(0.474)		(0.436)		(0.473)		(0.433)				
Other Backward Classes		-0.338		-0.216		-0.296		-0.140				
		(0.470)		(0.432)		(0.467)		(0.427)				
Other caste (General)		0.117		-0.471		0.128		-0.472				
		(0.543)		(0.504)		(0.541)		(0.498)				
Muslim						-0.094		-0.346		-0.055		-0.353
						(0.474)		(0.457)		(0.479)		(0.462)
Christian						-0.290		-0.637		-0.360		-0.634
						(0.405)		(0.417)		(0.402)		(0.418)
Other						-0.228		-0.391		-0.178		-0.543
						(0.553)		(0.525)		(0.553)		(0.531)
State dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	570	533	555	528	568	529	546	519	571	533	555	528
R <sup>2</sup>	0.031	0.062	0.036	0.053	0.055	0.080	0.049	0.073	0.028	0.053	0.034	0.054
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.024	0.039	0.029	0.029	0.048	0.051	0.042	0.044	0.021	0.029	0.027	0.030

Standard errors in parentheses

<sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

## J Controlling for conflict intensity

In Table A12 we show that our findings are robust when controlling for conflict intensity within each respondents spatial vicinity (i.e., within an approximately 20 km radius of the interview location, including violent events from 2015-01-01 to 2018-12-31). This is important because conflict intensity might shape democratic attitudes, and because individuals might interpret the treatments in light of their own experience with, and exposure to, state security forces and insurgents. We operationalize conflict intensity as three mutually exclusive dummy variables: “no violence” (0 events, excluded reference category), “some violence” (average of five or less events per year), and “a lot of violence” (average of more than 5 events per year). This includes all three types of violence from the UCDP GED (e.g., non-state, state-based, and one-sided violence) that have Maoist involvement. As Table A12 shows, the results remain largely robust. The only difference is that the coefficient for hypothesis 2 ( $p=0.066$ ), as well as those for the subgroup analysis of non-Hindus ( $p=0.05$ ) and those with low trust in the BJP ( $p=0.059$ ) for the state coercion information treatment are estimated with a bit more uncertainty.

**Table A12** Average and Conditional Treatment Effects (OLS) with conflict intensity control

	Hypothesis 1	Hypothesis 2	Hindu		Trust BJP		Scheduled tribes	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
State coercion	-0.254 (0.193)		-0.974 <sup>+</sup> (0.497)		-0.657 <sup>+</sup> (0.347)		-0.152 (0.295)	
State coercion + insurgent violence		0.354 <sup>+</sup> (0.192)		1.051* (0.500)		0.983** (0.345)		0.734* (0.296)
Hindu			0.040 (0.394)	0.939* (0.395)				
State coercion x Hindu			0.845 (0.537)					
State coercion + insurgent violence x Hindu				-0.813 (0.543)				
Trust BJP					0.302 (0.291)	0.966** (0.300)		
State coercion x Trust BJP					0.531 (0.416)			
State coercion + insurgent violence x Trust BJP						-0.845* (0.414)		
Not ST							0.276 (0.294)	0.075 (0.291)
State coercion x Not ST							-0.161 (0.388)	
State coercion + insurgent violence x Not ST								-0.626 (0.389)
A lot of violence (20km)	-0.790* (0.356)	-0.185 (0.368)	-0.780* (0.350)	-0.224 (0.354)	-0.744* (0.354)	-0.102 (0.363)	-0.817* (0.355)	-0.213 (0.367)
Some violence (20km)	-0.043 (0.243)	-0.529* (0.238)	-0.069 (0.238)	-0.537* (0.233)	-0.067 (0.242)	-0.500* (0.236)	-0.050 (0.241)	-0.536* (0.237)
Pre-treatment covariates	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	533	528	533	528	529	519	533	528
$R^2$	0.041	0.043	0.045	0.046	0.058	0.065	0.038	0.045
Adjusted $R^2$	0.013	0.015	0.020	0.020	0.027	0.033	0.012	0.019

Standard errors in parentheses

<sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

## K Social desirability bias

We conduct several analyses to address concerns about social desirability bias. For the average treatment effects (H1 and H2), we show that respondents who might be particularly likely to falsify their preferences do not differ systematically in their responses to our treatment from those that may be less likely to hide truthful answers (Table A13). For instance, highly educated individuals might be more aware of social norms, thus more likely to adapt their responses to these (e.g., Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986). Yet, including an interaction effect between our treatment and education we find no systematic difference in treatment response between individuals with different educational attainments (Model 1).<sup>10</sup> Likewise, while men might be more likely to report support for regime transgression of democratic rights in the context of insurgency in order to distance themselves from insurgent groups, we do not find systematic differences across gender in treatment response (Model 2).

There is also no clear pattern regarding systematic differences between respondents belonging to marginalized and non-marginalized groups that would indicate preference falsification when it comes to survey questions that probe the extent to which these might fear political repercussions. We use a pre-treatment survey question asking respondents: *“In your opinion, how often in India today do people have to be careful about what they say about the government?”*, and construct a binary measure (0= “never” and “rarely”; 1=“often” and “always”) that we regress in separate models on our proxies of political marginalization (Table A14). The only marginalized group that is more likely to report that people have to be careful than their non-marginalized counterpart are those with low trust in the BJP (Model 2). Non-hindus, on the other hand, are *less* likely to agree compared to Hindus (Model 1). For the marginalized group for which we would expect the strongest agreement due to being the most clear insurgent constituency – scheduled tribes – we find no systematic difference to respondents belonging to other castes (Model 3).

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<sup>10</sup>Note that the excluded reference category is high education.

**Table A13** Treatment response by gender and education (OLS)

	Education		Gender	
	1	2	3	4
State coercion=1	-0.313 (0.548)		-0.254 (0.258)	
Medium education	-0.452 (0.428)	-0.288 (0.418)		
Low education	-0.445 (0.491)	-0.552 (0.449)		
State coercion $\times$ Medium education	0.164 (0.599)			
State coercion $\times$ Low education	-0.107 (0.667)			
State coercion + insurgent violence		0.186 (0.520)		0.344 (0.259)
State coercion + insurgent violence $\times$ Medium education		0.167 (0.577)		
State coercion + insurgent violence $\times$ Low education		0.283 (0.635)		
Women			-0.211 (0.259)	-0.107 (0.261)
State coercion $\times$ Women			0.104 (0.369)	
State coercion+ insurgent violence $\times$ Women				0.038 (0.372)
Constant	6.548** (0.397)	6.235** (0.378)	6.204** (0.179)	5.950** (0.184)
Observations	543	531	572	556
$R^2$	0.008	0.011	0.004	0.007
Adjusted $R^2$	-0.001	0.002	-0.002	0.002

Standard errors in parentheses

+  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table A14** Do people have to be careful about what they say about the government?, by political marginalization (OLS)

	Hindu	Trust BJP	Not scheduled tribes
	1	2	3
Hindu	0.125* (0.049)		
Trust BJP		-0.136** (0.033)	
Not ST			0.039 (0.032)
Constant	0.487** (0.046)	0.682** (0.027)	0.574** (0.025)
Observations	971	952	972
$R^2$	0.007	0.017	0.002
Adjusted $R^2$	0.006	0.016	0.000

Standard errors in parentheses

+  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$