Gender in Elections: The Consequences of Killing Women Activists*

Andrés F. Rivera† Juliana Tappe Ortiz‡ Carlo Koos§

Abstract

Violence against social activists is a global phenomenon, increasingly prevalent in democratic and conflict-affected states. Violence targeting women activists, in particular, highlights the intersection of gender-based discrimination and the risks associated with activism. We theorize that the killings of women activists reduce both women's motivation to run for office and voters' willingness to elect women candidates, driven by fears of further retaliation from armed groups and a demand for masculine norms in politics. Using novel fine-grained data on violence against activists, we demonstrate that the killings of women activists in Colombia decrease women's candidacies and lower voter support for women in mayoral elections. Additional analyses suggest that women's visibility during peace negotiations and prior territorial control by left-wing FARC rebels mitigated this effect, emphasizing the role of norms in shaping the political consequences of violence. Our findings reveal that considering the gender of victims offers important insights into how exposure to violence influences democratic elections in countries affected by political and criminal violence.

Word count: 7387

*The authors would like to thank the organizers of the 'Political Violence in Democracies' Workshop, Ursula Daxecker, Neeraj Prasad, and Andrea Ruggeri for their encouragement. We gratefully acknowledge funding by the European Union (ERC, WarEffects, Grant no. 101040948).

†Corresponding Author: andres.rivera@u.icesi.edu.co Lecturer, Department of Economics, Universidad ICESI, Colombia.

‡Corresponding Author: juliana.ortiz@uib.no Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Government, University of Bergen, Norway.

§Corresponding Author: carlo.koos@uib.no Associate Professor, Department of Government, University of Bergen, Norway.

Introduction

Armed groups seeking control over territories resort to violence, including killing civilians, to disrupt democratic processes, such as elections, and foster a militarized order (Alacevich and Zejcirovic, 2020; van Baalen, 2023; Kalyvas, 2006). Activists who challenge this militarized social order are often targeted, among others as a warning to communities (Albarracín et al., 2023). From environmental defenders in Brazil to human rights advocates in Mexico and Turkey, the pattern of targeting individuals who stand up for democracy, social justice, environmental protection, and community rights is a disturbing aspect of how democratic engagement is affected by political and criminal violence (Krain et al., 2024).

Within the already selective victimization of activists, violence against publicly active women, *women activists*, is a particularly insidious form of persecution, underscoring the intersection of gender-based discrimination and the risks associated with activism (Bardall et al., 2020). Scholars understand violence against women activists and politicians as a deliberate tactic to uphold power structures and traditional gender norms (Krook, 2020; Daniele et al., 2023; Håkansson, 2023; Stallone and Zulver, 2024).[1] Despite this growing scholarly and policy interest in violence against activists, the political consequences of violence against activists, in particular women activists, have received little attention. This article addresses this larger question by focusing on how the exposure to the killings of women activists affects local elections during conflict.

Building on prior research on gender bias against women's political representation in elections, we theorize that the killings of women activists decrease the number of women running for office and diminish voter support for them, driven by fears of further retaliation from armed groups and a demand for masculine norms in politics (Bhatia and Monroe, 2023; Glaurdić and Lesschaeve, 2023).

We focus on killings of women activists and construct a novel fine-grained dataset on mayoral elections and killings of activists in Colombia between 2007 and 2019.[2] Colombia is

[1] We use "men" and "women" as adjectives because "female" and "male" connotes a biological category and excludes people whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth

[2] We focus on who was elected as mayor and on violence against women perpetrated by armed actors. We

an extreme case for assessing how different form of violence affect democratic elections for various reasons. First, local elections in a setting that is both democratic and suffers from political and criminal violence offers a rare opportunity to assess how ongoing insecurity—and not only pre-election violence—affects elections. Second, Colombia is the tragic leader in violence against social activists. In the wake of Colombia's historic 2016 peace agreement, there has been a harrowing increase in violence against activists (Prem et al., 2022). Third, in the Colombian context, activists and politicians are separable categories with different societal roles. Activists run for political office extremely rarely.[3] Fourth, due to its size, Colombia offers valuable within-case variation along important variables, thus allowing us to explore under which conditions violence against women activists influences electoral outcomes.

We employ a stacked difference-in-difference strategy, focusing on killings in the four years leading up to elections. Defining the treatment over the four years leading up to elections, rather than just months prior, provides a more comprehensive assessment of how killings of women activists impact electoral outcomes. This broader timeframe captures both immediate and delayed effects, accounting for the cumulative influence of violence on political participation throughout the entire electoral cycle. It enhances the robustness of our results by increasing statistical power with more data points and mitigates potential biases from short-term anomalies or temporal factors specific to the immediate pre-election period. Additionally, it allows us to better control for pre-existing municipal characteristics, ensuring that our findings more accurately isolate the true effect of the women activist killings.

We find that in municipalities in which women activists have been killed (treatment group), compared to municipalities without killings at all (control group), women's candidateship is reduced by 7.1 percentage points (pp) and women's vote share is down by 9 pp.

We conclude that the gender identity of victims of violence significantly alter the electoral process by constraining women's access to public office and reducing support for women's leadership. We rule out alternative explanations by showing that the effect is only observable for the killings of women activists but not for women civilians, women politicians, men

never refer to domestic violence unless specifically stated.

[3]The current vice president, Francia Márquez, is one of the few activists who became politicians.

activists, men civilians, or men politicians. Moreover, we show that armed conflict or illicit economies shocks do not drive our findings.

Heterogeneous effects underscore that the timing of these killings matter. The impact of the killings is most pronounced in the six months immediately preceding local elections. We also found the killing of women activists during the peace negotiations between the FARC and the government created a reverse, positive push effect on women's candidacies. Simultaneously, fewer women candidates emerged in areas formerly controlled by paramilitaries, while the proportion of women's votes increased in regions previously dominated by the left-wing FARC. These effects suggest a shift in gender norms as a potential mechanism linking exposure to violence with electoral behavior.

Our article advances the existing literature on the persistence of violence on democratic elections by offering a theory and empirical assessment of how violence against women activists affects women candidates' decision to run as candidates and gendered voting preferences (Trelles and Carreras, 2012; Condra et al., 2018; Alacevich and Zejcirovic, 2020; van Baalen, 2023). Furthermore, our study adds to the growing "war–women's empowerment" debate (Berry, 2018) by shifting the level of analysis from the aggregate country level (Kreft, 2019; Webster et al., 2019; Bakken and Buhaug, 2021) to the subnational level (Lindsey, 2022; Koos and Traunmüller, 2024; Lindsey and Koos, 2024; García-Ponce, 2017; Gaikwad et al., 2023), allowing us to advance an understanding of women's political engagement closer to communities' lived realities than national-level politics.

This paper contributes to the special issue theme of "Political Violence in Democracies" by examining the nuanced ways in which targeted violence against women activists influences democratic processes at the local level. Democracies are often idealized as systems where political participation and competition occur without coercion or fear. However, the persistence of political violence within democratic contexts, such as Colombia's, challenges this ideal and reveals complexities in how violence shapes political landscapes.

By focusing on the intersection of gender, violence, and democracy, this paper adds a critical dimension to the literature on political violence in democratic settings. It highlights the importance of addressing gender-specific impacts of violence to fully understand and miti-

gate its effects on democratic participation and representation. The Colombian case provides valuable insights into how democracies can be undermined from within and emphasizes the need for targeted policies that protect activists and promote inclusive political engagement. In doing so, it reinforces the imperative for democracies to not only prevent violence but also to address its lingering effects to uphold the integrity and inclusiveness of their political systems.

Prior Research on the Consequences of Violence in Elections

Electoral violence intensifies citizens' sense of insecurity, leading them to reject candidates linked to violence and influencing voter behaviour (Arjona, 2018; Trelles and Carreras, 2012; Gutiérrez-Romero and LeBas, 2020). In different contexts, such as Israel and post-World War I Germany, violence has shifted public support toward right-wing parties (Berrebi and Klor, 2008; De Juan et al., 2024), while in post-conflict settings like Indonesia, former rebels gain electoral support through clientelism (Haass and Ottmann, 2022). Recent research has started to focus on how the identity of victims of political violence affects elections, including the killings of politicians and civilians involved in informal politics (Albarracín et al., 2023; Prem et al., 2022; Balcells and Stanton, 2021).

Another critical identity category to understand the consequence of violence on democracies is the sex and gender of the victims. Individual women are often perceived as symbolic representatives of all women when they engage in public activities (Yan and Bernhard, 2024). They may mobilize other women to participate in protests and even in armed resistance groups (Mehrl, 2023; Kreft, 2019). Research indicates that sexual and gender-based violence can both politically mobilize survivors at the grassroots level and act as a barrier to women's formal political participation (Krook, 2020; Lindsey and Koos, 2024; González and Traunmüller, 2023; Koos and Traunmüller, 2024).

Violence against women politicians decreases their visibility in politics (Bardall et al., 2020; Daniele et al., 2023; Håkansson, 2023). Gendered violence can shift electoral preferences, with insecurity leading to lower support for women leaders (Bhatia and Monroe, 2023; Glaurdić

and Lesschaeve, 2023) and reinforcing stereotypes favoring men candidates (Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Kim and Kang, 2022). Gender-specific differences in the perception of political aggression in the political arena result in women expressing less desire to get involved in politics (Hadzic and Tavits, 2019). In contrast, Gaikwad et al. (2023) find that areas that suffered mass killings in Cambodia are associated with increased women representation in local elected positions. Similarly, García-Ponce (2017) shows that exposure to insurgent violence triggers more women's political participation in Peru. Women in Colombia often became social activists for human rights after experiencing traumatic forms of violence (Zulver, 2022).

Despite these insights, little is known about the specific electoral impact of gendered killings, especially of women activists. While women often lead efforts for political change in conflict zones, facing gendered threats, the effect of this specific form of violence against them, and its consequences for democracies, demand further investigation (Stallone and Zulver, 2024).

Gendered Consequences of Violence Against Women in Elections

Recent studies suggest that political violence affects democratic elections, but less is known about how gender intersects with electoral outcomes (García-Ponce, 2017; Hadzic and Tavits, 2021). We contribute to this body of research by exploring how the gender of activists impacts democratic elections in contexts of political and criminal violence. To achieve this, we should understand the roles these individuals play in society and how those roles differ from those of 'ordinary' civilian women and politicians.

First, socially active women, often referred to as social activists, are well-known within their communities due to their advocacy for social change. Women activists are seen as disruptors who challenge traditional gender roles and norms, particularly by naming security and political fallacies, drawing attention to the failures of the state and elites in addressing violence, inequality, and governance issues. In contrast, civilians, lacking this public advocacy role, do not generate the same political implications through their deaths. Civilian deaths, while contributing to overall insecurity, do not signal challenges to political participation in

the same way.

Second, women activists' deaths are often widely publicized in local newspapers and other communication channels making it more likely that potential voters are aware of the activist's death than that of a civilian woman. Even in areas with poor internet coverage, social activists are often well connected within their communities and inform each other about threats and violence they face, which then reaches the wider community, especially in the lead-up to elections. The media often stripps killed publicly active women from their professional identity and focuses on their gender (Ette, 2013). Third, the killings of women activists signal a targeted attack on women's leadership and advocacy efforts. By their very presence as publicly engaged women, activists challenge gender hierarchies by breaking "breaking [...] social norms around women's idealized roles within the private space" (Stallone and Zulver, 2024, p. 4). Their deaths signal to communities that socially active women are unsafe and that armed groups are enforcing a militarized social order that punishes civilians who challenge it.

Finally, there is a notable distinction between the killings of women activists and women politicians. While both groups challenge gender norms, are visible within their communities, and are specifically targeted by armed actors for their transgressive behavior, women activists often serve as a bridge between marginalized groups and the formal political system. They are not seen as representatives of the establishment and are typically closer to their communities. Killing a woman activist sends a symbolic message that efforts toward political change will be met with violence. In contrast, by the time women politicians are elected, they are seen as part of the formal political structure and less as challengers to the system.[4] The deaths of women politicians, while politically significant, often reflect the risks they face as part of the formal political system, whereas the killings of women activists signal a direct attack on community-level leadership, underscoring the state's inability or unwillingness to protect those promoting social change from outside the establishment. Based on this, we propose

[4]We visualized the extend to which the killings of social activists differ from the killings of politicians (Appendix Figure A4. We find that violence against social activists in Colombia is highly correlated with violence driven by the long-standing armed conflict (Prem et al., 2022; Albarracín et al., 2023) and the presence of illicit economies, especially the cultivation and trafficking of coca. Politicians are mostly targeted in other municipalties than activists and violence against them is driven by other patterns of violence.

two hypotheses on how violence against women activists affects (i) women's likelihood of running as candidates in local elections and (ii) women's vote shares.

A caveat here is that it is important to consider that not all communities are uniformly shocked by the killings of women activists or that they are inherently supportive of women's participation in politics and government. Some communities may have pre-existing norms that are hostile to women's activism and political engagement. For instance, in communities where traditional gender roles are deeply entrenched, the killing of women activists may reinforce existing beliefs that women should remain within the domestic sphere, rather than participating in public life. In such contexts, the killings might not be perceived as a signal against women's public engagement and needs careful evaluation.

Our theory applies to countries that experience political and/or criminal violence from armed groups but still hold elections. It specifically addresses cases where violence has not escalated to the point where men are unable to run as political candidates due to being absent or killed. In a 'nothing to lose' scenario, violence against women activists could potentially motivate the remaining women to run for office and increase voter support for women candidates (Kreft, 2019; Zulver, 2022). This aligns with the idea that wars can disrupt social hierarchies, allowing previously marginalized groups, including women, to assume political roles traditionally held by men, as well as take on leadership in peacebuilding (Tripp, 2015; García-Ponce, 2017; Webster et al., 2019; Bakken and Buhaug, 2021). However, in contexts where violence remains pervasive but falls short of full-scale war, these shifts in women's leadership may not materialize.

Women's Candidateship After Violence Against Women Activists

We first turn to the question how violence against women activists can affect the decisions and opportunities for women to run as candidates in local elections. In communities where women activists have not previously been killed, such violence reshapes the social and political environment. The killings of women activists signal to the entire community that public engagement by women is dangerous, disruptive to existing power structures, and inappro-

priate for women in society (Stallone and Zulver, 2024). Whether one or multiple activists are killed, the initial killing of a woman carries a disproportionately strong message, shaping perceptions of fear and reinforcing traditional gender norms across the community. Their deaths send the message that women's safety depends on adhering to these norms and refraining from public advocacy that challenges the militarized order. Men in the family such as fathers, husbands, brothers may actively discourage women from running for office or participating in public activities, fearing that political involvement could lead to violent retaliation by armed groups.

Beyond the general fear of violence within the community, these targeted attacks against women activists send a message that political engagement as a woman is characterized by danger, particularly in contexts of violence. The killings of women activists have, thus, a direct impact on women's political aspirations, instilling a personal sense of insecurity. When women witness their peers being targeted and killed for their activism, it discourages them from pursuing political office out of fear for their own safety and that of their families (Håkansson, 2023). This can result in women wanting to adhere to traditional gender norms in the private and the political sphere , as they perceive that any attempt to challenge these norms will be met with punishment.

The killings of women activists not only instill fear within communities and for women of running for politics but also reinforce societal preferences for a specific norm in leadership. After the death of women activists, the citizens associate the political sphere as a domain requiring strength, control, and protection which are qualities traditionally associated with men (Goldstein, 2003; Handrahan, 2004; MacKenzie and Foster, 2017). This perception of politics as masculine may encourage men to seek political roles, they believe they are best suited for while discouraging women from following their political ambitions (Hadzic and Tavits, 2019; Krook, 2020). The threat of violence effectively redefines political participation as something inherently masculine, deterring women from running for office.

Consequently, the killings of women activists create an environment of fear where communities are compelled to adhere to a militarized social order. Women, in particular, perceive their political ambitions as dangerous and socially unacceptable, and they observe a growing

preference for men leadership, which leads to a significant reduction in their willingness to run for political office.

> **Hypothesis 1:** Women run less as political candidates when women activists were killed before elections than in communities with no killings.

Voting Preferences and Violence Against Women Activists

In the aftermath of the killings of women activists in an environment of fear and militarized order, women are less likely to run as political candidates. If they do choose to enter the race, the prior killings of women activists can significantly influence voters' support for women candidates in local elections.

Voters typically consider candidates' platforms and the issues they advocate. Key factors for many include whether a candidate can address broad societal problems or, more specifically, challenges that emerged during the previous election cycle. In societies affected by political violence, voters often prioritize candidates who appear capable of confronting violence and ensuring security (Daly, 2019). This is especially relevant in contexts in which a woman activist was killed before the election since their deaths are widely publicized and they were well-known within their communities due to their advocacy for social change. After their deaths voters could explicitly look for a candidate who can deal with the state's failure to protect non-violent citizens.

Candidates who align their platforms with traits such as strength, protection, and decisiveness may gain favour in election periods marked by the killing of a woman activist. While women candidates can also embody these qualities, voters often associate such traits more readily with men candidates, even if those men do not actively promote security issues (Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Velásquez Leal et al., 2007). Both men and women frequently rely on gendered stereotypes when voting, particularly in times of conflict (Campbell, 2017). Men are often seen as more capable leaders during periods of violence, perceived as having better conflict-handling skills (Kim and Kang, 2022). In contrast, women are more likely to be viewed as compassionate but lacking the strength needed to lead effectively (Glaurdić and

Lesschaeve, 2023).

In addition to these stereotypes, fear also plays a crucial role in shaping voter behaviour. The same fear that discourages women from running for office influences how voters view women candidates. When violence targets women activists, it signals to voters that supporting women in politics may bring risks, including backlash or further violence. Citizens may fear that electing a woman could provoke retaliation from violent groups, or that women candidates are themselves at greater risk. As a result, voters—both men and women—might avoid supporting women candidates, worrying that they are not equipped to handle the violence or that their election could destabilize the political order. This fear-driven response could contribute to a higher proportion of men being elected after the killing of women activists, as voters seek leaders they believe are better able to provide security and stability.

> **Hypothesis 2:** Citizens are less likely to vote for women candidates when women activists were killed before elections than in communities with no killings.

Case Study: Local Politics, Activism, and Violence in Colombia

Taking a closer look at what role (women) social activists play in local politics and who benefits when activists are killed in Colombia is necessary to understand the significance of the killings of women in electoral campaigns.

The size of Colombian municipalities ranges from 65,000 to just 15 km², and the population density ranges from almost 8 million in Bogotá to just 50,000 in María La Baja in the department of Bolívar. Colombian electoral politics are very decentralized. Since 1986 mayors and governors work and are elected independently (Carbó, 2006, 113). Voters cast ballots to elect mayors and councilors in each of the 32 departments of the country. In each of the 1,102 municipalities, citizens vote every four years for a mayor who exercises political authority, is head of the local administration or legal representative of the territorial entity and a municipal council, composed of between seven and 21 members, according to the respective population that exercises political control over the municipal administration. Colombian municipal elections are held under a closed-list format and there is a 30 per cent women quota for

the candidate list. All potential political candidates should have access to the same financial resources for their campaign (Tula, 2015).

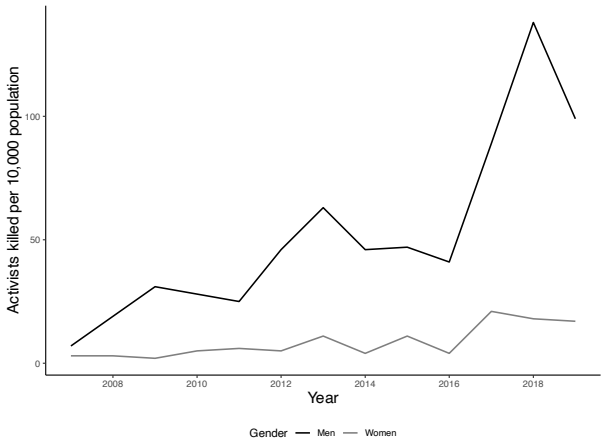
Local Colombian politics are characterized by non-state forms of order (Arjona, 2018). Guerrillas, paramilitaries, or other armed groups directly govern some communities and provide a comprehensive social order beyond public order and taxation (Aponte González et al., 2024). Meanwhile, in others, a strong civilian community governs public life but often relies on armed groups for protection. Social activists play a critical role by offering the public face-to-face contact when political candidates and state authorities fail. They often act as intermediaries between rural communities and the government, helping communities implement measures such as land restitution, promotion of local development initiatives, and replacement of cocaine plantations (Gutiérrez et al., 2020; Marín Llanes, 2020; Prem et al., 2022). Moreover, citizens perceive that social activists support them in their demands for redistribution measures, call for concrete microfinancing for infrastructure projects, and denounce corruption and human rights violations (Lobo et al., 2016; Orbegozo-Rodríguez, 2021). In local elections, citizens rely on these activists to channel community demands, monitor the performance of locally elected bodies and the implementation of projects, and report corruption cases.

Social activists often threaten the economic and social interests of armed groups, local elites, and the state by campaigning for land restitution (Marín Llanes, 2020; Orbegozo-Rodríguez, 2021; González-Jácome, 2018) and opposing mining, natural resource exploitation projects and coca cultivation (Vélez-Torres et al., 2022). If social activists are killed, armed groups, local elites, and the state can expect fewer public protests and increased freedom to implement their projects, be it the commercialization of illegal crops or land grabbing. Furthermore, paramilitary groups benefit from killing social activists in their fight against a perceived "communist" threat (Gutiérrez-Sanín and Vargas, 2017). In many cases, social activists have been directly targeted by paramilitary or guerrilla forces to facilitate territorial control (Steele, 2018).

Threatening and killing social activists dates back at least to the emergence of paramilitary groups in 1982 (Gutiérrez-Sanín and Vargas, 2017). Figure 1 shows the extent of killings of

social activists by sex between 2007 and 2019.[5] Descriptive statistics underscore an increasing trend in the number of killings over the years, with the annual count rising from 10 in 2007 to 116 in 2019, illustrating a significant increase. After the demobilization of several paramilitary units in 2007, the number of attacks on social activists decreased but increased again when the FARC announced a ceasefire during the peace talks with the government in 2012. A notable spike was observed in 2016, coinciding with the signing of the peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government (Prem et al., 2022), with activists' and women activists' killings peaking at approximately 138 and 21, respectively.

Figure 1: Evolution of killings by sex in Colombia, 2007–2019



Notes: This figure presents the evolution of killings of civilians and social activists discriminating by sex from 2007 to 2019.

Post-2016, although there is a slight decrease, the killings of men and women remain elevated compared to the pre-2016 figures, suggesting a persistent increase in risk for activists following the peace agreement. In the territories where the FARC was most active, new groups started to fight for territorial control by intimidating and targeting civilians and social activists. Simultaneously, some former displaced community members returned to their places of origin to reclaim their land, and several social activists demanded security and development projects more fearlessly (Orbegozo-Rodríguez, 2021; Prem et al., 2022).

Notably, Figure 1 shows a higher incidence of killings of men activists, possibly due to a

[5]The data from *Somos Defensores* contains the names of the victims. Based on the names, we were able to determine the sex of the victims. Two individuals were identified based on the gender identity described in the case and not based on their names.

greater number of men being involved in social activism. Colombian women activists are often targeted by armed groups because their activism is seen as a threat to the armed groups' dominance and because, as active and outspoken women, they break the traditional gender order that paramilitary groups establish and use to secure their political power over a community (Barreto Daza, 2017). For instance, women activists working as healers in their communities have been accused of witchcraft and targeted by paramilitaries as they searched for a culprit responsible for their lost battles (López León, 2009). Armed groups, which men often dominate, feel threatened by these women who mobilize communities and challenge gender hierarchies (Zulver, 2022).

Data

The data for understanding social activists' killings comes from *Somos Defensores*.[6] This NGO's comprehensive data collection encompasses detailed reports on incidents of aggression, including killings, threats, and other forms of violence against activists, making it a relevant resource for analyzing the patterns of local violence. Based on the detailed case descriptions in Spanish, we create a novel dataset including the victim's name, incident date, the specific location (municipality), the perpetrators, and type of activism for each reported incidence. The victimization events are presented as a panel dataset at the municipal-electoral year level in Colombia, spanning 2007–2019. While *Somos Defensores* records primary reports daily, our study consolidates this data annually.

There are several potential shortcomings to consider when handling event data. Its accuracy depends heavily on the reporting mechanisms and the willingness of individuals to report incidents. Underreporting may occur due to concern regarding potential retaliation, shame, a lack of confidence in the reporting mechanism, or simply because some incidents

[6]There are different publicly available records of the killings of social leaders (e.g., INDEPAZ, MOE or Pacifista) We chose the data from Somos Defensores because it had the most detailed case descriptions. We did not use government or UN databases because they tend to have more issues with underreporting, as communities often do not trust these institutions to accurately catalog the killings of activists. Also, *Somos Defensores* is widely recognized as a primary source for data on social activist killings and many other organizations information system rely on it.

go unnoticed.[7] Women activists also suffer from gender-specific threats and patterns of violence that are not reported here. Additionally, there has been a lot of attention on social activist killings after the FARC peace agreement when it became a politicized topic which could cause a high risk of temporal bias in reporting. However, we observe the opposite trend, many communities that had lost activists were encouraged by the increased attention to report incidents that had occurred in the past.

From 2007 to 2019, social activists that got killed include 86% men and 14% women, underscoring a significant disparity in the data and suggesting that the killings of women activists in Colombia represent a particularly selective phenomenon within the already selective violence against social activists. Numerous women activists killed in the past were active in human rights organizations and groups that advocate for victims of armed conflict, minorities, and women. The killed men activists were often engaged in land dispossession and labor unions. However, there is no clear gendered disparity in the activism of killed social activists.

In the dataset, the perpetrators behind the killings of social activists are identified in varying proportions—unknown actors are responsible for 85% of the cases; state forces are implicated in 2.2% of the incidents; the National Liberation Army (ELN) and FARC are attributed with 0.1% and 3% of the killings, respectively; and paramilitary groups are linked to the remaining 6%. This distribution reflects the multifaceted nature of the conflict in Colombia and underscores the diverse threats social activists face, complicating efforts to protect them and hold perpetrators accountable.

The election data used in this analysis comes from the *Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil*, the official entity responsible for organizing and supervising elections in Colombia. It includes information on 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 mayoral elections.[8] To ascertain the sex of

[7] We made a methodological decision to exclude data between 2003 and 2007 due to concerns about the consistency and reliability of those records. On examining the available data, we observed inconsistencies in the recording of dates and the presence of duplicates, which raised questions about the accuracy of this information

[8] In our analysis, we focus primarily on mayoral elections due to the significant role mayors play as the most prominent figures in local politics, directly overseeing the implementation of public policies. Other regional elections, such as those for *Diputados Departamentales* and *Gobernadores*, lack the necessary spatial variability to effectively disentangle causal effects. Additionally, local elections for *Concejos Municipales* are excluded from our study because the number of seats and elected officials is contingent upon municipal size and other specific characteristics, introducing additional noise into the analysis. By concentrating on mayoral elections, we aim to minimize these complexities and obtain clearer insights into the political dynamics at the local level.

each candidate, we employed a methodology based on the names of the candidates as listed in the electoral records.[9] This approach enabled us to categorize candidates as men or women, and using this sex-identified data, we calculated several key indicators.

First, we computed the share of women candidates in the mayoral elections and the vote share for women candidates, reflecting the proportion of votes received by women candidates relative to the total votes cast. We expand these data by incorporating a wide range of municipality-level data from the *Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico* (CEDE). We include various socioeconomic and geographic indicators such as population, size of the municipality, distance to the closest major city, distance to Bogotá, an index of rurality, presence of coca crops, eradication operations, tax revenues, government spending, number of school teachers, and crime rates. Moreover, we use data on cases of selective violence from *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* (CNMH). Finally, we incorporate information regarding eradication operations from *Observatorio de Drogas de Colombia* (ODC).

Empirical Strategy

Estimation

Our empirical strategy employs a *stacked difference-in-differences* model to assess the impact of killings of women activists compared to no killings at all in mayoral elections outcomes in Colombia between 2007 and 2019 (Baker et al., 2022; Dube et al., 2023). By focusing on the variation in the timing of these killings and their geographical occurrence across the Colombian municipalities, we aim to isolate the causal effects of killings of women activists on elections during mayoral elections.

In a *stacked difference-in-differences* design, each event—in this case, the killing of at least a woman social activist in a specific municipality—is treated as a separate small "experiment." For each killing, we compare the municipality where the event occurred (the "treated" municipality) to other municipalities where no killings occurred, which serve as the "control group." This process is repeated for each event, meaning that with multiple events in different munic-

[9] None of the candidates was registered as transgender.

ipalities, we create a separate panel dataset for each one. After conducting these individual comparisons for all the events, the datasets are "stacked" or combined into one larger dataset, allowing us to analyze all the events together. The *stacked difference-in-differences* approach allows us to center the events (that occurred in different moments of time) so that they are aligned on the same date, treating them as if they occurred simultaneously.[10]

We include a selected sample of clean control units chosen for their absence of any victimization event, thereby serving as a baseline for our counterfactual.[11] More formally, using the subindex e to denote an episode, i to denote municipalities, and t to denote electoral years, we estimate:

$$y_{ite} = \alpha_i \times \gamma_e + \delta_t \times Coca_i \times \gamma_e + \beta_1 \times Treat_{ie} \times Post_{te} + \varepsilon_{ite} \tag{1}$$

where y is an electoral outcome for municipality i in election t (the share of female candidates in the municipal elections, and the vote share for female candidates). $Treat_{ie}$ is a dummy that takes the value one for municipalities with events of victimization. $Post_{te}$ is a dummy that takes the value one for the post-treatment period. α_i is a municipality fixed effect that captures any time-invariant municipal-level heterogeneity. δ_t is an electoral year fixed effect that captures any aggregate time shock. $Coca_i$ is the share of coca cultivation relative to the size of a municipality measured before 2007. We include an episode fixed effect, γ_e, to fully saturate the model with the municipality and year fixed effects.[12] This effect interacts with $Coca_i$ to account for any differential impact caused by the incidence of coca cultivation and the pres-

[10]The recent literature on staggered DiD, which typically addresses cases where units (municipalities) receive the treatment at different points in time, does not apply to our context. In our case, municipalities do not receive the treatment in different years but rather experience the treatment switching on and off throughout our sample period.

[11]This decision was made to accurately identify the true causal effect of the killings of women social activists on our outcomes of interest. By including municipalities that experienced other forms of violence or killings, even if they didn't involve women social activists, we risk introducing bias into our estimates. Such bias would arise because we might unintentionally measure not only the effect of the killings of women social activists but also the effects of other forms of violence, which could act as noise and distort the estimation of the causal effect we're targeting

[12]The *stacked difference-in-differences* model we use is a two-way fixed effects model, where we interact municipality and time fixed effects with event fixed effects. Given that the stacking process of different individual "experiments" generates an artificial inflation in the number of observations in our dataset, the event fixed effects ensure that the comparison of changes in the outcome is made between treated and control units within each event, mitigating the potential bias introduced by the stacked structure of the data.

ence of illegal economies. Since a municipality may be treated multiple times or the same municipality may serve as a control unit in different episodes, the error term ε_{ite} is allowed to be correlated at the municipal level.

We extend the core framework of Equation 1 by incorporating a *triple differences* (DDD) approach to examine heterogeneous effects. This empirical strategy allows us to uncover how the impact of violence varies across different groups, conditions, or municipal characteristics. In this case, we estimate:

$$\begin{aligned} y_{ite} = \alpha_i \times \gamma_e + \delta_t \times Coca_i \times \gamma_e + \beta_1 \times Treat_{ie} \times Post_{te} + \\ \beta_2 \times Treat_{ie} \times Z_{te} + \beta_3 \times Post_{ie} \times Z_{te} + \\ + \beta_4 \times Treat_{ie} \times Post_{te} \times Z_{te} + \varepsilon_{ite} \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

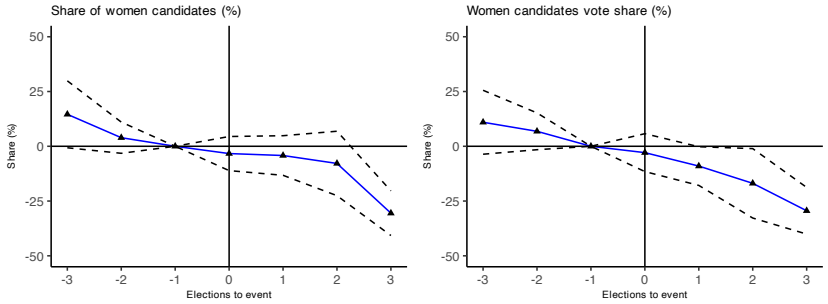
where Z_{te} is the measure we include as a heterogeneity. β_4 estimates the additional effect of violence against women activists on electoral outcomes for the variable Z_{te} in the post-treatment period.

Identification

The main identification assumption is the parallel trends assumption, which posits that in the absence of killings of women activists, the electoral outcomes in treated (municipalities experiencing victimization) and control (municipalities without victimization) groups would have followed a similar trend over time. Our empirical model would attribute any divergence in trends during the post-treatment period to the impact of violence against women activists in Colombia. Following Roth (2022) and Rambachan and Roth (2023) we test this identifying assumption. To avoid any inclusion of already-treated and not-yet-treated units in our control group, we only use never-treated municipalities that never experienced any violent events during our sample period. In doing so, we try to avoid any bias driven by negative weights (de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfœuille, 2020; Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2021; Sun and Abraham, 2021).

One of the main concerns arising from using a *difference-in-differences* approach is the potential violation of the assumption of parallel trends. This assumption is fundamental to the validity of the empirical model, as it underpins the causal interpretation of the estimated effects. For example, in municipalities where women social activists are more likely to be killed, there could also have been lower engagement among women, independent of any violence driven by, for example, educational opportunities or social movements. In this case, any changes in the electoral success of women candidates in these regions might be partially or wholly due to this underlying trend rather than the victimization events per se.

Figure 2: Stacked event study on the killings of women activists and mayoral elections outcomes in Colombia, 2007–2019



Note: This figure shows coefficients from a stacked event-study regressions version of Equation 1 based on Equation 1 together with the 95% confidence interval on electoral year data for two different municipal election outcomes, indicated in each subfigure title. Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level.

Figure 2 displays the event study plot representation of our primary empirical model. It reveals that point estimates in the pre-event window hover around zero and are not statistically significant, indicating no pre-existing differential trends between the treatment and control groups. Subsequently, in the post-event window, the coefficients become statistically significant and deviate from zero.[13]

[13]Overall, our results are robust to linear and non-linear violations of the parallel trends assumption (Online Appendix Figures A1 and A2). Specifically, the results from Figure A1 indicate that, indeed, there are linear trends in the data. However, even under this scenario, the test confirms that we are still able to disentangle parallel trends from these linear trends. This means we have sufficient statistical power to distinguish between the two. Overall, these linear trends do not pose a threat to estimating our target causal parameter, and we can be confident that the results are robust to this potential issue.

Results

Main Results

We begin by exploring if women ran less as political candidates when women activists were killed before elections than in communities with no killings (Hypothesis 1). Column (1) in Table I shows that the killings of women activists decrease the share of women candidates. The reduction in the share of women candidates is, on average, 7.1 percentage points (pp). The municipal average share of women candidates is 13.3%; thus, this reduction represents more than 50% of the dependent variable sample mean. These results indicate that the gendered consequence of the killings of women activists is that fewer women run for office, which is consistent with qualitative evidence from Colombia showing that women do not run for office because they have fears and perceive politics as men-dominated (Velásquez Leal et al., 2007).

Table I: Killings of women activists and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007–2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-7.114*	-9.058*
	(3.491)	(3.804)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.108	0.163
Observations	46,510	46,510
Events	57	57
Municipalities	257	257
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Note: Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral-year episodes of victimization against women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of female social activists victimization. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include vote share for women candidates, and a share of women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Column (3) in Table I explores if citizens are more or less likely to vote for women candidates when women activists were killed before elections than in communities with no killings (Hypothesis 2). The results show a decrease of, on average, 9 pp in the vote share for women candidates after the killings of women activists. The municipal average vote share for women candidates is 12%; therefore, this reduction represents almost 75% of the dependent variable sample mean. These results align with other research on preferences for masculine norms as a consequence of Colombia's enduring violence and display that fear to not comply with gender hierarchies could influence voters' decisions (Bedoya Sanín, 2018).

In summary, the results indicate that women are less willing to run for office (Hypothesis 1) and citizens are more swayed against women candidates in mayoral elections (Hypothesis 2). Although more men and less women run for elections, we have no evidence that men vote less for women or women.[14] We tried to proxy this point by merging the treatment variable with survey data from the Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions and Support (MAPS) dataset on the Colombian peace process in which we looked at several gender-related preferences (Weintraub et al., 2023). It remains unknown whether men or women vote less for women candidates after the killings of women activists.

Robustness Checks

Column (1) in the Online Appendix Table AI demonstrates that the killings of women activists lead to a decrease in the number of women candidates as the number of men candidates increases. Similarly, column (2) in the Online Appendix Table AI shows that the observed reduction in the vote share for women candidates is counterbalanced by a corresponding increase in the vote share for men candidates, indicating a shift in voter preferences rather than a protest against the candidates available. This pattern is further substantiated by the absence of any significant change in the blank vote share, suggesting that voters are not resorting to protest voting but are instead reallocating their support between men and women candidates in response to the circumstances.

[14] We found no consistent effects between men and women (Appendix Tables AXVI, AXVII, AXVIII, AXIX, and AXX).

The causal interpretation of the relationship between the killings of women activists and mayoral electoral outcomes, as depicted in Table I, could be threatened by the presence of simultaneous external shocks. The victimization of women activists and its effect on electoral outcomes in our study is distinct and not attributable to broader trends of selective violence (Online Appendix Table AII), violence against civilian women and women politicians (Online Appendix Tables AIII and AIV), and men activists, men civilians, or men politicians (Online Appendix Tables AV, AVI, AVII). The results in Table I are also not driven by conflict, coca eradication shocks, or patterns of violence during previous elections (Online Appendix Tables AVIII, AVIX, and AX). Furthermore, our findings were not driven by the definition of our control group, that is, a control that includes only municipalities where women activism victimization or men activism victimization never occurred (Online Appendix Tables AXI and AXII). To ensure the robustness of our findings, we employed various model specifications. Notably, we added municipal linear trends to control for constant unobserved heterogeneity across municipalities, allowing us to account for any differences in pre-treatment characteristics that could affect our outcomes (Online Appendix Table AXIII). Finally, we applied a doubly robust estimation method proposed by Sant'Anna and Zhao (2020), which combines Matching with the traditional Difference-in-Differences (DiD) specification. This approach allows the treatment assignment to depend on a set of municipal characteristics, enabling us to assess whether our causal effect is biased due to heterogeneous effects driven by these characteristics (Online Appendix Table AXIV).[15] Importantly, our results remain robust under both specifications.

Using a propensity score matching approach, we further address potential bias arising from how we define our control group, particularly concerning the distinct characteristics of the treated units. This method allows us to refine our control group to include only those units that closely resemble the treated units for each specific episode of women activists' victimization. Our selection criterion for the control group is stringent, encompassing units within a range of 0.2, 0.15, 0.1, and 0.05 of the propensity score of the treated unit. Figure

[15]The set of municipal characteristics include: Population size, size of the municipality, distance to the closest major city, distance to Bogotá, an index of rurality, presence of coca crops, eradication operations, tax revenues, government spending, number of school teachers, and crime rates.

A3 in the Only Appendix replicates the estimates of Table I, iterating on the aforementioned propensity thresholds. It confirms that our findings hold after modifying the composition of our control groups.

Heterogeneous Effects

Based on the clear association between violence against social activists and particular characteristics of the Colombian armed conflict, we analyze heterogeneous effects by considering three municipal characteristics, namely, the timing of electoral violence, the historical presence of non-state armed actors, and the timing of the peace agreement with the FARC insurgency in 2015.[16] These effects are primarily used to understand under what conditions the effects of killings of women activists are stronger or weaker, however, they also indirectly inform the proposed theoretical mechanism.

The timing of the killings of women activists may play an essential role in shaping local electoral outcomes because these events tend to attract increased media coverage close to elections (Acemoglu et al., 2013; Condra et al., 2018). Moreover, the timing of these incidents can influence political campaigns, with candidates and parties potentially adjusting their platforms to address concerns about activism, women's rights, and violence. From the voters' perspective, the timing of these violent acts can cause an emotional response that alters their preferences (Sanbonmatsu, 2002). The heterogeneous effects of the timing of violence against women activists show that the reductions in the share of women candidates and vote share for women candidates are primarily associated with incidents in the last semester of the electoral year (Online Appendix Table AXV).

The presence of non-state armed actors in a region can significantly shape political preferences since combatants' local origins and identities interact with communities (Dunning, 2011; Gallego, 2018). Further analyses reveal that in municipalities where the FARC played a more dominant role, the occurrence of killings of women activists is associated with an increase in the vote share for women candidates. This effect is statistically significant at the 10%

[16] We set the 2015 as the peace talks period as the peace talks with the FARC insurgency matches with regional elections that only took place that year.

level. Meanwhile, in territories formerly controlled by paramilitaries, the share of women candidates and the vote share for women candidates both decrease (Online Appendix Table AXVI). We assume that these results are connected to prevailing gender norms and the effort that guerrilla groups like the FARC invested in creating new role models for men and women (Dietrich Ortega, 2012; Gonzalez-Perez, 2006). In the FARC, women had a notably higher participation rate compared to paramilitary groups, which could have fundamentally altered the local perception of women's roles in communities (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2008; Thomas, 2024). This suggests that the reduced motivation for women to run for office and for voters to support women candidates after the killings of social activists, driven by a demand for masculine norms and fear, may be weaker in contexts where the prevailing norms have supported women in transgressive or nontraditional roles.

The 2016 peace agreement with the FARC insurgency may have influenced the relationship between the killings of women activists and electoral outcomes by raising expectations for improved human rights and gender equality, making the electorate more sensitive to violations of these principles (Lounsbery et al., 2024).[17] Moreover, voters needed to have less fears that voting for women would cause retaliation. Results indicate that more women ran for mayoral elections after the killings of women activists during the peace talks, suggesting that women's motivation to run as candidates is shaped by their perception of shifting gender norms (Online Appendix Table AXVII). We also find that voters became more inclined to elect them.

These heterogeneous effects suggest that the temporal proximity between killings of women activists and elections amplifies the impact of such violence on voter behavior, highlighting the acute sensitivity of electoral dynamics to the timing of these events. Moreover, the exposure to a non-state armed group with women combatants and societal changes during peace talks had a reverse, positive push effect for women's candidacy and vote share.

[17] The Colombian government has recognized the need to address gender inequalities, particularly by ensuring the rights of women in rural areas, enhancing women's political participation, and focusing on the rights of victims following the end of the armed conflict (Gobierno Nacional and Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo, 2016)

Conclusion

The previous sections outline how an understanding of the identity of the victims killed before elections is crucial in examining the effects of exposure to political and criminal violence on democracy. We have shown that the killings of women activists before elections reduce women's willingness to run as candidates and the vote share for women candidates. We theorized that this effect is connected to fears of further retaliation from armed groups and a demand for masculine norms in politics. The empirical analyses employing a *stacked difference-in-differences* regression model of mayoral elections in Colombia between 2007 and 2019 provided strong support for the causal mechanism between violence against women activists and electoral outcomes. A focal point of our analysis is the intersectionality between gender and social activism, recognizing the significance of killing publicly known women for how citizens engage in politics at the local level. The results are robust to potential violations of the parallel trends assumption and other definitions of the control group, such as killing men activists or overall killings. Moreover, our results are not driven by general or other types of violence against, for example, women politicians.

Heterogeneous effects show that violence against women activists near elections can intimidate communities, thereby dampening women's political participation. Finally, we find a reverse impact of gendered killings on elections during peace negotiations and in regions formerly controlled by the FARC, suggesting that while we cannot completely rule out the existence of gender bias in the affected communities, it is the killing of women and not only the pre-existing hatred of women that influence local elections.

This study highlights how the gender of victims and their societal roles are key to understanding the impact of violence on democratic processes. Violence against women, especially activists challenging traditional gender roles, is often used strategically to uphold power structures. Communities respond to these gendered killings by voting differently. While focused on Colombia, the findings apply to other conflict zones and countries with criminal violence such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Rwanda, showing how femicides and violence against women and LGBT individuals can influence elections and political

engagement, emphasizing the need for protections for women in politics.[18]

Our findings contribute to the broader discourse on political violence in democracies by highlighting the gender-specific dimensions of such violence and its capacity to distort democratic representation. They underscore the necessity for policymakers to implement protective measures for activists and to foster environments where women can participate in politics without fear of retribution. Addressing these challenges is crucial for strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring that they reflect the diversity and will of the populace. Ultimately, this study calls for a reevaluation of how democracies contend with internal threats to political participation. By acknowledging and addressing the specific vulnerabilities faced by women activists, democracies like Colombia can take meaningful steps toward more inclusive and resilient political systems.

A limitation of our study is that for anonymous elections we cannot disaggregate our findings based on voters' sex. Furthermore, municipal data limits us from assessing the mechanisms of individual voting preferences. Gender norms in campaigning could also disadvantage potential women political candidates in the Colombian context (Velásquez Leal et al., 2007). Moreover, whether all killings of women are (correctly) reported remain unclear due to questions of honor and shame when women are not protected from violence. Finally, although our findings for the killings of women are robust, we cannot be sure that these killings are gendered because we do not know how the victims self-identified or how the community or the perpetrators viewed them.

Future studies on the consequences of violence in elections could explore gender bias among right-wing and left-wing voters in areas exposed to war violence to understand how ideology and gender interact (Glaurdić and Lesschaeve, 2023). Differentiating between the perpetrators of violence against women is crucial to better grasp how gendered violence is used for group-specific conflict objectives. Gathering data on individual voting tendencies, including gender biases at the municipal level across all municipalities in Colombia, would help comprehend these mechanisms. Future research should also aim to further disentangle

[18]This is not to devalue violence against men (activists) in Colombia, since their deaths have long lasting consequences for their communities that we did not explore further in this research

the effects of selective violence against women activists on electoral outcomes from potential confounding factors. This can be achieved by identifying and controlling for unobserved variables—such as social tensions, economic disparities, or regional political cultures—that may influence both the occurrence of violence and electoral dynamics. Additionally, exploring other forms of political violence and their interaction with gender dynamics can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between political violence and democratic processes.

In summary, the gendered repercussions of the killings of women activists create an atmosphere where democratic participation and gender equality are compromised. It is crucial to understand how the targeted killings of women affect the obstacles women face in the political and public sphere, as all forms of femicide impede equality.

References

Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J. A., and Santos, R. J. (2013). The monopoly of violence: Evidence from Colombia. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 11:5–44.

Alacevich, C. and Zejcirovic, D. (2020). Does violence against civilians depress voter turnout? Evidence from Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 48(4):841–865.

Albarracín, J., Milanese, J. P., Valencia, I. H., and Wolff, J. (2023). Local competitive authoritarianism and post-conflict violence. An analysis of the assassination of social leaders in Colombia. *International Interactions*, 49(2):237–267.

Aponte González, A. F., Hirschel-Burns, D., and Uribe, A. D. (2024). Contestation, governance, and the production of violence against civilians: Coercive political order in rural Colombia. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 68(4):616–641.

Arjona, A. (2018). Civilian cooperation and non-cooperation with non-state armed groups: The centrality of obedience and resistance. In *Rebels and Legitimacy*, pages 87–110. Routledge.

Baker, A. C., Larcker, D. F., and Wang, C. C. (2022). How much should we trust staggered difference-in-differences estimates? *Journal of Financial Economics*, 144(2):370–395.

Bakken, I. V. and Buhaug, H. (2021). Civil war and female empowerment. *Journal of conflict resolution*, 65(5):982–1009.

Balcells, L. and Stanton, J. A. (2021). Violence against civilians during armed conflict: Moving beyond the macro-and micro-level divide. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24:45–69.

Bardall, G., Bjarnegård, E., and Piscopo, J. M. (2020). How is political violence gendered? Disentangling motives, forms, and impacts. *Political Studies*, 68(4):916–935.

Barreto Daza, S. (2017). Riesgos de los liderazgos sociales de las mujeres en el contexto del conflicto armado colombiano: Configuración de un problema de política pública.

Bedoya Sanín, D. (2018). La ley 1475 promotora de la carrera política de la mujer: Análisis de la efectividad de la ley de cuotas en Colombia. *Universidad de los Andes*.

Berrebi, C. and Klor, E. F. (2008). Are voters sensitive to terrorism? Direct evidence from the israeli electorate. *American Political Science Review*, 102(3):279–301.

Berry, M. E. (2018). *War, Women, and Power: From Violence to Mobilization in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Cambridge University Press.

Bhatia, J. and Monroe, S. L. (2023). Insecurity and support for female leadership in conflict states: Evidence from Afghanistan. *British Journal of Political Science*, pages 1–22.

Callaway, B. and Sant'Anna, P. H. (2021). Difference-in-differences with multiple time periods. *Journal of Econometrics*, 225(2):200–230.

Campbell, R. (2017). Gender and voting. *The SAGE handbook of electoral behaviour*, 2:159–176.

Carbó, E. P. (2006). *La nación soñada: violencia, liberalismo y democracia en Colombia*. Editorial Norma.

Condra, L. N., Long, J. D., Shaver, A. C., and Wright, A. L. (2018). The logic of insurgent electoral violence. *American Economic Review*, 108(11):3199–3231.

Daly, S. Z. (2019). Voting for victors: Why violent actors win postwar elections. *World Politics*, 71(4):747–805.

Daniele, G., Dipoppa, G., and Pulejo, M. (2023). Attacking women or their policies? Understanding violence against women in politics.

de Chaisemartin, C. and D'Haultfœuille, X. (2020). Two-way fixed effects estimators with heterogeneous treatment effects. *American Economic Review*, 110(9):2964–96.

De Juan, A., Haass, F., Koos, C., Riaz, S., and Tichelbaecker, T. (2024). War and nationalism: How WW1 battle deaths fueled civilians' support for the Nazi Party. *American Political Science Review*.

Dietrich Ortega, L. M. (2012). Looking beyond violent militarized masculinities: Guerrilla gender regimes in Latin America. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 14(4):489–507.

Dube, A., Girardi, D., Òscar Jordà, and Taylor, A. M. (2023). A local projections approach to difference-in-differences event studies. *NBER Working Paper*, (31184).

Dunning, T. (2011). Fighting and voting: Violent conflict and electoral politics. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 55(3):327–339.

Ette, M. (2013). Gendered frontlines: British press coverage of women soldiers killed in Iraq. *Media, War & Conflict*, 6(3):249–262.

Gaikwad, N., Lin, E., and Zucker, N. (2023). Gender after genocide: How violence shapes long-term political representation. *World Politics*, 75(3):439–481.

Gallego, J. (2018). Civil conflict and voting behavior: Evidence from Colombia. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 35(6):601–621.

García-Ponce, O. (2017). Women's political participation after civil war: Evidence from Peru. *Manuscript. University of California, Davis. At http://omargarciaponce. com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/shining_path. pdf, accessed July*, 16:2019.

Glaurdić, J. and Lesschaeve, C. (2023). Choosing women in postwar elections: Exposure to war violence, ideology, and voters' gender bias. *Politics & Gender*, 19(3):841–866.

Gobierno Nacional and Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (2016). Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera. https://www.jep.gov.co/Normativa/Paginas/Acuerdo-Final.aspx. Accessed: January 2024.

Goldstein, J. S. (2003). *War and gender: How gender shapes the war system and vice versa*. Cambridge University Press.

González, B. and Traunmüller, R. (2023). The political consequences of wartime sexual violence: Evidence from a list experiment. *Journal of Peace Research*.

González-Jácome, J. (2018). The emergence of revolutionary and democratic human rights activism in Colombia between 1974 and 1980. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, 40:91.

Gonzalez-Perez, M. (2006). Guerrilleras in Latin America: Domestic and international roles. *Journal of Peace Research*, 43(3):313–329.

Gutiérrez, F., Marín, M., Machuca, D., Parada, M., and Rojas, H. (2020). Paz sin garantías: El asesinato de líderes de restitución y sustitución de cultivos de uso ilícito en Colombia. *Estudios socio-jurídicos*, 22(2).

Gutiérrez-Romero, R. and LeBas, A. (2020). Does electoral violence affect vote choice and willingness to vote? Conjoint analysis of a vignette experiment. *Journal of peace research*, 57(1):77–92.

Gutiérrez-Sanín, F. and Vargas, J. (2017). Agrarian elite participation in Colombia's civil war. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 17(4):739–748.

Gutiérrez-Sanín, F. (2008). Telling the difference: Guerrillas and paramilitaries in the Colombian war. *Politics Society*, 36:3–34.

Haass, F. and Ottmann, M. (2022). The effect of wartime legacies on electoral mobilization after civil war. *The Journal of Politics*, 84(3):1322–1336.

Hadzic, D. and Tavits, M. (2019). The gendered effects of violence on political engagement. *The Journal of Politics*, 81(2):676–680.

Hadzic, D. and Tavits, M. (2021). Wartime violence and post-war women's representation. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(3):1024–1039.

Håkansson, S. (2023). The gendered representational costs of violence against politicians. *Perspectives on Politics*, pages 1–16.

Handrahan, L. (2004). Conflict, gender, ethnicity and post-conflict reconstruction. *Security Dialogue*, 35(4):429–445.

Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge University Press.

Kim, N. K. and Kang, A. J. (2022). External threat environments and individual bias against female leaders. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 10(1):1–17.

Koos, C. and Traunmüller, R. (2024). The gendered costs of stigma: How experiences of conflict-related sexual violence encourage civic engagement for women and men. *American Journal of Political Science*.

Krain, M., Murdie, A., and Beard, A. (2024). Silencing human rights defenders once and for all? Determinants of human rights defenders' killings. *Political Research Quarterly*, 77(1):401–416.

Kreft, A.-K. (2019). Responding to sexual violence: Women's mobilization in war. *Journal of Peace Research*, 56(2):220–233.

Krook, M. L. (2020). *Violence against Women in Politics*. Oxford University Press.

Lindsey, S. (2022). Conflict, protection, and punishment: Repercussions of violence in eastern DR Congo. *American journal of political science*, 66(1):187–204.

Lindsey, S. and Koos, C. (2024). Legacies of wartime sexual violence: Survivors, psychological harms, and mobilization. *American Political Science Review*.

Lobo, I., Velez, M., and Puerto, S. (2016). Leadership, entrepreneurship and collective action: A case study from the Colombian Pacific region. *International Journal of the Commons*, 10(2).

Lounsbery, M. O., Gerring, N., and Rose, K. (2024). Civil war peace agreements and gender inclusion. *Defence and Peace Economics*, 35(1):86–108.

López León, M. (2009). Las mujeres imaginadas de la guerra: narraciones de excombatientes paramilitares sobre las mujeres y el conflicto armado.

MacKenzie, M. and Foster, A. (2017). Masculinity nostalgia: How war and occupation inspire a yearning for gender order. *Security Dialogue*, 48(3):206–223.

Marín Llanes, L. (2020). El asesinato de líderes sociales: Efecto no intencionado de la sustitución de cultivos de uso ilícito.

Mehrl, M. (2023). Female combatants and rebel group behaviour: Evidence from Nepal. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 40(3):260–280.

Orbegozo-Rodríguez, G. D. (2021). Consequences of violence against social leaders in Colombia. *Documento CEDE*, (29).

Prem, M., Rivera, A., Romero, D., and Vargas, J. F. (2022). Selective civilian targeting: The unintended consequences of partial peace. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, (3):317–354.

Rambachan, A. and Roth, J. (2023). A more credible approach to parallel trends. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 90(5):2555–2591.

Roth, J. (2022). Pretest with caution: Event-study estimates after testing for parallel trends. *American Economic Review: Insights*, 4(3):305–22.

Sanbonmatsu, K. (2002). Gender stereotypes and vote choice. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(1):20–34.

Sant'Anna, P. H. and Zhao, J. (2020). Doubly robust difference-in-differences estimators. *Journal of Econometrics*, 219(1):101–122.

Stallone, K. and Zulver, J. M. (2024). The gendered risks of defending rights in armed conflict: Evidence from Colombia. *Journal of Peace Research*, 0(0).

Steele, A. (2018). IDP resettlement and collective targeting during civil wars: Evidence from Colombia. *Journal of Peace Research*, 55(6):810–824.

Sun, L. and Abraham, S. (2021). Estimating dynamic treatment effects in event studies with heterogeneous treatment effects. *Journal of Econometrics*, 225(2):175–199.

Thomas, J. L. (2024). Sisters are doing it for themselves: How female combatants help generate gender-inclusive peace agreements in civil wars. *American Political Science Review*, page 1–17.

Trelles, A. and Carreras, M. (2012). Bullets and votes: Violence and electoral participation in Mexico. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 4(2):89–123.

Tripp, A. M. (2015). *Women and power in post-conflict Africa*. Cambridge University Press.

Tula, M. I. (2015). Mujeres y política: Un panorama sobre a adopción de las cuotas de género y sus efectos en América Latina y Colombia.

van Baalen, S. (2023). Polls of fear? Electoral violence, incumbent strength, and voter turnout in Côte d'Ivoire. *Journal of Peace Research*, page 00223433221147938.

Velásquez Leal, L. F., Moreno Fajardo, M. L., Serna Cortes, A. C., and Garzón Panche, O. (2007). Más mujeres, más democracia: Una lectura del imaginario de la participación y género a partir de los resultados electorales en cinco departamentos en Colombia 2007. *Derecho, legislación y políticas públicas*.

Vélez-Torres, I., Gough, K., Larrea-Mejía, J., Piccolino, G., and Ruette-Orihuela, K. (2022). "Fests of vests": The politics of participation in neoliberal peacebuilding in Colombia. *Antipode*, 54(2):586–607.

Webster, K., Chen, C., and Beardsley, K. (2019). Conflict, peace, and the evolution of women's empowerment. *International Organization*, 73(2):255–289.

Weintraub, M., Steele, A., Pantoja-Barrios, S., Nygård, H. M., Dahl, M., and Binningsbø, H. M. (2023). Introducing the mapping attitudes, perceptions and support (MAPS) dataset on the Colombian peace process. *Journal of Peace Research*, page 00223433231178848.

Yan, A. N. and Bernhard, R. (2024). The silenced text: Field experiments on gendered experiences of political participation. *American Political Science Review*, 118(1):481–487.

Zulver, J. M. (2022). *High-risk feminism in Colombia: Women's mobilization in violent contexts*. Rutgers University Press.

ONLINE APPENDIX

Gender in Elections: The Consequences of Killing Women Activists

Andrés F. Rivera* Juliana Tappe Ortiz† Carlo Koos‡

*Corresponding Author: andres.rivera@u.icesi.edu.co, Lecturer, Department of Economics, Universidad ICESI, Colombia.

†Corresponding Author: juliana.ortiz@uib.no, Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Government, University of Bergen, Norway.

‡Corresponding Author: carlo.koos@uib.no, Associate Professor, Department of Government, University of Bergen, Norway.

Appendix Tables

Table AI: Killings of women activists and number of candidates in mayoral elections, 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Women candidates	Men candidates
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-0.210	0.585*
	(0.137)	(0.289)
Dependent variable mean	0.474	2.921
Adjusted R^2	0.132	0.210
Observations	46,510	46,453
Events	57	57
Municipalities	257	257
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral-year episodes. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the number of women candidates, and the number of men candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AII: Selective violence and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-0.591	-1.665
	(1.937)	(2.176)
Post × Treated × Activists	-0.237	0.186
	(2.020)	(2.380)
Post × Treated × Politicians	-0.531	1.767
	(2.078)	(2.717)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.112	0.163
Observations	1,201,124	1,201,124
Events	1,472	1,472
Municipalities	1069	1069
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 1472 municipality-electoral-year episodes. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of selective violence (*Activists*, *Politicians*, and *Civilians* is the omitted category). *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AIII: Killings of women civilians and mayoral elections outcomes 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-1.433	-2.192
	(2.574)	(2.987)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.112	0.687
Observations	481,421	481,421
Events	590	590
Municipalities	671	671
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 590 municipality-electoral year episodes. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed civilian women. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AIV: Killings of women politicians and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	0.808	6.675
	(9.380)	(6.017)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.113	0.165
Observations	15,501	15,501
Events	19	19
Municipalities	222	222
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 19 municipality-electoral year episodes. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women politicians. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AV: Killings of men activists and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	0.872	0.541
	(1.647)	(2.038)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.114	0.147
Observations	734,840	734,840
Events	228	228
Municipalities	1025	1025
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 228 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed men activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed men activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AVI: Killings of men civilians and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-0.489	-1.595
	(2.064)	(2.344)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.113	0.163
Observations	718,728	718,728
Events	882	882
Municipalities	747	747
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 882 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed men civilians. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed men civilians. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AVII: Killings of men politicians and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	1.294	-0.208
	(2.205)	(2.941)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.113	0.163
Observations	1,185,623	1,185,623
Events	1,453	1,453
Municipalities	423	423
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 827 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed men politicians. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed men politicians. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AVIII: Conflict shocks and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-1.294	-1.015
	(1.778)	(1.991)
Dependent variable mean	13.351	11.924
Adjusted R^2	0.115	0.172
Observations	703,168	703,168
Events	1,149	1,149
Municipalities	941	941
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 1,149 municipality-electoral year episodes of conflict. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of conflict shocks. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AIX: Coca eradication shocks and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	0.354	-0.372
	(1.992)	(2.336)
Dependent variable mean	13.256	12.038
Adjusted R^2	0.095	0.159
Observations	501,537	501,537
Events	774	774
Municipalities	654	654
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 774 municipality-electoral year episodes of eradication operations. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of eradication shocks. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AX: Killings of women activists and municipal elections outcomes, 2007-2019: Violence in previous elections

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-8.192*	-11.044*
	(4.250)	(5.096)
Dependent variable mean	0.132	0.210
Adjusted R^2	0.103	0.159
Observations	46,510	46,510
Events	57	57
Municipalities	257	257
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Prior violence FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXI: Killings of women activists and municipal elections outcomes, 2007-2019 (Control group: No violence against women activists)

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-6.148	-8.972*
	(3.368)	(3.647)
Dependent variable mean	14.075	12.765
Adjusted R^2	0.116	0.149
Observations	121,408	121,408
Events	57	57
Municipalities	586	586
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXII: Killings of women activists and municipal elections outcomes, 2007-2019 (Control group: No violence against men activists)

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-6.726*	-8.358*
	(3.351)	(3.746)
Dependent variable mean	14.075	12.765
Adjusted R^2	0.098	0.137
Observations	90,457	90,457
Events	57	57
Municipalities	452	452
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXIII: Killings of women activists and mayoral elections outcomes 2007-2019: Municipal linear trends

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-7.114*	-9.058*
	(3.501)	(3.815)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.095	0.151
Observations	46,510	46,510
Events	57	57
Municipalities	257	257
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes
Municipal linear trends	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral year episodes. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed civilian activist. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. We add a linear trend for each of the 257 municipalities in our sample. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXIV: Killings of women activists and mayoral elections outcomes 2007-2019: Doubly robust DiD

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-14.005*	-10.220*
	(3.428)	(4.216)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Observations	46,510	46,510
Events	57	57
Municipalities	257	257

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 590 municipality-electoral year episodes. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed civilian women. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Estimates follow Sant'Anna and Zhao (2020). Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXV: Killings of women activists and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019: Electoral violence

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-3.512	-3.629
	(3.642)	(3.909)
Post × Treated × First semester	-6.148	-10.433*
	(9.229)	(5.197)
Post × Treated × Second semester	-15.349*	-22.489**
	(7.417)	(7.796))
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.109	0.164
Observations	46,510	46,510
Events	57	57
Municipalities	257	257
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. *First semester* is a dummy indicator of the months covering the first six months of the regional electoral period as *Second semester* is a dummy indicator of the months covering the last six months of the regional. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXV reports the heterogeneous effects of the timing of killings with a specific focus on the electoral year period. The electoral year is divided into two semesters. The reductions in the share of women candidates and in the vote share for women candidates are mostly associated with incidents of violence that involved women activists occurring during the last semester of the electoral year. This temporal proximity amplifies the impact of such violence on voter behavior, highlighting the acute sensitivity of electoral dynamics to the timing of these events.

Table AXVI: Killings of women activists and mayoral elections outcomes, 2007-2019: Presence of non-state armed groups

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-3.265	-8.088
	(5.506)	(5.645)
Post × Treated × Paramilitary groups	-17.484*	-19.288*
	(7.999)	(8.915)
Post × Treated × FARC	10.344	17.955
	(8.542)	(9.530)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.110	0.166
Observations	46,510	46,510
Events	57	57
Municipalities	257	257
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. *Paramilitary groups*, and *FARC* are dummy indicators of one-sided violence committed by these groups between 2000-2006. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXVI focuses on the differential effect driven by the historical presence of non-state armed groups, namely paramilitary groups, and the FARC insurgency, as this historical presence is measured as a dummy indicator of any attack perpetrated by a non-state actor between 2000 and 2006 (pre-sample period). These differential effects suggest that the roles women played within both non-state armed groups matter for the effect of killing women activists on electoral outcomes.

Table AXVII: Killings of women activists and municipal elections outcomes, 2007-2019: Peace talks with the FARC insurgency in 2015

Dependent variable	Share of women candidates	Women candidates vote share
	(1)	(2)
Post × Treated	-9.750*	-11.032*
	(4.208)	(4.393)
Post × Treated × Peace talks	16.097*	14.163*
	(6.688)	(7.165)
Dependent variable mean	13.305	12.054
Adjusted R^2	0.108	0.164
Observations	46,510	46,510
Events	57	57
Municipalities	257	257
Municipality × Event FE	Yes	Yes
Date × Event × Coca FE	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample is an electoral year panel in stacked event-specific datasets. It includes 57 municipality-electoral year episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. *Peace talks* is a dummy indicator of the 2015 regional elections. Outcome variables include the share of women candidates, and the vote share for women candidates. Each column provides estimates of treatment effects for a different outcome, as indicated in the table header. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXVII focuses on the differential effect driven by the local elections that took place in 2015 during the peace negotiations. Peace negotiations often highlight the importance of inclusive governance to achieve lasting stability, leading to initiatives that promote broader participation. As a result, the political environment during peace processes is usually more open and representative, striving to address the needs and rights of all citizens and strengthening the legitimacy of the peacebuilding efforts. The results suggest that the peace process fosters a more favorable environment for women's political participation, likely due to heightened efforts to promote inclusivity and gender equality.

The Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions, and Support (MAPS) dataset is a two-wave survey that gathers information on political attitudes and preferences in municipalities prioritized for local development programs after the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC. We test whether the killing of a woman activist changes political attitudes at the local level. The outcome variables include: trust in the Mayor, trust in social leaders, trust in state institutions, participation in marches, protests, or strikes, and membership or active involvement in civil society organizations. Using a difference-in-differences empirical model, we examine the effect of violence against women activists in 2020. Our findings reveal no statistically significant change in political attitudes among both women and men, as shown in Tables AXVI, AXVII, AXVIII, AXIX, AXX.

Table AXVIII: How much you trust the Mayor

Dependent variable	All	Women	Men
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Post × Treated	-0.010	-0.019	0.009
	(0.037)	(0.028)	(0.020)
Dependent variable mean	0.567	0.328	0.240
Adjusted R^2	0.277	0.279	0.095
Observations	137	137	137
Events	13	13	13
Municipalities	69	69	69
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample includes the 2019 and 2021 survey waves. It includes 13 municipality episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. The outcome variable is the proportion of people saying they trust the Mayor. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXIX: How much you trust social leaders

Dependent variable	All	Women	Men
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Post × Treated	-0.078	-0.042	-0.036
	(0.067)	(0.047)	(0.026)
Dependent variable mean	0.667	0.383	0.284
Adjusted R^2	0.193	0.272	0.034
Observations	137	137	137
Events	13	13	13
Municipalities	69	69	69
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample includes the 2019 and 2021 survey waves. It includes 13 municipality episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. The outcome variable is the proportion of people saying they trust social leaders. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXX: How much you trust state institutions

Dependent variable	All	Women	Men
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Post × Treated	-0.071	-0.051	-0.020
	(0.050)	(0.041)	(0.017)
Dependent variable mean	0.660	0.379	0.281
Adjusted R^2	0.049	0.092	-0.008
Observations	137	137	137
Events	13	13	13
Municipalities	69	69	69
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample includes the 2019 and 2021 survey waves. It includes 13 municipality episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. The outcome variable is the proportion of people saying they trust state institutions. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table AXXI: Have you participated in a march, protest, or strike?

Dependent variable	All	Women	Men
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Post × Treated	0.017	0.004	0.012
	(0.021)	(0.014)	(0.010)
Dependent variable mean	0.088	0.046	0.042
Adjusted R^2	-0.009	-0.007	0.007
Observations	137	137	137
Events	13	13	13
Municipalities	69	69	69
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample includes the 2019 and 2021 survey waves. It includes 13 municipality episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. The outcome variable is the proportion of people saying they participated in a march, protest, or strike. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

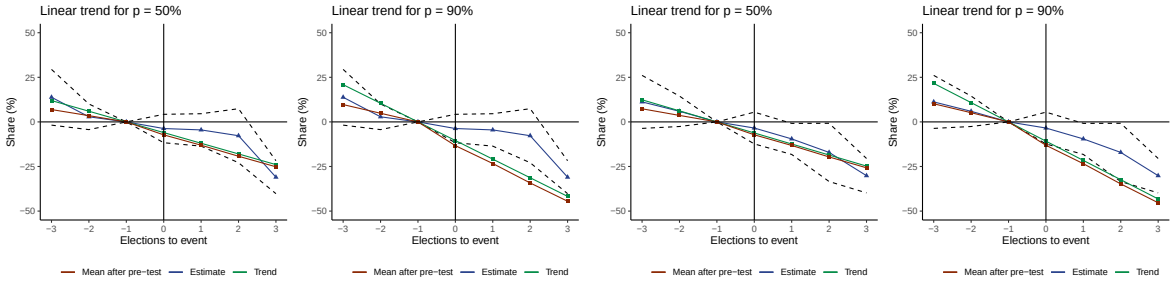
Table AXXII: Have you been a member of or active member of a civil society organization?

Dependent variable	All	Women	Men
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Post × Treated	0.005	0.004	0.000
	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Dependent variable mean	0.055	0.024	0.028
Adjusted R^2	0.096	0.003	0.044
Observations	137	137	137
Events	13	13	13
Municipalities	69	69	69
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the municipal level. The sample includes the 2019 and 2021 survey waves. It includes 13 municipality episodes of killed women activists. *Treated* is a dummy indicator of killed women activists. *Post* is a dummy indicator of post-treatment. The outcome variable is the proportion of people saying they are members of or active members of a civil society organization. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Appendix Figures

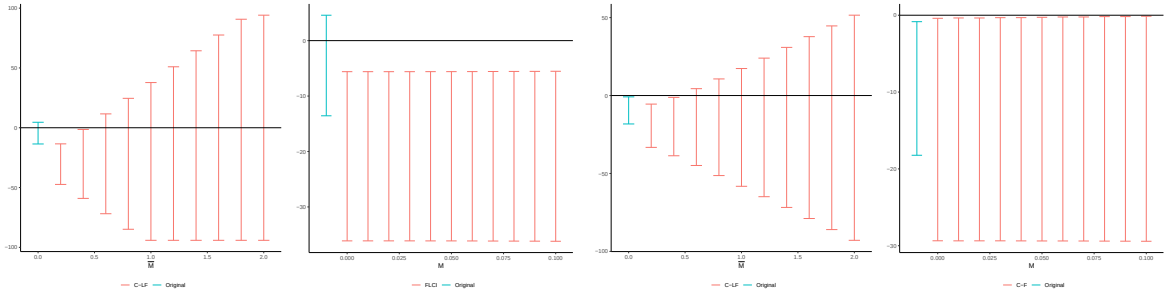
Figure A1: Parallel trends power analysis



(a) Share of women candidates (%) (b) Women candidates vote share (%)

This figure shows pre-test power analysis from Roth (2022).

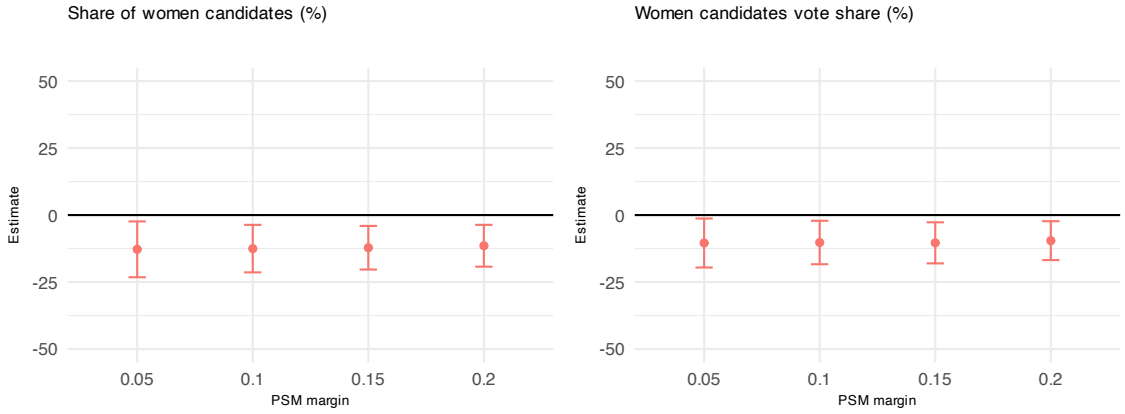
Figure A2: Sensitivity analysis using relative magnitudes and smoothing restrictions



(a) Share of women candidates (%) (b) Women candidates vote share (%)

This figure shows plausible violations of parallel trends from Rambachan and Roth (2023).

Figure A3: Propensity score matching results



This figure presents the propensity score analysis of Table I in the manuscript.

Appendix References

Roth, J. (2022). Pretest with caution: Event-study estimates after testing for parallel trends. *American Economic Review: Insights*, 4(3):305–22.

Roth, J., Sant'Anna, P. H., Bilinski, A., and Poe, J. (2023). What's trending in difference-in- differences? a synthesis of the recent econometrics literature. *Journal of Econometrics*, 235(2):2218–2244.

Sant'Anna, Pedro H.C., and Zhao, Jun (2020).Doubly robust difference-in-differences estimators. *Journal of Econometrics*, 219(1):101-122.

Weintraub, M., Steele, A., Pantoja-Barrios, S., Mokleiv Nygård, H., Dahl M., and Malmin Binningsbø, H. (2023) Introducing the Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions and Support (MAPS) dataset on the Colombian peace process. *Journal of Peace Research*, online first.