Performative Rebel Governance and Legibility

Ilayda B. Onder[*]

March 31, 2025

Abstract

Rebel groups often engage in performative governance acts that mimic the symbolic repertoires of sovereign states (e.g., printing currency, holding funeral rites, or building mausoleums). How do these acts shape rebel-constituency ties and civilian participation in rebellion? Extending constituency-centric theories of conflict, I conceptualize performative rebel governance as a legibility-oriented strategy for mapping civilian loyalties in harder-to-reach communities—those beyond the rebels' immediate networks. By observing voluntary participation in these symbolic acts, rebels can identify potential supporters who would otherwise be unlikely to mobilize, such as women, non-activists, and individuals without familial ties to the rebel movement. Yet, these same acts also increase the legibility of rebellion to the state, exposing pro-rebel civilians to surveillance and repression, raising the personal costs of radicalization and deterring individuals who might have otherwise mobilized in a lower-risk environment. Thus, performative rebel governance paradoxically trades off the ability to expand rebels' mobilization base beyond their traditional networks for an overall decline in mobilization due to heightened state repression. I provide evidence for this theory using a difference-in-differences framework, combining original spatial event data on the funeral rites of PKK fighters in Southeast Turkey with microdata on PKK recruitment. The findings substantiate the dual effect of symbolic governing acts on recruitment. While funeral rites increase the recruitment of women and individuals with no history of political activism or family ties to the rebel movement, overall recruitment declines, indicating that the suppressive effects of state surveillance and repression outweigh the mobilizing impact of symbolic governance. These results reveal an inherent dilemma in rebel governance in contested spaces: while governance helps insurgents overcome informational deficiencies by eliciting civilian agency to reveal allegiances, it simultaneously renders the social landscape of war more legible to the enemy.

Keywords: rebel recruitment, rebel governance, mobilization in civil war

11,611 Words

[*]Assistant Professor of Political Science, Texas A&M University. `ilaydaonder@tamu.com`.

> "The inability to tell friend from enemy is a recurring element of irregular war."
> —Kalyvas (2006, p. 89)

Introduction

In May 2012, thousands gathered in the district of Çermik in Diyarbakır/Turkey, to mourn the death of PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) fighter Ağa Karakaya, who had been killed in clashes between PKK rebels and the Turkish army[1]. As the crowd advanced toward the cemetery, they carried banners displaying images of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan alongside PKK flags. Chants of *"Revenge," "Honor the martyr,"* and *"PKK is the people, the people are here"* echoed through the streets. Officials from the pro-Kurdish political party BDP, local mayors, and members of civil society groups delivered speeches at the graveside. The gathering was met with resistance from state security forces. Clashes erupted when police fired tear gas into the air, prompting young attendees to respond with stones. What began as a commemoration had become a site of resistance.

This was just one of hundreds of public commemorations held for PKK fighters over the last decade[2]. Such ceremonies are not unique to the PKK; rebel groups worldwide engage in symbolic acts of governance that mirror the performative rituals of sovereign states—conducting communal vigils, building mausoleums or martyr cemeteries, establishing checkpoints on public roads, and even issuing identity documents or printing currency[3]. Groups such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka, FARC in Colombia, and FAFN in Côte d'Ivoire have all employed similar symbolic acts[4].

In paying more attention to these performative aspects of rebel governance, scholars increasingly recognize that non-state actors do not need territorial control to govern[5]. The rationale that the existing literature puts forward behind performative rebel governance is straightforward: rebels need a certain degree of local support to survive, and they often secure civilian compliance either by coercing or serving them. By mimicking the symbolic repertoires of sovereign states, however, they can project power, reinforce their presence in contested spaces, and foster identification between the rebel movement and civilian constituencies, thereby legitimizing their political authority, which in turn alleviates the need for coercion to facilitate compliance[6]. This strategic logic underpins the canonical theories of insurgent collective action[7], wartime civilian victimization in contested spaces[8], and institutionalized forms of rebel governance involving social service provi-

---

[1] (ANF News 2012)
[2] (Akin 2024)
[3] (Mampilly 2011)
[4] (Förster 2015; Mampilly 2015)
[5] (Loyle et al. 2021)
[6] (Mampilly 2015)
[7] (Wood 2003; Weinstein 2006)
[8] (Kalyvas 2006)

sion, justice provision, or law enforcement[9].

Yet, while studies of rebel-led civilian victimization and institutionalized governance are abundant, research on performative rebel governance remains underdeveloped. We lack systematic evidence linking performative acts by rebel groups to strengthened rebel-civilian relations or increased civilian support for rebellion. Furthermore, recent findings challenge long-held assumptions about the legitimacy-building effects of institutionalized rebel governance—documenting cases of civilian resistance to rebel governing efforts[10]—suggesting that performative governance warrants closer scrutiny as well. In this paper, I investigate how performative rebel governance— through emblematic public acts that mimic the symbolic repertoires of sovereign states—shapes rebel-constituency relations. How do performative public acts by rebels impact rebel-constituency ties and civilian participation in rebellion?

Extending social ties- and networks-centric theories of collective action, mobilization, and rebellion[11], I conceptualize performative rebel governance as a legibility-oriented strategy for mapping civilian loyalties in harder-to-reach communities—those beyond rebels' immediate networks. Participation in these symbolic acts entails risk, making it a credible signal of loyalty that helps rebels distinguish between civilians demonstrating costly behavioral support and those offering mere attitudinal sympathy[12].

Building on existing frameworks that highlight identification problems[13] and informational deficiencies[14] in civil war mobilization, I argue that voluntary participation in symbolic public acts helps rebels identify potential supporters who might not otherwise mobilize—such as women, non-activists, and individuals without familial ties to the movement. However, these same acts also increase the legibility of rebellion to the state, exposing pro-rebel civilians to surveillance and repression. As authorities monitor those engaging in symbolic support, they raise the personal costs of radicalization, deterring individuals who might have mobilized in a lower-risk environment. Thus, performative rebel governance presents a paradox: while it expands the rebels' mobilization base beyond traditional networks, it also triggers intensified state repression, leading to an overall decline in mobilization.

I provide evidence for this theory by combining original spatial event data on the funeral rites of PKK fighters (2012–2022) with granular microdata on PKK mobilization (2001–2022) in Southeast Turkey. Funeral rite data was collected from news sources affiliated with the rebel group,

[9](Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2016; Stewart 2021)

[10](Gowrinathan and Mampilly 2019; Rubin 2019; van Baalen 2021)

[11](Olson 1965; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Siegel 2009; Staniland 2012; Parkinson 2013; Staniland 2014; Shesterinina 2016; Lewis 2017; Larson and Lewis 2018; Edgerton 2022; Nussio 2024)

[12]See Onder (2024) for a discussion of this distinction.

[13](Kalyvas 2006)

[14](Obayashi 2018)

which offer more comprehensive coverage of these commemorations than Turkish media. Mobilization data was sourced from the PKK's official website dedicated to fallen fighters, providing individual-level records of birthplaces and recruitment dates. I cross-referenced obituaries of fallen fighters, extracting demographic details about their backgrounds and pre-mobilization lives. Leveraging the plausibly random location and the staggered, often delayed timing of funeral rites within a difference-in-differences framework, I substantiate the theorized dual effect of symbolic governing acts on civilian mobilization into rebellion[15].

Consistent with the theory, rebel funeral rites increased the mobilization of women and individuals without prior political activism or family ties to the rebel movement in communities where these rites were held. Performative public acts allowed rebels to expand their mobilization base beyond traditional networks—typically composed of men, highly politicized activists, and individuals from families with prior "rebel martyrs." However, overall mobilization from the communities, where these rites were held, declined, suggesting that the suppressive effects of state surveillance and repression outweighed the mobilizing impact of funeral rites.

Several additional analyses further support the theory. Text analysis of propaganda materials surrounding fighter funerals shows that the PKK explicitly framed these public performances as mobilization tools. Obituaries of fallen fighters indicate that attending a rebel funeral was a significant path to recruitment. Data on government-perpetrated civilian deaths during the state-imposed curfews of 2015 suggests that the Turkish government responded to performative rebel governance with collective repression against pro-PKK civilians in affected communities. Finally, data on "foreign-born" recruits in the PKK during the study period reveals that the group compensated for declining domestic mobilization by increasing recruitment among ethnic Kurds outside Turkey (e.g., in Syria, Iraq, and Iran).

This study makes several important contributions. My theory highlights how performative rebel governance enables rebels to elicit costly signals of allegiance from civilians they seek to mobilize. By foregrounding the strategic utility of "performing the nation-state"[16], my approach moves beyond macro-level discussions of rebel legitimacy-building to uncover micro-level mechanisms through which rebels expand their base via public performances. Bridging research on rebel governance and civilian mobilization, I show that symbolic governance is not merely an assertion of authority but a war-making strategy—one that, like any other, entails trade-offs. The theory also provides a novel framework for understanding how rebels in contested spaces without territorial control navigate the tension between strengthening rebel-civilian ties and increasing exposure to state repression—a dynamic largely absent from existing accounts, which overwhelmingly focus on rebel governance in insurgent-held territories shielded from state intervention.

---

[15]I discuss the plausible randomness and parallel trends assumption in detail in the Research Design section.
[16](Mampilly 2015)

By shifting attention to how rebels symbolically govern without territorial control, this study advances theoretical debates on insurgent strategies in contested conflict zones. My findings refine existing theories of rebel governance by demonstrating that symbolic acts shape civilian allegiances even in the absence of formal governance structures. In fluid, government-contested environments where territorial control is tenuous, rebels use symbolic governance to identify and mobilize supporters. Furthermore, the study challenges conventional assumptions that rebel legitimacy-building necessarily enhances civilian support. Instead, it reveals a trade-off: while rebel efforts to "connect" with civilians in the public space can expand their support bases beyond their traditional networks, they also expose civilians to state repression, ultimately constraining broader mobilization efforts.

Beyond the case of the PKK, this study has broader implications for civilian participation in rebellion, insurgent mobilization, and rebel social networks. Traditional explanations of civilian alignment with rebels emphasize preexisting social ties, material incentives, or coercion[17], yet my findings suggest that the visibility of rebellion itself creates mobilization opportunities—even in the absence of these factors. Additionally, the study provides insights into how non-state actors cultivate support in contested environments, offering relevance beyond insurgencies, including for non-violent social movements.

Finally, this study has implications for counterinsurgency strategies and state efforts to "win hearts and minds" in conflict zones. My findings underscore the need to account for the symbolic and performative dimensions of insurgency when crafting policies aimed at undermining rebel influence or fostering civilian cooperation with the state.

Identification (or Information) Problems

Rebel groups invariably face a key challenge in mobilization—what Kalyvas (2006) terms the *identification problem*. In targeting civilian communities for recruitment, rebels must navigate the risk that these populations include not only potential supporters but also informants, hostile individuals, or government agents. Obayashi (2018) frames this dilemma as an *information problem*, emphasizing rebels' limited ability to predict an individual's commitment once recruited. Without mechanisms to encourage self-selection, recruitment risks enlisting individuals with diverging interests or a high likelihood of desertion.

This challenge is particularly acute in harder-to-reach communities—those beyond rebels' immediate, dense social networks. Rebel mobilization often begins in familiar circles, where familial, communal, or institutional ties facilitate recruitment and reduce the risk of defection[18]. Militancy

---

[17](Weinstein 2006; Staniland 2014; Parkinson 2013; Lewis 2017)
[18](Staniland 2014; Parkinson 2013; Shesterinina 2016)

frequently spreads through extended families and everyday networks, where trust is already established. Political or religious networks also serve as mobilization channels, allowing rebels to observe potential recruits before enlisting them. In contrast, communities outside these networks lack clear markers of loyalty, making recruitment riskier and intensifying the identification dilemma[19].

The privacy of political allegiances[20] further complicates this task. Rebels may rely on heuristics—using ethnicity as a proxy[21] or analyzing political mobilization patterns, such as election outcomes[22]. However, ethnicity is an unreliable indicator of allegiance[23], and while voting patterns offer insights, they remain an imperfect measure. Supporting a political party sympathetic to the rebels does not necessarily signal unwavering pro-rebel loyalty. Many individuals may endorse the movement's political goals while rejecting its violent methods. Thus, voting behavior alone cannot distinguish between passive sympathizers, reluctant supporters, and committed rebel loyalists. While established networks provide ongoing behavioral cues, communities beyond these circles remain largely illegible to rebels.

I argue that, in response to these identification challenges, rebels strategically deploy performative acts to "make visible" hidden political inclinations within populations they seek to mobilize. By prompting civilians to convert latent, private pro-rebel sympathies into overt, observable behaviors, these acts enhance population legibility, allowing rebels to "read" and "map" the political terrain of peripheral communities.

Performative Governance as a Strategy of Legibility

Rebel groups engage in highly visible performative governance that mimics the rituals and symbols traditionally associated with sovereign authority[24]. These acts include printing currency, holding funeral rites, constructing mausoleums, staging parades, issuing ceremonial decrees, and organizing commemorations for fallen fighters or key milestones in the struggle.

Distinct from institutionalized rebel governance—such as social service provision, justice administration, law enforcement, or taxation[25]—these performative acts are primarily symbolic. Institutionalized governance involves bureaucratic processes that provide tangible benefits and administrative structures, even in informal or ad hoc forms[26]. In contrast, performative acts prior-

---

[19](Obayashi 2018)

[20](Fjelde and Hultman 2014)

[21](Posen 1993)

[22](Steele 2011; Balcells and Steele 2016; Onder 2024)

[23](Hägerdal 2019; Onder 2024)

[24](Mampilly 2015)

[25](Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2016; Huang 2016; Stewart 2018; Revkin 2020; Stewart 2021; Loyle 2021; Gilbert 2022; Loyle and Onder 2024)

[26](Loyle et al. 2021)

itize spectacle over function, allowing rebels to project authority without the resource-intensive demands of actual governance.

While these symbolic displays often incorporate imagery of violent struggle—such as honoring militants or displaying combat-related symbols—they are non-violent in execution. Moreover, these acts are deliberately orchestrated as public spectacles, designed to capture attention. By staging them in public spaces, rebels ensure their visibility, contrasting with the clandestine nature of their interactions with potential supporters within immediate social networks. These performances are, by design, "open".

The visibility of these acts and their public setting serve as an invitation for participation, offering an accessible platform for individuals outside the movement's intimate networks. By soliciting mass participation, rebels can extend their outreach beyond established circles, connecting with potential supporters who might otherwise remain disengaged or ambivalent. I argue that by observing voluntary participation in these symbolic public performances, rebels can better "read" harder-to-reach communities—distinguishing those who merely sympathize with the movement from those who demonstrate costly behavioral support for rebellion.

Attitudinal sympathy for rebels typically reflects positive perceptions of their goals[27] or endorsement of political violence[28]. However, sympathy does not always translate into active participation. Many who ideologically align with a rebel movement refrain from direct involvement due to weak political preferences[29] or risk aversion[30]. The gap between attitudes and behavior makes it critical for rebels to accurately "read" their target communities. Yet, as Kalyvas (2006, p. 93) cautions, inferring loyalty from behavior is not always reliable. Individuals may engage in pro-rebel actions—such as providing intelligence[31] or paying rebel-imposed taxes[32]—out of fear or coercion rather than genuine allegiance.

Public acts of performative governance help resolve these identification challenges by ensuring that participation signals genuine pro-rebel allegiance, rather than coerced or merely attitudinal support. Voluntary participation in highly visible events is inherently costly, as it exposes civilians to state repression, including arrest, detention, torture, or execution. Because these performances are deliberately non-coercive—where rebels solicit but do not enforce participation—the decision to engage credibly signals genuine allegiance. Only those with strong pro-rebel loyalties would be willing to incur such risks, enabling rebels to map support within harder-to-reach communities more effectively.

---

[27](Lyall, Blair and Imai 2013; Hirose, Imai and Lyall 2017)

[28](Moskalenko and McCauley 2009; Kruglanski et al. 2014; Khalil, Horgan and Zeuthen 2022)

[29](Kilcullen 2009)

[30](Mosinger 2018)

[31](Fjelde and Hultman 2014; Condra and Wright 2019)

[32](Gilbert 2022)

Expanding Rebel Mobilization Base

By analyzing patterns of civilian participation in performative acts—such as frequency, intensity, and diversity of engagement—rebels can map support beyond their immediate reach and identify pockets of latent support for future mobilization. Armed with a more refined profile of civilian loyalties, rebels can then strategically extend recruitment efforts beyond traditional networks. In discussing this expansion, I focus on three harder-to-reach groups: women, individuals without strong political activist roots, and those without preexisting familial ties to the rebel movement.

First, rebel recruitment traditionally centers on male-dominated networks. While a growing literature highlights women's increasing participation in militancy—and how rebel groups leverage female involvement for propaganda[33]—cross-national studies show that only about one-third of armed movements include female combatants[34]. This suggests that either rebels are reluctant to recruit women, or women themselves hesitate to join, positioning them outside conventional rebel circles and limiting their exposure to clandestine mobilization efforts.

The public nature of performative rebel acts offers a more inclusive mobilization arena by removing barriers inherent in covert recruitment. Unlike secretive, male-dominated interactions, these public performances are open and accessible, inviting broader participation and signaling a break from traditional exclusivity. In this setting, women can engage with the rebel movement in ways previously inaccessible to them. This increased visibility can enhance female mobilization, as performative governance shifts recruitment from a hidden, network-based operation to a widely observed and participatory spectacle, ultimately encouraging greater female participation than traditional covert methods would allow.

Rebels also traditionally rely on familial ties to secure loyalty and ensure reliability—a pattern extensively documented in the recruitment practices of groups such as FARC, ELN, EPL, and M-19 in Colombia[35], Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP in Lebanon[36], as well as the PKK in Turkey[37] and rebel groups in El Salvador and Peru[38]. These kinship-based mobilization patterns leave individuals without familial connections to rebels less integrated into the movement. Public performative governance acts, conducted in open and observable spaces, however, can reduce reliance on kinship networks by allowing individuals to signal pro-rebel loyalties independently. This increased legibility can enable rebels to identify and mobilize supporters previously overlooked due to their absence from traditional kin-based recruitment channels.

---

[33](Manekin and Wood 2020)

[34](Henshaw 2017; Thomas and Bond 2015; Wood and Thomas 2017)

[35](Arjona and Kalyvas 2011)

[36](Parkinson 2013)

[37](Özeren et al. 2014; Tezcur 2016)

[38](Ortega 2011)

Similarly, individuals without strong political activist roots often remain on the periphery of rebel networks. Some groups maintain close ties to civilian-led political organizations, which they, in Staniland's (2014) words, "repurpose" for violent mobilization (p. 17). For instance, ELN in Colombia leveraged civil society organizations to access new militants[39]. The PKK in Turkey similarly mobilizes activists through legal political organizations, such as Political Academies (PA), Self-Defense Units (ÖSB), City Councils (ŞM), Patriotic Democratic Youth Council (DYGM), Educational Support Houses (EDEV), and Associations of the Free People (ÖYD)[40]. Prior political activist engagement is a key pathway into rebellion, fostering ideological commitment[41] and social contagion effects[42].

Traditional activist-based mobilization often excludes those with minimal or sporadic political involvement. However, public symbolic events can lower the threshold for participation, allowing individuals without prior activist ties to engage with the movement. Voluntary participation in these performances can, thus, serve as a bridge into the rebel network, enabling rebels to identify and mobilize previously disengaged supporters.

> Hypothesis 1: Rebel performative governance acts will increase the mobilization of women, non-activists, and individuals without familial ties to the rebel movement.

The Legibility Dilemma

While performative acts of rebel governance enhance the ability of insurgents to "read" and map civilian loyalties, I argue that they simultaneously expose civilians who are loyal to the rebel movement to heightened state scrutiny. This unintended consequence is the *legibility dilemma*.

On one hand, public acts—such as commemorative funerals, parades, and displays of pro-rebel solidarity—help overcome the identification problem. By converting private sympathies into observable behavior, rebels can distinguish mere attitudinal support from genuine, costly commitment. Voluntary participation signals a willingness to bear personal risk, allowing rebels to identify and mobilize potential recruits beyond their immediate networks.

On the other hand, this visibility increases participants' exposure to state surveillance and repression. First, public events attract state security forces, enabling authorities to concentrate surveillance resources more effectively[43]. Instead of dispersing efforts across a broad landscape, the state can deploy police contingents directly to event venues, ensuring real-time monitoring of

---

[39](Sanin 2011, p. 188)

[40](Özeren et al. 2014)

[41](Tezcur 2016)

[42](Özeren et al. 2014)

[43](Earl, Soule and McCarthy 2003; Davenport, Soule and David A. Armstrong 2011)

potential pro-rebel civilians. Moreover, such concentrated surveillance allows for systematic data collection—including participant lists, roll calls, and visual documentation—enhancing the state's ability to track, monitor, and repress individuals exhibiting overt pro-rebel sympathies[44].

Second, public events concentrate individuals in a single location, making each participant visible while allowing state security to observe and map social interactions in real time. Authorities can, thus, infer social networks and identify key influencers within the rebel-supporting community. This spatial concentration facilitates targeted repression, as individuals playing central roles in these informal networks become priority targets for later surveillance or crackdown[45].

Third, the publicity of these events ensures that participation is documented beyond the immediate setting. Local, national (pro- or anti-rebel), and international media, as well as social media, contribute to creating a lasting public record of attendance[46]. These records—readily accessible to state authorities—can transform what might have been private expressions of solidarity into verifiable proof of allegiance.

Finally, in the aftermath of high-profile public events, state authorities can undertake targeted investigative measures, including arrests and interrogations of organizers and participants[47]. Such inquiries serve as additional mechanisms for uncovering political allegiances, enhancing the state's ability to compile profiles of known rebel sympathizers. This extends the reach and precision of state monitoring and covert repressive actions well beyond the temporal boundaries of the even itself[48].

The expansion of state surveillance raises the personal costs of rebellion. Prospective recruits, now more easily identified and subject to repression, must weigh the risks of arrest or harassment against the potential benefits of participation[49]. As these risks escalate, individuals may reconsider active involvement, even if underlying grievances persist. Ultimately, this increased repression can constrain the mobilization base, deterring participation despite existing political discontent[50].

> Hypothesis 2: Rebel performative governance acts will decrease the overall mobilization into the rebel group.

---

[44](Liu and Sullivan 2021; Xu 2021)

[45](Sullivan 2016)

[46](Sobolev et al. 2020)

[47](Liu and Sullivan 2021)

[48](Davenport 2005)

[49](Demirel-Pegg and Rasler 2021)

[50](Lacina 2014; Steinert-Threlkeld, Chan and Joo 2022)

Research Design

Rebel Funeral Rites in Southeast Turkey

The data on rebel funeral rites in Southeast Turkey was collected through large-scale web scraping of ANF News, a PKK-affiliated media outlet that extensively covers the funerals of PKK militants. ANF News has been widely documented as having close affiliations with the PKK. The German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz), for instance, explicitly describes it as "PKK-affiliated", stating in a February 2019 report that "a cornerstone of [PKK's propaganda] policy is the PKK-affiliated news agency 'Firat News Agency' (ANF), based in the Netherlands. Its goal is to establish a presence for Kurdish media through a network of correspondents in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and European countries"[51].

A total of 569 unique news articles reporting on funeral ceremonies were retrieved and manually coded, resulting in a dataset of 481 distinct funeral rites that took place within the study's timeframe. Each funeral entry in the dataset records the precise location of the ceremony[52], as well as key contextual details about the event, including the presence of family members, politicians, and NGO representatives, along with an estimate of total attendees. Additionally, the dataset documents the level of state response by noting the presence of police forces, whether confrontations occurred between attendees and security personnel, and whether any arrests were made during the event.

Rebel funeral rites in Southeast Turkey typically begin with the retrieval of the deceased fighter's body from a state-owned morgue, most often in Malatya, where the Turkish military's Second Army is headquartered. The body is then transported to the fighter's hometown in the southeast, accompanied by a convoy of family members and protestors. Upon arrival, a public march is commonly held from the family home to the cemetery, where the main funeral ceremony takes place. These ceremonies frequently include political chants and expressions of solidarity with the PKK before transitioning into religious rites and the burial itself. In many cases, funeral days see widespread participation from local communities, with shops and businesses closing to commemorate the fallen fighter.

Political figures, particularly from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), play a significant role, with local politicians and occasionally national parliamentarians attending 75 percent of the recorded funerals. Pro-Kurdish civil society organizations are also actively involved, with the most prominent being MEYA-DER (Mesopotamian Aid, Solidarity, and Cultural Associ-

---

[51](Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz 2019, p. 22)

[52]These funerals occurred across 20 provinces in Southeast Turkey, including Adıyaman, Ağrı, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Hakkari, Iğdır, Kars, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Mardin, Muş, Şanlıurfa, Siirt, Şırnak, Tunceli, and Van.

Figure 1. Funeral for PKK Fighter Mehmet Çelik in Van's Başkale District, 2016

ation for Those Who Have Lost Their Relatives), which was present in 56 percent of the cases.

Public attendance to fighter funerals varies, but in 61 percent of the recorded funerals, thousands of people were documented as participants. In my analysis, I focus only on funeral rites that were attended by more than 10,000 people, as reported by PKK-affiliated media. The geographic distribution of these mass-attended funerals is presented in Figure 2. However, in my robustness checks, I conduct the same analysis using the entire universe of fighter funerals, regardless of attendance size as well as using only the funerals with police presence, and find that the results remain largely robust (see Appendix 2 and 3).

The official organizer of these funerals is usually MEYA-DER, an NGO that played a crucial role in repatriating the bodies of PKK militants. Formally shut down in 2016 due to its alleged links to the PKK, MEYA-DER representatives openly acknowledged their ongoing communication with the PKK, which is now headquartered in Iraq, to facilitate these funerals[53].
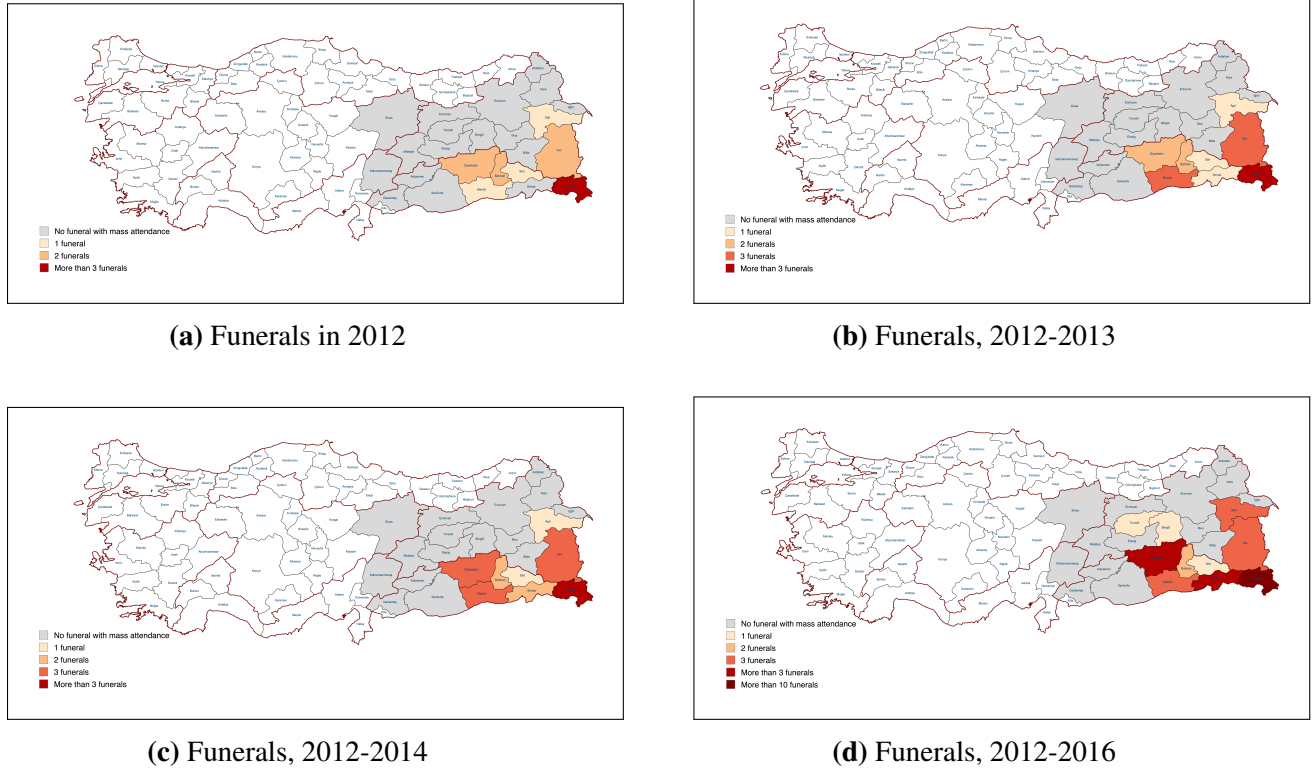
While the PKK's involvement in the organization of funeral rites remains tacit, it is also evident through the group's public statements. The PKK regularly calls for participation in these commemorations through its official website, *hezaparastin.com*. For instance, on December 2, 2012, the PKK published a statement titled *"Funeral Rites"*, urging the public to attend ongoing ceremonies in Diyarbakır's Yeniköy district[54]. Similarly, on October 6, 2015, the PKK issued another public call for mass funeral participation in a statement titled *"The Honor of the Kurdish People Has Been Dragged on the Ground"*[55]. Referring to the death of senior PKK commander Baran Dersim, the statement declared:

> *"The brave son of the Kurdish people, raised in the heart of Dersim, and the Apoist*

---

[53](Aydın 2018; Düzel 2024)
[54](Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) 2012)
[55](Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) 2016)

(a) Funerals in 2012

(b) Funerals, 2012-2013

(c) Funerals, 2012-2014

(d) Funerals, 2012-2016

Figure 2. Province-Level Rebel Funeral Rites with Over 10,000 Attendees, 2012-2016
Note: Darker shades indicate more rebel funeral rites.

militant follower of the will of Alişer and Seyit Rıza, our Leading Commander Baran Dersim, was martyred on September 16 after two days of intense attacks by the Turkish army. Our patriotic people and revolutionary-socialist forces must attend his funeral with great honor and enthusiasm, embracing it fully."

These public calls for participation highlight the strategic significance of funeral rites in the PKK's broader efforts to mobilize civilian support. By explicitly urging mass attendance and framing participation as a patriotic duty, the PKK reinforces funeral rites as a mechanism for strengthening rebel-civilian ties.

The Turkish state maintains a visible presence at a significant number of rebel funeral rites, but direct repression of these events appears to be selective. Approximately one-third of the recorded funerals had a mass police presence on site, signaling that authorities actively monitor these gatherings. However, while state forces frequently observe these ceremonies, direct intervention is less common. Physical confrontations between police and attendees occurred in 14 percent of cases, often involving the use of tear gas, water cannons, or rubber bullets to disperse crowds. Yet, only 3 percent of the funerals resulted in arrests, suggesting that while the state remains vigilant, large-scale suppression of these events is not widespread.

These patterns suggest two important dynamics. First, the state rarely engages in overt crack-

downs on funeral rites, implying that civilians are, at least formally, free to attend. This is a crucial element in understanding these events as a legibility-oriented mechanism of performative rebel governance—because participation is not forced but voluntary, attendance serves as a credible signal of allegiance to the rebel movement. If the state had completely banned or consistently repressed these ceremonies, many truly loyal individuals might choose not to attend out of fear, meaning attendance would no longer accurately reflect the full extent of civilian support for the rebels, as many supporters would refrain from exposing themselves.

Second, while open repression is rare, state surveillance is common, making participation in these events a costly political act. The persistent presence of security forces at funeral sites suggests that individuals who attend are exposed to state scrutiny, increasing their risk of being monitored, investigated, or even targeted for future repression. Thus, by making civilian allegiances more visible, these symbolic acts allow the state to map and track potential recruits as much as they help rebels do the same.

Overall, funeral rites for PKK militants serve as an important form of performative rebel governance. These ceremonies are public and highly visible, making them an ideal setting for rebels to engage with local communities. Unlike clandestine forms of organization or coercive governance mechanisms, funerals are voluntary gatherings where civilian participation—through attendance, chanting slogans, or engaging in other symbolic acts—signals an individual's alignment with the movement. By invoking collective narratives of martyrdom, resistance, and solidarity, these rites serve as arenas for political mobilization, fostering a sense of shared identity between rebels and civilians. The public nature of these events allows rebels to map civilian loyalties, distinguishing between those willing to take visible risks on behalf of the movement and those who remain passive or disengaged. At the same time, these gatherings function as moments of heightened state scrutiny, increasing the cost of participation and exposing attendees to potential repression.

Beyond their political significance, rebel funeral rites also provide a valuable opportunity for causal inference due to their quasi-random nature. While funerals occur systematically—taking place in the hometowns of fallen fighters—their timing and exact location vary in ways that are plausibly exogenous to broader patterns of rebel support or state repression. Although a province can only experience a funeral if it has previously contributed fighters to the PKK, not every community that has sent militants to the group will necessarily witness a funeral. Many fallen fighters never receive a public funeral due to battlefield circumstances, the inability of their families to claim their bodies, or logistical constraints in repatriation. This means that while PKK recruitment patterns determine which areas are eligible for funerals, the actual occurrence of a funeral in a given community is not predictable.

The timing of funerals is also plausibly exogenous, as it is influenced by factors unrelated to a province's present-day level of mobilization or PKK recruitment. First, the timing of a fighter's

death in combat is unlikely to be systematically related to the political conditions or recruitment dynamics of their hometown. The uncertainty of armed conflict means that fighters from the same region may perish at vastly different times, independent of when or where they were recruited. Second, there are often unpredictable delays between the time of death and the funeral itself due to the state's control over the repatriation process. The Turkish authorities determine when and whether to release a militant's body to their family, creating additional variation in funeral timing that is outside the control of either the PKK or the affected community. Together, these factors introduce exogenous variation in both the occurrence and timing of funerals, making them a useful empirical setting for identifying the effects of performative governance on rebel recruitment.

Rebel Recruitment in Southeast Turkey

Individual-level records of PKK mobilization are sourced directly from the group's own public listings of its fallen fighters. The primary dataset is constructed using a large-scale web scraping of the PKK's official website dedicated to fallen fighters, *hpgsehit.com*, which has maintained public records since 2001. Each fallen fighter is profiled with personal information, including their full name, code name, birthdate, birthplace, recruitment date, death date, and place of death. These records allow for the identification of where and when recruits originated, though the level of granularity is restricted to province and year, as more fine-grained location or time data is unavailable. The dataset spans from 2001 to 2022, covering both pre- and post-funeral rite periods, providing a long temporal scope for analysis. In total, 5,822 fallen fighters were identified and recorded.

To further enrich this dataset, each fallen fighter's name was cross-referenced with reports from ANF News, which publishes obituaries for each PKK fighter alongside its coverage of funerals. These obituaries are provided directly by the *PKK Basın İrtibat Merkezi* (Press Liaison Center), as openly acknowledged by ANF. A systematic manual coding process was conducted to extract additional demographic information, including gender, prior political activism before joining the PKK, and whether the fighter had family members in the PKK before their recruitment.

A typical example of an obituary provides insight into how fighters' backgrounds are framed and narrated. For instance, one obituary describes a fallen fighter as follows:

> *"Comrade Şahin was born into a patriotic family belonging to the Sipêrtî tribe in the Silopi district of Şırnak ... He attended Turkish state schools for nine years but soon realized that what he was being taught was a fabricated history imposed by the ruling powers, erasing his people's past. He therefore abandoned school and started working to support his family financially. Aware of the Kurdish people's existential and liberation struggle, Comrade Şahin sought ways to contribute to the movement and fulfill his responsibilities as a young Kurd. He became involved in revolutionary youth*

activities, participating in numerous youth actions with great courage. Experiencing state oppression firsthand, his anger toward the enemy intensified, especially after the martyrdom of his cousin in PKK ranks, leading him to a decisive turning point. Realizing that the strongest way to avenge the martyrs and the suffering inflicted upon his people was to join the guerrilla forces in the mountains of Kurdistan, he made the decision to become a guerrilla fighter in the Botan region."

By systematically coding fighter obituaries, the dataset captures three key individual-level attributes—gender, political activism before joining the PKK, and prior family ties to the PKK— enabling an assessment of mobilization trends among women, individuals without prior activism, and those without family ties to the rebel group, across provinces and over time.

While fallen fighters do not represent the entirety of PKK recruits, the potential for bias in this dataset is unlikely to pose a significant issue for this study. First, the composition of fighters in this dataset closely matches known characteristics of the PKK's fighter base. For instance, women constitute approximately 30 percent of the dataset, which aligns with external estimates of the PKK's gender composition. Second, it is unlikely that fighters who remain alive are systematically different from those who have died in ways that would bias my analysis. The PKK does not necessarily deploy fighters in their home regions, nor does it assign recruits based on where they were born. While most PKK fighters are Turkish-born, the majority of combat deaths recorded in the dataset occurred in Iraq, indicating that fighters are often stationed far from their places of origin. Additionally, PKK members frequently rotate between different fronts, sometimes moving to high-intensity conflict zones (such as Syria during battles against ISIS) and at other times to lower-risk areas. This means that a fighter's place of origin is unlikely to systematically determine their likelihood of dying in combat, reducing concerns that the dataset overrepresents particular local recruitment dynamics.

To empirically test the relationship between performative rebel governance and recruitment patterns, I construct two sets of dependent variables corresponding to my two core hypotheses. To test H1, which posits that rebel funerals will increase the mobilization of women, non-activists, and individuals without familial ties to the rebel movement, I use the following three dependent variables:

1. The *percentage of recruits with no history of activism*, calculated as the ratio of recruits who lacked prior political engagement before joining the PKK to the total number of recruits in a given province in a given year.
2. The *percentage of female recruits with no history of activism*, measured as the ratio of women without prior activism experience to the total number of recruits in a given province in a given year.
3. The *percentage of recruits with no family ties to the rebel group*, computed as the ratio of recruits without pre-existing familial connections to the PKK to the total number of recruits in a given province in a given year.

The decision to use ratios instead of crude numbers is motivated by the need to control for fluctuations in overall recruitment levels that may vary across time and space. By capturing shifts in the composition of recruits rather than raw increases or decreases in recruitment numbers, these DVs allow for a more precise test of whether rebel funerals facilitate the entry of new social groups into the insurgency.

To test H2, which posits that rebel funerals will decrease the overall level of recruitment into the PKK, I use the *number of new recruits per 100,000 population* in a given province in a given year as my dependent variable. This measure accounts for differences in provincial population sizes, ensuring that recruitment levels are assessed in proportion to the available recruitment pool rather than in absolute terms. Using crude numbers of recruits would introduce significant bias, as larger provinces would naturally contribute more recruits simply due to their larger populations, even if the per capita mobilization rate remained unchanged. Nevertheless, I also conduct robustness checks using the crude number of recruits per province in a given year, and the results suggest even more substantively large and statistically significant reductions in recruitment (see Appendix 1). Province-level recruitment is visualized in Figure 3.

(a) New Recruits   (b) New Recruits per 100,000 Population
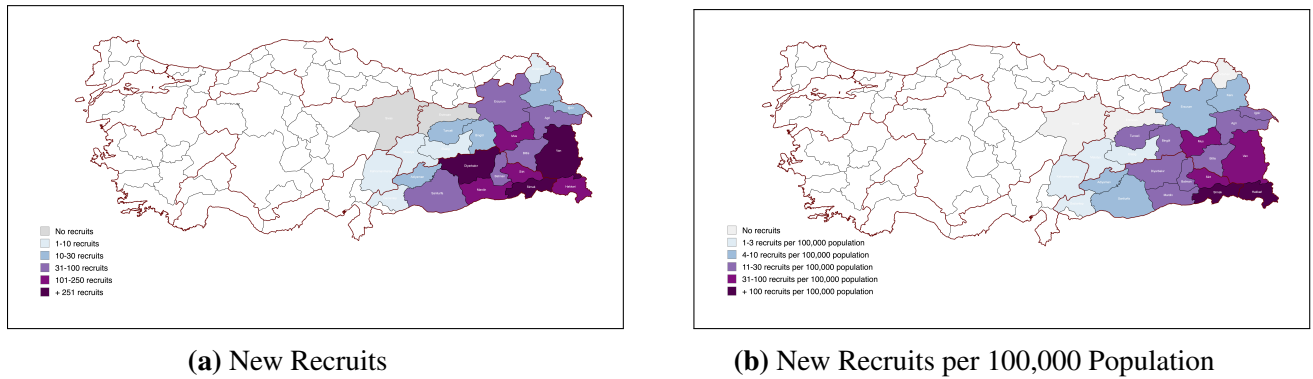
Figure 3. Province-Level Rebel Recruitment, 2012-2020
Note: Darker shades indicate more new rebel recruits.

Difference-in-Differences Design

To estimate the effect of performative rebel governance—measured through mass-attended PKK funeral rites—on civilian mobilization, I employ a difference-in-differences (DiD) design. The funerals occur at different times and in different locations, creating staggered treatment effects that allow for causal inference. The timing and location of these funerals introduce quasi-exogenous variation, enabling comparisons between provinces that experience mass funerals and those that do not, before and after the events take place.

The key advantage of the DiD framework is that it accounts for time-invariant differences

between provinces as well as broader nationwide temporal shocks that could otherwise confound estimates. Funeral ceremonies occur in the hometowns of fallen fighters, but the precise timing of funerals is largely outside local civilian control. Fighters die in combat under uncertain conditions, and delays in state-controlled repatriation processes further introduce variation in when a funeral actually takes place. As a result, while recruitment patterns determine which provinces are eligible for funerals, the actual occurrence and timing of funerals remain plausibly exogenous to present-day mobilization dynamics in a given location.

Moreover, not all PKK fighters receive public funerals, either due to battlefield circumstances that prevent the recovery of bodies or government-imposed restrictions on repatriation. This creates a natural variation in exposure to funerals, where some communities with prior PKK ties never experience these events despite having contributed militants. By comparing provinces that do and do not experience mass-attended funerals over time, while controlling for pre-existing differences in recruitment trends, the DiD approach helps approximate a counterfactual scenario—what mobilization patterns would have looked like had a funeral not occurred. This allows for an empirical test of whether funerals expand mobilization beyond traditional rebel networks while also exposing participants to repression, thereby suppressing overall recruitment.

The *treatment group* consists of provinces that experienced mass-attended PKK funeral rites. The *control group* consists of all Southeastern provinces that had PKK fighters in the period before 2012 but did not experience funerals, or that had funerals with smaller attendance sizes below the mass-attended threshold. The inclusion of provinces with smaller funerals in the control group ensures that the estimated effect is capturing the mobilizational and repressive dynamics triggered by large, highly publicized ceremonies. Importantly, many provinces that contributed fighters to the PKK throughout the insurgency did not host funerals, plausibly because fallen militants' bodies were never repatriated. These provinces provide a counterfactual, as they share a history of PKK recruitment but lack exposure to the treatment event.

Using this comparison allows for an estimation of how mass funerals affect both the composition and overall levels of recruitment, independent of broader province-level characteristics. Since funerals are not systematically assigned—some fighters' deaths do not result in repatriations, and the timing of funerals is subject to administrative delays—the control provinces are not fundamentally different from treatment provinces in ways that would bias the results. If recruitment trends in control provinces remain stable while treatment provinces exhibit divergent patterns following funeral rites, this provides evidence that the observed changes are attributable to the symbolic public acts rather than pre-existing differences in rebel support.

To estimate the effect of mass-attended funerals on recruitment while accounting for staggered treatment timing, I adopt the difference-in-differences estimator proposed by Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021). Unlike traditional two-way fixed effects (TWFE) models, which impose con-

stant treatment effects across all treated units, this approach estimates group-time average treatment effects (ATTs) separately for each cohort of treated units.

Formally, for each province i that first experiences a funeral in year g, the group-time ATT is given by:

$$ATT(g,t) = \mathbb{E}[Y_{it}(1) - Y_{it}(0)|G_i = g, T_i = t] \tag{1}$$

where $Y_{it}(1)$ and $Y_{it}(0)$ represent recruitment outcomes under treatment and control, respectively, and G_i denotes the first treatment year for province i. The control group consists of provinces that are either never treated or not yet treated at time t[56].

Parallel Trends

The most important identifying assumption for the difference-in-differences (DiD) design is that treatment and control provinces would have followed similar trends in recruitment in the absence of mass-attended funerals. This parallel trends assumption ensures that any post-treatment divergence in mobilization can be attributed to the funeral event rather than pre-existing differences in recruitment trajectories. If treatment provinces had significantly different trends in recruitment before the funeral, it would suggest that the estimated effects are confounded by underlying differences rather than the causal impact of funerals themselves.

Figure 4 presents a pre-treatment trends plot that visually inspects the validity of the parallel trends assumption. The x-axis represents the relative time to treatment (with 0 being the funeral year), while the y-axis shows the number of new PKK recruits per 100,000 population. The treatment group (provinces that experienced mass funerals) is depicted in red, while the control group (provinces without such funerals) is in black. If the parallel trends assumption holds, both groups should exhibit similar recruitment trajectories before time 0.

The figure confirms that before treatment (-11 to -1 years relative to funeral occurrence), both treatment and control groups exhibit similar fluctuations in recruitment trends, with increases and decreases occurring at roughly the same points in time. While treatment provinces generally have higher levels of recruitment, their trajectories move in sync with those of the control provinces. This lends support to the parallel trends assumption, as any post-treatment divergence can reasonably be interpreted as the effect of mass funerals rather than pre-existing recruitment momentum.

---

[56]This estimator is implemented using the `did` package in R.
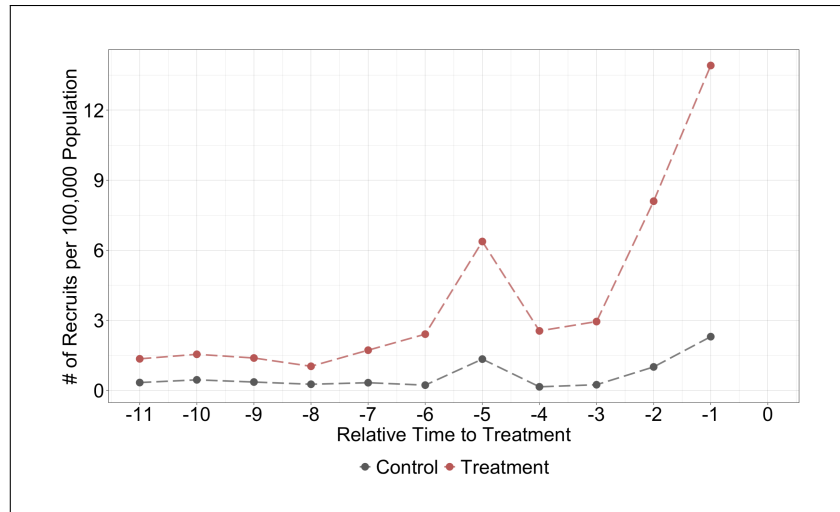
Figure 4. Pre-Treatment Trends in Recruitment

Results

Composition of Recruits

Table 1 presents the average treatment effects (ATTs) of mass-attended rebel funeral rites on the composition of PKK recruits, testing Hypothesis 1, which posits that performative rebel governance will expand recruitment beyond traditional networks by increasing mobilization among non-activists, women, and individuals without familial ties to the rebel movement. The results strongly support H1 for the first two categories—non-activist recruits and non-activist female recruits—while the effects on recruits without familial ties are in the expected direction, but weaker.

Models 1, 4, and 7 represent naïve estimates, including no additional controls beyond province and year fixed effects. Models 2, 5, and 8 introduce conflict-related controls, which account for historical and contemporary security conditions that may influence recruitment patterns. These controls include historical community-level political dissidence, measured by the number of Kurdish tribes that rebelled in the 1920s and 1930s following large-scale secularization reforms [57], the intensity of clashes between the PKK and government forces in the 1990s at the height of the conflict[58], and the number of police per 100,000 population, a proxy for state repression [59]. Models 3, 6, and 9 introduce demographic controls, accounting for structural differences between provinces that may shape recruitment. These include the percentage of rural and urbanized populations, literacy rate, number of mosques per 100,000 population, and whether the province is a

---

[57]Data come from Belge and Sinanoglu (2022).
[58]Data come from Tezcür (2016).
[59]Data come from Belge and Sinanoglu (2022).

border province. All except the mosque data are drawn from Tezcür's (2016) Kurdish Insurgency Militants Dataset, while mosque density is sourced from Belge and Sinanoglu (2022).

The first three models examine the effect of funerals on the proportion of new recruits with no history of political activism. The estimated treatment effects are consistently positive and significant across all specifications, indicating that mass-attended funerals increase the mobilization of previously politically inactive individuals. The naïve model (Model 1) estimates a 40.5 percentage point increase ($p<0.01$) in the proportion of non-activist recruits following mass funerals. This effect strengthens to 60.8 percentage points in Model 2 after controlling for historical political dissidence, conflict intensity, and state repression, and remains highly significant at 66.2 percentage points in Model 3, which accounts for demographic characteristics. These findings indicate that symbolic public acts serve as a mechanism through which rebels mobilize civilians who were not previously engaged in political activism, suggesting that funeral rites facilitate recruitment beyond traditional militant networks.

Models 4–6 focus on the mobilization of non-activist female recruits and reveal a similar trend. The naïve estimate (Model 4) suggests a 14.5 percentage point increase ($p<0.05$) in the proportion of female recruits without a history of activism. The effect strengthens to 24.6 percentage points in Model 5, with conflict-related controls, and remains positive at 20.9 percentage points in Model 6, though with reduced significance. These results suggest that mass funerals facilitate the entry of women into the rebel movement, particularly those without prior activism experience, reinforcing the idea that performative governance rituals create opportunities for new social groups to participate in the insurgency.

Models 7–9 assess whether funerals increase recruitment among individuals without prior family ties to the PKK, but the results are more ambiguous. While the estimated treatment effects remain positive in all specifications, they do not reach statistical significance. This suggests that while funerals may expand recruitment to non-activists and women, they do not fundamentally weaken the role of kinship networks in rebel mobilization. Family ties continue to serve as an important channel for recruitment, and mass funerals do not appear to significantly increase the participation of civilians who lack prior familial connections to the rebel movement.

To assess the dynamic effects of mass-attended funerals on rebel recruitment, I conduct event-study analyses that trace treatment effects over time. Figure 5 displays average treatment effects (ATTs) by event time, where negative values represent pre-treatment years and positive values denote post-treatment years.

Panel A examines the ratio of non-activist recruits over time. Prior to treatment, the estimated coefficients remain statistically indistinguishable from zero, supporting the parallel trends assumption and confirming that recruitment trajectories in treatment and control provinces were similar before funerals occurred. At t = 0 (the funeral year), the treatment effect becomes positive and sig-

Table 1. Rebel Funeral Rites and Selective Recruitment in Southeast Turkey

	Dependent Variable: Ratio of Recruits **Sample: Post-2000**								
	Non-Activist Recruits			*Non-Activist Female Recruits*			*Recruits With No Family Ties*		
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**	**Model 9**
Average Treatment Effect	0.4053***	0.6088***	0.6625***	0.1451**	0.2465**	0.2091	0.0704	0.1778	0.1353
	(0.1433)	(0.1532)	(0.1714)	(0.0699)	(0.0864)	(0.1471)	(0.1422)	(0.1608)	(0.1694)
Year-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls									
Conflict Related Controls	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Demographic Controls	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N	480	440	440	480	440	440	480	440	440

Note 1: ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1
Note 2: Robust standard errors clustered on province are in parentheses. All models are estimated using Callaway and Sant'Anna's (2021) doubly robust estimation method for staggered Difference-in-Differences. All models consider both "Never Treated" and "Not Yet Treated" units as the control group.

nificant, and it remains elevated for at least eight years post-treatment. The persistently positive and statistically significant effects suggest that funerals lead to a long-term increase in the mobilization of civilians with no prior political activism, reinforcing the argument that performative governance broadens the composition of the rebel movement beyond pre-existing militant networks.

Panel B plots the ratio of non-activist female recruits over time. Similar to the first figure, the pre-treatment estimates hover around zero, indicating no systematic differences between treatment and control provinces before funerals. However, beginning in the post-treatment period, the estimated effects become positive and statistically significant, peaking in the early years after the funeral before stabilizing. The size of these effects suggests that funerals create lasting changes in the gender composition of rebel recruitment, particularly by increasing the participation of women who were not previously involved in activism.

Panel C examines the ratio of recruits without prior family ties to the PKK. Unlike the previous two figures, the post-treatment estimates remain small and statistically insignificant, with confidence intervals consistently overlapping zero. This suggests that mass funerals do not significantly increase the recruitment of individuals who lack familial ties to the movement, implying that kinship networks continue to play a dominant role in recruitment. While funerals help mobilize politically inactive individuals and women, they do not fundamentally disrupt the importance of family-based mobilization.

Overall, the event-study results align closely with the difference-in-differences (DiD) estimates presented in Table 1. The findings suggest that mass funerals expand recruitment to previously politically inactive individuals and women, with persistent and statistically significant effects. However, the lack of significant effects on non-kin recruits highlights the continued importance of

(a) Non-Activist Recruits

(b) Non-Activist Female Recruits

(c) Recruits With No Family Ties
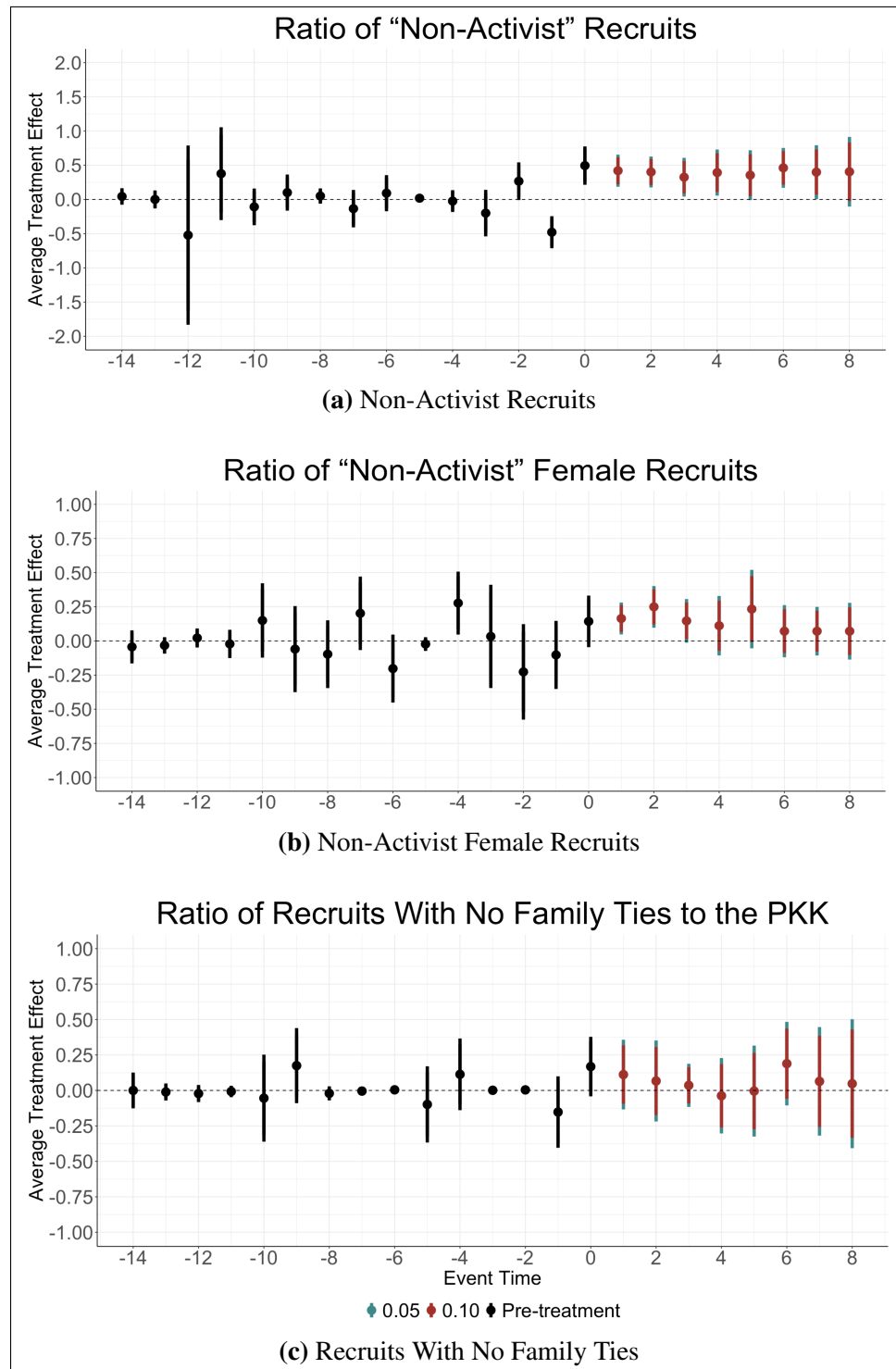
Figure 5. Aggregate Group-Time Average Treatment Effects (Event Study)
Note: The vertical bars indicate confidence intervals, with blue bars representing 95% confidence intervals and red bars representing 90% confidence intervals.

familial ties in sustaining rebel mobilization.

Overall Recruitment

Table 2 presents the average treatment effects (ATTs) of mass-attended rebel funeral rites on overall PKK recruitment, testing Hypothesis 2, which posits that performative governance will ultimately lead to a decline in total mobilization due to increased state surveillance and repression. The dependent variable in this analysis is the number of new PKK recruits per 100,000 population at the province level in a given year.

Models 10, 11, and 12 progressively introduce different sets of control variables. Model 10 represents the naïve specification, including only province and year fixed effects. The estimated treatment effect is -8.407 (p<0.05), indicating that mass funerals lead to a significant decrease in overall recruitment. Model 11 introduces conflict-related controls, including historical Kurdish rebellions, conflict intensity in the 1990s, and police presence per capita. While the estimated effect size decreases to -4.526 (p<0.1), it remains negative and statistically significant, suggesting that the suppressive effects of state repression are not solely explained by pre-existing political and security conditions. Finally, Model 12 includes demographic controls, such as urbanization, literacy rates, mosque density, and border province status. The estimated treatment effect is -8.504 (p<0.1), reinforcing the conclusion that mass funerals reduce overall mobilization into the PKK, even after accounting for structural demographic differences across provinces.

In substantive terms, the estimated treatment effects are sizable, indicating that funerals lead to a reduction of approximately 4.5 to 8.5 fewer recruits per 100,000 population following mass-attended funerals. Given that the average number of recruits in a province over the entire timespan is approximately 46 new recruits per 100,000 population, this suggests that the effect of funerals accounts for a 9.8% to 18.5% decline in overall mobilization per province. These results provide strong evidence that while performative rebel governance fosters selective recruitment among politically inactive individuals and women, it simultaneously deters broader mobilization due to increased visibility to the state.

The event study plot in Figure 6 shows the average treatment effects (ATTs) by event time, where negative values indicate pre-treatment years and positive values represent post-treatment years. The results provide strong evidence in support of H2. Prior to the funeral event, treatment and control provinces exhibit statistically indistinguishable recruitment trends, reinforcing the parallel trends assumption and confirming that funerals are not simply occurring in areas with pre-existing recruitment declines. At t = 0 (the funeral year), the treatment effect begins to turn negative, and in the post-treatment period, recruitment declines significantly, with statistically significant negative effects appearing from year 1 onward and persisting for at least eight years after

Table 2. Rebel Funeral Rites and Overall Recruitment in Southeast Turkey

| | *DV: Recruits per 100,000 population* | | |
| | **Sample: Post-2000** | | |
	Model 10	**Model 11**	**Model 12**
Average Treatment Effect	-8.407**	-4.5226*	-8.5043*
	(3.7048)	(2.7421)	(5.0838)
Year-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls			
Conflict Related Controls	No	Yes	No
Demographic Controls	No	No	Yes
N	440	440	440

Note 1: **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note 2: Robust standard errors clustered on province are in parentheses. All models are estimated with Callaway and Sant'Anna's (2021) doubly robust estimation method for staggered Difference-in-Differences using the `att_gt` function of the `did` package in R. All models consider both "Never Treated" and "Not Yet Treated" units as the control group.

the funeral. The long-term decline in recruitment supports the claim that performative rebel governance creates a tradeoff between visibility and security—while it broadens participation among certain groups, it simultaneously makes the rebellion more legible to the state, reducing overall insurgent mobilization.

Extensions

Rebel Propaganda

As an additional test of the theory's implications, I analyze PKK-affiliated media coverage of funerals to assess whether the rebel group itself frames these performative acts as tools for mobilization. If performative rebel governance serves as a mechanism for expanding recruitment and reinforcing civilian engagement, then we should observe explicit mobilization-oriented framing in the propaganda surrounding these events.

I conduct a Structural Topic Modeling (STM) analysis on the news reports covering PKK funerals. The results, presented in Appendix 4, suggest that funeral propaganda is heavily structured around themes of mass mobilization. The second most prominent topics—*Mass Mobilization*—explicitly associates funeral attendance with political slogans, participation in thousands, and public demonstrations, aligning with the theory's expectation that rebels use these events not
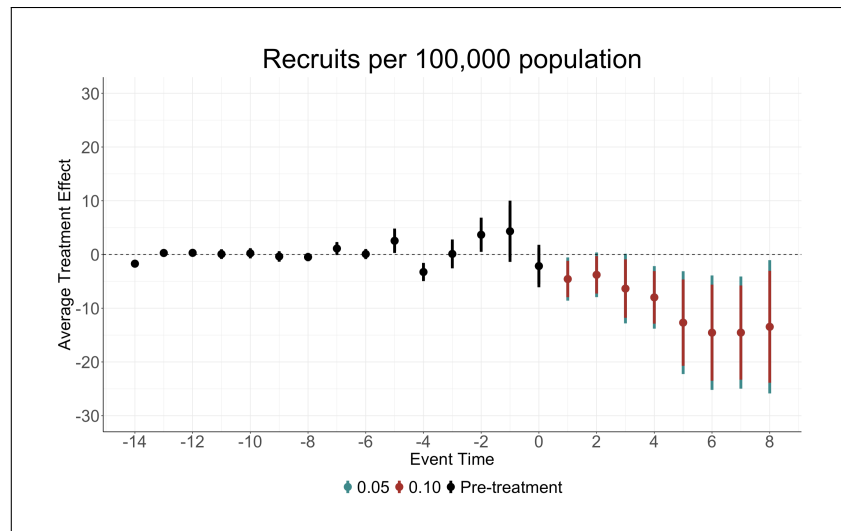
Figure 6. Aggregate Group-Time Average Treatment Effects (Event Study)
Note: The vertical bars indicate confidence intervals, with blue bars representing 95% confidence intervals and red bars representing 90% confidence intervals.

just for commemoration but for recruitment. The topic correlation network (Appendix 4) provides additional evidence that funeral propaganda is systematically tied to themes of mobilization. *Mass Mobilization* is closely associated with *Kurdish Fighters in Kobane* and *ISIS Conflict,* suggesting that the PKK links funerals to ongoing wartime struggles to galvanize support. The fact that PKK-affiliated media consistently frames funerals as mobilization tools rather than mere memorials offers evidence for an observable implication of the theory—that performative rebel governance is not just symbolic but also instrumental.

Path to Mobilization

If performative rebel governance serves as a mechanism for mobilization, we should expect to see evidence of funeral attendance influencing individuals' decisions to join the insurgency. While systematic individual data on this process is difficult to obtain, obituaries published for fallen PKK fighters provide qualitative indications that funerals frequently function as a path to mobilization. A recurring theme in these obituaries is that individuals who later joined the PKK are described as having attended the funerals of fallen fighters, sworn oaths of vengeance, and subsequently entered the guerrilla ranks. One obituary, for instance, states:

> *"Our comrade [Barış Kartal], who admired the guerrillas who wrote epics of heroism in their clashes with the Turkish state, attended the funeral ceremony of the fallen guerrillas and swore to take revenge on the enemy. He acted with the awareness that the only way to respond to martyrdom was to join the ranks of the struggle. In 2013,*

he turned his face toward the sacred lands of the guerrilla and joined the ranks in the Botan region."[60]

State Repression

Another key argument of the theory is that performative rebel governance increases the visibility of civilian participation to the state, thereby exposing pro-rebel communities to greater repression. The observable implication is that the Turkish government should have responded to performative rebel governance acts with collective repression. To test this implication, I collected original data on government-perpetrated civilian deaths during the state-imposed curfews of 2015, a period of heightened counterinsurgency operations in southeast Turkey. Using these data, I conduct a separate difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis to estimate whether provinces that hosted mass-attended PKK funerals experienced greater levels of state repression during the 2015 curfews compared to similar provinces that did not.

The results, presented in Appendix 5, indicate a statistically significant increase in government-perpetrated civilian deaths in provinces where mass funerals had previously taken place, suggesting that these performative acts indeed triggered state repression. By making support for the PKK more visible, funerals inadvertently exposed pro-rebel civilians to greater state violence, reinforcing the paradox of performative rebel governance as both a mechanism of mobilization and a source of risk for pro-rebel communities.

Rebel Adaptation

If state repression and heightened surveillance following mass-attended funerals deter overall mobilization within Turkey, a logical extension of the theory is that the PKK would seek to compensate for declining domestic recruitment by expanding its recruitment efforts elsewhere. To test this, I supplement my original dataset on PKK recruitment in southeast Turkey with additional data on foreign-born PKK recruits from Syria, Iraq, and Iran, collected using the same procedure.

The temporal trends, presented in Appendix 6, indicate that as overall recruitment in Turkey declines, the PKK increasingly draws new fighters from Kurdish communities outside of Turkey. Specifically, following periods where domestic recruitment drops, there is a corresponding increase in the proportion of recruits from Syria, Iraq, and Iran, suggesting a strategic adaptation to domestic constraints on mobilization.

---

[60](Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) 2024)

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that performative rebel governance—through public acts that mimic the symbolic repertoires of sovereign states—shapes both civilian mobilization and state repression. Using original event data on PKK funeral rites in southeast Turkey, I show that these ceremonies expand recruitment beyond traditional militant networks, particularly among politically inactive individuals and women. However, they also increase state surveillance and repression, leading to an overall decline in mobilization.

These findings contribute to the study of rebel governance and insurgent mobilization in several ways. First, they extend existing theories of rebel governance by demonstrating that rebels do not always need *institutions* to govern; symbolic governance can shape insurgent-civilian relations as well. Second, they provide systematic evidence that performative acts are not merely displays of power but function as mechanisms of recruitment, reinforcing the role of *public relations* in sustaining insurgencies. Finally, they highlight an inherent dilemma in rebel governance in contested spaces: while governance helps insurgents overcome informational deficiencies by eliciting civilian agency to reveal allegiances, it simultaneously renders the social landscape of war more legible to the enemy.

This study opens several avenues for further research. First, future research should examine the role of performative governance acts cross-nationally to clarify, for instance, whether performative governance is primarily a tactic of rebels operating under the constraints of not being able to consolidate territorial control. Second, more systematic large-N work is needed on how rebels establish and maintain ties with civilians in contested spaces, including but not limited to performative acts like funerals and public commemorations. While existing quantitative research has examined service or justice provision, less attention has been given to how rebels leverage informal social ties or kinship-based patronage to embed themselves within civilian communities.

Finally, while this study focuses on how rebels use performative acts to shape legibility and mobilization, governments also employ symbolic performances during civil war. Future research should investigate state-led performative governance in contested environments, such as state-sponsored martyrdom commemorations, counter-mobilization protests, or military parades, to assess how these acts contribute to pro-state mobilization. Examining how states and insurgents compete in the symbolic realm—not just in the battlefield—could provide deeper insights into how both actors attempt to shape political behavior in civil conflict.

References

Akin, C. Erdost. 2024. ""Martyrs do not die": Politics and security in Kurdish insurgents' funerals." *Death Studies* .

ANF News. 2012. "Binlerce Kişi Karakaya ve Aydemir'i Toprağa Verdi.". Available at https://anfturkce.com/guncel/-2009. Accessed on February 12, 2025.

Arjona, Ana. 2016. *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Arjona, M. Ana and Stathis N. Kalyvas. 2011. Recruitment into Armed Groups in Colombia: A Survey of Demobilized Fighters. In *Understanding Political Violence*, ed. Y. Guichaoua. New York: Palgrave Macmillan pp. 143–171.

Aydın, Derya. 2018. "Kürdistan'da Direnişe Dönüşen Yas: Cumartesi Anneleri, Barış Anneleri ve MEYA-DER Deneyimi." *Jineoloji Dergisi* (11).

Balcells, Laia and Abbey Steele. 2016. "Warfare, Political Identities, and Displacement in Spain and Colombia." *Political Geography* 51(1):15–29. doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2015.11.007.

Belge, Ceren and Semuhi Sinanoglu. 2022. "Containing Ethnic Conflict: Repression, Cooptation, and Identity Politics." *Comparative Politics* 54(4):765–786.

Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz. 2019. Arbeiterpartei Kurdistans (PKK). Technical report Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz.

Callaway, Brantly and Pedro H. C. Sant'Anna. 2021. "Difference-in-Differences with Multiple Time Periods." *Journal of Econometrics* 225:200–230.

Condra, Luke N. and Austin L. Wright. 2019. "Civilians, Control, and Collaboration during Civil Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly* 63(4):897–907. doi:10.1093/isq/sqz042.

Davenport, Christian. 2005. "Understanding Covert Repressive Action: The Case of the U.S. Government against the Republic of New Africa." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(1):120–140.

Davenport, Christian, Sarah A. Soule and II David A. Armstrong. 2011. "Protesting While Black?: The Differential Policing of American Activism, 1960 to 1990." *American Sociological Review* 76(1):152–178.

Demirel-Pegg, Tijen and Karen Rasler. 2021. "The Effects of Selective and Indiscriminate Repression on the 2013 Gezi Park Nonviolent Resistance Campaign." *Sociological Perspectives* 64(1):58–81.

Düzel, Esin. 2024. "The Afterlife of Sacrifice in the Kurdish Movement." *Cultural Anthropology* 39(4):507–532.

Earl, Jennifer, Sarah A. Soule and John D. McCarthy. 2003. "Protest under Fire? Explaining the Policing of Protest." *American Sociological Review* 68(4):581–606.

Edgerton, Jared. 2022. "Suicide Bomber Mobilization and Kin and Peer Ties." *Social Networks* 70:36–54.

Fjelde, Hanne and Lisa Hultman. 2014. "Weakening the Enemy: A Disaggregated Study of Violence against Civilians in Africa." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58(7):1230–1257. doi:10.1177/0022002713492648.

Förster, Till. 2015. Dialogue Direct: Rebel Governance and Civil Order in Northern Côte d'Ivoire. In *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, ed. Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir and Zachariah Mampilly. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press chapter 1, pp. 203–225.

Gilbert, Danielle. 2022. "The Logic of Kidnapping in Civil War: Evidence from Colombia." *American Political Science Review* 116(4):1226–1241.

Gowrinathan, Nimmi and Zachariah Mampilly. 2019. "Resistance and Repression Under the Rule of Rebels: Women, Clergy, and Civilian Agency in LTTE Governed Sri Lanka." *Comparative Politics* 52(1):1–20.

Henshaw, Alexis Leanna. 2017. *Why Women Rebel: Understanding Women's Participation in Armed Rebel Groups*. New York: Routledge.

Hirose, Kentaro, Kosuke Imai and Jason Lyall. 2017. "Can Civilian Attitudes Predict Insurgent Violence? Ideology and Insurgent Tactical Choice in Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 54(1):47–63. doi:10.1177/0022343316675909.

Huang, Reyko. 2016. *The Wartime Origins of Democratization: Civil War, Rebel Governance, and Political Regimes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hägerdal, Nils. 2019. "Ethnic Cleansing and the Politics of Restraint: Violence and Coexistence in the Lebanese Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(1):59–84. doi:10.1177/0022002717721612.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Khalil, James, John Horgan and Martine Zeuthen. 2022. "The Attitudes-Behaviors Corrective (ABC) Model of Violent Extremism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34(3):425–450. doi:10.1080/09546553.2019.1699793.

Kilcullen, David. 2009. *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Kruglanski, Arie W., Michele J. Gelfand, Jean-Christophe Bélanger, Adam Sheveland, Masiyaleti Hetiarachchi and Rohan Gunaratna. 2014. "The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism." *Political Psychology* 35(1):69–93. doi:10.1111/pops.12163.

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). 2012. "Cenaze Törenleri.". Accessed: 2025-02-21. doi

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). 2016. "Kürt Halkının Şerefi Yerde Sürüklenmiştir.". Accessed: 2025-02-21.

doi

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). 2024. "Fedai Komutanımız Serhed Jêhat, Xebat, Yılmaz ve Zamani Yoldaşlarımız Şehadete Ulaştı.". Accessed: 2025-02-24.

doi

Lacina, Bethany. 2014. "How Governments Shape the Risk of Civil Violence: India's Federal Reorganization, 1950–56." *American Journal of Political Science* 58:720–738.

Larson, Jennifer M. and Janet I. Lewis. 2018. "Rumors, Kinship Networks, and Rebel Group Formation." *International Organization* 72(4):871–903.

Lewis, Janet I. 2017. "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?" *Comparative Political Studies* 50(1):1420–50.

Liu, Howard and Christopher M. Sullivan. 2021. "And the Heat Goes On: Police Repression and the Modalities of Power." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(10):1657–1679.

Loyle, Cyanne E. 2021. "Rebel Justice During Armed Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(1):108–134.

Loyle, Cyanne E. and Ilayda B. Onder. 2024. "The Legacies of Rebel Rule in Southeast Turkey." *Comparative Political Studies* 57(11):1771–1803.

Loyle, Cyanne E., Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, Reyko Huang and Danielle F. Jung. 2021. "New Directions in Rebel Governance Research." *Perspectives on Politics* 19(1):264–278.

Lyall, Jason, Graeme Blair and Kosuke Imai. 2013. "Explaining Support for Combatants during Wartime: A Survey Experiment in Afghanistan." *American Political Science Review* 107(4):679–705. doi:10.1017/S0003055413000403.

Mampilly, Zachariah. 2015. Performing the Nation-State: Rebel Governance and Symbolic Processes. In *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, ed. Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir and Zachariah Mampilly. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press chapter 1, pp. 74–97.

Mampilly, Zachariah Cherian. 2011. *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War*. Reprint ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Manekin, Devorah and Reed M. Wood. 2020. "Framing the Narrative: Female Fighters, External Audience Attitudes, and Transnational Support for Armed Rebellions." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(9):1638–1665.

McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald. 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mosinger, Eric S. 2018. "Brothers or Others in Arms? Civilian Constituencies and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 55(1):62–77. doi:10.1177/0022343316675907.

Moskalenko, Sophia and Clark McCauley. 2009. "Measuring Political Mobilization: The Distinction Between Activism and Radicalism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21(2):239–260. doi:10.1080/09546550902765508.

Nussio, Enzo. 2024. "The "Dark Side" of Community Ties: Collective Action and Lynching in Mexico." *American Sociological Review* 89(4):708–734.

Obayashi, Kazuhiro. 2018. *Rebel Recruitment and Information Problems*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge. Published March 21, 2019.

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Onder, Ilayda B. 2024. "How Civilian Loyalties Shape Rebel-Led Victimization of Rebel Constituencies." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* .

Ortega, Luisa Maria Dietrich. 2011. Gendered Patterns of Mobilization and Recruitment for Political Violence, Experiences from Three Latin American Countries. In *Understanding Political Violence*, ed. Y. Guichaoua. New York: Palgrave Macmillan pp. 84–104.

Parkinson, Sarah. 2013. "Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War." *American Political Science Review* 107(3):418–432.

Posen, Barry. 1993. "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict." *Survival* 35(1):27–47. doi:10.1080/00396339308442672.

Revkin, Mara Redlich. 2020. "What Explains Taxation by Resource-Rich Rebels? Evidence from the Islamic State in Syria." *The Journal of Politics* 82(2):757–764.

Rubin, Michael A. 2019. "Rebel Territorial Control and Civilian Collective Action in Civil War: Evidence from the Communist Insurgency in the Philippines." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(2–3):459–489.

Sanin, Francisco Gutierrez. 2011. The Dilemmas of Recruitment: The Colombian Case. In *Understanding Political Violence*, ed. Y. Guichaoua. New York: Palgrave Macmillan pp. 175–195.

Shesterinina, Anastasia. 2016. "Collective Threat Framing and Mobilization in Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 110(3):411–427.

Siegel, David A. 2009. "Social Networks and Collective Action." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(1):122–38.

Sobolev, Anton, M. Keith Chen, Jungseock Joo and Zachary C. Steinert-Threlkeld. 2020. "News and Geolocated Social Media Accurately Measure Protest Size Variation." *American Political Science Review* 114(4):1343–1351.

Staniland, Paul. 2012. "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia." *International Security* 37(1):142–177.

Staniland, Paul. 2014. *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Steele, Abbey. 2011. "Electing Displacement: Political Cleansing in Apartado, Colombia." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55(3):423–455. doi:10.1177/0022002711400975.

Steinert-Threlkeld, Zachary C., Alexander M. Chan and Jungseock Joo. 2022. "How State and Protester Violence Affect Protest Dynamics." *The Journal of Politics* 84(2):798–813.

Stewart, Megan A. 2018. "Civil War as State-Making: Strategic Governance in Civil War." *International Organization* 72(Winter):205–226.

Stewart, Megan A. 2021. *Governing for Revolution: Social Transformation in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sullivan, Christopher M. 2016. "Undermining Resistance: Mobilization, Repression, and the Enforcement of Political Order." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60(7):1163–1190.

Tezcur, Gunes Murat. 2016. "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Risks: Joining an Ethnic Rebellion." *American Political Science Review* 110(2):247–263. doi:10.1017/S0003055416000150.

Thomas, Jakana and Kanisha Bond. 2015. "Women's Participation in Violent Political Organizations." *American Political Science Review* 109(3):488–506.

van Baalen, Sebastian. 2021. "Local Elites, Civil Resistance, and the Responsiveness of Rebel Governance in Côte d'Ivoire." *Journal of Peace Research* 58(5):930–944.

Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2006. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, Reed and Jakana Thomas. 2017. "Women on the Frontlines: Investigating the Influence of Rebel Group Ideology on Women's Combat Roles." *Journal of Peace Research* 54(1):31–46.

Xu, Xu. 2021. "To Repress or to Co-opt? Authoritarian Control in the Age of Digital Surveillance." *American Journal of Political Science* 65:309–325.

Özeren, Süleyman, Murat Sever, Kamil Yılmaz and Alper Sözer. 2014. "Whom Do They Recruit?: Profiling and Recruitment in the PKK/KCK." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37(4):322–347.

Appendix

Contents

Crude Number of Recruits

Table A.1. Rebel Funeral Rites and Overall Recruitment in Southeast Turkey

	DV: Number of Recruits **Sample: Post-2000**		
	Model 10	**Model 11**	**Model 12**
Average Treatment Effect	-30.64***	-16.57***	-26.8***
	(7.91)	(4.02)	(8.16)
Year-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls			
Conflict Related Controls	No	Yes	No
Demographic Controls	No	No	Yes
N	440	440	440

Note 1: **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note 2: Robust standard errors clustered on province are in parentheses. All models are estimated with Callaway and Sant'Anna's (2021) doubly robust estimation method for staggered Difference-in-Differences using the `att_gt` function of the `did` package in `R`. All models consider both "Never Treated" and "Not Yet Treated" units as the control group.

All Funerals As Treatment

Table A.2. Rebel Funeral Rites and Selective Recruitment, All Funerals

	Non-Activist Recruits			*Non-Activist Female Recruits*			*Recruits With No Family Ties*		
	Dependent Variable: Ratio of Recruits **Sample: Post-2000**								
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**	**Model 9**
Average Treatment Effect	0.1588*	0.0112	0.6811***	0.0507	0.08	0.08	0.0106	-0.0078	-0.0078
	(0.0951)	(0.6283)	(0.1798)	(0.076)	(0.1107)	(0.1107)	(0.0734)	(0.1179)	(0.1179)
Year-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls									
Conflict Related Controls	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Demographic Controls	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N	480	440	440	480	440	440	480	440	440

Note 1: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$

Note 2: Robust standard errors clustered on province are in parentheses. All models are estimated using Callaway and Sant'Anna's (2021) doubly robust estimation method for staggered Difference-in-Differences. All models consider both "Never Treated" and "Not Yet Treated" units as the control group.

Table A.3. Rebel Funeral Rites and Overall Recruitment, All Funerals

	DV: Recruits per 100,000 population **Sample: Post-2000**		
	Model 10	**Model 11**	**Model 12**
Average Treatment Effect	-5.542***	-0.4768	1.4816
	(2.115)	(1.0026)	(1.572)
Year-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls			
Conflict Related Controls	No	Yes	No
Demographic Controls	No	No	Yes
N	440	440	440

Note 1: **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$

Note 2: Robust standard errors clustered on province are in parentheses. All models are estimated with Callaway and Sant'Anna's (2021) doubly robust estimation method for staggered Difference-in-Differences using the `att_gt` function of the `did` package in `R`. All models consider both "Never Treated" and "Not Yet Treated" units as the control group.

Funerals With Police Presence As Treatment

Table A.4. Rebel Funeral Rites and Selective Recruitment, Funerals with Police Presence

	Dependent Variable: Ratio of Recruits **Sample: Post-2000**								
	Non-Activist Recruits			*Non-Activist Female Recruits*			*Recruits With No Family Ties*		
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**	**Model 9**
Average Treatment Effect	0.2973**	0.4052***	0.293**	0.1972**	0.2644***	0.1558	0.013	0.0279	-0.0023
	(0.1165)	(0.1219)	(0.1394)	(0.097)	(0.0941)	(0.1069)	(0.1016)	(0.1247)	(0.0839)
Year-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls									
Conflict Related Controls	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Demographic Controls	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N	480	440	440	480	440	440	480	440	440

Note 1: ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1
Note 2: Robust standard errors clustered on province are in parentheses. All models are estimated using Callaway and Sant'Anna's (2021) doubly robust estimation method for staggered Difference-in-Differences. All models consider both "Never Treated" and "Not Yet Treated" units as the control group.

Table A.5. Rebel Funeral Rites and Overall Recruitment, Funerals with Police Presence

|	*DV: Recruits per 100,000 population* **Sample: Post-2000**		
	Model 10	**Model 11**	**Model 12**
Average Treatment Effect	-6.1698**	-3.1552	1.0547
	(2.8132)	(2.0255)	(1.0409)
Year-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls			
Conflict Related Controls	No	Yes	No
Demographic Controls	No	No	Yes
N	440	440	440

Note 1: **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1
Note 2: Robust standard errors clustered on province are in parentheses. All models are estimated with Callaway and Sant'Anna's (2021) doubly robust estimation method for staggered Difference-in-Differences using the att_gt function of the did package in R. All models consider both "Never Treated" and "Not Yet Treated" units as the control group.
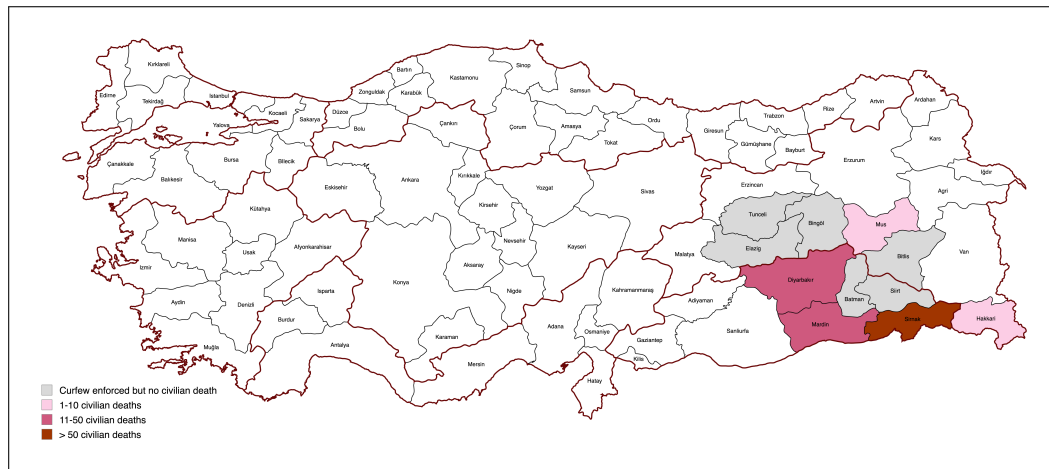
Rebel Propaganda
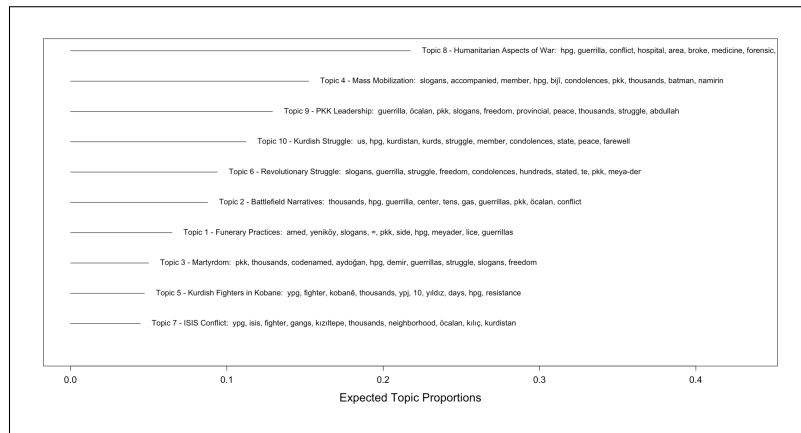
Figure A.1. Topics from STMs with 10 Topics
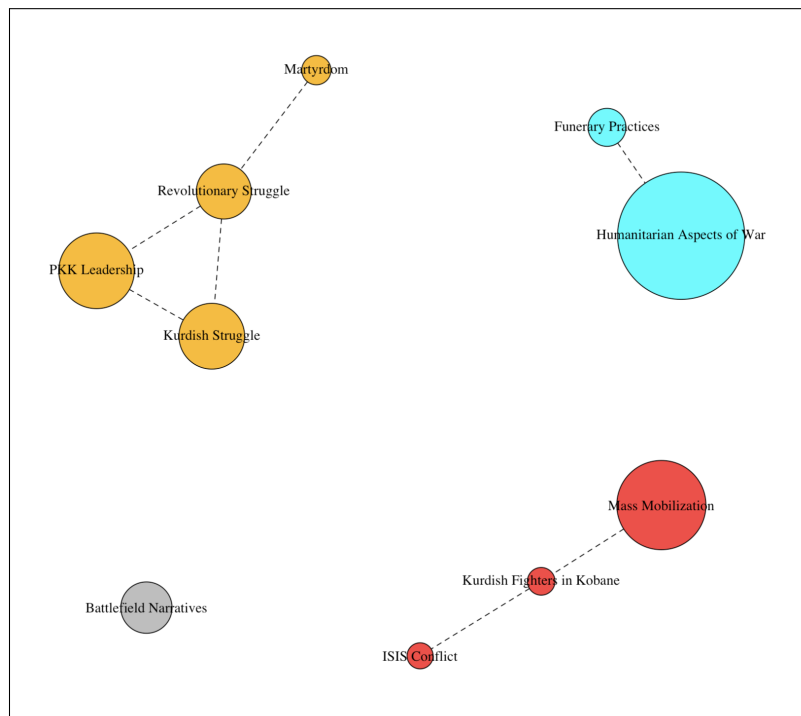
**Figure A.2.** Topic Correlations

State Repression

Figure A.3. Distribution of State-Perpetrated Civilian Deaths during Curfews, 2015

Table A.6. Impact of Rebel Funeral Rites on Government-Perpetrated Civilian Deaths

| | *DV: Civilian Deaths (Logged)* | | |
| | **Sample: 2015** | | |
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Rebel Funeral Rites	0.265**	0.221*	0.188
	(0.100)	(0.108)	(0.126)
Rebel Recruits (Logged)	0.212	-0.034	0.275
	(0.176)	(0.273)	(0.232)
Controls			
Conflict Related Controls	No	Yes	No
Demographic Controls	No	No	Yes
N	24	22	22
Adjusted R^2	0.415	0.428	0.355

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Rebel Adaptation
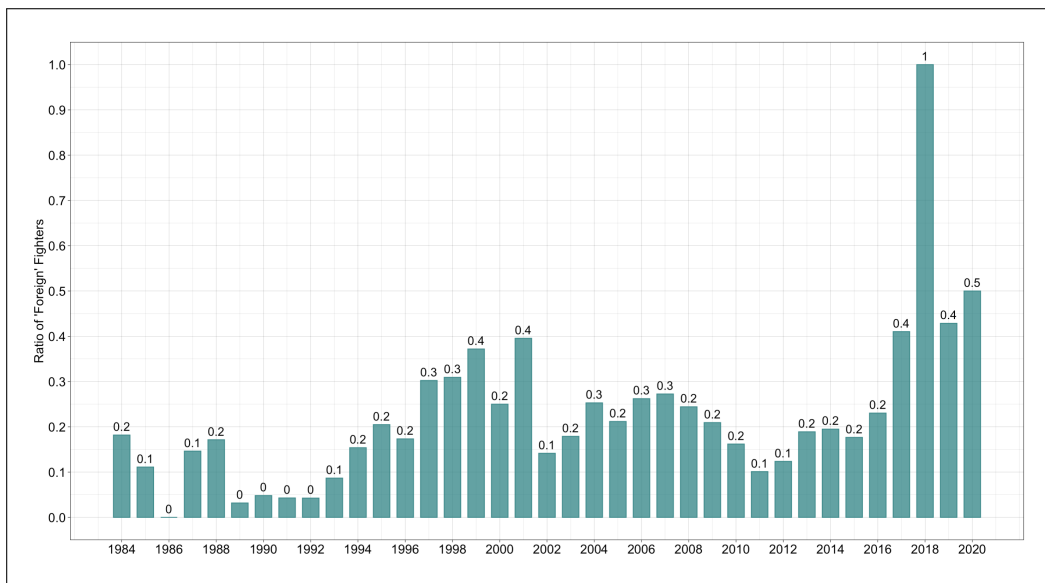
Figure A.4. Ratio of "Foreign" Recruits to All Recruits, 2012, 2020