The Pull of the Center

Mobilization, States, and Rural Transformation in Communist Revolution

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Abstract

I study how individuals and families from marginalized, rural communities have become integrated into networks centered on the state through revolutionary mobilization. Using a unique intergenerational and genealogical dataset from Laos, I test a historically influential view of communist revolutions, which sees individual-level mobilization into revolutionary political parties as central to revolutionary transformation. In Laos, revolutionary mobilization in the 1960s and 1970s pulled in individuals from marginalized communities into positions of power. I find that descendants of such people were then more likely to work for the party-state than people from similar, unmobilized families. I also find differences in social networks, human capital, and the salience of traditional social norms between unmobilized and mobilized families. Mobilization has conferred self-sustaining political and economic advantages, which have been transmitted within families, beyond "pork" from the state. By facilitating denser state-society interactions, these transformations have advanced state capacity and control.

Keywords— revolutions, state building, communism, Southeast Asia

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1950: Born to an ethnic minority family of farmers and gatherers in a remote village.
1967: Soldier, cook, animal handler.
1969: Military team leader, student medic.
1973: Medic, squadron leader, full party member.
1975: District party secretary, district military command, head of district court.
1976: Student in an allied country.
1987: Major.
1994: Lieutenant colonel.
2008: Colonel.
2014: Brigadier general.

Promotion history of a Laotian revolutionary

1 Introduction

Social, and particularly communist, revolutions in the twentieth century pulled in masses of people from rural and peripheral areas abruptly into political modernity. Between 1950 and 1951 alone, North Vietnamese communists drafted a standing army numbering at least 150,000 people from rural areas along the Red River Delta amidst their conflict with the French, while thousands more were brought into other wings of the Communist Party (Goscha, 2022, p. 259-262). Further afield, from Indochinese and Burmese highlands to Malayan jungles, to the mountains of Dhofar in Oman, to the borderlands of Colombia, Mozambique, and El Salvador, places where state authority was historically absent or weak became centers of mobilization in violent revolutionary movements. Starting from these histories, I address a significant question in the study of revolutions, state-building, and authoritarianism: Where they took power, how have communist regimes durably attached their citizenry to the organs of the party-state?

I advance a canonical debate in the study of revolutions. Prominent sociological accounts have understood communist revolutions through the lens of class conflict, as the rebellion of a mass peasantry overburdened by demands from strong landlords and state bureaucracies (Moore, 1966, p. xxii). I argue instead for a mobilizational path to revolutionary social transformation. According to this view, the existence of class conflict or

other particular socioeconomic conditions does not spontaneously lead to revolution; such conditions are neither necessary nor sufficient for revolution. Rather, the mobilization of new revolutionaries into political parties is a critical and contingent moment that is central to long-run societal change (cf. Lenin, 1929; Huntington, 1968). Through mass mobilization in violent revolutions—where rural communities were suddenly pressed into military, administrative, and political work—communists built the powerful political parties that, where they prevailed, empower the state and structure political participation over the long run. Despite the world-historical significance of this view, which guided prominent revolutionaries, a rigorously empirical, micro-level analysis of whether and how revolutionary mobilization itself created enduring connections between previously decentralized communities and emerging communist party-states is missing in existing work.

Addressing this gap, I collected a unique dataset from rural, upland areas of Laos that traces the ancestors, descendants, and extended family members of individuals who were mobilized into various wings of the Communist Party during the Laotian Civil War in the 1960s-1970s as well as those of similar, nearby people who were not mobilized. This data, covering approximately 1000 individuals across three generations, was collected in nine villages in a remote area of northern Laos that experienced large-scale communist mobilization during the war, which led to a communist takeover of the country. Such genealogical data is used in a study by Wantchekon and coauthors (2015) on the long-run impact of colonial education in Benin but is otherwise missing in studies of political and economic development, including the study of revolutions. This allows for a uniquely granular view into how revolutionary, centralizing states come to control communities that were previously governed in more localized ways.

I test how family histories of mobilization impact individual-level connections to the party-state, social networks, and human capital formation intergenerationally, starting from a history broadly characterized by localized networks, subsistence livelihoods, and loose connections to the state. These micro-level outcomes speak to the larger outcome of state capacity insofar as they facilitate legibility and the consistent interactions and

negotiations between communities and the state, which have been argued to be foundational to state capacity (Migdal, 1988; Barkey, 1994; Scott, 1998; Lee & Zhang, 2017; Zhang & Lee, 2020). In Laos, I find that the nature of conflict and mobilization itself caused a deep social realignment, creating new political hierarchies, binding new social networks, and shaping patterns of economic development. During and after the Laotian Civil War, newly mobilized people from isolated communities with minimal involvement with the state under the old regime became local agents of the emerging communist party-state. Community connections to the state persisted into the subsequent generation, as local individuals in the post-war generation continued to work for the party-state and reach leadership positions. Results show that a key mechanism of persistence in these state-society connections involved the family. In fact, a deeper social differentiation—reflected in differences in status, education, migration, and marriage patterns, in addition to livelihoods—emerged between the descendants and close relations of mobilized revolutionaries and non-mobilized families.

The central methodological challenge is to convincingly separate the impact of mobilization itself from prior factors. I address this endogeneity problem in three steps, partly mirroring the approach followed by Wantchekon and coauthors (2015). First, more so than almost anywhere else in the world at the time, the communities under study were economically underdeveloped, disconnected, and remote from political and economic centers in pre-revolutionary times (Scott, 2010; Evans, 1990; Halpern, 1961a). As a result, social differentiation, whether in terms of occupation, class, or education was very minimal to begin with. Second, the process of revolutionary mobilization occurred under conditions of low information, where most mobilization happened through conscription during periods of intensive nearby fighting. Some families were thus less exposed to mobilization simply because of the gender and ages of family members at the time when drafts took place. Accordingly, I show balance across a range of individual-level covariates between mobilized and unmobilized people. The granularity of my data allows me to show balance on attributes that are almost never measured in existing work, covering family structure, pre-revolutionary family social status, networks, and human capital,

addressing pre-revolutionary social differentiation. Finally, I employ a state of the art sensitivity analysis (Cinelli & Hazlett, 2020) to show that, given these contextual factors, selection bias would have to be implausibly high to nullify the observed results.

As a further robustness check, I conduct an instrumental variables analysis leveraging the specific dynamics of revolutionary conscription in these communities. This relies on the exogeneity of the timing of nearby fighting and the fact that commanders targeted young men for conscription into revolutionary forces most intensively during such periods, leaving families with exogenous variation in exposure to mobilization based on the ages and genders of their children. The key results hold robustly in all specifications.

Laos represents a hard case for macro-social theories of revolution: the revolutionary centers in the remote uplands of the country had historically low levels of state capacity, there were essentially no landlords, bourgeoisie, or industrial proletariat, and impacts of French colonialism were also comparatively low in these inaccessible outer reaches of empire (Evans, 1990, p. 27-34). Rather, the setting was composed of small villages, often only connected by mountainous foot tracks, inhabited by subsistence agriculturalists from diverse ethnicites (cf. Scott, 2010). These loose pre-revolutionary orders were profoundly disrupted by the Laotian Civil War, which involved hundreds of thousands of Lao soldiers across the opposing communist Pathet Lao and Royal Lao Government (RLG) sides. It drew in the extensive participation of North Vietnam, which at times had over 100,000 troops and cadres in Laos, and the US, which dropped 260 million bombs on the country.

After the revolution, the typical communist policies of agricultural collectivization and industrial modernization were not effectively carried out in much of the country for long (Evans, 1990, p. 44-64). Politics in Laos has since been characterized by a paradox of strong one-party hegemony over society on the one hand and weak and uneven state capacity on the other (Creak & Barney, 2018). These factors together make Laos a crucial case, and a baseline, for studying the mobilizational path to revolutionary state formation; if such effects are identifiable anywhere, they should be identifiable in Laos given its relative lack of pre-revolutionary modernization and subsequent challenges with

top-down policy change.[1]

The central contributions of this paper are to the study of revolutions, communism, and state formation. To my knowledge, there is no existing empirical study that analyzes whether and how revolutionary mobilization itself contributed to post-revolutionary social transformations and state capacity in the rural communist revolutions of the mid twentieth century. Results suggest micro-level dynamics behind Koss's (2018) findings that the Chinese Communist Party continues to be strongest in the areas where they fought the Sino-Japanese War. Results also build on recent work by Lankina (2022) on Russia in showing how families have been an important pathway of persistence in political and economic outcomes even in communist contexts. However, unlike Lankina (2022), who shows persistence of old regime social hierarchies despite the Russian Revolution, I detail a process of revolutionary transformation that then ossifies in the post-revolutionary period. Even in a context like Laos, where the implementation of typical communist policies has been limited and uneven (Evans, 1990), revolution has been meaningfully transformative through the impact of mobilization itself. By studying deeper layers of society at a micro-level, I also push a recent literature on revolutionary autocracies (Lachapelle *et al.*, 2020; Levitsky & Way, 2022) beyond its current focus on elites, suggesting ways in which violent revolution durably transforms the interface between state and society.

Although the connection between war and state-making is well known (Tilly, 1990), prior work has not brought systematically collected and fine-grained data covering generations of people to bear on studying this process. At the same time, this study is an important contribution to theories of state formation that emphasize "bottom-up" or interactive dynamics between states and societies, rather than only "top down" coercive processes of state formation. Classic work by Karen Barkey (1994) on Ottoman Turkey, for instance, details a process of state formation built on bargaining and cooptation, rather than contestation, between states and social groups who seek out state resources and connections. In recent work, Zhang & Lee (2020, p. 1001) emphasize the "everyday

[1]Resettlement of mountain villages to lowland areas (Evrard & Goudineau, 2004), especially since the mid 1980s, is one notable area of state-led change, but even this has been largely managed by local authorities and is thus arguably endogenous to the local penetration of state power.

practice of rule-making authority...predicated upon frequent and dense encounters" between states and their societies as foundational to state capacity. The structure of social networks and the nature of state-society interactions, which are concretely *individual level* phenomena, are pivotal for state capacity in such theories, but existing work does not empirically drill down to the level of individuals. By studying long-run individual-level transformations after revolutionary mobilization, I am able to elucidate the process of state penetration of societies through the shifting of networks, norms, and individual capacities in uniquely rich detail.

In Section 2, I outline the key mechanisms in my theory connecting revolutionary mobilization to individual and local transformation, which in turn supports state capacity. Section 3 introduces the Laos case, Section 4 describes the data, and Sections 5 and 6 present empirical results. The main results are based on the collected family histories. As an extension, I also conduct a macro-level analysis comparing villages across upland Laos to trace infrastructural, political, and economic legacies of mobilization across Laos, further speaking to state capacity. This uses a dataset drawn from a host of both official and originally collected sources, covering wartime school-construction, the birthplaces of revolutionaries across Laos, and historical settlement patterns. Results suggest that variation in revolutionary mobilization helps explain political and economic differentiation across upland Laos even today.

2 Conceptualizing a Post-Revolutionary State-Society Interface

2.1 Mass Mobilization in Rural Communist Revolution

My goal is to study how revolutionary mobilization into a political party transforms individuals in ways that promote the building of state capacity. I begin with a Maoist notion of revolutionary mobilization, since this was the guiding ideology for communist leaders in Laos and Vietnam (Goscha, 2012, p. 146). This is a vision that sees conventional warfare instrumentally to some extent, as a tool in accomplishing the critical project of politicizing the peasantry and reconstituting the state by forcibly drawing in large

numbers of people from marginalized social classes. Such mobilization uses ideology and inducements, but is ultimately based on large-scale forced conscription (Zasloff, 1973, p 78; Goscha, 2022, p. 262-263, Moran & Waldron, 2003). Given that indoctrination, inducement, and force all work at once in such contexts, I cannot cleanly separate the effects of different "types" of mobilization. The Maoist model assumes a *party-state*: an organization that both amalgamates political and administrative functions and monopolizes political participation in areas under its control, retaining this monopoly after the conclusion of fighting. In contrast to much prominent work on mobilization in insurgencies and civil wars (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008; Blattman, 2009; Hanson, 2021), I thus study a context where ideologically motivated revolutionary leaders raised entire batallions of soldiers for conventional warfare rather than insurgency, through a distinct model of mass mobilization directly transmitted from China to Indochina (Goscha, 2022). Soldiers were supported by conscripted logistical labor and political cadres, all of whom were integrated into a single emerging party-state (Goscha, 2012).

War exposes revolutionaries to intense leadership and organizational experiences, and binds them to their compatriots in ways that are not possible in peacetime. After the conflict, where revolutionaries succeed, mobilization both equips revolutionary veterans with the necessary skills and also gives them strong moral claims for pursuing political and material benefits within the emerging party-state. The rise of such people creates a connection between the central state and the communities from where they come.

At least two factors help sustain this connection in the short-run in cases of successful rural revolution. First, in many such cases, revolutionaries were mobilized from remote, economically underdeveloped localities where competing political organizations and identities under the old regime were weak or nonexistent (Huntington, 1968, p. 342); in such cases, veterans had no strong competing allegiances that threatened to drive a rebellion. Second, rural revolutions often expelled and eliminated skilled groups, who held privileged positions in urban centers under the old regime.[2] Especially where human capital

[2]The exodus of intelligentsia after communist takeovers in places like China and Vietnam is well known (Lary, 2012, p. 124-125; Goscha, 2016, p. 385-386). This is less true in the earlier Russian Revolution (eg. Lankina *et al.*, 2016).

was scarce after revolutionary victory, trusted revolutionary veterans, now armed with practical administrative experience, were unlikely to be removed from positions of power in the party-state, which now needed to administer a peacetime polity.

2.2 Long-run Individual Capacities and State Capacity

How do these state-society connections deepen and when are they sustained over the long-term? Connections to the state are deeper when local people are formally embedded in the party-state to a greater extent, creating intersections between localized and party-state networks. The long-run sustenance of these formal connections depends on yet deeper shifts in social networks, cultural norms, and human capital rooted in revolutionary mobilization. For instance, veterans might transfer skills and aspirations to their descendants through socialization (Bisin & Verdier, 2001; Lupu & Peisakhin, 2017), leaving these descendants well placed for party-state work on purely meritocratic grounds. Veterans might use their larger social networks to help relatives and community members gain access to resources and jobs through engaging with the state; they might also use their positions of authority in the party-state to secure enduring benefits and positions of power for those close to them. In developing connections to the state, revolutionary veterans from peripheral backgrounds might be especially ideologically attached to the party-state, perhaps even associating it with a "reversal of fortune" (cf. Barkey, 1994, p. 30-33; Lankina *et al.*, 2016); they might also seek out closer connections to the state for material benefits. In these ways, individual transformations through mobilization have spillover effects, over the long-run, within families and communities.

In casting this revolutionary transformation as an expansion of state capacity, I am informed by highly interactive conceptualizations of state capacity (cf. Barkey, 1994). For instance, Zhang & Lee (2020) see state capacity as being rooted in the removal of transaction costs of communication between states and localities. While they conceptualize literacy, through linguistic intelligibility and human capital, as one transaction cost, other similar frictions, impeding state initiatives, might arise from asymmetries in networks and norms between agents of the state and local inhabitants. Such asymmetries

might impact legibility and the frequency and scope of state-society interactions. An illiterate person, or one with no known people among state employees will find it hard or impossible to obtain party-state employment. Equally, they might rely more on informal and untaxed financial networks; they might be less able to engage the state in negotiations over land or local policy, impeding state action; they might be less exposed to ideological indoctrination. I show how state-building happens, to some extent epiphenomenally after revolution, through local revolutionary veterans rather than through continual top-down investments from the center and coercion applied by external authorities.

Though there is a sense in which mobilization occurs at the level of a locality as a whole, shifts in social networks, cultural norms, and human capital are ultimately individual-level phenomena. Membership and incorporation into a party organization is also concretely an individual-level phenomenon. Unlike existing work in this vein, I thus conduct the analysis systematically at the individual level, so that I can directly test for changes in these micro-processes rooted in revolutionary mobilization, which in turn speak to the conception of state capacity described above.

2.3 An Illustrative Example

The life story of an ethnic minority man who ended his career as a brigadier general (*naiphon chattava*) in the Lao Peoples' Liberation Army (LPLA) helps solidify these ideas.[3] Naiphon Chan was born in an upland village in northern Laos to a family that lived by subsistence agriculture and the gathering of forest products. He was drafted into the communist army as a child and taught to read and write by party staff. At first a cook and animal handler, after fighting against the opposing Royal Lao Government (RLG), he was promoted and selected to receive training to be an army doctor. As hostilities subsided in 1975, when he was in his mid-twenties, he was a party member, involved in district-level administration of the military and youth union, and was also the chief of the district-level court.

He married inter-ethnically, something that was exceedingly rare under the old regime,

[3]This information is based on a biographical manuscript provided by the family. Naiphon (general) Chan is a pseudonym. His story is also detailed in the epigraph of this paper.

to someone he met through his work, and became assimilated into the dominant lowland ethnic Lao, Buddhist culture. By the mid-1980s, he had become a senior officer in the LPLA. He pulled in his children, some nephews and nieces, and others from his birth village into party-state work. In his community, he embodied the diligence and industriousness that was celebrated in the propaganda of the party-state. He brought investments in roads and temples to his village. He was thus integral to an enduring incorporation of local networks into party-state networks, increasing the number and variety of interactions between his community and the party-state. Many others, though they did not reach such positions of power, were perhaps able to transmit similar changes, albeit at a smaller scale, after revolutionary mobilization.

2.4 Hypotheses

Where revolutionaries succeed, achieve stability in the critical post-revolutionary moment, and banish or significantly weaken incumbent elite groups, wartime mobilization drives enduring connections to the emerging party-state. To trace long-run outcomes rooted in mobilization at the maximally granular level, I test for within-family effects, based on family histories of mobilization. At this level, one can test for "bottom up" dynamics, where local individuals, rather than the state on its own, work to build denser state-society connections.[4]

As a baseline, my first hypothesis is that descendants, including in the extended family, of mobilized revolutionaries are more likely to hold positions in the party state than the descendants of nearby, similar people who were not mobilized. My second hypothesis then speaks to deeper societal transformations, rooted in revolutionary mobilization, that support state capacity: I hypothesize that those from historically mobilized families will have wider social networks and more human capital; the salience of traditional social norms that might impede connections to the state will also be less for mobilized families. I operationalize this through studying inter-ethnic marriage, education, migration,

[4]I do not rule out top-down mechanisms, indeed communist parties are by their nature hierarchical and top-down. The possibility of bottom-up mechanisms is more theoretically interesting because it sheds new light on how party-states penetrate localities through the efforts of local revolutionaries.

and certain observable consequences of traditional cultural norms, described in greater detail below. These hypotheses speak to family socialization as a key mechanism in the persistence of state-society connections.

3 Historical Context

Before presenting results, I briefly describe the historical context of Laos. This study focuses on the upland parts of Laos. I take this to encompass all of the country apart from the low-lying areas along much of the Mekong River, which are home to the urban centers. Historically low state-capacity and underdevelopment coupled with a violent communist revolution that mobilized large numbers of people and displaced the incumbent elite make Laos a critical, most likely case for studying the impact of revolutionary mobilization itself on durable party-state formation.

Many upland areas of Laos even in the 1960s were some of the least economically developed and sparsely populated places in the world. The largest settlements had 2,000-3,000 inhabitants, while the average village had fewer than 100 residents; locals were almost exclusively subsistence farmers (Halpern, 1961b). Conflict over land was thus not salient. There were active trade networks in opium and forest products, and Buddhist monastic networks extended into some upland communities.[5] But by and large, there were no landlords, capitalists, or state bureaucracies. Corvée labor existed under traditional rulers as well as French colonial rule (Halpern, 1961a, p. 26-28), but by most accounts this was inconsistently applied given the proclivity of locals to simply move away (Evans, 1990, p. 33-34). Given this state of affairs, modern political identities and preferences, such as those between "left" and "right," did not exist among the general upland population under the old regime.

In line with this condition of sparse, subsistence economies and weak state power (cf. Scott, 2010), cultural identities were diverse and diffuse. Laos is made up of people who

[5]The historical presence of Christian missionaries in the uplands appears to have been limited to a handful of individuals in total, though there was more Christian influence among some ethnic Hmong communities starting around 1950 (Andaya, 2014; Andrianoff, 2020). Many Hmong Christians sided with the US during the Laotian Civil War.

speak a variety of unrelated languages and follow diverse cultural traditions. To this day, many people belonging to minority cultures live in ethnically homogeneous villages in upland areas of the country. Out of 50 officially recognized ethnicities, the ethnic Lao make up a bare majority of the population across the country, while the broader category of Tai ethnic groups (*Lao Loum* or "lowland" Lao), which includes the Lao, make up around 60% (Statistics Bureau, 2015a, p. 37). Historically, the Lao-Tai have been politically dominant in Laos, ruling over towns (*meuang*) in many of the arterial valleys of present-day Laos by the early 1300s (eg. Stuart-Fox, 1997, p. 8). The Khmu and other Mon-Khmer groups, older inhabitants of the area, have traditionally occupied mountainous locales and were historically given the pejorative label of *Kha*, or slave, by the Lao-Tai, reflecting the perceived backwardness associated with highlanders. These people are also sometimes referred to as the *Lao Theung* or "upland" Lao. The third most populous group after the Khmu, the Hmong—categorized as *Lao Soung*, "highland" Lao—arrived fleeing unrest in southern China in the 1800s to settle in the mountains of northern Laos. I refer to all groups outside of the Lao-Tai as "ethnic minorities" or "upland ethnic minorities."

In this context, the Laotian Civil War, or Laotian Revolution, was rooted in political instability following decades of French colonialism, Japanese occupation during World War 2, and then a return of French rule after a brief period of independence (Stuart-Fox, 1997). Subsequently, splits emerged among the Lao elite between those who wanted French rule and those supporting the Viet Minh's anti-French insurgency in Indochina; this faction developed into the communist Pathet Lao (PL), heavily supported by North Vietnam. Laos gained independence, as a constitutional monarchy, from the French in 1954. At this time, the PL were active in many areas of Laos and retained full control of two upland, northeastern provinces bordering Vietnam: Sam Neua and Phongsaly (Langer & Zasloff, 1969, p. 73-79).

Fighting between the Royal Lao Government (RLG), now supported by the US, and communists continued sporadically. Communist control gradually expanded from their original strongholds in the northeast to include much of eastern and upland Laos. At

the same time, boundaries were fluid and frequently changing, front lines were highly fractured and both sides came to hold areas behind enemy lines at various times. People from virtually all major ethnic groups were involved on both sides of the conflict.[6] The 1962 Geneva Conference instituted a ceasefire, though no official demarcating line between the factions was ever established (Langer & Zasloff, 1969, p. 110). Fighting continued and intensified immediately after and subsided only after the communist takeover of the country in 1975.

Post-revolutionary Changes

Table 1: Ethnic diversity in party leadership

Body	Year	Total size	Ethnic minorities
National population	2015	6,446,690	∼40%
Lao Peoples' Revolutionary Party (LPRP), 11th Politburo	2021	13	38.46%
9th National Assembly (elected reps.)	2021	164	18.3%
7th National Assembly (all candidates)	2011	190	26.3%
LPRP, 8th Central Committee	2006	55	27.27%
6th National Assemby	2006	115	20%
4th National Assembly	1997	99	32.32%
LPRP, 4th Politburo	1986	13	7.69%
LPRP, 2nd Politburo	1972	7	0%

In this historical context, early Lao nationalists, who were part of the small ethnic Lao elite under French colonialism, looked to their ethnicity as the basis of political community (Ivarsson & Goscha, 2007; Pholsena, 2002). Leadership positions at the district level and above under the old regime were almost always held by Lao-Tai aristocrats. The communists, who were based in upland areas bordering Vietnam during much of the war, have claimed to represent a multi-ethnic Lao people and to champion the interests of minorities since the wartime period (Neo Lao Haksat, 1970, 1980). While such proclamations are typical in communist contexts and often hollow, wartime US sources also noted that the PL leadership structure and ethnic policy "appear[ed] to live up to these principles" (Langer & Zasloff, 1969, p. 133-134), despite the fact that the core leadership was made up of lowland Lao, heavily supported by the Vietnamese, who provided much of the military manpower. Many from the educated, elite classes under the old regime

[6]The Hmong are well known to have been recruited by the CIA, but in fact many Hmong were also on the communist side, with clan-level splits (Pholsena, 2008; Naotoayang, 2014). See Goudineau, (1997, p. 23) for examples of local geographical splits among and within Khmu subgroups.

fled the country after the war, while others—especially those in RLG leadership positions who chose to stay—perished in Pathet Lao prison camps (cf. Baird, 2021).

Today, a diversity of ethnic groups are represented at all levels of the party-state, including in the Politburo and Central Committee, which are the primary policy-making bodies. At the same time, many of the poorest and most isolated communities in the country are ethnic minority communities. Outside of the very highest echelons of the party-state, many ethnically non-Lao people also hold positions, including prominent ones, in the military as well as in the bureaucracy. Since information on party membership is not publicly available, data on the National Assembly of Laos gives some sense of the extent to which the deeper ranks of the party-state encompass underlying social groups (see Appendix A).

Unevenness also characterizes the economic situation of upland people in Laos. In aggregate, there are major and persistent gaps in poverty rates between the majority Lao-Tai, Mon-Khmer, Tibeto-Burman, and Hmong communities (Statistics Bureau, 2015b, p. 170). However, these aggregates mask a significant amount of variation across geographical areas and within the state-sanctioned broad ethnolinguistic categories (table A.1). In making sense of this differentiation, I build on work by scholars of Laos who have highlighted the importance of revolutionary histories as an important source of political capital in Laos (Goudineau, 1997; Baird & Le Billon, 2012; Dwyer, 2022).

4 Family Histories

With the aid of local partners, a sample of family histories was gathered from nine ethnic Khmu villages in northern Laos. This was done using a backward sampling procedure, where enumerators systematically sampled from individuals living in these communities today, asking these people about their ancestors and other family members in face-to-face interviews (cf. Wantchekon *et al.*, 2015). These communities, about whom little is known in any academic field, were very heavily mobilized by the communists during the Laotian Civil War while also being historically remote and peripheral to state power. Thus they provide a good setting for studying the impact of mobilization on state formation.

These histories recover the stories of approximately 1000 people across three generations, providing relational data as well as data on professions, education, and migration during the old regime, during the time of intensive revolutionary conflict, and in the subsequent generation. This includes information on family members who have died, have moved or reside in other places, and some who were royalist soldiers and went to reeducation camp (*semana*, "seminar" in Lao). Although Laos is well known as the most bombed country in the world (Riano & Valencia Caicedo, 2024), this area faced few instances of aerial bombardment, and the impacts of bombing are not significant locally.[7] A total of 72 initial interviews were conducted.[8] Historically similar villages were selected for data collection, and households were randomly sampled within each village. There are significant data constraints in identifying historically similar villages, since no pre-war data exists at the village level. As an alternative, local elders with deep knowledge and first-hand experience of the area going back to the 1950s were enlisted to help with village selection. This process is described in detail in Appendix B.

Like similar historical studies, especially of contentious histories, where official records are unavailable, this study relies on truthful and accurate recall by interviewees (Blattman, 2009; Wantchekon *et al.*, 2015; Lupu & Peisakhin, 2017; Sánchez De La Sierra, 2020). In studying the impacts of revolutionary mobilization on remote, rural communities anywhere in the world, there is simply no way around this. With regards to recall, the histories in question here are more recent than those analyzed in other retrospective work (Wantchekon *et al.*, 2015; Lupu & Peisakhin, 2017), and the majority of interviewees had directly lived through the war and were often able to give detailed accounts of their experiences as well as those of their relatives.[9]

While I cannot guarantee that all data is accurate, several steps were taken to ensure good data quality. Data was collected by two enumerators, both of whom are themselves

[7] According to U.S. data from the Theater History of Operations Report, the area was bombed in a total of approximately 5 missions. These communities were also not located anywhere near the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

[8] The collected family histories, along with results to follow, should only be seen as representative for Khmu in the specific area under study.

[9] There is, however, clear evidence of missing data on women in older generations. This is addressed below and in Appendix B.

Khmu, have professional training and over a decade of experience in survey research, and also have familial ties to the surveyed communities. Due to the insider status of the enumerators, interviews were conducted as semi-structured conversations among community insiders in the Khmu language. During interviews, information on family histories was often verified, corrected, or sharpened through discussions among multiple community members. The villages under study have only between 15 and 20 unrelated households, and families are well-informed about each others' histories.[10] In all but one village, follow-up conversations, sometimes with original respondents and sometimes with their close relations, for clarifying and verifying information were also conducted over phone, social media, and in person over the course of six months for all families.[11] While it cannot be fully ruled out, I believe that the unique nature of the interviews, conducted as conversations among trusted community insiders, represents an unusually high safeguard against social desirability bias. A sign of this is the fact that respondents reported historical participation on the royalist side at rates that exceeded prior expectations based on knowledge of this area.

Other concerns with retrospective data might involve the possibility of differences in migrations, death rates, and birth rates between mobilized and unmobilized families, leading to biased results (see Appendix C). Data on people who were displaced or have migrated away is typically available, since many such people retain connections to family members who have remained in the surveyed villages. Based on interviews, entire extended families typically did not move away. Available data on family sizes in both the wartime and post-war generations provides no evidence for differential birth or death rates.

Revolutionary Mobilization and Selection

A detailed qualitative account of local mobilization and pre-revolutionary society, based

[10] Officially, some of these settlements are at a sub-village level, since in some cases nearby settlements are grouped together administratively into the same "village." I refer to the sampled settlements, rather than the broader official administrative units, as villages. Almost all of these villages have been relocated closer to roads and waterways and other villages since the time of the revolution, but the analysis here largely involves events and histories that preceded relocations.

[11] In one village, follow-ups were not successful because of a lack of phone and internet signal and difficulties in obtaining permissions for follow-up in-person interviews.

on extensive fieldwork and interviews conducted over several years, is available in an appendix. I present such qualitative information summarily here due to space constraints. I identify individuals as mobilized into the communist revolution only if they had a military, political, or administrative position in support of the war on the communist side at the district (*meuang*) level or higher. Given that the area underwent mass mobilization, with many people contributing to the war effort in different ways, this is simply meant to capture a threshold of integration into the communist party, which is the core theoretical idea behind the treatment, following Huntington (1968). At lower levels of work, the day-to-day life of the person would not have significantly shifted away from those of a local farmer.[12] Individuals in the post-war generation (notated generation 2) are considered to be from a mobilized family if they are a grandchild, child, niece or nephew, or younger sibling of someone who was mobilized.

The "unmobilized," or control, group includes a few different types of people, all of whom remained, to varying extents, remote from the Communist Party: those who worked for the communists at the village or sub-district level at times, those who were mostly uninvolved in the conflict, and those who were mobilized into the Royal Lao Army (FAR). Some of the villages under study were actively contested during the war and came under royalist control for some time, hence the history of mobilization into the right wing forces. Family histories of royalist mobilization are accounted for in the analysis to come in order to ensure that any identified effects arise from benefits from mobilization rather than the punishment of those on the losing side.

In the area under study, beyond its intensiveness, the local dynamics of mobilization were haphazard and do not map on to pre-revolutionary interests. There were several cases where the same individual switched between opposing sides of the conflict, while in many other cases, siblings or family members were forced into opposing sides.[13] Based on

[12]The particular operation of a Leninist party structure in these localities also leads to a situation where many local people are affiliated with mass organizations during certain periods of their life without this concretely impacting their skills, social networks, livelihoods, or political power.

[13]As Walder & Chu (2020) show in a seminal sociological study of the Cultural Revolution in China, faction building in settings of intensive conflict where institutions have collapsed happens through contingent, localized decisions, made under conditions of high uncertainty; the influence of prior interests and identities are minimal in such chaotic settings.

Table 2: Mobilized and unmobilized balance

Individuals have a notable prior generation if at least one of their ancestors was a soldier, village head, *taseng* head, trader, or important spiritual figure based on reported data.

	Mobilized			Unmobilized			
	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.	Diff.
Female	63	0.079	0.272	166	0.518	0.501	−0.439
Ave. no. siblings	52	4.981	1.831	111	5.261	2.012	−0.28
Monk (males)	55	0.255	0.44	79	0.266	0.445	−0.011
Other family mob.	60	0.7	0.462	156	0.545	0.5	0.155
From area 1	63	0.333	0.475	166	0.283	0.452	0.05
Notable prior gen.	51	0.392	0.493	116	0.328	0.471	0.064

interviews with locals who experienced the war, the primary determinant of individual mobilization was simply being in the village as a young man at the time that the local military commander happened to come looking for men (see Appendix D). Drafts were particularly likely when conflict happened to intensify nearby, as was the case in 1967-1968 when areas nearby were part of an active front-line in the war. Commanders were not well informed about the capacity of draftees and faced significant manpower pressure from ongoing conflict; rather, key determinants of being drafted were simply being the right age and gender (male) when conflict happened to intensify nearby.

Despite the prevalence of conscription, I do not make strong claims about the randomness of recruitment, since it is impossible to recover the precise motivations, and the mix between coercion, inducements, and indoctrination, in the process of mobilization writ large. However, I am able to show balance along key covariates, at a high level of granularity and historical depth, between mobilized and unmobilized people in the sample. Especially given the very low levels of pre-revolutionary social differentiation locally, this provides evidence that mobilization did not select for a particular type of person.

Table 2 shows balance across several individual-level covariates for which data was collected and which might confound results to come. Family size might correlate with economic status and thus is an important variable for balance. Prior connections to the state, which were exclusively through military service or attaining village and sub-district head positions, as well as connections to supra-local trade are captured by the "notable

prior generation" variable, on which there is balance.[14] A particularly important pre-revolutionary societal network was the Buddhist priesthood (cf. Hansen, 2007; Grzymała-Busse, 2023; Zaw, 2024). This was the only source of education in this area in pre-revolutionary times, which we might expect to be an important factor in mobilization, following work on Russia (Lankina *et al.*, 2016). Monastic networks might well have played an important part in the Laotian revolution broadly, but I find that exposure to them does not predict revolutionary mobilization.[15] In assessing covariate balance, data at this level of granularity, speaking to deep family histories, is rare in existing work. Building on this, to further address the issue of selection bias (either selection by the party-state or by mobilized people according to some unobserved capacity), I conduct sensitivity analysis of the key results to come. I also present an instrumental variables analysis as a robustness check.

5 Main Results

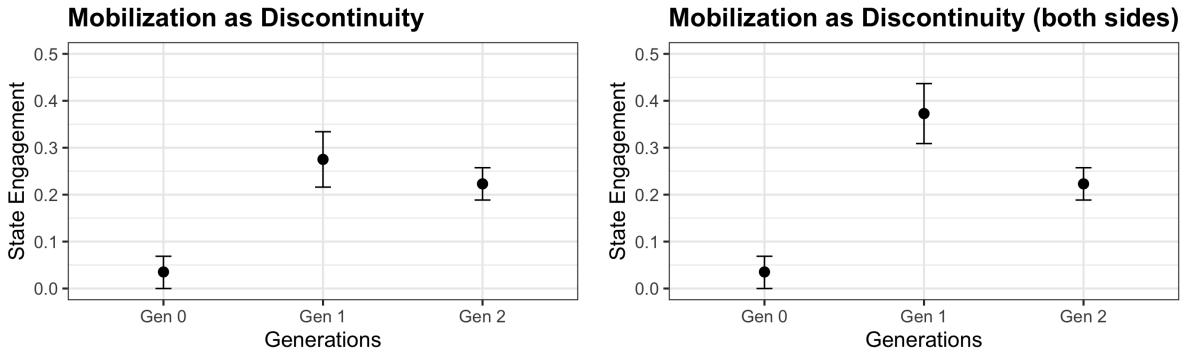
5.1 Intergenerational Connections to the State

Involvement with the state increased during the wartime generation and remained at a significantly higher level in the post-war generation. Remarkably, over 37% of the sample was involved in the war effort at the district level or above on both sides, with about 27% being mobilized by the communists, consistent with mass mobilization in the Maoist mold.[16] Much of this involvement came from military mobilization of young men and boys, though people also worked as teachers, administrators, and other political staff (see table A.2). Mobilization into teaching and administrative positions typically also involved conscription of very young people who initially provided labor and were given

[14]This combines different notable histories because there are so few (one or two) cases in each category.

[15]Regression analysis of the determinants of mobilization suggests that gender, number of siblings (weakly), and the specific village of the individual are the only measured factors correlated with mobilization (see table A.3). The result on number of siblings is likely because some people were able to avoid conscription because their siblings had already been conscripted.

[16]Royalist involvement is driven entirely by mobilization into the armed forces (FAR). All data on FAR involvement is tentative, since this is still a sensitive history. Women are consistently underrepresented in the sample, though the problem improves across generations. Estimated rates of state involvement are thus likely biased upwards. This issue should not disrupt the basic picture.



(a) **(b)**

Figure 1: A mobilization shock

Gen 0 is the pre-war generation, gen 1 is the wartime generation (born between 1940 and 1960), and gen 2 are the children, nieces, and nephews of gen 1 along with siblings born after 1960. Panel (a) shows means for mobilization and government employment at the district level or higher. Panel (b) also includes mobilization on the royalist side for gen 1. Error bars indicate a two standard error interval.

basic education by the party.

Individuals were counted as reaching high positions if they had a leadership position at the district level or higher and/or they attained a senior officer rank in the military or police (*nai phan* or higher—battalion commander or higher). In the sample, 35 individuals reached high positions across generations 1 and 2. In generation 1, this includes a former district governor (*jao meuang*), a former deputy district governor (*hong jao meuang*), a former member of the National Assembly of Laos, a military general, and several other senior soldiers and police. 63 out of 229 people were mobilized in the revolution, while 130 out of 584 people in generation 2 worked full-time for the party-state.

5.2 Mobilization, Kinship, and the State

As a first step, to directly test if party-state work in generation 2 is rooted in histories of revolutionary mobilization, I consider correlations between histories of family-level mobilization and being employed full-time by the party-state in the subsequent generation. Almost all employees of the party-state in the sample worked at local and provincial levels as bureaucrats, doctors, teachers, soldiers, or police, while several reached national-level positions. I rely on a theory of state capacity that sees the density of state-society interactions as central to state capacity. From a past of highly localized networks, greater

Table 3: Generation 2, determinants of party-state work

	(1)	(2)	(3)
DV	Govt. work	Govt. work	Govt. work
Model	Logit	Logit	Logit
family mobilized	1.164***		
	(0.224)		
parent		1.289***	1.289***
		(0.2)	(0.222)
aunt/uncle		0.903***	0.765**
		(0.302)	(0.325)
sibling		1.142***	0.984***
		(0.219)	(0.25)
area1	−0.084	0.015	
	(0.376)	(0.34)	
individual controls	✓	✓	✓
village dummies			✓
N	568	568	568

standard errors clustered by village, Bonferroni corrected α
$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

Table 4: Predicted probabilities of party-state involvement in generation 2

Model: 3, Village: 7, Birth cohort: 1975-1990, FAR: No, Siblings: 5

	Only parent mobilized	Only aunt/uncle mobilized	No close family mobilized
Male	0.483	0.357	0.205
Female	0.202	0.131	0.065

intersection between local kinship networks and party-state networks, rooted in revolutionary mobilization, thus speaks to an expansion of state capacity. Presumably, working for the party-state also inculcates ideological loyalty, though it is impossible to explicitly ask about this in Laos. In some sense, the idea that children follow in the footsteps of their parents is a mundane fact. However, the key point here is that the incorporative effects of mobilization spread, through families, beyond those directly mobilized, causing these effects to persist.

I conduct regression analysis, with the outcome variable being full-time employment by the party-state in generation 2 and the treatment variables being various indicators of familial revolutionary mobilization in the prior generation. I control for gender, birth-year cohorts, number of siblings, and family history of royalist mobilization, since these factors might independently affect the outcome variable. An important baseline level of

control, including on unobservables, is achieved through sample selection. All individuals come from the same ethnic community, with family histories in upland villages that have historically occupied essentially the same ecological and economic niches. I also control for the specific village (or "area" encompassing a sampling cluster, see Appendix B), further accounting for village histories that might have been pertinent to mobilization.

Results suggest that revolutionary mobilization, including among extended family (uncles and aunts), led to a significantly greater likelihood of party-state employment among family members in the subsequent generation. Instead of arguing directly for a causal interpretation based on an exogenous treatment, I use a sensitivity analysis based approach and contextual knowledge to argue that these results are meaningful. Most mobilization happened through conscription in a low-information environment, in response to the intensity of nearby fighting; selection by draftees or communist commanders was minimal, and pre-war social differentiation was also minimal. Sensitivity analysis results, following Cinelli & Hazlett (2020), show that in order for results to lose statistical significance at the 95% level, all of the following would have to be true: (1) a very high level of selection on an unobserved ability during a chaotic process of mobilization, (2) an independent intergenerational transfer of this underlying ability, and (3) this underlying ability influencing participation in state work at rates even higher than having male gender, which is the strongest measured predictor of party-state work (Appendix E.1).[17] This chain of effects is highly implausible given the context under study.

As a further robustness check, I estimate an instrumental variables specification. Results hold robustly in the IV specification (table A.6), which uses the ages and genders of children in the family in 1967-1968 as exogenous sources of variation in exposure to mobilization, under the assumption that mobilization—primarily conscription—responded to nearby conflict. Though age cutoffs for conscription were not sharp, using a conservative cutoff there is strong evidence that the instrument is both relevant and exogenous.

[17]Selection into mobilization on an unobserved ability would also have to be over half as strong as the observed selection into mobilization on gender, which is by far the strongest predictor of mobilization, in order for results to lose significance.

Table 5: Generation 2, sample characteristics by mobilization history

Averages/proportions of sample in generation 2, grouped by mobilizational history, with high position government jobs, skilled jobs (including govt.), residence in Vientiane, inter-ethnic marriage, college diploma, and number of siblings. CLT standard errors in parentheses. Number of observations in brackets.

Mobilization	Leader	Skilled	VTE	Inter-ethnic	Diploma	Sibs.
Family	0.048	0.345	0.118	0.197	0.142	5.561
	(0.016)	(0.034)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.018)	(0.107)
	[393]	[391]	[391]	[365]	[310]	[392]
None	0.016	0.153	0.053	0.038	0.017	5.426
	(0.006)	(0.016)	(0.011)	(0.01)	(0.009)	(0.166)
	[190]	[190]	[190]	[182]	[176]	[183]
Parent/sibling	0.073	0.426	0.114	0.203	0.162	5.77
	(0.02)	(0.037)	(0.024)	(0.03)	(0.028)	(0.151)
	[177]	[176]	[176]	[158]	[136]	[178]
No parent/sibling	0.022	0.218	0.089	0.121	0.071	5.406
	(0.007)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.111)
	[405]	[404]	[404]	[388]	[350]	[397]

5.3 Social Networks and Human Capital

In addressing my second hypothesis, I first test how mobilization has transformed the social networks and skills of families and individuals in the long-run, giving them advantages in seeking connections to the state. As table 5 shows, there are significant intergenerational differences between mobilized and unmobilized families. This suggests that the incorporation of these families has not only been a thin, top-down cooptation by party leaders; it has been driven by self-sustaining advantages. I focus on social networks and human capital because these are factors that leave locals both well placed to work for the party-state as well as engage party-state institutions in more and more varied ways (Lee & Zhang, 2017; Zhang & Lee, 2020).

I operationalize social networks by examining trends in inter-ethnic marriage and migration to the capital city, Vientiane; both inter-ethnic marriage and urban migration imply more varied social networks. In addition, many inter-ethnic marriages brought Khmu people into familial relationships with people from historically more privileged Lao-

Table 6: Regression results, marriage and education

	(1)	(2)
DV	Inter-ethnic marriage	Diploma
Model	Logit	Logit
family mobilized	1.571***	2.3*
	(0.571)	(1.198)
individual controls	✓	✓
village dummies	✓	✓
N	534	471
standard errors clustered by village		
$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$		

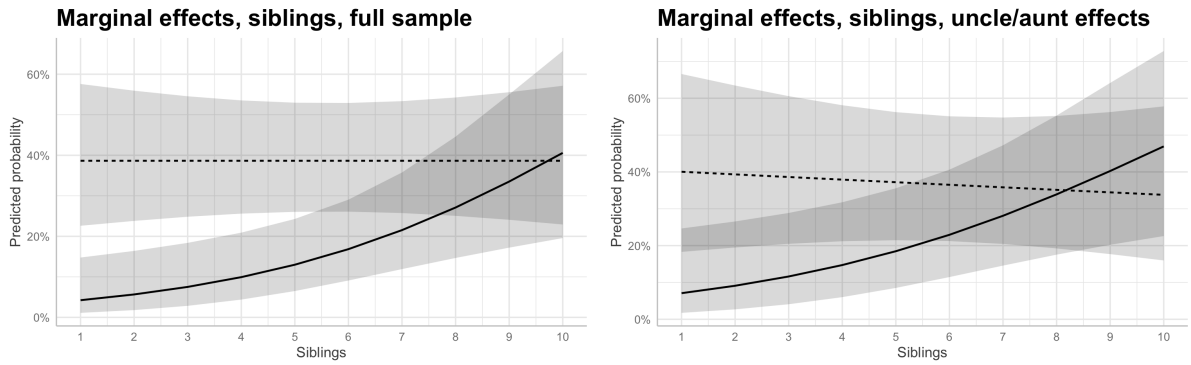
Tai communities.[18] I operationalize human capital using trends in educational attainment and participation in skilled labor.[19] Few people from this area spoke the Lao language in pre-war times, literacy was minimal, and there were virtually no cross-ethnic marriages. Trends in table 5 thus represent a revolutionary social transformation. These trends started with revolutionary mobilization itself, which first brought locals into large multi-ethnic networks centered on the party and gave them formal education. In turn, benefits from better social networks and education likely reinforced local party-state connections. Regression analysis provides further evidence that a family history of mobilization led to higher rates of inter-ethnic marriage and higher rates of tertiary education in the post-revolutionary generation.

5.4 Cultural Norms

Traditional cultural norms might function as another source of friction in interactions between the state and local communities. This is perhaps especially relevant given Scott's (2010) influential argument that the inhabitants of "Zomia" are particularly culturally averse to state control. Anecdotally, ambitions of children in generation 2 were affected by family mobilization histories through socialization, even across extended families. For instance, in one case, a woman who attained higher education and skilled non-governmental

[18]Many such relationships developed as a direct result of participating in multi-ethnic revolutionary networks and workplaces.

[19]In addition to government work, I counted working in an office setting, owning or operating a business, working in a technical trade, and working in the arts as skilled jobs.



(a) **(b)**

Figure 2: Heterogeneous effects: siblings

Results are from regressions following table 3, column 1, which include an additional interaction term between treatment and siblings (see table A.7). Predicted probabilities, given covariates: Gender=Male, FAR=No, Area 1, Birth cohort=1975-1990. Dotted line is mobilized group and solid line is unmobilized group. Panel (a) uses the full sample; panel (b) restricts the sample to children who only have a mobilized uncle/aunt (but no mobilized parent or sibling) and those from unmobilized families.

work in the national capital mentioned that her uncle, a senior soldier, had encouraged her to study hard from her childhood, promising her a job as an army doctor if she did so. To test the salience of differences in socialization more systematically, I focus on the observable implications of a cultural norm that might impede party-state connections by placing responsibilities on individuals that make it difficult to pursue careers in the party-state.

Traditionally, in the studied communities, at least one male child was expected to stay with his parents and support the parental household throughout his life. This would preclude the travels and training necessary for much party-state work. To test the salience of this norm, I leverage the fact that party-state opportunities would thus be more available to male children from bigger families, where some such children would be less affected by the burden of the traditional role.

Accordingly, in unmobilized families, I find positive marginal effects of the number of siblings on party-state employment at the individual level, suggesting the maintenance of this cultural norm. However, no such effect exists for mobilized families, for whom the number of siblings has no impact on the probability of party-state employment. Furthermore, this effect is not simply driven by children whose parents are government employees, and who might thus not be needed at home; a similar heterogeneity exists

when comparing nieces and nephews, but not children, of revolutionary veterans with children from unmobilized families (figure 2b). In other words, the cultural norm appears to not apply even in families where the parents are farmers but an uncle or aunt was mobilized during the revolution. While I cannot rule out alternative explanations, this result provides suggestive evidence that revolutionary mobilization shifted parents' preferences on traditional family roles for their children; parents in historically mobilized families encouraged their children to pursue opportunities with the party-state even at the expense of traditional familial responsibilities.[20] This also points to within-family socialization as a mechanism of persistence in state-society connections.

I thus find evidence for three related shifts rooted in revolutionary mobilization itself that have supported an intensification of local connections to the state over the long run. First, social networks expanded and intersected more privileged groups. Second, relevant skills were built through formal education, even at the highest available level. Finally, there is evidence of shifts in preferences and ambitions regarding family roles that would allow individuals to pursue party-state work even at the expense of traditional family duties. The within-family effects show that such transformations have not been based on development and industrialization (cf. Gellner, 1983) or broad top-down investments by the state, since such change would apply broadly through these communities. Rather, they are rooted in revolutionary mobilization itself. These outcomes, in turn, suggest a local expansion of state capacity, conceptualized as the density of interactions between the state and the locality.

6 Revolutionary Mobilization and State Capacity Across the Uplands

I conclude with an analysis connecting wartime revolutionary mobilization to infrastructural, political, and economic outcomes, which speak directly to state presence and ca-

[20]This divergence in preferences could, in turn, have been driven by economic and political factors, though I am unable to systematically test such deeper mechanisms. Mobilized families, if they were wealthier, might have required less household labor. Mobilized families might also have had higher returns from sending their children to study or work if their children were likely to be privileged in such contexts based on their family histories.

pacity at a higher level of aggregation. Building on the results above, my objective in this section is to marshal the broadest possible range of data to provide suggestive evidence that the party-state has continued to be more active in areas that were heavily mobilized during the revolution. To this end, I use an extensive range of originally collected data on local pre-war covariates. My suggestion is that these aggregate signs of state capacity are, in part, a result of the micro-processes detailed more locally above.

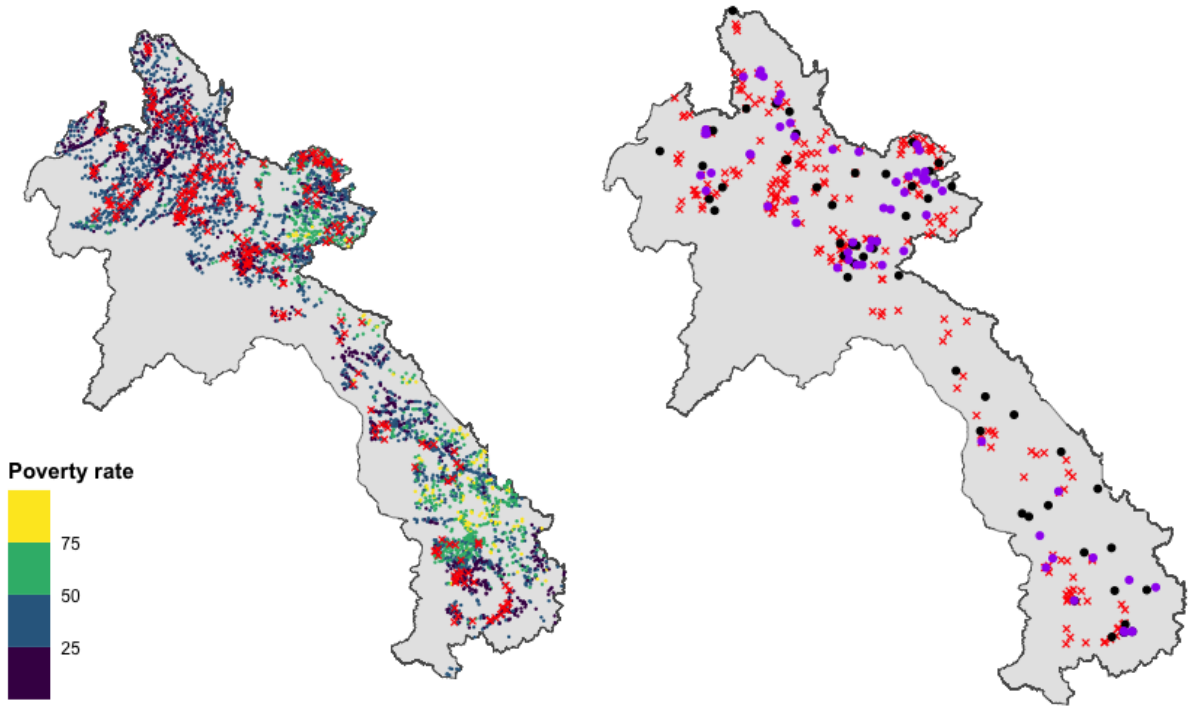
6.1 Measuring Revolutionary Mobilization

As before, my conception of revolutionary mobilization into a political party relies on the Maoist model, where strategies like ideological indoctrination, emulation drives, and new hero worship were combined with conscription (Goscha, 2012, 2022). I focus on two wartime variables to operationalize this kind of intensive revolutionary mobilization at the village level across upland Laos: (1) wartime school construction and (2) birthplaces of National Assembly members who were revolutionaries.

Wartime schools

One of the explicit goals of wartime education in the communist areas was to create and staff a unified party-state (Ministry of Education & Sports, 2020, p. 102). A wartime American study notes that the phrase "going to school" had become a euphemism for being drafted in communist areas because students were frequently pushed into the war effort (Whitaker *et al.*, 1972, p. 102). Village schools were typically small huts built of the same local materials as other village houses (Ministry of Education & Sports, 2020, p. 58), so their construction did not represent a discontinuous investment in physical infrastructure. Students learned basic literacy, were indoctrinated in anti-imperialist and communist ideas, and contributed labor during the school day to the war effort. Essentially no schools existed in upland Laos prior to the war (figure A.1).

Information on the year of construction for every school in Laos that existed as of 2014 is publicly available through Open Development Mekong, a consortium of NGOs



(a) Poverty rates and wartime schools **(b)** Politician birthplaces and wartime schools

Figure 3: Wartime school building, poverty, and politics

Red x's denote locations of schools built by the communists during wartime. Areas retained by the RLG till late into the war are excluded from the analysis. Data on poverty rates is from the Population and Housing Census of Laos, 2015 (Statistics Bureau, 2015a). In panel b, purple dots represent birth villages of candidates for the 9th National Assembly in 2021 and black dots are birth villages of members of the 4th National Assembly in 2000.

providing open access development-related data.[21] In order to identify wartime school construction by the Pathet Lao, I traced the evolution of areas of communist control using dozens of briefs produced by the CIA during the war (see Appendix F.2). I exclude Mekong lowland areas, since the focus here is on the historically remote uplands. I also exclude areas captured by the PL after 1973, since these places are unlikely to have seen much wartime mobilization by communists so late in the conflict, after lengthy prior royalist control.

Birthplaces of members of the 4th NA

I use geocoded data on prominent revolutionaries who were mobilized as a second, more direct, measure of mobilization. I identify prominent revolutionaries by using data on members of the 4th National Assembly (1997-2002), since this is easily available from

[21] This is the best available data, but it is imperfect due to the fact that details of how the data was collected are unavailable (see Appendix F.1).

an official registry. Almost all members of the 4th NA had personal histories of being mobilized into the war; the few that did not were excluded from the analysis. The assumption is that places that were home to prominent revolutionaries had high levels of mobilization more generally. There are no signs that political leadership strives for geographical balance in the National Assembly; instead, famous revolutionary areas seem to be especially well represented. Figure 3 reveals a striking, though suggestive, correlation between 2015 poverty rates and wartime school building in the uplands as well as a clustering of wartime school building and birthplaces of National Assembly members in the 4th and 9th National Assemblies.

6.2 Model and Estimation

Estimating standard regression models, I consider three outcome variables that are indicative of variation in the capacity of the post-revolutionary party-state. These are: (1) poverty rate in 2015, measured as the percentage of people in the village below a common poverty threshold, (2) the number of schools built within five kilometers of the village in the immediate post-revolutionary period in 1976-1990, and (3) whether a candidate from the 9th National Assembly (elected in 2021) was born within 5 kilometers of the given village. The unit of analysis is the village. The treatment variables are (1) a dummy variable for wartime school construction within five kilometers of the centroid of the village and (2) a similar variable that indicates if a member of the 4th NA was born within 5 kilometers of the centroid of the village.

Though I do not make causal claims, I account for a variety of observable and unobservable confounding factors. The empirical strategy is to structure highly local comparisons of villages through a district-level fixed effect. Districts include approximately 70 or 80 villages today, each typically within about 30 kilometers of one another. Thus, the idea is to compare neighboring villages, which are likely to be similar across many unobservables. Given the basic state of economic development in pre-war times, there is also good reason to believe that unobservables that vary within districts are highly correlated with geography and climate, for which I also control (cf. Huillery, 2009, p. 188-189).

To further account for deeper historical factors, working with research assistants, I compiled a dataset of pre-war settlement patterns across all of upland Laos. This dataset was hand-coded from about 300 American maps from the 1950s and 1960s. This then gives a measure of local settlement density, which likely correlates with economic development. It also provides information on which settlements were district and provincial capitals as well as on the location of Buddhist temples. Finally, as a control for pre-war ethnicity, I coded a variable that indicates the historical density of nearby villages with non Lao language names.

I include district-specific intercepts, so that effects are within-district. Additionally, I control for altitude, terrain roughness, river access, distance to the nearest international border, a dummy for being on an international border, and mean annual precipitation. Wartime bombing is a particularly important history that needs to be accounted for (Lin, 2022; Riano & Valencia Caicedo, 2024). I use data from the Theater History of Operations Report (THOR), released by the US Department of Defense, which includes information on all US air operations conducted during the course of the Vietnam War. To get a measure of the local intensity of bombing for each village, I count the number of airstrikes flown within five kilometers of each village according to THOR. Finally, I control for several historical factors: (1) the number of named settlements within 5km of each village according to the historical maps, (2) whether the village is within 5km of a historical district capital or (3) provincial capital, (4) the presence of a historical temple within 5km, (5) the presence of a pre-war school within 5km, and (6) the number of settlements within 5km in 1965 that had non-Lao names.

6.3 Political and Economic Incorporation of Upland Villages

Results from estimating these models further connect revolutionary mobilization to long-run state capacity, now at a higher level of aggregation. Wartime school construction is associated with significant decreases in contemporary poverty rates, increases in post-war school building, and increases in the probability of being the birthplace of a member of the 9th National Assembly. Villages that are near birthplaces of revolutionaries who were

Table 7: Local economic and political legacies of wartime mobilization

	(1)	(2)	(3)
DV	Poverty	N. Schools 76-90	9th NA
Model	OLS	Poisson	Logit
school	-2.93^{***}	0.362^{***}	1.068^{***}
	(0.672)	(0.037)	(0.19)
4th NA birthplace	-1.86^{**}	0.188^{***}	0.333
	(0.861)	(0.047)	(0.244)
district dummies	✓	✓	✓
geographical controls & bombs	✓	✓	✓
historical controls	✓	✓	✓
adj. R^2	0.571		
N	4919	4919	4919
standard errors clustered by district			
$*p < 0.1$; $**p < 05$; $***p < 0.01$			

members of the 4th NA are also less poor than similar nearby villages and had greater subsequent school-building. These outcomes point to greater party-state initiative and higher density of state-society interactions. Results hold after structuring highly local comparisons and controlling for geographic and climactic factors, bombing histories, pre-war settlement characteristics and patterns, pre-war schools, and pre-war temples. A further robustness check is available in Appendix F.6.

This analysis, though suggestive, thus builds on the individual level results and points to state-building in Laos emanating from histories of revolutionary mobilization. The individual-level results provide insights into the mechanisms behind these larger correlations between historical revolutionary mobilization and subsequent state investments and policy. In aggregate, villages that saw wartime school construction continue to see greater benefits and stronger ties to the party-state, relative to similar nearby villages, even close to fifty years after the end of the Laotian Civil War.

7 Conclusion

A distinguishing characteristic of post-revolutionary communist governments has been their ability to incorporate even far flung communities into a party-state. I have pointed to revolutionary mobilization, at the origin of these party-states, as a critical moment

in this process of state formation. This advances a canonical debate in the study of revolutions between Marxist perspectives, emphasizing class conflict (Moore, 1966), and political perspectives emphasizing the transformative impact of contingent processes of revolutionary mobilization (Huntington, 1968). Recent work has made important inroads into studying the local micro-processes behind revolutionary change and state-building in canonical cases (Koss, 2018; Lankina *et al.*, 2016; Lankina, 2022), yet the empirical micro-foundations of post-revolutionary change over the long-run still remain largely unstudied. This paper provides an account of revolutionary transformation in agrarian communist revolution rooted in mobilization into a revolutionary political party.

As far as I am aware, this is the only paper systematically tracing processes of state formation after war at the individual level, intergenerationally. This also contributes to a recent literature, building on classic work by Weber (1976), Scott (1998), and other scholars of state building, which conceptualizes state capacity as rooted in the density of state-society connections (Lee & Zhang, 2017; Zhang & Lee, 2020). I have shown that connections between an emerging party-state and previously "stateless" localities, emerged directly from revolutionary mobilization. The political party was key in integrating and channeling individual revolutionary transformations into further participation in the state and party, shifting social networks, human capital, and social norms. Intergenerationally, these changes were transmitted within families, which socialized their children according to the networks, norms, and skills built through revolutionary mobilization. Thus even in a part of the world famous for holding out against modern state control (Scott, 2010), state building has progressed not only through coercion and top-down investments, but also through the initiatives of locals seeking connections to the state.

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Online Appendices

The Pull of the Center

Contents

A Laos: History and Context

Lao National Assembly

The Lao National Assembly remains a "rubber stamp" parliament, which does not hold any real policy-making or oversight power. Still, candidates typically come from positions of leadership in various wings of the party-state, and the composition of the National Assembly thus provides a window, however imperfect, into the broader party-state. Through an opaque process, candidates to the National Assembly are nominated by different branches of the party-state to run in elections, where they are selected by universal suffrage at the provincial level. There are no official ethnic quotas.

Ethnicity, Geography, and Poverty

Table A.1: Three northern provinces, poverty and altitude data by major ethnic groups

Villages in which a majority of the population belongs to the given ethnic group are counted. Values for the three most populous groups are shown in each province. Poverty data from Population and Housing Census of Laos, 2015 (Statistics Bureau, 2015). Elevation data from the NASA Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM). The standard deviation of elevation at all points captured by SRTM within 500 meters of each village centroid gives a measure of local terrain roughness.

Province	Group	Majority villages	Mean Poverty	Mean Alt.	Mean SD Alt.
Phongsaly	Tai	65	18.78%	658.06m	31.04m
Phongsaly	Khmu	128	23.9%	693.31m	53.12m
Phongsaly	Tibeto-Burman	272	23.37%	969.28m	47.58m
Luang Namtha	Tai	76	10.36%	577.05m	15.84m
Luang Namtha	Khmu	90	26.17%	617.59m	31.62m
Luang Namtha	Tibeto-Burman	135	25.07%	768.55m	32.88m
Xieng Khouang	Tai	229	22.1%	987.25m	18.51m
Xieng Khouang	Khmu	59	52.86%	839.07m	45.64m
Xieng Khouang	Hmong	186	37.28%	1138.18m	36.81m

Data Collection on Party Leadership

The ethnicities of Politburo members are often well-known and easy to ascertain. Information on the 4th National Assembly was gathered from an official directory (National Assembly & United Nations, 2000). For the 9th and 7th National Assemblies, data was gathered from brief candidate biographies distributed during election time and accessed through Lao-language news websites and Facebook groups. Data on the 6th

National Assembly is derived from summaries in Stuart-Fox (2007). Data on the Central Committees was gathered from a mix of Lao-language print media, online media, social media, and Wikipedia pages. Confirmation through cross-referencing different sources was conducted whenever possible.

B Family Histories

B.1 Data collection

Village Selection

In selecting villages, a sampling frame was constructed around two villages that are locally well-known today to have been important sites for communist mobilization during the wartime period. For one of these core villages, two additional nearby villages were selected, which are both also Khmu villages that were situated in similar topographies and occupied similar ecological niches during the pre-war and wartime periods. Likewise, four nearby villages were selected for the other core village. The different number of "matched" villages for each core village is due to differing levels of village density and accessibility between the two areas. One additional village, which did not exist during the wartime period but was founded soon after was also selected because it is almost exclusively home to the descendants of individuals from villages in the sampling frame. Families from this village were then matched to each of the two sampling areas based on their histories.

Survey Procedures

Working at the village level in a low state-capacity and authoritarian context, it is imperative to have the trust and buy-in of local communities and officials. For this reason, as well as for reasons of data quality, family histories were collected by two local researchers who have extended family connections in the communities under study. In each village, researchers first introduced themselves to the village head and asked permission to con-

duct interviews for this project. This is a requirement for doing such work in Laos.[1] The village head then introduced researchers to all elderly inhabitants of the village for interviews. Subsequently, researchers also walked through the villages and randomly asked residents for interviews on local and family histories. All interviews were conducted in an informal, semi-structured way largely in the Khmu language. Each interviewee was asked about the livelihood, jobs, marriage patterns, and educational attainment of members of their extended family, going as far back in time as the respondent could remember.

B.2 Sample Characteristics

Table A.2: Sample characteristics across three generations

Proportions of sample who were women, worked for the state, worked for the military, and attained high positions for each generation.

Generation	N	Female	State Involvement	Military	High Positions
0	122	0.311	0.035	0.035	0
1	229	0.397	0.275	0.188	0.057
1 (both sides)			(0.373)	(0.297)	
2	584	0.491	0.223	0.144	0.038

B.3 Coding

Coding schemes were developed based on a qualitative understanding of the villages under study with a view towards first identifying the generational cohort that most intensively experienced revolutionary mobilization. Familial relationships to this cohort were used to define the post-war and pre-war generations. The most significant coding decision was to exclude individuals who worked at very local levels for the party-state from the treatment group, as well as not counting village-level work as government employment, for the reasons outlined in the text.[2] Other questions of judgment in coding are marginal, involving judgments on one or two families or several individuals (see below).

[1] In the villages under study, the village head is a local person who typically has a similar livelihood to others in the village (usually involving smallholder agriculture and small-scale trade), but village heads are selected by the party-state.

[2] Additionally, a very large proportion of the sample has worked at the village level for local administration or a mass organization.

Generation 0/Generation 1

Birth years are unknown across the sample for people in the pre-war generation (see Section B.4 below). To get around this issue, the pre-war "generation 0" includes all people who had a child born in the 1950s or earlier. Almost all such people were likely born in the 1930s or earlier, although some might have been born in the early 1940s. Thus there is possible overlap between generation 0 and generation 1, which is defined as 1940-1960 births. Triangulation was used based on the reported ages of their siblings, children, parents, and other relevant family members to place marginal cases in generation 0 vs. generation 1. Eight out of 94 people from generation 0 in the sample were mobilized during the Laotian Civil War. These cases are dropped from figure 1 in the paper to better approximate the pre-war situation, but their relations are coded to reflect these mobilization histories in all other analysis.

Coding Mobilized Families

An individual in generation 2 is said to belong to a mobilized family if they have a parent, sibling, grandparent, or aunt or uncle who was mobilized. This is meant to capture a threshold of familial proximity to the mobilized individual. In two marginal cases, where an individual's aunt or uncle through marriage was mobilized (rather than a direct sibling of their parent), a judgment on coding was made based on qualitative information on the strength of the family tie of the given wing of the family with the mobilized individual.

B.4 Missing Data

1. Identifying Mobilization: In some cases, interviewees were not sure about the exact time when a family member in generation 1 began party-state work. In such cases, there is uncertainty about whether such a person was mobilized during the war or after the war. Unless confirmed otherwise, individuals born between 1940 and 1960 were coded as being mobilized if they joined party-state work. 1960 is used as a cutoff due to the prevalence of child soldiers in the war, starting from the age of 13 or 14. 1940 is used at the other end to reflect the fact that mobilization, which was most intensive from 1967/1968 onwards in this area, typically involved young people in their early-mid twenties.

Uncertainty about mobilization status might result in some people being coded as being mobilized when they in fact started working after the official end of the war. The possibility of such misclassification was probed in follow-up interviews; I believe that if it exists at all, it is likely minimal. Families with significant missing data were dropped from the sample. All such cases followed the two following molds: (1) the interviewee was in their 30s and did know details about prior generations, (2) the interviewee was in their 80s and did not remember details about subsequent generations.

2. Identifying Birth Years: Birth information was not typically recorded in this area, and many people do not know their exact age. This information is important for sorting people into the three generations and for the birth cohort controls. This is not generally a problem since the cohorts span multiple decades. In cases of people who were born around the cutoff years, triangulation was used based on the reported ages of their siblings, children, parents, and other relevant family members.

3. Missing Family Members: In some cases, there is missing data on entire wings of families. For instance, a nuclear family might only have connection with the father's side and have lost contact with the mother's side. This would only be an issue for (1) models where general "family mobilization" is used as the treatment variable and (2) in models where aunt/uncle relations are used, and where no reported aunts and uncles were mobilized, but there is missing information on some of them (there is no missing data in the sample on parents of people in gen 2).

Family results can be viewed as conditional on an active relationship. The mechanisms of transmission depend on there being an active relationship between the people involved, thus a relative with whom there is no active relationship can justifiably be left out of coding. In cases where there is in fact an active relationship between relatives, but the interviewee lacks the relevant information, there should be no reason for systematic bias. Individuals with significant missingness in relational data were dropped from the sample.

4. Gender Imbalance: The gender imbalance in the sample is due to the fact that respondents were much more likely not to know about their female relatives, especially those from older generations who might have passed away years ago. Given the gender

dynamics in these communities and the patterns of mobilization, essentially all of these missing people are likely to have been subsistence farmers or local traders.

C Backward Sampling and Bias

Backward sampling might induce biased estimates in three main ways (cf. Wantchekon *et al.*, 2015). First, estimates might be biased if there is significant migration and the outcomes for migrated individuals are not captured in the dataset. Second, bias might also result from treated and untreated people having children at different rates. For instance, if mobilized individuals have more children than unmobilized individuals and potential outcomes depend on whether a person is a first, second, or third child (and so on), then there will be selection bias. Finally, results might be biased if unmobilized people have died or been displaced at higher rates, and such people are excluded from the sample.

It is evident in the data that many people who have moved away from the area retain family connections locally, thus they are still captured in the sample. It is impossible to know for sure whether some populations are systematically missing from the sample due to migration, but qualitative interviews do not suggest any such movements. Distant migrations were difficult until relatively recent times due to a lack of road and transportation infrastructure. During the 1970s-1990s, those who migrated typically did so for work or study and thus mostly came from prominent, mobilized family backgrounds. If such people tend to be missing from the sample, then key estimates should actually be biased downward. Immediate postwar migrations to Thailand and farther to France and the US by those on the RLG side also happened in these communities but appear to have been rare given the distance to the Lao-Thai border.

Family sizes between treated and untreated families in the post-war generation are similar in the sample (5.573 vs. 5.389, see table 5), suggesting no differences in child-bearing rates. Finally, family sizes in the wartime generation in both groups are also very similar (see table 2), suggesting no survivorship related data censoring.

D Local Histories and Revolutionary Mobilization

D.1 Pre-War Society

The collected family histories back up the dominant view of pre-war remoteness, though they also point to military recruitment and trade and monastic connections between the Khmu and lowland communities. Monastic connections only extended to one of the two sampled areas, where trade connections to Luang Prabang (the royal capital) also seemed to have been somewhat denser. However, this did not appear to influence mobilization rates across these two areas (table 2). Anecdotally, based on interviews with local elders, it was rare for local people to be able to speak the Lao language in the area under study prior to the wartime generation. Highlighting this, in one case, one interview from generation 1 knew only one fact about her grandmother: that she was famous in the village for knowing how to say one simple phrase in the Lao language. Though many details on individuals born in the 1930s or earlier are forgotten and unverifiable, the collected family histories are the most fine-grained data available on livelihoods in the area of study in this time period.

Out of 94 individuals on whom data is available, two had sub-district (*tambon* or *taseng*) level leadership positions, three were French soldiers—including one who went to Hanoi for training. One person was an influential trader with the royal capital Luang Prabang, another was an opium trader, while another had spent about 20 years in Thailand and Burma working as a laborer before returning and becoming an early and influential supporter of the communists. Another person is reported to have owned many plots of land and led French labor gangs. Communist mobilization in this area started among people in this generation born in the 1920s and 1930s, but the vast majority of sampled people still lived traditional livelihoods of small-scale farming and gathering forest products by all accounts, as is further backed up by the small number of notable cases in the sample (exhaustively described above).

The balance table in the main text (table 2) shows that there was no notable selection

on these past histories in the process of mobilization. These past histories might still have influenced revolutionary mobilization in more nuanced ways. For instance, early revolutionary leaders in one of the areas were ex-monks. Meanwhile, the first district head under the revolutionary government, a man from the second sampled area, soon had to be replaced because he was illiterate and unable to effectively administer the area. In sum, literacy and other forms of human capital were at a premium in this area. There were exceedingly few local people with administrative skills in the pre-revolutionary period. These people were likely targeted for mobilization by the communists, but this was complicated by the fact that any such people would also have had relatively stronger prior connections, whether through the priesthood or trade, to the royalist center in Luang Prabang.

D.2 Determinants of Mobilization

Table A.3: Determinants of mobilization

	(1)	(2)	(3)
DV	Mobilization	Mobilization	Mobilization
Model	Logit	Logit	Logit
male	2.731***	2.783***	2.657***
	(0.803)	(0.988)	(0.917)
monk	0.063	0.306	0.257
	(0.341)	(0.496)	(0.499)
other family mobilized	1.003	1.18*	1.097*
	(0.645)	(0.661)	(0.666)
prior generation notable		0.044	
		(0.447)	
siblings			−0.219***
			(0.082)
village dummies	✓	✓	✓
N	214	163	163
standard errors clustered by village			
*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 05$; ***$p < 0.01$			

Regression analysis suggests that the only statistically significant determinants of mobilization were gender, village, and number of siblings. The result on number of siblings is consistent with a story where some children are able to avoid drafts because their siblings

have already been conscripted. This was also qualitatively described to us by several interviewees. The logic here is one of a "flat tax" on family contributions: all families contribute equally.

D.3 Narrative Account of Revolutionary Mobilization

Most revolutionary mobilization in this area happened through conscription. Here, I provide a longer-run picture of mobilization for additional context. It is useful to think of communist mobilization in Laos in terms of two-stages. In the first stage, support was built in local areas by communist cadres attempting to persuade local leaders, families, and individuals. In the second stage, once a sufficient level of strength had been built, locals could simply be drafted into the military and other wings of the communist war effort (Zasloff, 1973, p. 78-81).

The promise of education seems to have been a prominent inducement, with cadres sometimes holding classes for youths in villages and forest encampments, drawing young people away from their families, sometimes against their parents' wishes. Such stories were directly relayed in several interviews, corroborating the accounts in Zasloff (1973) gathered from PL defectors during the war. The Khmu language has no written script, and some mythological accounts, relayed to me by village elders, hold that the Khmu used to have a written language, but this was stoled by the lowland Lao. Other motivations for mobilization involved anti-colonial and anti-feudal messaging, for instance over taxation and labor demands. This is broadly in line with Maoist strategies of revolutionary mobilization, which combine inducements, ideology, and force, as for example detailed in parts of North Vietnam in the work of Christopher Goscha (2022).

Why did some communities become communist strongholds while other, sometimes nearby areas, did not? Given the lack of prior political identities and preferences, and the disconnected, low-information environment faced by leaders, it is difficult to find any general or systematic reasons that apply across the country, other than (1) basic conditions of geographic accessibility and (2) manpower needs due to nearby fighting. In more hierarchical communities, such as among the Hmong in some areas, the royal-

ist/communist split mapped onto local elite power struggles. When asked in interviews, no one, including one person who attained a high position in the government, offered any ideological or otherwise systematic reason for why the area under study was so heavily mobilized. Rather, the typical answer was that the most important reason for this was the fact that this happened to be an area which saw heavy nearby fighting.

One idiosyncratic factor that has not been mentioned in existing literature is variation in the effectiveness of early PL and Viet Minh mobilizers. In the case of one interviewed Khmu family, an ancestor who was a *taseng* (sub-district) headman was mobilized in the 1950s by a Viet Minh cadre from a Mon-Khmer ethnic minority background in South Vietnam. This Vietnamese cadre was fluent in the Khmu language and could likely work effectively in Khmu communities because of cultural affinities. The personal relationship between this man and the interviewed family was central to their mobilization.

In later stages, in areas where drafts were instituted, the primary determinant of individual mobilization was simply being a young man. All mobilized interviewees reported some degree of coercion in this process, and none looked back at it as purely voluntary. Many people who were drafted were children. While some individuals and families fled to more remote areas or across lines of control, given the risks of such travel during wartime, many stayed in their villages. Sometimes, individuals avoided conscription when families that already had members in service convinced authorities to keep some remaining children at home, or when they were already involved in the Buddhist *sangha* and not living in the village.

Striking examples of the contingent nature of mobilization come from stories of people who were involved on both sides of the war. In one case, a local man joined the Royal Lao Armed Forces (FAR) and received military training from Americans in Phitsanulok, Thailand before crossing over to the communist side and joining one of his brothers to become a PL soldier. Another story shows an opposite route: a man started out working with the communists, was captured by the FAR, and eventually became a FAR officer trained in Thailand. Nine out of 64 total extended families had siblings mobilized on opposite sides of the war.

E Individual Level Analysis

E.1 Sensitivity Analysis

The idea behind the sensitivity analysis is to (1) identify how strong an unobserved confounder would have to be to reverse the key results, and (2) compare this to the strength of observed variables. The was done by computing the "robustness value" and relevant partial R^2 values using the "sensemakr" R package (Cinelli *et al.*, 2024). Regressions were estimated as linear probability models, using OLS, in order to apply the sensitivity analysis.

An oddity in this context is that the unit that receives treatment is different than the unit for which key outcomes are measured (ancestor vs. descendant). Thus any unmeasured ability that might bias results, for instance intelligence or ambition, would itself need to be transmitted intergenerationally. For this reason, partial R^2 values from the key regression (table 3) as well as from the mobilization regressions presented in table A.3 above, are relevant points of comparison.[3] Unobserved confounders would have to explain 10.3% of the residual variance of both the treatment and outcome to make the observed effect lose statistical significance at the 95% level. This is higher than the observed partial R^2 (6%) of having male gender on having a party-state job in generation 2. Meanwhile, it is more than half as much as the observed partial R^2 (16%) of having male gender on being mobilized in generation 1.

Table A.6: Cinelli-Hazlett sensitivity analysis

Outcome: *Govt. job*

Treatment:	Est.	S.E.	t-value	$R^2_{Y\sim D\|\mathbf{X}}$	$RV_{q=1}$	$RV_{q=1,\alpha=0.05}$
Family mobilized	0.165	0.036	4.545	3.6%	17.4%	10.3%
df = 560				*Bound (1x Gender=M)*: $R^2_{Y\sim Z\|\mathbf{X},D}$ = 6%, $R^2_{D\sim Z\|\mathbf{X}}$ = 16%		

[3]Table A.6 is adjusted accordingly.

E.2 Robustness Check: Instrumental Variables

I conduct an instrumental variables analysis of party-state jobs in generation 2, using the exogeneity of the timing of nearby conflict and the fact that local conscription responded to nearby conflict. Families were thus more or less exposed to revolutionary mobilization simply because of the ages and genders of their children.

I construct an instrumental for mobilization that takes the value of 1 for individuals who are males and born between the years of 1942 and 1954. Nearby fighting was most intensive in 1967-1968, thus this instrument captures all males who were between the ages of 13 and 25 during this period.[4] While there was no strict age cut-off for conscription, given contextual knowledge, I expect this demographic to be systematically more exposed to mobilization based only on the timing of nearby fighting. Some of the villages in the sample were actively contested at this time. I exclude these villages, since local individuals in the key demographic were also exposed to the FAR. Given severe manpower constraints and the total lack of transport infrastructure, young men from nearby villages under communist control were pushed to fight or otherwise support combat operations.

I adapt a 2SLS approach to the inter-generational analysis here. I first estimate the first-stage regression using the generation 1 sample. Then I take the maximum of predicted mobilization values across individuals within each family to derive a measure of exogenous family-level exposure to revolutionary mobilization. Next, I map this predicted family-level value to individuals in generation 2 and use it as the key predictor in the second-stage regression, which maps family mobilization histories to party-state jobs in generation 2. For statistical inference, I use a bootstrap that resamples families in generation 1 and repeatedly runs the above procedure.

Exclusion Restriction: There is no reason to believe that having a male born between 1941 and 1954 in the family should impact party-state connections for the subsequent generation of that family through any mechanism other than revolutionary mobilization.

Instrumental Relevance: The first stage regression is a bivariate regression of the

[4]There were no explicit criteria for conscription and these cut-offs are based only on a qualitative understanding of local conscription during this period.

instrument on mobilization. It provides evidence that the instrument is highly correlated with the potentially endogenous treatment.

Table A.4: IV, First stage

DV	Mobilization
Model	OLS
IV (male born in 1941-1954)	0.412***
	(0.086)
N	123
F-stat	23.2
Adj. R^2	0.154
$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$	

Results: IV results provide further evidence that revolutionary mobilization itself created family-level connections to the party-state in the subsequent generation.[5]

Table A.5: IV, Second stage

DV	Govt. job
Model	OLS
Family mobilization (IV fitted)	0.479***
99% CI	$[0.126, 0.998]$
individual controls	✓
N	244
Boostrap confidence interval	
$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$	

E.3 Cultural Norms: Heterogeneous Effects

Marginal effects plots in figure 2 are based off of regressions in table A.5. In column 2, the sample only includes generation 2 children who have only an uncle/aunt mobilized along with those with no mobilized family.

[5] I omit village and area controls due to the restricted sample in this case, which already omits most of area 2.

Table A.7: Heterogeneous effects, siblings

	(1)	(2)
DV	Govt. work	Govt. work
Model	Logit	Logit
family mobilized	2.959***	
	(0.880)	
aunt/uncle only		2.473***
		(0.721)
siblings	0.304**	0.272**
	(0.14)	(0.134)
siblings × mobilized	−0.304**	−0.302***
	(0.131)	(0.102)
individual controls	✓	✓
area 1 control	✓	✓
N	568	383
standard errors clustered by village		
$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$		

F Village-level Analysis

F.1 School Data

Details on how the school data was collected are not available, but the data appears to code all schools that existed in 2014 in Laos. An important contextual point in interpreting results is the significant history of village relocation in Laos. Since some villages within five kilometers of a wartime school today might have been relocated to this area after the war, results are consistent with a story where benefits emanate from revolutionary centers, but extend to relocated villages that might not have themselves been heavily mobilized. This does not undermine my argument insofar as heavily mobilized areas remain the central nodes of subsequent development.

Additionally, a potential missing data issue here is that data on wartime school-building in villages that subsequently relocated might not be included in the dataset (it is impossible to say for sure). Existing work suggests that heavily mobilized villages tended to benefit from favorable relocation to areas with more public goods (Goudineau, 1997). To the extent that this is true, such villages, even after relocation, should tend to

be near areas that saw wartime school-building.

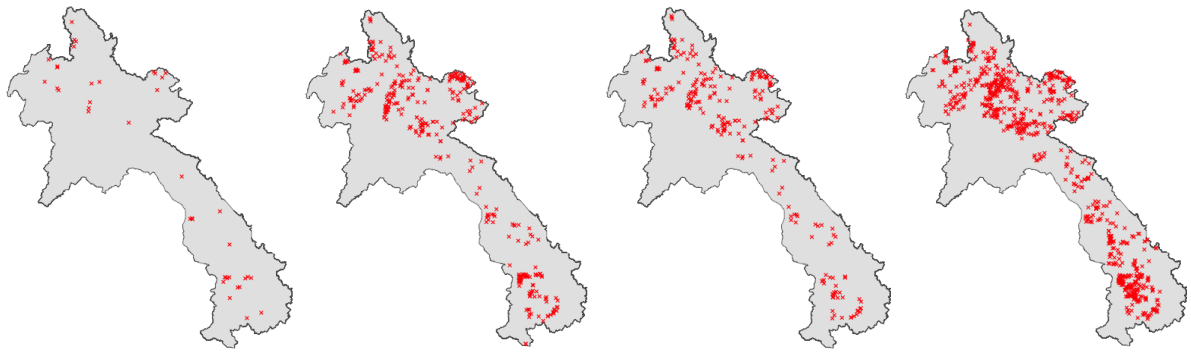
F.2 Coding Communist Schools

In order to code schools built by communists in upland areas, I matched school data to the evolving zones of control from 1962 to 1973. This was done using declassified documents from the online archives of the CIA. The following documents were consulted to roughly reconstruct areas of control:

- Mission Coverage Indexes: Mission 3206, 27 December 1962; Mission 3226, 17 May 1963; Mission 3241, 16 November 1963; Mission S074E, 1 March 1964; Mission 3767, 20 May 1964; Mission 5143, 23 March 1966
- Memo on Preliminary Evaluation of Mission 0074E, 6 March 1964
- Memo on Laos Transportation and Control, 26 June, 1964 (PAG/M-800-64)
- Photographic Interpretation Reports, IPIR: Mission 3224, 14 May 1963; Mission 3225, 15 May 1963; Mission 6071, 30 December 1963; Mission S074E, 1 March 1964; Mission 0014E, 8 January 1964; Mission 0064E, 29 February 1964; Mission C595C, 23 November 1965
- Developments in Indochina, Directorate of Intelligence: 26 November 1971; 12 January 1973; 12 February 1973
- The President's Daily Briefs: 12 March 1968; 9 April 1969; 15 April 1969; 21 February 1970; 9 May 1970; 10 June 1970; 4 February 1971; 17 May 1971; 20 May 1971; 29 November 1972
- Central Intelligence Bulletins: 10 February 1966; 27 December, 1967; 15 January 1968; 19 November 1968;17 December 1968; 6 January 1970; 31 January 1970; 27 October 1972
- Weekly Summaries, Directorate of Intelligence: 28 April 1967; 22 December 1967
- Special National Intelligence Estimate, Communist Capabilities and Intentions in Laos Over the Next Year, 31 October 1968
- Laos, Territorial Control as of 6 June 1972
- Military Areas: Ban Pha Home, Laos, 13 July 1964; Ban Na Nhom, Laos, 23 November 1964; Ban Na Hi, Laos, 7 January 1965
- Military Camps, Ban Kok Tong Area, Laos, 23 February 1965; Ban Thay Area, Laos, 2 March 1965
- Military Complex, Khang Khai, Laos, 2 December 1965
- Churchdoor Mission C055C, 22 February 1965

- Intelligence Report, Geographic Brief on Laos, February 1967
- Khang Khai Military Complex, Laos, 13 July 1964
- Memo on Indochina Control Maps, June 27, 1972
- Memo: The Situation in Phong Saly Province, 19 September 1961
- Intelligence Memorandums: Recent Communist Logistical Developments in Southern Laos, June 1971; The Current Status of Military Forces in Laos, April 1973
- Military Activity Route 65, Laos, 19 May 1965
- Staging Areas: Ban Nakay Neua, Laos, 11 May 1965; Muong Dai, Laos, 17 May 1965
- Day/Night Comparative Photography Muong Phalane, Laos, 22 December 1964
- Military Activity and Transportation Routes, Laos Panhandle, July 1965
- Route 12 Mu Gia Pass Area, Laos, 4 November 1965
- Situation Summaries: Developments in Laos and North Vietnam, 9 May 1962; Developments Along Sino-Laotian Border, 18 November 1963
- 92nd Congress, 1st Session, Staff Report, Laos: April 1971, August 3, 1971

F.3 Historical School Construction



(a) Schools -1952 **(b)** Schools 1953-1975 **(c)** Schools 1962-1975 **(d)** Schools 1976-1990

Figure A.1: Historical school building

Figure A.1 shows (a) upland school construction in the pre-war period (to 1952) in areas that would later come under communist control before 1973, (b) school construction in these areas from 1953 to 1973, (c) communist school construction between 1962 and 1973, and (d) upland school construction immediately after the war, between 1975-1990. I use

1962 as the cutoff for my measure because this is around the time that communist school-building began in earnest (panels b and c in figure A.1 are almost identical). Additionally, there is more information on identifying communist and royalist controlled areas after the Geneva Agreement of 1962.

F.4 Historical Settlement Patterns

Historical settlement patterns were coded using digitized maps available from the University of Texas libraries at https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/laos.html. All available maps from Series L7015 (1965) and Series L509 (1954) were used.[6] Only named settlements from the map were coded. This was done to avoid coding small, temporary or transient settlements that likely shift with upland swiddens. Ethnic minority settlements were identified based on village names. Known minority villages were also coded as such regardless of their name. [7]

F.5 Village Analysis, Covariate Balance

Table A.8: Wartime schools balance

	$\leq$ 5km wartime school, N=1166		$>$ 5km wartime school, N=3770		
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Diff.
District capital	0.22	0.415	0.037	0.188	0.184
Altitude (m)	605.641	374.022	618.455	368.103	−12.814
Sd. altitude (m)	22.976	19.289	27.818	21.38	−4.841
River	0.34	0.474	0.251	0.434	0.088
Rainfall (m)	14.15	4.689	14.976	4.44	0.825
N. historical vills.	7.574	7.017	4.88	4.644	2.694
N. minority vills.	0.94	1.608	1.206	2.121	−0.266

[6]Series L7015 maps were used whenever available, since these maps provide a greater level of detail. Series L509 maps were used for areas where Series L7015 maps were not available and as a pre-war check for areas where more detailed maps where only available for 1970 or later. Based on these comparisons, it is clear that maps made during the war include location and name data on settlements that were destroyed or abandoned as a result of fighting.

[7]This was an imperfect process, since many minority villages have Lao language names, and distinguishing Lao from minority language names requires some guesswork in the absence of established conventions. Names with consonants or sound clusters that do not appear in Lao language, names that include known minority language words, or names that refer to ethnic minority groups were coded as minority villages.

Table A.9: NA birthplaces balance

	≤ 5km NA birthplace, N=349		> 5km NA birthplace, N=4587		
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Diff.
District capital	0.255	0.436	0.067	0.25	0.188
Altitude (m)	604.232	390.089	616.276	367.93	−12.044
Sd. altitude (m)	18.419	17.917	27.3	21.089	−8.881
River	0.401	0.491	0.262	0.44	0.139
Rainfall (m)	14.111	4.272	14.832	4.527	−0.72
N. historical vills.	8.183	7.542	5.313	5.172	2.871
N. minority vills.	1.026	1.812	1.152	2.029	−0.126

F.6 Robustness Check

An alternative explanation of the aggregate results is that they are consistent with a story of development leading to more development (cf. Huillery, 2009). The political mechanisms emanating from wartime mobilization that are central to my story thus might not be necessary for these results.

The revolutionary birthplaces variable addresses this to some extent, since it captures areas that had prominent revolutionaries without having investments in schools. I also perform a robustness check, where I instead use villages that saw no wartime school construction but saw school building immediately after the war in 1976-1990 as a placebo

Table A.10: Robustness check, post-war schools

	(1)	(2)	(3)
DV	Poverty	Poverty	9th NA
Model	OLS	OLS	Logit
school 1975-1990	−1.357*	−3.339***	0.267
(no wartime school)	(0.723)	(0.843)	(0.374)
wartime school		−4.923***	1.212***
		(0.843)	(0.332)
4th NA birthplace		−1.717**	0.336
		(0.821)	(0.699)
district dummies	✓	✓	✓
geographical controls & bombs	✓	✓	✓
historical controls	✓	✓	✓
adj. R^2	0.567	0.574	
N	4919	4919	4919
standard errors clustered by district			
$*p < 0.1$; $**p < 05$; $***p < 0.01$			

treatment variable. If effects are solely driven by infrastructural investments, then we should see no difference in development outcomes between villages with wartime schools and those with no wartime schools but schools built soon after the war. Results suggest that, using the same control strategy as above, wartime school construction brings a development premium. As might be expected, post-war school building also significantly reduces poverty in 2015, though, unlike the treatment variables, it does not predict contemporary National Assembly representation. This again controls for historical settlement density, proximity to district and provincial capitals, pre-war schools, and pre-war temples, along with geographical and bombing histories as well as a district-specific effect.

G Research Ethics

This research was approved by IRB at the author's institution. All respondents provided consent before interviews. No compensation was provided. A major motivation for the data collection effort is to preserve the histories of these communities, which are currently unrecorded and at risk of being permanently lost as individuals from the revolutionary and pre-revolutionary times have largely died. Preserving and learning from these neglected histories is important for social science. There is also significant local interest in these communities for preserving these histories.

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