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## **Fleeing the Peace? Determinants of Outward Migration after Civil War**

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# Fleeing the Peace? Determinants of Outward Migration after Civil War

## Abstract

In countries where civil war has formally ended, not all refugees return. Nor does emigration come to a halt. Why? We argue that three specific features of post-war situations explain the varying levels of outward migration: the quality of peace, the quality of political institutions, and the quality of economic livelihoods. We test our hypotheses using a mixed-method research design that combines a series of statistical models with evidence from two case studies, Nepal and El Salvador. Our findings suggest that, cross-nationally, post-war violence and repression as well as exclusion from economic opportunities are the major drivers of outward migration after civil war. Complementary evidence from the two case studies shows that the effects of violence and of the lack of decent economic livelihoods on post-war emigration are enhanced by insufficient or dysfunctional political reforms.

Keywords: migration, post-war societies, peace, Nepal, El Salvador

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# Fleeing the Peace? Determinants of Outward Migration after Civil War

Felix Haaß, Sabine Kurtenbach and Julia Strasheim

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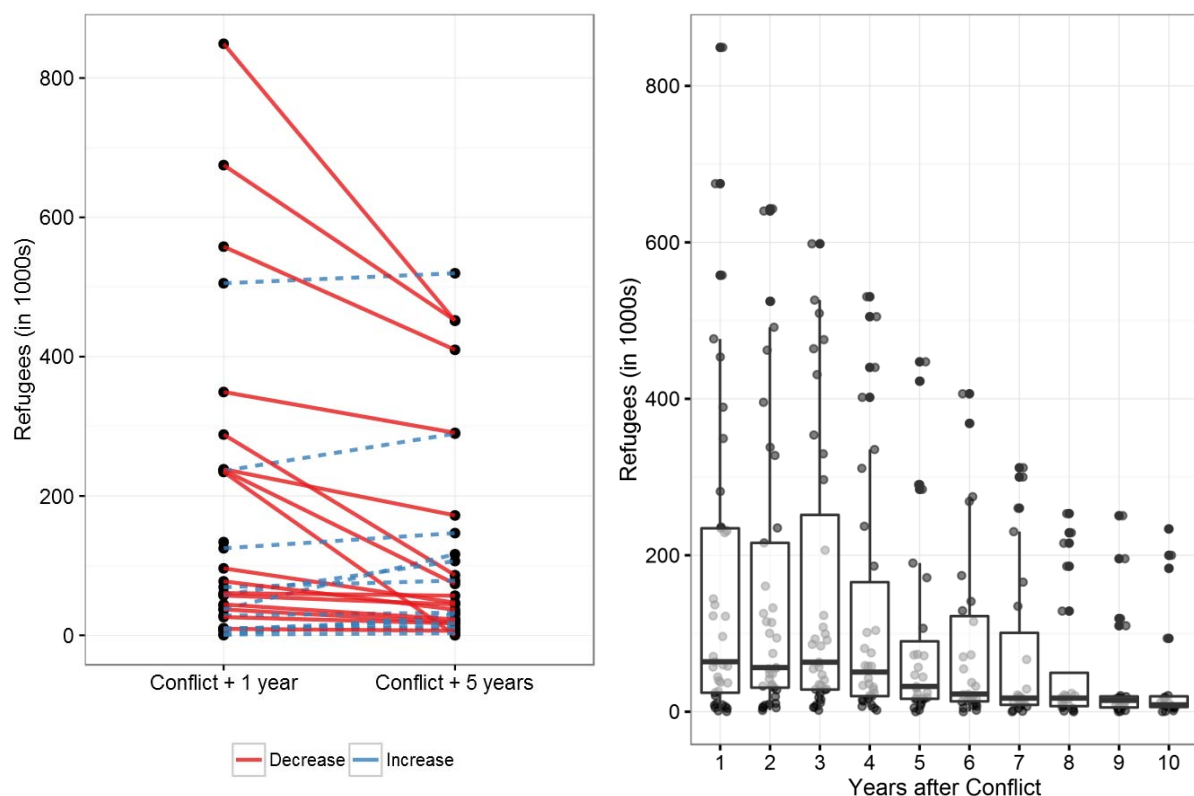
Appendix

## 1 Introduction

In 2015, the rising number of refugees arriving in the European Union (EU) was primarily driven by the internal dynamics of the Syrian war, which led thousands of people to try to escape the widespread violence in their country. But even in societies where civil war has formally ended, not all refugees return. Outward migration does not come to a complete halt either. Afghanistan is a case in point: since the 2001 removal of its Taliban regime and the in-

ternationally sponsored presidential election in 2004, Afghanistan has repeatedly been labelled a “post-conflict society,” both in research and in politics (e.g. van Gennip 2004; Prohl 2004; Winthrop 2003; Singh, Rai, and Alagarajan 2013). With regard to the ongoing flow of Afghan refugees, despite international reconstruction efforts – Afghans represented 21 per cent of all asylum seekers in the EU in 2015 (UNHCR 2016) – the German federal minister of the interior, Thomas de Maizière, recently expressed his profound lack of understanding that citizens were still leaving, even after large amounts of money had been invested in the country: “[The] young generation and the middle class families ought to stay in their country and help build it” (Bundesregierung 2015). Afghanistan is not an exceptional case: following the conclusion of civil wars, there is large variation with regard to whether levels of emigration drop or rise. As Figure 1 shows, many post-war societies see individuals leave despite the ending of organised warfare.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1. Variation in Post-War Refugee Flows**



*Note:* In the left panel, the points represent the number of refugees in the first and fifth post-war year, respectively. The red lines indicate a decreasing number of refugees, and the blue lines indicate an increasing number. The right panel visualises the distribution of refugee counts for all countries in each year after a conflict. The data points in the right panel are observed counts of refugees in a country-year; the values have been slightly jittered for visual clarity. Data are taken from the post-war-refugee data set we describe below.

1 Note that these figures likely underestimate the true extent of outward migration after civil war, since they include refugee data only. See below for a discussion of the benefits and shortcomings of UNHCR refugee data and other data sources.

This study analyses the underlying determinants of this variation and is driven by the following research question: What factors explain why levels of emigration increase in some post-war societies following the formal termination of civil war, but not in others?<sup>2</sup> Based on previous research on post-war societies and migrations, we focus on three interrelated factors that motivate people to leave their homes. Firstly, we hold that a low quality of post-war peace – physical insecurity and violence below the level of civil war recurrence – influences levels of emigration. This is an aspect that has thus far been insufficiently addressed, particularly in the quantitative literature on post-war political dynamics. Secondly, we argue that a low quality of post-war institutions – for instance, through institutional reforms that remain unlinked to prevailing societal divisions – affects levels of outward migration. This is equally an aspect that has not been the focus of the post-war institutional reform literature. And thirdly, we expect that a low quality of post-war economic livelihoods – where societies lack economic prospects for sustainable development and opportunities for social mobility – positively affects levels of emigration. While the socio-economic drivers of migration have been widely studied in the relevant literature, we show that a focus on the specific situation of youth or ex-combatants in post-war societies can provide new insights into the motives for and consequences of migration.

This paper proceeds as follows. In Section 2, we briefly discuss the existing research on civil war and emigration, present an argument for why it is theoretically and empirically rewarding to study push factors for emigration through the specific lens of the structural features of post-war societies, and consequently formulate three concrete hypotheses to be tested using a mixed-method research design. This section also discusses the concept of migration from war-torn countries in more detail, and why it is fruitful to study voluntary economic migration and forced displacement under one umbrella term. Section 3 presents a quantitative analysis of the relationship between the quality of post-war peace, institutions, and economic livelihoods, as well as levels of outward migration, after civil war. In Section 4, we address the limitations of the statistical analysis with two qualitative case studies of countries that experienced a rise in outward migration despite the successful termination of their respective civil wars, Nepal and El Salvador. In sum we find that, cross-nationally, post-war violence and repression as well as exclusion from economic opportunities are major drivers of outward migration after civil war. Complementary evidence from the two case studies shows that the effects of violence and of the lack of decent economic livelihoods on post-war emigration are amplified by insufficient or dysfunctional political reforms. Section 5 concludes by formulating policy recommendations as well as avenues for future research.

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2 We employ a broad understanding of emigration that includes but is not restricted to refugees, yet also encompasses emigrants who do not fall under the UNHCR definition of refugees (see footnote 3). For our quantitative analysis, however, we only have annual and continuous data on refugees from the UNHCR, which is why our statistical analyses as well as our plots employ UNHCR data on refugees only. In our case studies we look at emigration more broadly.

## 2 Civil War, Post-War Societies, and Emigration

Empirically, the phenomenon of outward migration is not new, but the number of people living outside their country of birth has recently reached a record high. In June 2016, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) reported that for the first time since World War II, over 65 million people worldwide had been forcibly displaced, a figure which accounts for roughly one-quarter of the total number of migrants residing outside their home country globally. These numbers (and thus also those we report in our cross-national comparisons below) are conservative estimates, because the true number of refugees is masked by the UNHCR's definition of a "refugee," which only pertains to those officially seeking political asylum abroad.<sup>3</sup> Individuals who leave their homes without officially declaring themselves political refugees are not included in these statistics (on "noise" in refugee statistics, cf. also Davenport, Moore, and Poe 2003).<sup>4</sup> This aspect also means that, conceptually, the boundaries between voluntary economic migration and forced displacement are often blurred – especially in post-war societies – and the distinction becomes a political rather than an analytical category (Cornelius and Rosenblum 2005). This is not least because post-war states exhibit many push factors that contribute to both high levels of economic migration and personal motivations to flee, such as weak economies, political instability, corrupt elites, or prevalent human rights abuses: "This leads to the notion of the 'asylum-migration-nexus': many migrants and asylum seekers have multiple reasons for mobility and it is impossible to completely separate economic and human rights motivations – which is a challenge to the neat categories that bureaucracies seek to impose" (Castles 2003: 17). The public debate on "economic refugees" from the post-war states of the former Yugoslavia is a case in point. As a result, and in line with Bakewell's (2010) suggestion of using theoretical approaches that encompass "forced and voluntary migration in a more comprehensive way," we discuss forced and voluntary migration under the umbrella term *emigration*.

A number of existing studies have investigated the links between violence, civil war, and emigration, but few have analysed post-war societies as very specific situations that make people want to leave. The existing literature can instead be categorised into two subfields. A first debate is interested in civil wars and organised political violence as a *determinant* of migration. For example, Davenport, Moore, and Poe (2003) study the relationship between violent threats to personal integrity and refugee levels, and find strong support for their argu-

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3 In accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention, the UNHCR defines a "refugee" as a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR 2010, para. 1,2).

4 For instance, following the escalation of anti-constitution protests in Nepal in August 2015 and the first deployment of the Nepal Army since the end of the country's civil war in 2006, 4,000 members of the Tharu ethnic minority were reported to have fled over the open border to India. They have not yet been registered by any official agency as seeking political asylum (International Crisis Group 2016).

ment that states with high levels of personal integrity threats also come with significantly higher levels of “migrant production.” The authors also formulate different expectations for how democratic institutions impact levels of forced migration: do people stop emigrating once states democratise, or do they emigrate in greater numbers when authoritarian restrictions on emigration are gone? They find that shifts toward democracy are associated with higher numbers of refugees (cf. our discussion below). Similarly, Moore and Shellman (2004) study the link between violence and migration and find compelling evidence that state threats (such as genocide), dissident threats (such as guerrilla attacks), and the combination of both in civil wars are the primary determinants of migration flows.

Others have turned the argument around and study civil war as a *consequence* of migration, highlighting difficulties in establishing linear cause-and-effect relationships between violence and migration that we also attend to in our case studies below. Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006) analyse the link between refugees and civil war and find that the presence of refugees from neighbouring countries increases the risk of violence in the host country, because refugee flows may facilitate the transnational spread of arms, alter the ethnic composition of states, or exacerbate economic pressure. Ansorg (2014) similarly analyses the role of militarised refugees in the diffusion of violence across borders. Reuveny (2007) studies the link between climate-change-induced migration and armed conflict more explicitly and finds strong support for the argument that migration caused by environmental issues, such as rising sea levels, increases the risk of violence. Ware (2005) investigates how emigration acts as a safety valve between demographic pressure and intercommunal violence in Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia and finds that limited opportunities for migration strongly increase the occurrence of intercommunal tensions. Urdal (2006) provides a similar argument regarding the link between youth and migration.

In contrast to these studies’ focus on war-time violence, the institutional and social features of societies in which war has formally ended have received only scant scholarly attention. There exists a large debate on “returnees” in post-war societies in the migration (e.g. Black and Gent 2006), international law (e.g. Williams 2004), political science (e.g. Chimni 2002), or area studies literature (Kibreab 2002). But post-war societies have thus far hardly been studied in terms of their structural determinants of continued emigration. While motivations to emigrate are always based on a mix of different structural and individual factors, we argue below that three interlinked factors can help us understand why some post-war states experience a large degree of emigration while others do not: the quality of *post-war peace*, *institutions*, and *economic livelihoods*. None of these “qualities” are unique to post-war societies, but we show how studying their links to emigration can advance the existing literature on political and social dynamics in post-war societies, and how taking into account the specifics of post-war situations can advance the research on the drivers of migration in general.



## 2.1 Three “Qualities” of Post-War Societies as Drivers of Emigration

Our first explanation for varying levels of emigration from post-war societies is that the *quality of post-war peace* differs between countries. Such quality of peace refers to the continued persistence of violence, as well as personal or community insecurity below the threshold of civil war recurrence. This link between violence and emigration is not specific to post-war situations: we have cited studies above that have argued that when people experience violence – either in the form of direct, physical attacks against themselves or of *potential* violence (e.g. the looming threat of state-sponsored disappearances) – they are more likely to leave the country to seek physical protection (Davenport, Moore, and Poe 2003). Most studies exploring the link between violence and emigration focus on violence in civil wars or large-scale state repression. Post-war societies, however, often continue to display “high levels of instability, fragility and inequality” (Licklider 2001: 697 f) below the threshold of civil war recurrence, as well as various other forms of organised political violence that are often only indirectly linked to the causes of the previous civil war itself.

These different types of post-war violence mirror the different types of violence perpetrated during civil war: direct confrontations between the warring parties are often accompanied by instances of state- or rebel-sponsored one-sided violence against civilians (Eck and Hultman 2007), sexual violence (E. J. Wood 2006), and non-state conflict between rebels (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012) as well as torture, disappearances, private conflicts, crime, or revenge. These manifestations of violence are not necessarily related to the war’s “master cleavage” (Kalyvas 2006) regarding the control of a government or territory, but can be inter-linked without any clear-cut division. In South Sudan, for example, underpaid state-sponsored militias reportedly raped women and stole cattle or other property as “payment.” As a consequence, acts of violence can persist even after a civil war is formally terminated with the signing of a peace accord, an international intervention, or a military victory by one of the warring parties. Thus, while there may not be a full relapse into war and a remobilisation of statutory and non-statutory armed forces, many post-war societies enter a grey zone of neither peace nor war, where violence remains a daily experience for the majority of the population (Berdal and Suhrke 2012; Mac Ginty 2008; Richards 2005; Richmond and Mitchell 2011). For instance, although the parties may not remobilise for combat, some may use criminal activities to destabilise a newly elected post-war government (Westendorf 2015). If these different forms of violence continue after civil war, people will try to achieve physical security by emigrating and seeking such security abroad. Consequently, we argue that

**H1:** *Higher levels of post-war violence below the threshold of civil war recurrence are associated with higher levels of emigration from post-war societies.*

A second factor driving continued emigration after war is the low *quality of post-war institutions*. This refers to institutional designs that remain insufficiently linked to prevailing societal divisions – for instance, because they are dominated by former elites, based on a system of

impunity, or are the result of international actors exporting “best practice” guidelines and blueprints disconnected from local contexts. The need for institutional reform and for the design of state institutions to adequately reflect underlying societal cleavages and address minority grievances is particularly severe in post-war states. This idea is based on the argument that if civil wars occur because groups experience political discrimination, then reforming institutions so that post-war governance is more inclusive and just should have a pacifying effect (Walter 2015; Wolff 2011; Kurtenbach and Mehler 2013).

However, empirical evidence shows that institutional reforms often do not work the way they are supposed to, also due to time pressure and conflicting short- and long-term priorities. For instance, Cederman et al. (2015) report that the introduction of autonomy through the reform of territorial state structures after civil war might be “too little, too late.” The failure of post-war institutional designs and reforms to truly effect societal change after war is also often due to pre-war and war-time institutions that do not simply fade away but instead influence the paths of reform (Ansorg and Kurtenbach 2017). But what are the implications of failed institutional reforms for emigration after civil war?

Specifically, we expect the low *quality of post-war institutions* to push emigration after civil war for at least two reasons. Firstly, without at least some minimal form of justice and judicial reform that addresses the wrongdoings of the past, the perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations often continue to formally or informally execute strong influence in post-war societies, and victims are forced to live side by side with those who have carried out gross human rights violations. As a consequence, and even if the former warring parties do not remobilise in the post-war period, war-time victims may emigrate due to fears of personal violence, reprisals, or revenge, or if the judicial system does not provide for mechanisms that safeguard individuals’ fair access to the law, equal treatment before the law, or secure property rights. Thus, we should particularly expect a lack of judicial reforms and the absence of access to the rule of law to positively influence higher levels of outward migration.

Secondly, people may also have stronger incentives to emigrate if institutional designs deprive them of opportunities to participate politically. If the political marginalisation of identity groups is among the main drivers of civil war, then the continued political exclusion of such groups after the war has ended may motivate people to stay abroad or leave their homes. This is related not least to employment opportunities, as the marginalisation of identity groups is typically not limited to whether they have a voice in the design of institutions or in an election, but also concerns their access to jobs in the civil administration, the police, or the military. Based on this discussion, we can formulate our second hypothesis:

**H2:** *All other things being equal, a higher quality of post-war institutions is associated with lower levels of emigration from post-war societies.*

**H2a:** *All other things being equal, a higher level of equality before the law is associated with lower levels of emigration from post-war societies.*

*H2b: All other things being equal, a higher quality of democratic participation is associated with lower levels of emigration from post-war societies.*

A final explanation for varying levels of emigration from post-war societies is related to the low quality of economic livelihoods, by which we refer to the lack of social and economic prospects for individuals as well as opportunities for social mobility. Again, the lack of social and economic opportunities is widely accepted in the literature as a key driver of both forced and voluntary outward migration, independent of whether a country has recently experienced a civil war or not. However, we have reason to believe that this mechanism is exacerbated in post-war situations, and that studying such situations provides new insights into the underlying mechanisms between economic livelihoods and emigration, particularly with regard to two aspects.

Firstly, following the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) processes that are increasingly implemented after the formal termination of civil war, many ex-combatants enter the labour markets of post-war societies. This means that there is an even greater demand for jobs in war-devastated economies, which are characterised by a distinct lack of employment opportunities. This can have several effects. Often, “ex-combatants lack skills, assets, and social networks that enable them to create sustainable livelihoods” and thus “return to war or a life of criminality and banditry that could adversely affect the peace process” (Leff 2008). On the other hand, given this increased pressure to find jobs in labour markets with very few possibilities, many individuals develop strong incentives to leave their respective countries.

Secondly, youth are at high risk of being drawn into violence or other “anti-social” behaviour in most post-war societies, as access to economic resources is often controlled by those generations who have fought in wars and their respective clientele networks. Although youths are often better educated than their parents, decent work is largely unavailable in weak and unstable post-war states. In these contexts, “emigration may work as a safety valve” (Urdal 2006: 624).

*H3: All other things being equal, lower levels of economic opportunity are associated with higher levels of emigration from post-war societies.*

### 3 Quantitative Analysis

We test these hypotheses using a mixed-method framework. We begin by investigating the effect of post-war violence, institutions, and economic opportunities on the levels of post-war refugees in a large-N setting. For this quantitative analysis, we construct a data set of post-war refugee flows between 1990 and 2010 (cf. Table A.1 in the Appendix). Our unit of observation is the post-war country-year, and we include up to 10 post-war years in our sample. For any country-year to be included in our data set, the following criteria for what consti-

tutes a *post-war episode* had to be met: A post-war episode is coded as starting in the first year after an *internal armed conflict with at least 1,000 accumulated direct battle-related deaths* ended (UCDP version 4.2014), without war or armed conflict recurring for at least two consecutive years (cf. Gleditsch et al. 2002; Themnér and Wallensteen 2014). The end of a post-war episode is coded either in the case of civil war recurrence (same or different actors and incompatibilities) or if an armed conflict (same actors and incompatibilities) recurs for at least two consecutive years and leads to at least two consecutive years of fighting with 500 battle-related deaths. This definition is strict, but it has the advantage of excluding cases that are driven by continuously changing lower levels of collective violence caused, for instance, by the artificial temporal delineation of calendar years.

**Measuring refugee flows:** We rely on data from the UNHCR *Online Population Database* to measure the level of refugees from a post-war country. According to the UNHCR's legal definition (cf. above), a person is included in the *Online Population Database* if he or she (a) seeks protection as a refugee and (b) has crossed an international border. The UNHCR collects statistics based on information from host countries, its own field offices, and NGOs, and provides annual estimates of this information on its website. To construct our dependent variable, we aggregate the number of refugees and asylum seekers from each post-war country in a given year. That means that we have information on how many individuals from a given post-war country were residing outside that country because they sought protection as a refugee under international humanitarian law per country-year. Because our observations for each country start in the first post-war year, we take a one-year lead ( $t + 1$ ) of the refugee measure. Since all independent variables are measured at  $t = 0$ , this allows us to estimate the effect of our predictors on future levels of refugees and mitigate simultaneity bias.

We acknowledge that the UNHCR refugee data is an imperfect proxy for our variable of interest, emigration after civil war. It does not reflect the number of people who emigrate but do not register as refugees (either through an application for asylum in a host country or through registration with the UNHCR in a refugee camp) and instead simply move to another country because, for instance, they seek employment there. Ideally, we would want to combine the refugee data with official data on migration. While the UN provides such data, it is only available in five-year intervals, and is thus not suitable for a fine-grained country-year analysis.<sup>5</sup> Another shortcoming is the UNHCR's data collection practice, which has changed over time (i.e. more recent data relies to a greater extent on official host-state statistics whereas earlier data relies more heavily on UNHCR estimates). These changes in reporting practices could bias the refugee count if the sources systematically under- or over-report refugee levels (Marbach 2016). Despite these limitations, the UNHCR data is the best proxy available for post-war emigration.

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5 See online: <[www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/index.shtml)> (15 June 2016).

*Measuring the quality of peace:* To capture levels of post-war violence beyond the recurrence of civil war, we rely on two empirical indicators, the *Political Terror Scale* (PTS) (R. Wood and Gibney 2015) and a combined count of *non-state conflict* and *one-sided violence* as measured by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz 2012; Eck and Hultman 2007). Disaggregating post-war violence into two empirical measures enables us to distinguish between political and societal violence. Both political violence, such as state terror and human rights violations, and societal violence likely influence individual decisions to leave home or stay abroad, even after war has formally ended.

The PTS explicitly captures *political* violence. It “measures levels of political violence and terror that a country experiences in a particular year based on a five-level terror scale originally developed by Freedom House” and ranges from one (“Countries under a secure rule of law, people are not imprisoned for their views, and torture is rare or exceptional. Political murders are extremely rare”) to five (“Terror has expanded to the whole population. The leaders of these societies place no limits on the means or thoroughness with which they pursue personal or ideological goals”) (Political Terror Scale 2016).<sup>6</sup> To capture *societal* violence, we combine the annual best estimate of UCDP non-state and one-sided violence counts of victims. The UCDP data sets understand one-sided violence as the use of armed force by a government or rebel group against civilians that results in at least 25 battle-related deaths per calendar year, and non-state conflict as the use of armed force between two groups, neither of which is the government of a state. Since the PTS does not capture “violence ascribed to the actions of insurgent groups, criminal syndicates, gangs, or similar non-state actors whose motives may be political” (R. Wood and Gibney 2015: 370), the two data sources complement the state terror captured by PTS.

*Measuring the quality of institutions:* We operationalise the quality of post-war institutions by using two distinct variables. To measure access to justice and the rule of law (in order to test hypothesis 2a), we draw on the variable “Equality before the law and individual liberty index” (*v2xcl\_rol*) from the V-Dem project (Coppedge et al. 2015). The variable measures “to what extent are laws transparent and rigorously enforced and public administration impartial, and to what extent do citizens enjoy access to justice, secure property rights, freedom from forced labour, freedom of movement, physical integrity rights, and freedom of religion?” The variable is derived from the Bayesian measurement model of a range of other rule-of-law-related factors and ranges from zero to one. Our second variable captures the quality of political participation in order to test hypothesis 2b. Again, we utilise information from the V-Dem data set – namely, the variable “participatory democracy index” (*v2x\_partipdem*), which measures the extent to which the ideal of participatory democracy is achieved (Coppedge et al. 2015).

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6 The Political Terror Scale is based on three sources: the country reports of Amnesty International, the U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, and Human Rights Watch’s World Reports (Political Terror Scale 2016).

**Measuring the quality of economic livelihoods:** We capture post-war economic opportunities through two variables: First, a simple level of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. We are aware that GDP per capita is an imperfect proxy of economic opportunities, but it is the only measure that is widely available across the range of countries we investigate. Data for this measure is taken from the United Nations (2015).<sup>7</sup>

Second, we take the variable “Particularistic or Public Goods” provision from the V-Dem data set, to capture the political allocation of state resources (Coppedge et al. 2015). While the GDP per capita variable proxies the overall level of economic development, the V-Dem variable allows us to capture the extent to which these economic capabilities are actually translated into public goods, with our expectation being that the lower the levels of public goods provided, the more incentives people have to emigrate from the post-war country. The variable is assessed on a five-point scale (zero = “Almost all of the social and infrastructure expenditures are particularistic” to four = “Almost all social and infrastructure expenditures are public-goods in character. Only a small portion is particularistic”) and is projected onto a continuous scale through V-Dem’s Bayesian item response measurement model.

**Control variables:** We follow Achen (2005) and Clarke (2005), who warn against over-specified regression models with too many control variables. Thus, in order to keep the model simple, we only use a minimal set of control variables. We include the logged value of a country’s *population* to account for the fact that countries with a higher population can have a higher number of people emigrating. At the same time, higher population is likely to drive our quality of peace variables, which justifies the inclusion of the variable in the model on the basis of mitigating omitted variable bias. The population data is from the World Bank (2015). We also include a measure of *annual foreign aid commitments* per capita to the respective post-war country, which is taken from the AidData project (Tierney et al. 2011). Research has found that donors use aid to strengthen economic development abroad and thereby curb migration (Bermeo 2015). Thus, without accounting for aid income, the coefficient for economic opportunities might be biased.<sup>8</sup> Figure 1 indicates a strong negative time trend for post-war refugee flows. We thus include a set of time polynomials, where time is measured in absolute years since the end of war and the squared number of peace years to allow for a non-linear time trend (Carter and Signorino 2010).

**Model specification:** Our dependent variable is the absolute annual count of persons from a post-war country with refugee or asylum-seeker status currently residing in another country. This count is not normally distributed but rather strongly right-skewed, with many country-years showing a very low number of refugees and only a few country-years exhibiting high levels of post-war refugees. Since a refugee count cannot be lower than zero and is

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7 We choose the level of GDP per capita over GDP growth, since the former better captures the absolute levels of wealth available in a country, whereas growth captures only the additional wealth that is accumulated.

8 Since aid might also influence post-war violence (Nielsen et al. 2011) and institutional quality (Dietrich and Wright 2015), controlling for aid reduces bias in the estimates for our violence and institutional variables.

highly right-skewed, we employ a count model to estimate the expected refugee counts conditional on our independent variables. Since our observations are non-independent and our refugee data is over-dispersed, with variance greater than the mean, we estimate a negative binomial model of the form:<sup>9</sup>

$$Refugees_{it+1} = \eta(.) = PTS_{it} + violenceUCDP_{it} + Rule\ of\ Law_{it} + Participatory\ Democracy_{it} + GDPpc_{it} + Provision\ of\ Public\ Goods_{it} + X_{it}$$

$Refugees_{it+1}$  is the count of refugees and asylum seekers from country  $i$  in year  $t+1$  not currently residing in the post-war country;  $PTS_{it}$  is the country's score on the Political Terror Scale;  $violenceUCDP_{it}$  is the combined best estimate of the number of people killed through non-state conflict or one-sided violence in post-war country  $i$  in year  $t$ ;  $Rule\ of\ Law_{it}$  is the V-Dem score of equality before the law;  $Participatory\ Democracy_{it}$  is the V-Dem index of participatory democracy;  $GDPpc_{it}$  is the country's gross domestic product per capita; and  $Provision\ of\ Public\ Goods_{it}$  is the V-Dem measure of whether a state provides more particularistic or more public goods.  $X_{it}$  stands for the vector control variables described above, and  $\eta(.)$  is the negative binomial link function (Fox 2008: 394). To account for serial correlation within post-war periods, we cluster standard errors on the post-war period.

### 3.1 Results from the Statistical Analysis

Table 1 reports the results from estimating different specifications of Equation 1. The first column of Table 1 is a baseline model. Heeding the advice of Ray (2003) and Achen (2005), the baseline model without control variables serves to illustrate the relationship between our independent variables of interest and post-war refugee levels to make sure adding control variables does not arbitrarily flip signs. The coefficient signs for post-war violence, institutions, and economic variables are all in the expected direction, except for GDP per capita and rule of law (see below). In the baseline model, only the coefficients for the PTS score and the public goods variables are positive and statistically significant.

The positive and statistically significant coefficient for the PTS variable provides initial support for our violence hypothesis: not only does post-war violence vary across post-war societies, but it is also a predictor of subsequently high levels of refugees. Similarly, the coefficient for UCDP non-state and one-sided violence is positive, but fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance ( $p = 0.14$ ). None of our institutional variables – rule of law and participatory democracy – is statistically significant in the baseline model. While the sign of participatory democracy is negative (but not statistically significant) as expected, the rule of law coefficient is positive, contrary to our expectations. The coefficients for the economic variables present a mixed picture. GDP per capita is, contrary to expectations, a positive but statistically insignificant predictor of refugee levels, at least in the baseline model. The provision

9 Log-likelihood tests that compare a negative binomial model to a Poisson model where variance and mean are equal indicate that the over-dispersion parameter alpha is indeed statistically significantly different from zero and negative binomial models are the more reasonable choice.

of public goods is, as expected, a strong, negative, and statistically significant predictor of refugee levels: the higher the provision of public goods in a post-war country-year, the lower the number of refugees in the following year. How do these initial results hold up against the introduction of control variables?

**Table 1. Negative Binomial Regressions for Post-War Refugee Levels**

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
Political Terror Scale	0.33+ (0.19)	0.34 (0.25)	0.12+ (0.06)	0.29*** (0.07)
OSV + Non-state Viol	0.02 (0.01)	0.04+ (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Particip. Democracy	-1.99 (2.06)	-1.27 (2.04)	2.98*** (0.68)	3.39*** (0.89)
Rule of Law	0.56 (1.20)	-0.34 (1.34)	-2.04*** (0.57)	-2.31*** (0.67)
GDP / PC (log)	0.14 (0.16)	0.32* (0.16)	0.75*** (0.07)	0.47*** (0.10)
Public Goods	-0.35* (0.15)	-0.29+ (0.16)	-0.27** (0.10)	-0.38*** (0.12)
Aid / PC (log)		0.08 (0.14)	0.16*** (0.04)	0.14** (0.05)
Population (log)		-0.33+ (0.19)	-0.07 (0.13)	-0.25* (0.13)
Peace Years		0.01 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.04)	
Peace Years <sup>2</sup>		-0.02* (0.01)	-0.01*** (0.00)	
Constant	9.68*** (1.26)	14.18*** (3.02)	-2.47 (2.20)	2.02 (2.21)
PC Period FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	272	271	270	270
No. of Peace Periods	37	37		
Chi-Sq	54.48	61.32	386.49	319.64
Log-Lik	-3348.97	-3318.70	-2564.35	-2608.35

+  $p < 0.10$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Note: Robust standard errors clustered on the post-war period are reported in parentheses.

Model 2 reports the results from a model that includes a set of control variables: aid per capita, population, and time. For the most part, the respective size of our coefficients of interest in-



creases while corresponding standard errors become smaller, making the core relationships more clearly visible in the data after we include our controls.

We observe a series of changes to the baseline specification. First, the coefficient for the PTS variable fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance in Model 2 ( $p = 0.17$ ), while the coefficient stays about the same size. Simulations of substantive effects that are based on Model 2 confirm, however, that there are still regions of the variable space where political terror is a positive and statistically significant predictor of post-war refugee levels. In addition, the coefficient for the combined UCDP one-sided- and non-state-violence variable also becomes statistically significant at the 10 per cent level. This indicates that, in addition to political violence, societal violence, including systematic killings perpetrated by non-state actors such as militias, is a driver of post-war migration, as expected. Again, none of the institutional variables are statistically significant, even though the coefficient of rule of law switches sign. Also notable is that the coefficient for GDP per capita is still positive, but now statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), meaning that higher levels of GDP come with higher levels of migration from post-war societies, contrary to our theoretical expectations. The provision of public goods, on the other hand, remains a strong, negative, and statistically significant predictor of post-war refugee levels even after control variables are included.

As for the control variables, population is negatively correlated with the count of post-war refugees. This suggests that our data reflect an inverse relationship between a post-war country's population and refugee levels: if more citizens remain in their home country, fewer people are registered abroad and vice versa. Aid, on the other hand, is not a significant predictor of post-war refugee levels in Model 2.

As unobserved factors can drive the relationships reported in models 1 and 2, we also estimate a set of fixed-effects specifications. We include post-war-period fixed effects (Model 3) and add year fixed effects in Model 4. The post-war-period fixed effects control for any bias resulting from time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity across post-war periods, such as different conflict histories, colonial origins, or ethnic diversity. The year fixed effects in Model 4 additionally control for annual shocks that might affect refugee flows in a particular year (since we model time dependence through year dummies, time-trend variables are removed from Model 4). Thus, models 3 and 4 only use variation *within* post-war periods to estimate the effect of our independent variables on the level of post-war refugees and discard any variation *between* post-war periods.

In models 3 and 4, despite the additional restrictions, the coefficient for the PTS variable remains positive and statistically significant at the 10 per cent level. This indicates strong support for our first hypothesis: post-war violence, particularly in the form of state-sponsored violence, is a strong driver of post-war emigration. However, the coefficient for the UCDP one-sided- and non-state-violence variable becomes very small and loses statistical significance. This is likely the result of little variation in the intensity of non-state and one-sided violence within countries: many countries do not observe any non-state and one-sided

violence once civil war has ended. While this is good news for the respective post-war countries, our fixed-effects models do not have much variation left to estimate a coefficient for this variable, which increases standard errors and leads to a loss of statistical significance for the UCDP violence variable in the fixed-effects models. Another way to put this finding is like this: since non-state and one-sided violence is statistically significant in Model 2, we can say that variation in societal violence between countries does indeed drive post-war refugee levels upwards, while we do not have enough information to confirm this pattern if we only look at within-country variations in societal violence. We scrutinise the role of one-sided violence and non-state conflict further in our qualitative case studies below.

In both fixed-effects models, the institutional variables now become large and statistically significant predictors of post-war refugee levels: in contrast to our expectations, post-war political participation is a *positive* predictor of emigration after war. This means that, at least if we investigate only variation within countries, the more people leave (or stay abroad), the better their opportunities for political participation. This could mirror in part the above-cited finding by Davenport et al. (2003) that democratising countries are associated with higher numbers of refugees because authoritarian restrictions against emigration are gone. At the same time, rule of law is a negative predictor of post-war emigration: as citizens' access to the justice system increases and a country moves towards more equality before the law, refugee levels recede. However, we would interpret the results for the institutional variables with a grain of salt as the coefficient signs of both variables flip across model specifications. While this might be due to constraints put on the data by the fixed effects, it might also indicate a non-robust finding.<sup>10</sup>

The patterns for our economic variables remain robust in the fixed-effects models. GDP per capita continues to be a strong and significant positive predictor of post-war refugee levels across all fixed-effects specifications. As GDP increases, so does the level of post-war refugees abroad. At the same time, the provision of public goods reduces post-war emigration. Conversely, the more goods and services are privately steered towards certain social groups and not to the overall population, the more individuals continue to flee countries even after war has ended.

Against the background of these quantitative results, two questions emerge: First, how can we explain the positive effect of GDP per capita? And second, how substantively strong are these correlations? Marginal-effects plots for some of our variables give answers to both of these questions. Figure 2 plots the marginal effects of all the variables for which we report substantive results in Table 2: GDP per capita, Political Terror Scale, UCDP violence, and Provision of Public Goods. Given the lack of robustness for the institutional variables, we do not plot their associated marginal effects.

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<sup>10</sup> We checked whether the results might be driven by multicollinearity between the institutional variables. While both correlate moderately strongly in our sample, variance inflation factors are sufficiently low to indicate that there is no problem of multicollinearity.

Holding all other variables at their respective means, we can see in the upper-left panel of Figure 2 that an initial increase in the value of GDP per capita is associated with a substantive and statistically significant increase in the associated level of post-war refugees. Thus, if we simulate an increase from a logged value of GDP per capita of approximately five to approximately seven, the number of refugees more than doubles from approximately 44,000 to somewhat less than 100,000. However, the log-scale of the GDP variable helps to put things into perspective and partially explains the puzzling finding of the positive coefficient for the economic opportunity proxy. Log-transformed GDP values of five and seven correspond to an actual GDP per capita income of USD 148 and USD 1,096. Thus, we observe the most significant increase in refugees when GDP increases *only at the very low ends of the GDP per capita distribution*. A GDP per capita of USD 148 is comparable to Mozambique in 1995 (GDP per capita: USD 157), while a GDP per capita of USD 1,096 is comparable to a country such as Nicaragua in 2004 (GDP per capita: USD 1,046). This illustrates the causal relationship that is most likely at play here: as a citizen's economic opportunities increase *at the very low end of the scale of economic opportunities*, their means to flee the country also increase. Or, to put it differently: in extremely poor countries such as Mozambique, many people simply may have been too poor to leave the country, even though they might have wanted to. Emigration is an expensive endeavour: transit costs, bribes, food, and transportation all cost money, which explains why we observe a positive relationship between GDP per capita and levels of refugees. This interpretation is supported by the large confidence interval as the value of GDP per capita increases: since we do not have much information on richer countries in our sample (post-war countries tend to be very poor on average), we cannot reliably estimate the effect of positive economic opportunities at higher levels of GDP per capita.

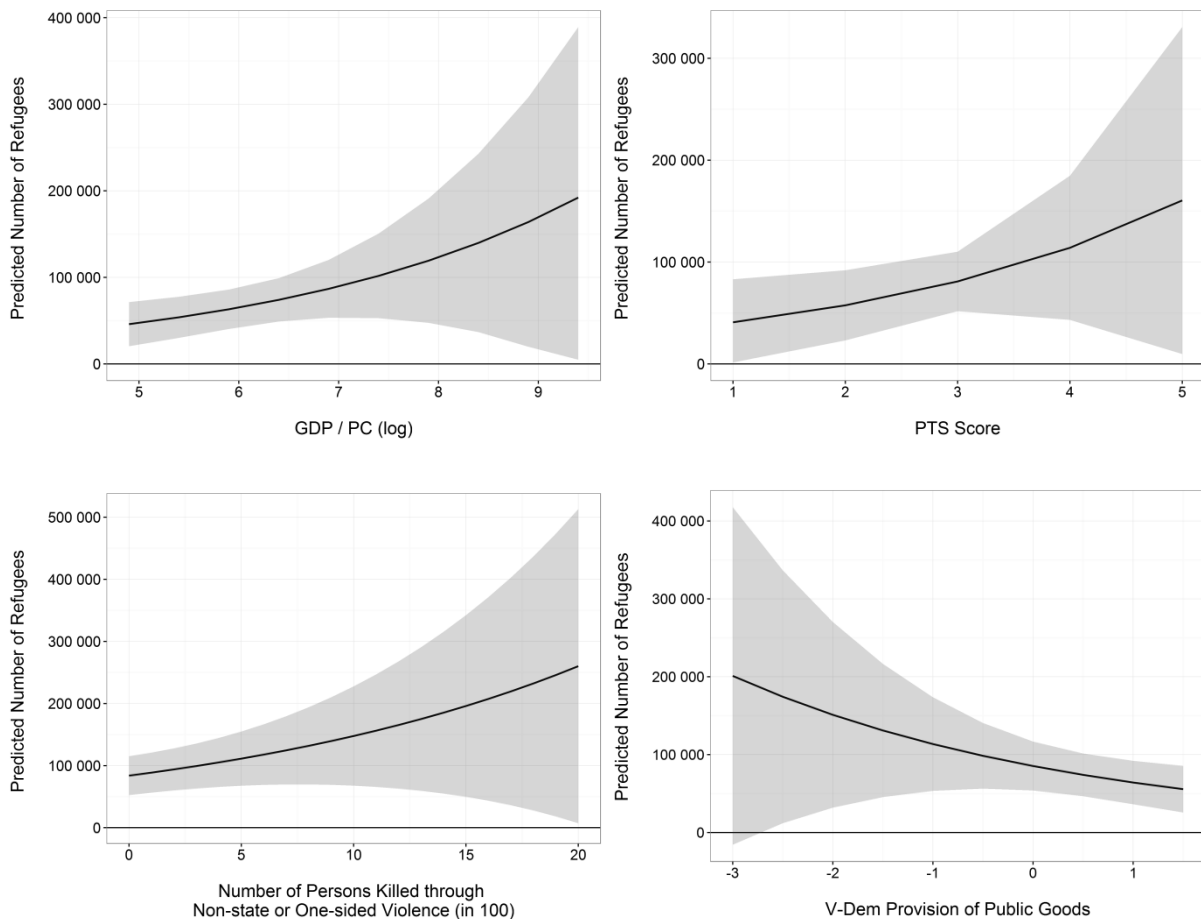
The upper-right and lower-left panels of Figure 2 visualise the substantive relationship between our violence indicators and post-war refugee levels. In the upper-right panel, we see that an increase in a country's PTS from one to three (a PTS score of three is roughly the mean in our sample) is associated with an estimated increase in refugees from approximately 40,823 (95 per cent CI: 1,420; 83,067) to 80,933 (95 per cent CI: 51,745; 110,120). Similarly to the effect of GDP, confidence intervals increase as the level of political terror grows. This is the result from only very few cases in which the PTS exceeds a score of four. Despite this large variation, the effect is substantively very large (and given the uncertainty around the point estimates might be even more substantial). We find a similar effect of non-state and one-sided violence. As more and more people are killed in battles between non-state actors, or as civilians are targeted by both state and non-state actors, refugee levels rise. If we simulate the effect of increasing the number of victims killed through non-state and one-sided violence from zero to 1,000, the associated refugee levels increase from 83,802 (95 per cent CI: 52,553; 115,050) to 147,624 (95 per cent CI: 67,709; 227,539).

We consider this to be strong evidence in support of our first hypothesis: excessive political terror after the end of a civil war pushes individuals to flee the country or to remain

abroad. Yet the estimated effects for both violence variables are surrounded by significant uncertainty, reflecting the fact that post-war societal violence is typically low and we do not have much data on which to base our evidence. Thus, while our evidence appears to support our first hypothesis, the associated uncertainty leaves room for a qualitative investigation of the precise mechanisms at play.

In the lower-right panel of Figure 2, we plot the effect of the provision of public goods. We observe a strong and substantive effect of increasing public goods provision on post-war refugee levels. As the provision of public goods increases, refugee levels drop considerably. If we move from a value of -2 (which is approximately the value of Georgia in 1994) to 1 (which is similar to the value of Peru in 2000), simulated refugee levels drop from 151,085 (95 per cent CI: 31,905; 27,026) to 64,147 (95 per cent CI: 36,290; 92,005).

**Figure 2. Marginal Effects of Violence, Institutions, and Economic Opportunities on Post-War Refugee Levels**



*Note:* Marginal effects calculated using the Stata command “margins,” holding all other variables at their means. Calculations based on Model 2 in Table 1. The grey areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around point estimates.

## 4 Qualitative Research Design and Analysis

Our quantitative analysis has achieved one key objective vital for a better understanding of how the quality of post-war peace, institutions, and livelihoods drives levels of migration after civil war: we have identified those variables that are particularly relevant across all cases under analysis. However, some results are not overly robust across model specifications, and standard errors remain large. This could indicate that the variables we use are inefficient measures of the underlying theoretical concepts (on this issue of construct validity, cf. Shadish, Cook, and Campbell 2002). For instance, we have had to rely on the crude proxy of GDP per capita to capture the quality of economic livelihoods because we lack better cross-national data on economic opportunities for the broader population, and we have also discussed how the absence of annual migration data does not allow us to capture both refugee and economic migration levels statistically. Consequently, we now turn to two qualitative case studies to complement our statistical analysis: the post-war societies of Nepal and El Salvador.

These cases were selected based on a variety of factors. Most importantly, both are regularly presented as “success cases” of post-war peacebuilding in the academic and policy-oriented literatures. Additionally, civil war has not recurred since the formal termination of war in Nepal in 2006 and in El Salvador in 1992, and many accounts of international and domestic reconstruction efforts seem effective on paper (cf. below). Having said that, both countries have experienced continuously rising levels of post-war migration, and approximately one-fifth of the population in each case lived outside the country in 2010 (19.5 per cent in Nepal; 20.5 per cent in El Salvador, cf. (UNDP 2014)). Both cases are also “off the line” cases which are not predicted well by our statistical model. This means that we can use qualitative case evidence to investigate whether this is due to ineffective statistical measurements of our core variables (Lieberman 2005).

### 4.1 *Post-War Flight and Migration from Nepal*

Following the fall of Nepal’s authoritarian *panchayat* system in 1990, early hopes for democratisation and decreased economic and social inequality were soon shattered (Malagodi 2013; Brown 1996; Ganguly and Shoup 2005). For instance, in the first years of democracy from 1990 to 1995, the institutional representation of *janajatis* (indigenous people) decreased relative to the *panchayat* period, while male, high-caste Hindus from the central hill region further consolidated their dominance in the political system (Lawoti 2014; Riaz and Basu 2007). This increasing inequality was capitalised on by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) or CPN (M), which mobilised disadvantaged groups with the promise of increased representation, a remodelling of the political system, and the distribution of land. The Maoists’ “People’s War” – which became one of the highest intensity civil wars worldwide (Murshed and Gates 2005) – raged until 2006, when the warring parties signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and agreed to form a power-sharing interim government, hold elections to a Constituent Assembly, and disarm under United Nations (UN) supervision. In 2008, the

Maoists won the first post-war elections, but polarisation within the Constituent Assembly over the issue of federalism led to its dissolution in 2012, without a constitution having been put into effect. A constitution was only promulgated in September 2015, when the urgency of beginning reconstruction following the 7.8 and 7.3 magnitude earthquakes on 25 April and 12 May sped up the long-stalled constitution-making process.

While the CPA ended the war between the Maoists and the government, it did not end emigration from Nepal. Nepal has always seen a high level of emigration due to natural disasters such as flooding and landslides, poverty, and the increasing scarcity of agricultural land (Massey, Axinn, and Ghimire 2010). Past research has also found a link between violence during the People's War and migration: while low to medium levels of violence reduced the odds of migration during the war, such odds increased once violence reached very high levels (Bohra-Mishra and Massey 2011). Since the end of the civil war in 2006, outward migration counts from Nepal have risen continuously. The World Bank reports 2,647 refugees from Nepal in 2006 and 8,561 in 2014, with a linear trend for the years in between (World Bank 2014). Similar numbers appear for labour migration, which provides roughly 30 per cent of the country's GDP through remittances, with the largest share of such funds coming from India, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (Government of Nepal 2014).

Part of this numerical increase is explained by factors unconnected to post-war dynamics. It has also been driven, for instance, by a 2001 reform of the administrative system that allowed passports and travel documents to be obtained from district offices instead of only from Kathmandu (Lokshin, Bontch-Osmolovski, and Gliskaya 2007). And although the figures are not yet available, the 2015 earthquakes are also expected to have driven migration, as they severely affected Nepal's tourism industry and its employment opportunities (Clewett 2015). However, we can also ask whether the increase in migration during the post-war period has also been connected to the variables identified above.

*Quality of peace:* Physical insecurity and violence have been common features of Nepal's post-war period, even though the CPN (M) laid down its weapons after 2006. The first example is provided by the actions of the Young Communist League (YCL), a youth organisation created by the Maoists as they joined the interim government. The YCL engaged in armed quasi-policing activities, forced taxation, and the extraction of protection money in the early post-war period (United Nations 2007). Skar (2008) classified the YCL as something in between "boy scouts and paramilitary storm troops." Second, as it became apparent that the interim government would not fully address the demands of marginalised communities, an episode of non-state conflict erupted in 2007 between Maoist cadres and members of the Madhesi community in the southern Tarai plains. Over 30 people were killed. Third, the Tarai was also home to the most recent episode of violence, when polarisation over the 2015

constitution sparked clashes between Madhesi protesters and government security forces that killed more than 50 people (Human Rights Watch 2015).<sup>11</sup>

A significant amount of post-war violence below the threshold of civil war recurrence has thus occurred in the Tarai, and the majority of migrants since the end of the war have been young men from low-income families in the Tarai (Government of Nepal 2014: 25). Having said that, this observed correlation does not translate into a clear causal link. It instead highlights a more complex relationship between post-war violence and migration that can only be fully understood if we take our two additional explanatory variables into account (cf. below): the episodes of post-war violence are not explanatory factors for outward migration from the Tarai; instead, both migration and violence are consequences of the larger underlying problems of a lack of (1) institutional representation and (2) economic opportunities for communities in the Tarai, which have created further grievances leading to both migration and violent unrest.<sup>12</sup>

**Quality of institutions:** While Nepal's institutional reform process is a relative success on paper vis-à-vis other post-war societies – Nepal, for instance, has seen a successful rebel-to-party transformation process (Ogura 2008; Ishiyama and Batta 2011) – the institutional reforms have not been without faults. Two issues can be highlighted here for the purpose of this paper. First, thorough transitional justice and judicial reform processes have been lacking – often due to the disinterest of the former warring parties – and while the 2006 CPA called for the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the implementation of this commission was delayed until 2014. Second, while Nepal's institutional reform process has successfully brought the Maoist rebels into several power-sharing governments, disadvantaged groups in the Tarai argue that they are becoming increasingly marginalised – for instance, by the current design of federalist reforms in the 2015 constitution – and that reforms promised to them by the Maoists during the war have not transpired (International Crisis Group 2008).

As already indicated above, this lack of institutional reforms that more accurately take into account the grievances of the Tarai communities in particular is among the explanations for migration from post-war Nepal. First, in the early stages of the peace process, Nepali refugees stated that the lack of transitional justice mechanisms was a reason why they had been forced to flee their homes. These individuals feared reprisals by those (Maoist or YCL) cadres

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11 This discussion is only an example and disregards many additional levels of violence and insecurity in post-war Nepal, not least sexual and gender-based violence. For a discussion of female insecurity and how it relates to Nepal's post-war institutional reforms, such as female representation in the security sector, see Onslow (2010).

12 Cultural factors also partly explain the outward migration from the southern Tarai plains in Nepal. A large proportion of migrants from the Tarai move to India, where they find wages higher than those at home (Clewett 2015). Particularly Madhesis from the Tarai historically share cultural ties with communities in Northern India. India's Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, for instance, have a caste system similar to that of the Madhesis, and there are thus also frequent marriages between families from each side of the border.

who had committed human rights violations during the war, as those cadres were still roaming freely and pressuring people to pay protection money in the post-war period (Lisibach 2007). Second, post-war institutional reforms have also accelerated grievances related to political marginalisation among Madhesis in the Tarai. On the one hand, these grievances escalated on into physical violence in 2007 and 2015 (Human Rights Watch 2015). On the other, the lack of institutional representation has also been a driver of outward migration: thus far, “desirable jobs in the civil service, army, and judiciary” are overwhelmingly assumed by traditional elites – notably high-caste Hindus from the central hill region – and ethnicity and caste are “fairly reliable proxies” for access to wealth, motivating Tarai communities (and other groups, such as Dalits from all regions) to seek employment abroad (cf. Clewett 2015). Throughout Nepal, Dalit households are most likely to receive remittances from a foreign country (Lokshin, Bontch-Osmolovski, and Gliskaya 2007).

**Quality of livelihoods:** The Nepalese peace process has thus far inadequately addressed the economic root causes of the war, including widespread poverty, landlessness, and economic inequality between castes and ethnic groups. The creation of economic prospects *within* Nepal has been sidelined in the peace process, especially opportunities for demobilised ex-combatants from the Maoist army who entered the job market in 2013 when the last cantonments were closed (Subedi 2012).

While the lack of economic prospects for young men (and women) in Nepal is among the key drivers of outward migration, the aspect of migration opportunities for ex-combatants is particularly fruitful for our purpose as it highlights the difficulties involved in discovering a clear and linear causal mechanism between the qualities of post-war societies and migration. While we argued above that post-war violence and insecurity can be a driver of outward migration, the case of Nepal instead shows that outward migration can also be a factor in reducing the risks of violence and insecurity: Observers are in accord that the option of economic migration for ex-combatants – many of whom are today working on construction sites in Dubai or Qatar – is among the central reasons why demobilised ex-combatants have not engaged in criminal activities or remobilised for war (Martin Chautari 2013). In an interview in September 2015 in Kathmandu, for instance, a Nepalese civil society leader joked that the two employment options for ex-combatants were “militia or Malaysia.”

#### 4.2 *Post-War Flight and Migration from El Salvador*

El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America. Because land is scarce there, both seasonal and permanent migration to the capital San Salvador and out of the country has a long tradition. But outward migration increased significantly along with state repression in the second half of the 1970s. The military regime answered the struggle for more political and social participation with high levels of repression. A coup took place in 1979 and the resulting civil-military government announced a series of reforms, but due to the staunch resistance of the economic elites and the increasing level of US involve-



ment in Central America, the junta was unable to implement significant changes. The assassination of the Archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, on 24 March 1980 marked the start of a 12-year civil war that ended with a comprehensive peace accord in 1992. The war's overall death toll was 75,000. According to the Truth Commission, the state's security forces were responsible for 85 per cent of the casualties (Betancur, Planchart, and Buergethal 1993).

Thousands of Salvadorians fled the country during the war. Although most of this migration was undocumented, the number of Salvadorians residing in the USA was estimated at approximately half a million people (from a population of four million at the time) in the early 1980s. But because the US government was the most important external supporter of the Salvadorian government during the presidency of Ronald Reagan (1980–1988), only a small share of refugees were granted asylum. Additionally, an estimated 180,000 people fled across the border to Honduras and other neighbouring countries. At the end of the war in 1992, a quarter of the population lived outside the country (W. Stanley 1987; Todd 2010).

Because support for guerrilla groups during the war was driven by high levels of inequality, social and economic marginalisation, and state repression, hopes were high that the end of war would lead to fundamental changes regarding these issues. The Salvadorian peace process is largely considered a success in terms of its negotiated and UN-mediated war termination (Montgomery 1995). Nevertheless, after a short period of returns to El Salvador, emigration continued to increase again after 1997, with 218,000 Salvadorians leaving each year (PNUD 2005: 27)

*Quality of peace:* The demobilisation and demilitarisation of the former non-state armed group, the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN), was successful. While there was one incident when hidden weapons were discovered, this did not endanger the overall process. There has been neither a recurrence of armed conflict nor other manifestations of organised collective political violence. However, post-war El Salvador is one of the world's most violent countries in terms of homicide rates (UNODC 2014), an aspect of post-war violence not accounted for in our statistical model due to the difficulties of measuring homicide rates comparatively over time and space. Government and media have emphasised the role of young poor males as drivers of violence and have advocated for zero-tolerance policies to politicise public security (Holland 2013; Oettler 2011). Violence in its different manifestations is an important driver of post-war emigration in El Salvador and is closely related to our second hypothesis on dysfunctional institutions.

*Quality of institutions:* The peace accords also introduced a major reform of the security sector, which is frequently considered a success story (Call 2007; W. D. Stanley 2006). The United Nations monitored the DDR process, and European donors supported the establishment of a new civilian police force composed of former police officers, former rebels, and new recruits. While external observers saw a lot of potential in this new institution, the lack of political will on the part of the traditional elites undermined the implementation of the related reforms early on (W. Stanley 1995; Wade 2016). The right-wing Alianza Republicana

Nacionalista (ARENA) governments which held power until 2009 not only dismissed the recommendations of the Truth Commission by granting ample amnesty – even for gross human rights violations such as the massacre of El Mozote, where 800 civilians were killed in 1983 – but also used the high levels of insecurity to block or even roll back reforms in the security sector and the judiciary. Public security was militarised, and the new division of labour between the civilian police and the army was blurred. As a consequence, repressive strategies for confronting crime and violence dominated, contributing to an increase in emigration after the “peace bubble” had disappeared (Cruz 2011; Popkin 2000; Wade 2016; PNUD 2005).

The Chapultepec Peace Accords also established a series of provisions regarding the reform of other institutions. First of all, the electoral system – established in the midst of war – was amended and opened up to allow the participation of the former guerrillas. The FMLN transformed into a political party, increasing its share of the votes in national as well as municipal elections. In 2009, its candidate was even elected president. However, the FMLN never had a majority in parliament and was confronted with the strength of the traditional economic elites of the famous 14 families that had succeeded in modernising their economic base from coffee and agriculture to financial services and regional trade (Albiac 1998). As a consequence, no FMLN president was able to change the development model to include the marginalised rural and urban poor. While the end of war increased participation in politics, it did not change the traditional patterns of exclusion related to our third hypothesis.

Quality of livelihoods: El Salvador is a low-middle-income country (USD 1,513 per capita income, const. 2012) with high levels of inequality. The peace agreement did not change the economic development model. In 2012, over 50 per cent of the country’s economically active population worked in the informal sector, and 45 per cent of working people were underemployed. The richest quintile accounts for 48.4 per cent of income, while the poorest quintile receives only 4.9 per cent (PNUD 2013, statistical annex). The unequal social status quo rests on an alliance of and political resistance from right-wing politicians and Salvadorian business, who control the media and the economy and thus prevent any kind of tax reform or other initiatives that would generate substantial change regarding social and economic inclusion. In this context, outward migration is a safety valve. Remittances from legal and illegal migrants (mostly to the USA) have become the most important inflow of external revenues – over 10 per cent of GDP (Orozco and Yansura 2013: 16). To summarise, it is evident that post-war emigration from El Salvador is heavily driven by the interaction of all three factors – violence, dysfunctional institutions, and a lack of viable social and economic prospects. The high number of unaccompanied minors from Central America to the United States in the summer of 2014 provides significant evidence in this respect: They are confronted with the choice of either joining one of the armed groups or being killed (by *mareros*, the military, or the police). At the same time, they face a state that is unable to prevent violence or cope with its perpetrators within the parameters of the rule of law. And last but not least, they lack viable

options for obtaining decent livelihoods. Hence, it is not surprising that many young people choose to take the risk and leave the country.

## 5 Conclusion: A Peace Dividend for All

In this article, we have provided quantitative and qualitative evidence on the drivers of post-war emigration. Our theoretical arguments and empirical results highlight the role of three factors that shape levels of post-war emigration: (i) societal and political violence beyond the mere termination of organised combat, (ii) institutional reforms, and (iii) the existence of social and economic opportunities.

The results of our statistical models emphasise the impact of violence and economic factors in shaping post-war emigration. In countries with high levels of civilian death, large numbers of victims of non-state conflict, and stark political repression, we observe higher levels of refugees residing outside the country in the post-war period, despite the fact that the war has formally ended. Complementary evidence from our case studies shows that institutions also play a role, but they do so in close interaction with the other two factors, violence and economic opportunities.

Nepal in particular exemplifies the complexity of the interaction between the different drivers of emigration discussed above. There, the eruptions of violence and the increasing levels of emigration that occurred after the war were both expressions of frustration with the lack of institutional representation and economic opportunities. The interplay between the three factors is also evident in El Salvador, where the lack of economic reforms is a key driver of non-state violence and state repression is used to maintain the status quo of inequality. Moreover, reforms of the country's political institutions have failed to provide security or increase participation among the socially excluded.

Our findings yield a range of implications for political practice and future research. Policymakers and practitioners should adopt a holistic view of post-conflict politics when developing and implementing aid projects in post-war societies; it is not enough to provide a minimum of security and of the necessary means for a decent livelihood. Rather, the reduction of post-war state violence and non-state violence, as well as institutional reforms that ensure a peace dividend in form of economic and political opportunities for the broader population, not just the elites, should be the aim.

Future research on this topic should unpack the precise mechanisms that underlie our three broad systemic drivers of post-war emigration. A better understanding of the micro-dynamics of repression and emigration, for instance, might help us to identify individual-level motivations for emigration. Empirically, subnational survey research might be able to trace such causal mechanisms and could very well complement the macro-comparative approach taken in this paper.

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## Appendix

**Table A.1**

*List of countries and peace periods included in the statistical analysis:*

	<i>Country</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>
1	Angola	2003	2012
2	Azerbaijan	1995	2004
3	Bangladesh	1992	2001
4	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1996	2005
5	Burundi	2007	2013
6	Cambodia (Kampuchea)	1999	2008
7	Chad	2011	2013
8	Congo	2000	2009
9	Congo, Democratic Republic of (Zaire)	2002	2005
10	Congo, Democratic Republic of (Zaire)	2009	2011
11	Croatia	1996	2005
12	El Salvador	1992	2001
13	Georgia	1994	2003
14	Guatemala	1996	2005
15	Indonesia	1993	1996
16	Indonesia	2006	2013
17	Iran (Persia)	2002	2004
18	Iraq	1997	2003
19	Laos	1991	2000
20	Lebanon	1991	2000
21	Liberia	2004	2013
22	Mozambique	1993	2002
23	Nepal	2007	2013
24	Nicaragua	1991	2000
25	Peru	2000	2006
26	Peru	2011	2013
27	Rwanda	2003	2008
28	Senegal	2002	2011
29	Sierra Leone	2002	2011
30	Somalia	1997	2000
31	Somalia	2003	2005
32	Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	2002	2004
33	Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	2010	2013
34	Tajikistan	1999	2008
35	Yemen	1995	2004
36	Serbia	1992	1997
37	Serbia	2000	2009

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