

## Victimization and Political Participation (DRAFT)

**Introduction**

Social scientific research has fairly decisively established a robust link between a person's victimization by political violence and their subsequent political participation. Blattman (2009) finds that in northern Uganda, victims of LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) abduction were more likely to vote, be a community leader, be a member of a peace organization or hold a political job. Bellows and Miguel (2009) find that individuals whose households directly experienced more intense war violence are more likely to attend community meetings, more likely to join local political and community groups, and more likely to vote. Schewfelt (2009) found that associational and institutional participation and leadership increased among those exposed to wartime trauma in Aceh, Bosnia and Vietnam (American veterans). Voors et al (2012) find that individuals exposed to violence display more altruistic behavior towards their neighbors.

To explain the link between victimization and political participation, this body of literature relies on an "expressive" theory of political participation, in which exposure to violence "augments the value a person places on the act of political expression itself" (Blattman 2009, pg. 1). This theory of political participation is constructed on psychological research on emotional growth and resilience in trauma victims, namely Tedeschi and Calhoun's (1995) "Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI)". The link between post-traumatic growth and political participation is most developed in Blattman (2009), who argues that exposure to violence often spurs a powerful, psychologically transformative process which prompts the individual to reevaluate their relationship to society.

Yet, when we examine the source material, there is not a direct link between the effects of post-traumatic growth and explained by Tedeschi and Calhoun and political activism. The

trauma-induced changes that Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) identify are localized to the individual or the individual's immediate social circle and not necessarily political: the three changes they highlight are changes in self-perception, changes in life philosophy and changes in interpersonal relationships. In another study, Tedeschi, Park and Calhoun (1998, pg. 3) describe post-traumatic growth as a "significant beneficial change in cognitive and emotional life that may have behavioral implications as well." Thus while perceptual and behavioral changes are certainly a possible outcome of trauma, the impact of post-traumatic growth need not be externalized and is not inherently or necessarily political: these new insights may be directed towards the political and social, but often are primarily focused towards the familial or the spiritual. Thus, while post-traumatic growth may incline a person towards increased political activism, it is not a sufficient explanation for why trauma victims become more politically active. I argue that the victimization and political participation field needs additional theory linking the psychological growth victims often experience after trauma to their decision to become politically active.

Both Rojo-Mendoza (2014) and Dorff (2015) have taken a step in this direction by demonstrating how strong positive social ties function as a key intervening variable between post-traumatic growth and subsequent participation. Rojo-Mendoza (2014) finds that supportive relationships increase altruism and participatory behavior for victims. For Rojo-Mendoza (2014, pg. 8), empathetic social interactions both strengthen victims' motivation to pursue political participation or model pro-social behaviors that victims later connect to broader social change as a method of reciprocating. Dorff (2015) argues that victims' political behavior is conditional on the social support of their kinship networks. For Dorff (2015, pg. 11), strong social networks give victims the sense of support and motivation necessary to pursue political participation.

Both pieces are theoretically and empirically compelling, and fit nicely with classic arguments about the importance of social networks for building social movements (Tarrow 2008). However, I argue, these arguments do not completely fill the causal gap between post-traumatic growth and the decision to take action. In both causal stories, strong social ties play a supportive role for individuals in their path from victimization to activism. Neither causal story gives us insight into what enabled victims to make the connection between their personal growth and the idea to pursue political participation as an empowered response to victimization.

Borrowing from Dorff (2015), I introduce the theory of responsibility attribution to the victimization and participation literature as a plausible causal story to fill the intervening gap between post-traumatic growth and the decision to become politically active. Responsibility attribution theory argues that how individuals explain events to themselves is critical to determining the subsequent actions they will take. Applying this theory to political activism around localized security problems in Mexico, Dorff (2015) argues that individuals are far more likely to become politically active when they 1) clearly implicate the government as the source of the problems they are experiencing in their community and 2) associate their own political participation as an effective means to combat that problem. She writes:

"In order to hold officials responsible, citizens must first make the connection between what they experience and who is responsible for that experience. Those individuals who view their local authorities as the source of responsibility for their security have a clear view of whose actions must change in order to alleviate violence (pg. 35)."

Thus, civilians who hold the government authorities responsible for their security problems are more likely to become politically active.

Second, to become politically active, individuals must make the connection between the social and political problems their community is experiencing and their own political participation as an effective means to solve those problems. Dorff (2015) calls this the "psychological adhesive" that

enables individuals to build for themselves a compelling rationale for consistent participation. Dorff cites Javeline's (2003) research, which finds that individuals who have greater specificity in attributing blame for local issues are more likely to protest because the expected utility of a protest is higher. Her own research finds that "individuals who believe that local government authorities are the source of their security problems are also more likely to believe that nonviolent methods are an effective tool for improving the security situation in their area (pg. 35)." She further finds that, perhaps unsurprisingly, that an individual's positive opinions on the effectiveness of nonviolent political activism correlate to a higher level of political action.

In this paper, I test the applicability of the responsibility attribution theory as a determinant of political participation for victims of political violence using a 2013 survey of rural Colombians. The responsibility attribution theory generates a number of testable hypotheses in this context. First, following Dorff (2015), victims that blame the government for the security situation in their locale should participate at higher rates. Thus, I predict that victims of government violence should participate more than victims of guerrilla or paramilitary violence, as they have an obviously compelling rationale to hold the government responsible for their insecurity. Victims who blame the government for the damages caused to their municipality should likewise participate at higher rates. Finally, individuals in areas where the paramilitaries, criminal bands and guerrillas are still active should participate at higher rates, as they have continuing resonant evidence of the government's failure to protect their security.

**H<sub>1</sub>: Victims of government violence should participate more**

**H<sub>2</sub>: Victims who blame the government for the effects of the war in their municipality should participate more**

**H<sub>3</sub>: Victims in areas where paramilitaries, criminal bands and guerrilla forces are still active should participate more**

The second part of the responsibility attribution framework argues that individuals who perceive political participation as an effective way to rectify the insecurity problems that led to their victimization would be more likely to participate. While Dorff (2015) focuses on how holding the government

responsible for insecurity increases an individual's likelihood to perceive political activism as effective, other scholars have focused on norms of activism (Foster-Fishman et al 2009) and the presence of effective community organizations (Klesner 2009) as the key drivers of individuals perceptions of the efficacy of political activism. Thus I argue that victims will be more liable to make the link between political problems and their own activism if their communities have a history of social activism and robust community organizations. Second, as Olsson (2014), people become politically active when they perceive that they have the opportunity to influence the political system. Thus, I argue that individuals will be more inclined to view political participation as effective if they view the government as a potential partner: when they perceive local government to be more open to citizen voices.

**H<sub>4</sub>: Victims in localities with a tradition of community organizing should participate more**

**H<sub>5</sub>: Victims that perceive that their local government is open to input from citizens should participate more**

#### **Patterns of Violence and Victimization in Colombia**

insert this paragraph

#### **Data and Variables**

##### *The Dataset*

The data come from a nationally representative survey of Colombia's rural areas in 2014 conducted under the auspices of a USAID multiyear impact evaluation program. [get the rest of this from Joe] The survey randomly selected XX number of municipalities within Colombia's conflict zones. XX more municipalities from non-conflict zones were selected through propensity matching to created a balanced picture of Colombia's rural areas. Within the municipalities, 6,320 people were randomly selected for participation in a detailed survey examining individual's economic status, experiences with the conflict, outlook on the future and opinions on a variety of social and political questions.

##### *Descriptive Statistics*

Of the 6,320 survey participants, 4,315 were women. The average age of the survey group was 42 with a standard deviation of 15.5; no one surveyed was younger than 18. 4800 of the surveyed individuals had completed up to basic primary or basic high school education, split evenly between the two. The rest of the population was evenly distributed between technical school, technological school, university, or no formal ed. The mean response was 2.7 (2 indicated primary; 3 indicated high school). Roughly 3,500 people reported a monthly income between 180,000 (about \$60) and 710,000 pesos (about \$250). About 1250 people were below that level and the rest were above; only 18 people who reported a monthly income higher than 3,200,000 pesos (about \$1100). The social ties measure mean was 3.3 (where a 0 was no trust in a neighbor and a 6 is much). 2219 people reported that they were victims of violence in the war; they did not vary significantly from the wider population in their descriptive statistics. The average age was 43, 1548 of the 2219 were women, 1700 of the 2219 had either primary or high-school level education. Monthly income was slightly lower; for the general population the average response was a 5.0, which translates to between 360,000 pesos (\$125) and 540,000 pesos (\$190) while for the victims the average response was 4.7, placing them in the 180,000 to 360,000 bracket. The mean social capital measure was almost exactly the same for the victims at 3.2. Looking at the count index, the average number of activities people participated in was 2.6 out of 27 total different measures; the standard deviation was 2.4.

### *Independent Variables*

The first set of independent variables seeks to test the factors that impact a victimized individual's propensity to blame the government for localized insecurity problems. [H1] looks specifically at victims of government violence; it relies on the survey question, "Which actor is responsible for the crime you suffered?" Because of the relatively small number of victims of government violence, [H1] will be tested a second time, including the family members of victims of government violence, to create a

more robust result. [H2] looks at victim's assignment of blame; it relies on the survey question, "From the following groups, which ones do you consider are responsible for the damages caused to your municipality in the armed conflict?" [H3] looks at the continued presence of armed groups; it relies on the survey question, "Which armed groups outside the law do you think have the freedom to move within the municipality?"

The second set of independent variables seeks to test the factors that impact a victimized individual's propensity to perceive political participation as effective. [H4] looks at the presence of social organizations; two survey questions allow us to test this hypothesis: "In this community, is there a tradition to work in groups to advance community projects?" and "Is there a community action board in your neighborhood?". Community action boards (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*) have a long tradition in Colombia as a basic unit of social organization at the community level; while they are overseen by the government each board has a wide degree of latitude in determining its leadership, structure and goals (US Bureau of Citizenship). Perhaps the mere presence of a community organization is insufficient for individuals to develop a belief in the efficacy of political activism; therefore I also test how individual's perception of the efficacy of the board correlates to their participation with three survey questions: "do you think the board is effective fighting corruption?", "do you trust the board" and "on a scale of 1 to 6, how much has the board contributed to the peace and protect civilians?" [H5] looks at individuals' perceptions of the openness of their local government, it relies on two survey questions: "Municipal authorities invite the community to express their opinion on topics of community interest (where 1 is never and 6 is always)" and "Municipal authorities take into account the opinions expressed by the citizenship when making decisions (where 1 is never and 6 is always)".

### *Dependent Variables*

The dependent variable of interest is political participation; four sets of questions in the survey allow us to get at this variable. First, the survey asks individuals, "over the past year, have you participated in...?": "marches and demonstrations", "events to improve security, build community projects, maintain public spaces", "events of groups or political parties", "management areas or public control", "labor strikes or demonstrations", "fundraising events", "mingas (indigenous protests)" and "participatory budgeting". Second, the survey asks individuals, "do you currently belong to any of the following organizations or bodies?": "Territorial Planning Councils (local, municipal, departmental or national)", "Ethnic Authority (council or indigenous reserve) / Community Council or Grassroot organization", "Political Party", "Gender group (e.g. feminist group, community mothers, sexual rights)", "Mutual help or support groups", "Community (Civic) Action Board / Neighborhood associations", "Victim Participation Tables / Victims Organizations", "Humanitarian Organizations" and "Labor Unions". Third, the survey asks individuals, "Have you participated in these mechanisms for citizen participation?": "revocation of mandate", "popular legislative initiatives and regulations", "referendum", "plebiscite", "popular consultation", "town meeting", "community action board", "social control of public services", "community participation in health committees", "public hearings" and "citizen oversight". Fourth, the survey asks, "Did you vote on October 25, 2015 for the last local elections?" All of the questions are yes/no, so I test the likelihood of participation for each measure with a logit regression. Additionally, I create a count index aggregating participation in all these measures to provide a broader picture of patterns of participation.

### *Controls*

This study makes use of relatively standard controls determined significant by the victimization and political participation literature: age, gender, minority status, level of education, income and intensity of violence experienced. All are self-reported in the survey. Klesner (2009) finds that in Mexico,



reduced access to resources explains lower levels of political participation for women, poorer people and less educated people. Paulsen (1991) finds that in the USA, increased levels of schooling led to higher levels of activism later in life; he further found that middle-class individuals were more likely to become politically active than working class individuals. Van Heelsum (2005) found that especially tight-knit ethnic minority communities may participate at higher rates, even if they face discrimination.

## Results

I began by seeking to confirm that victims of violence do participate at higher rates; across all measures this held true. All the individual logit regressions showed the correct direction; nearly all were statistically significant. Looking at the count index, victimized people were involved in .6 more political activities than non-victims significant at the .01 level. Our included controls for the most part held with earlier literature; social ties and education were strongly positively associated with more political participation, while women were significantly less likely to participate than men. Perhaps more surprisingly, income was significantly negatively associated with participation, though perhaps because almost everyone surveyed came from roughly the same economic class. Minority groups participated at higher rates across the board, perhaps attributable to strong intra-group identities and a mobilizing indigenous movement currently in Colombia. The logit tables for victimized vs. nonvictimized are available in [Appendix A].

VARIABLES	(1) Victimized Participation Count
Victimized	0.602*** (0.0685)
Social Ties	0.0642*** (0.0185)
Gender	-0.340*** (0.0736)
Age	0.0107*** (0.00227)

Minority	0.467*** (0.0789)
Education	0.312*** (0.0327)
Income	-0.0474** (0.0189)
Constant	1.307*** (0.201)
Observations	5,927
R-squared	0.045

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*[H1] Victims of government violence should participate more*

This hypothesis was cautiously confirmed; controlling for victimization, victims of government violence participate at significantly higher results. Although the logit results across the board showed in the correct direction, many fewer were statistically significant, primarily, I believe, because the number of individuals victimized by the government in my survey is only 47. Nevertheless, my count index showed that on average, victims of government violence participated in an additional one political event, significant at the .05 level. When I include family of those victimized by government violence, the association drops to .5 events more than average but remains statistically significant at the .1 level.

VARIABLES	(1) Participation Count
vict_dummy	1.050** (0.493)
faced_violence	0.592*** (0.0700)
social_ties	0.0659*** (0.0189)
Gender	-0.326*** (0.0747)
Age	0.0107*** (0.00231)

Minority	0.460*** (0.0803)
Education	0.318*** (0.0336)
Income	-0.0504*** (0.0193)
Constant	1.323*** (0.205)
Observations	5,927
R-squared	0.045

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

A serious endogeneity threat to this result is the possibility that the victims of government violence were targeted because they were activists. However, we can address this concern by examining the participation rates of victims of paramilitary violence, because, as was discussed [note: haven't inserted that paragraph in yet...that's patterns of violence in Colombia section] paramilitary groups targeted activists at equal, if not higher rates than the government. However, victims of paramilitary violence do not participate at rates distinct from other victims of violence, lending solid evidence that we are observing our hypothesized relationship. Logit tables for H1 are available in [Appendix B].

*[H2]: Victims who blame the government for the effects of the war in their municipality should participate more*

This hypothesis was cautiously confirmed: controlling for victimization, victims who held the government responsible for the effects of the war in their municipality participated, on average, in 1.1 more events than the rest of the sample population. Because this is a one-wave survey and I do not know when the individuals first became politically active, I cannot disprove that there was a time-order issue in my data: perhaps experiences with political activism made individuals more inclined to blame the government for the damages of the war. Nevertheless I include the data here as strongly suggestive of my hypothesis and encourage further testing on this question.

VARIABLES	(1) Participation Count
blame_govt	1.079*** (0.328)
faced_violence	0.527*** (0.0683)
social_ties	0.0663*** (0.0189)
Gender	-0.315*** (0.0743)
Age	0.0105*** (0.00229)
Minority	0.431*** (0.0804)
Education	0.318*** (0.0334)
Income	-0.0559*** (0.0193)
Constant	1.361*** (0.203)
Observations	5,927
R-squared	0.048

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

*[H3]: Victims in areas where paramilitaries, criminal bands and guerrilla forces are still active should participate more*

This hypothesis was confirmed. Victimized individuals who encounter the constant, visceral evidence of their government's failure to protect their security in the form of active paramilitary, criminal gangs or guerrilla forces all participate at higher rates across the board, significant at the .01 level.

VARIABLES	(1) Criminal Movement	(2) Guerrilla Movement	(3) Paramilitary Movement
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Criminal Presence	0.631***		
	(0.132)		
Gender	-0.401***	-0.395***	-0.392***
	(0.137)	(0.138)	(0.138)
Age	0.00981**	0.00993**	0.00996**
	(0.00459)	(0.00464)	(0.00465)
Minority	0.472***	0.503***	0.535***
	(0.143)	(0.145)	(0.146)
Education	0.306***	0.316***	0.312***
	(0.0600)	(0.0610)	(0.0610)
Income	-0.0675*	-0.0689**	-0.0670*
	(0.0344)	(0.0346)	(0.0344)
Guerrilla Presence		0.208*	
		(0.116)	
Paramilitary Presence			0.358**
			(0.152)
Constant	2.141***	2.213***	2.221***
	(0.379)	(0.382)	(0.379)
Observations	2,129	2,129	2,129
R-squared	0.041	0.030	0.031

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

#### *H4: Victims in localities with a tradition of community organizing should participate more*

This hypothesis was confirmed. I first tested this hypothesis with the survey question, "In this community, is there a tradition to work in groups to advance community projects?" (responses were either yes or no). Our results showed that perceiving that there was a tradition to work in groups in that community dramatically increased an individual's participation. This was the strongest individual variable influencing rates of political participation that I measured; participation rates were strongly significant across the board. Victimized individuals who thought there was a tradition of working in

groups in their community on average participated in 1.6 more events than other victims, significant at the .01 level.

VARIABLES	(1) Participation Count
Community_Problemsolving	1.564*** (0.131)
social_ties	0.00189 (0.0328)
Gender	-0.448*** (0.132)
Age	0.0113** (0.00446)
Minority	0.482*** (0.139)
Education	0.269*** (0.0574)
Income	-0.0501 (0.0325)
Constant	1.787*** (0.378)
Observations	2,129
R-squared	0.105

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

Since these are self-reported perceptions, there is a potential endogeneity problem in that those who participate at higher rates develop a belief that their communities have a tradition of activism. I attempt to account for this endogeneity problem by creating municipal-level averages for this survey question; these averages should give us some insight into which communities truly have a greater tradition of collective action. My theory predicts that in communities with such a tradition of greater collective action, victims should participate at higher rates; this prediction was confirmed: the count index regression predicts that *ceteris paribus*, a victimized individual from a community with a tradition

of collective action would participate in on average almost two more political events than a victimized individual from a community without such a tradition, significant at the .01 level.

VARIABLES	(1) Community_ProblemsolvingAvg
Community_ProblemsolvingAvg	1.894*** (0.150)
social_ties	0.0571*** (0.0189)
Gender	-0.290*** (0.0743)
Age	0.00900*** (0.00231)
Minority	0.397*** (0.0805)
Education	0.276*** (0.0334)
Income	-0.0497*** (0.0192)
Constant	1.103*** (0.202)
Observations	5,927
R-squared	0.052

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

Next, I tested how the presence of a community action board affected participation. I find that the presence of a community action board translates to a small bump in participation; however, this bump is entirely attributable to participation in the community action board. Thus the mere presence of a community organization doesn't translate to a wider belief in the effectiveness of political participation. However, I found that victimized individuals who believe that their community action board was an effective tool participated at significantly higher rates across all measures, potentially

indicating that the presence of effective community organizations is key in helping individuals develop the perception that political participation is effective.

VARIABLES	(1) CAB trust 1	(2) CAB trust 2	(3) CAB trust 3
CAB trust 1	0.137*** (0.0404)		
social_ties	0.0845** (0.0357)	0.0824** (0.0358)	0.0832** (0.0355)
Gender	-0.392*** (0.140)	-0.378*** (0.140)	-0.375*** (0.140)
Age	0.00765 (0.00494)	0.00766 (0.00493)	0.00738 (0.00492)
Minority	0.632*** (0.151)	0.610*** (0.151)	0.640*** (0.152)
Education	0.314*** (0.0628)	0.323*** (0.0629)	0.316*** (0.0626)
Income	-0.0414 (0.0349)	-0.0410 (0.0349)	-0.0370 (0.0350)
CAB trust 2		0.130*** (0.0400)	
CAB trust 3			0.139*** (0.0393)
Constant	1.058** (0.443)	1.070** (0.439)	0.988** (0.449)
Observations	1,657	1,657	1,657
R-squared	0.052	0.051	0.053

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

Once again, these self-reported opinions are subject to the same time-order problem as the previous test; therefore I once again created municipal-level averages for each community action board



trust question on the intuition that there are shared perceptions within municipalities of whether or not their community action boards are effective. My hypothesis predicts that where community action boards are perceived to be effective, victims will participate at higher rates. This prediction was confirmed with the municipal-average data; all three count index measures are positive and significant at the .05 level. Logit tables for H4 are located in [Appendix D].

VARIABLES	(1) CAB trust 1	(2) CAB trust 2	(3) CAB trust 3
CAB trust 1	0.157** (0.0720)		
social_ties	0.0779** (0.0324)	0.0638* (0.0339)	0.0642** (0.0315)
Gender	-0.371*** (0.127)	-0.405*** (0.134)	-0.369*** (0.125)
Age	0.00747* (0.00433)	0.00643 (0.00469)	0.00640 (0.00429)
Minority	0.562*** (0.137)	0.602*** (0.143)	0.639*** (0.137)
Education	0.294*** (0.0570)	0.313*** (0.0612)	0.276*** (0.0566)
Income	-0.0447 (0.0322)	-0.0398 (0.0337)	-0.0401 (0.0316)
CAB trust 2		0.467*** (0.106)	
CAB trust 3			0.239*** (0.0795)
Constant	1.046** (0.410)	0.275 (0.501)	0.839* (0.435)
Observations	1,999	1,767	2,032
R-squared	0.038	0.055	0.041

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

*H5: Victims that perceive that their local government is open to input from citizens should participate more*

This hypothesis was confirmed. It was tested across two survey questions: "Municipal authorities invite the community to express their opinion on topics of community interest (where 1 is never and 6 is always)" and "Municipal authorities take into account the opinions expressed by the citizenship when making decisions (where 1 is never and 6 is always)". Higher opinions on both questions were associated with significantly higher rates of participation.

VARIABLES	(1) Openness Percept 1	(2) Openness Percept 2
Perception of Openness 1	0.182*** (0.0584)	
social_ties	0.102** (0.0432)	0.103** (0.0434)
Gender	-0.388** (0.167)	-0.388** (0.167)
Age	0.0117** (0.00570)	0.0116** (0.00573)
Minority	0.869*** (0.205)	0.865*** (0.205)
Education	0.407*** (0.0814)	0.410*** (0.0823)
Income	-0.0619 (0.0443)	-0.0628 (0.0446)
Perception of Openness 2		0.149** (0.0580)
Constant	1.137** (0.528)	1.252** (0.516)
Observations	1,354	1,354
R-squared	0.067	0.063

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

However, since both responses are self-reported, we once again should be aware of the potential for time-order or other endogeneity problems. Thus, I once again created municipal-level averages on the intuition that these averages would give us some insight as to which municipal governments were more widely perceived to be open to community voices. The data illustrates that *ceteris paribus*, for every point increase (on a 6 point scale) in the community's perception of local government openness, victim participation increases by a half event, significant at the .01 level. Logit tables for H5 are located in [Appendix E].

VARIABLES	(1) open gov 1	(2) open gov 2
Open gov 1	0.528*** (0.0914)	
social_ties	0.0743** (0.0354)	0.0764** (0.0358)
Gender	-0.394*** (0.138)	-0.389*** (0.140)
Age	0.00882* (0.00475)	0.00932* (0.00479)
Minority	0.518*** (0.148)	0.494*** (0.150)
Education	0.317*** (0.0625)	0.322*** (0.0632)
Income	-0.0835** (0.0357)	-0.0838** (0.0361)
Open gov 2		0.505*** (0.0941)
Constant	0.809* (0.461)	0.948** (0.463)
Observations	2,019	1,996
R-squared	0.047	0.047

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

## Conclusions

This paper has sought to make a new entry into our understanding of the link between an individual's victimization from political violence and their subsequent political participation. I argue that the existing literature does not provide a full causal argument for this link; while the evidence Blattman (2009) and others provide for their post-traumatic growth theory is compelling, they have insufficiently theorized the link between personal growth and political action. Additionally, while Dorff (2015) and Rojo-Mendoza (2014) find solid evidence of the importance of social ties in encouraging an individual to take steps towards becoming politically active (a result that is borne out in this paper as well, as my social ties variable is consistently significant), I argue that in both causal stories, strong social ties play a supportive role in the individual's decision to become politically active. Neither give us true insight into what allowed the victimized individual to make the connection between their own growth and the decision to become politically active.

I argue that responsibility attribution fills this gap by illustrating how for an individual to make the connection between their personal growth and the decision to become active, they must 1) clearly implicate the government as the source of the problems they are experiencing in their community and 2) associate their own political participation as an effective means to combat that problem. This generated three hypotheses predicting that victims that would be reasonably inclined to blame the government more participated at higher rates; all three hypotheses were confirmed. It furthermore generated two hypotheses predicting that victims reasonably inclined to believe more in the effectiveness of political participation would participate at higher rates. These hypotheses were also confirmed. However, acknowledging some of the problematic limitations of a 1 wave survey, I advocate for further testing before we fully accept the relevance of responsibility attribution theory to the link between victimization and political participation.

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