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# MASS FEARS, STRONG LEADERS AND THE RISK OF RENEWED CONFLICT: THREE ESSAYS ON POST-CONFLICT ELECTIONS

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Anup Phayal, Student

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Dr. Clayton Thyne, Director of Graduate Studies

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MASS FEARS, STRONG LEADERS AND THE RISK OF RENEWED CONFLICT:  
THREE ESSAYS ON POST-CONFLICT ELECTIONS

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DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the College of Arts and Sciences  
at the University of Kentucky

By  
Anup Phayal  
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Clayton Thyne, Professor of Political Science  
Lexington, Kentucky 2016

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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### MASS FEARS, STRONG LEADERS AND THE RISK OF RENEWED CONFLICT: THREE ESSAYS ON POST-CONFLICT ELECTIONS

Countries emerging out of armed conflicts face immense challenges in their efforts to build electoral democracies. Contrary to our intuition that elections can transform violent competition to peaceful political contests, past research suggests that holding post-conflict elections only increases the chance of renewed violence. Why are elections unable to build sustainable democracies as expected? In this dissertation, I examine the question by focusing on two levels of analysis. First, I study the effects of violence on political behavior of mass publics at the individual level using the World Values survey Dataset. I argue that citizens are more inclined to support undemocratic leaders, when they are faced with threats from armed violence. Empirically, I find that presence of pre-election violence in post-conflict elections leads voters to prefer parties that are stronger in terms of their violence-wielding capacities over more moderate and peaceful parties. Second, I investigate how such an outcome might influence the risk of renewed conflicts in a country emerging out of armed conflict. The hypothesized mechanism can only be described as tragic. At individual level, fearful voters support violent parties mainly to maintain the status quo, fearing that parties with a violent reputation are likely to renew conflict if they lose the election. Tragically, however, placing undemocratic and violent parties in power only increases the likelihood of renewed conflicts. I test this expectation using an event history model to analyze all post-conflict countries from 1950 to 2010 and find that the presence of pre-election violence in a country increases its risk of renewed armed conflicts. The study has important implication for policymakers and election monitoring bodies. Rather than the current practice of observing only a single event Election Day, this study emphasizes the importance of creating a secure environment during the pre-election phase, about six months prior to the first election, in order to achieve a sustainable peace in post-conflict countries.

**KEYWORDS:** Post-conflict election, Peace-building, Democratization, Armed Conflict, Civil War

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_ August 23, 2016

MASS FEARS, STRONG LEADERS AND THE RISK OF RENEWED CONFLICT:  
THREE ESSAYS ON POST-CONFLICT ELECTIONS

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Dedicated to my beloved parents Surya Phayal and Goma Phayal.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 The puzzle

Elections are excellent means to empower aspiring political groups. For countries that have experienced internal armed conflicts, first national elections after the end of conflicts are often crucial parts of the transitional phase in achieving peace and stability. They are symbolic in marking the end of violence and the beginning of democratic politics. For this reason, policymakers involved in building sustainable peace in post-conflict countries often want to hold such elections early (Newman and Rich, 2004; Carothers, 2007; Reilly, 2002). In the same vein, some scholars argue that elections in the post conflict context serve as the start of the process of democratic institutionalization, and they should be held sooner rather than later, to capitalize the consensus generally seen among the key players during the peace agreement phase (Lyons, 2004). Analyzing seven post-conflict election (PCE) cases, for example, Lyons (2004) argues that demilitarization should be the top priority before holding elections and suggests, “Rather than focusing on creating the structures necessary to produce ‘free and fair’ elections [emphasis in original], the international community should look for ways to support interim electoral commissions that foster collaboration among former warring parties, build confidence in the peace process, and change expectations” (2004:58). Many practitioners share this view that election held at the right moment can cement the consensus among parties, thus starting a new phase of democratic stability.

Post conflict elections, however, are not always successful in establishing sustainable democracies. Quite the contrary, past research points to unsuccessful case

studies like Liberia and Cambodia, where post-conflict elections exacerbated the tension and restarted the war (Lyons, 1999). Perplexed by the puzzle, scholars and policymakers have been focusing on the question: how can elections bring about a more robust and sustainable democracy in such countries? Three main distinct approaches have emerged over the years to address this question.

First, an intuitive and feasible approach suggested is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants before elections. After studies indicated the positive impacts of DDR (Walter, 1999; Lyons, 2002, 2004), other studies have contributed further to improve on the procedural efficiency of conducting DDR (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2005; Phayal, Khadka and Thyne, 2015). As a result, the international community and third parties involved in peace processes have incorporated DDR as an important part of the peacebuilding project. In United Nations peacekeeping missions, for instance, DDR strategies have been widely applied since the beginning of the new millennium and published a manual called the Integrated DDR Standard (IDDRS) in the year 2006, to guide DDR practitioners world wide (United Nations, 2006). Currently, the UN boasts a second generation of DDR best practices (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2010) and the initiative is echoed in various regional peacebuilding missions.

Second, the UN established the Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) in 1992 to support the smooth transitioning of elections.<sup>1</sup> The EAD has five key roles, while still expanding: (a) organization and conduct of elections; (b) verification/certification; (c) technical assistance; (d) expert panels; and (e) coordination of international observers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See General Assembly Resolution A/RES/46/137, 9 March 1992

<sup>2</sup>See General Assembly Resolution A/66/314, 19 August 2011

Lastly, scholars have advocated powersharing arrangements like that of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a part of institutional design to foster peace within divided societies (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003; Hoddie and Hartzell, 2005; Mattes and Savun, 2009; Jarstad and Sisk, 2008). Although the emphasis to build proportional representation (PR) election in divided societies is not new (see Lijphart, 1969), re-examination of its merits in the context of post-conflict elections is recent. However, not all agree on the long term benefits of a PR electoral system. On the one hand, many scholars point that proportional representation and autonomy minimize the risk of conflicts as minorities in such countries gain a voice in the national politics. On the other hand, critiques warn against Balkanization, as countries divide into separate ethnic enclaves and face political gridlock as the number of veto players increase in national politics (Cunningham, 2011; Horowitz, 1985)<sup>3</sup>.

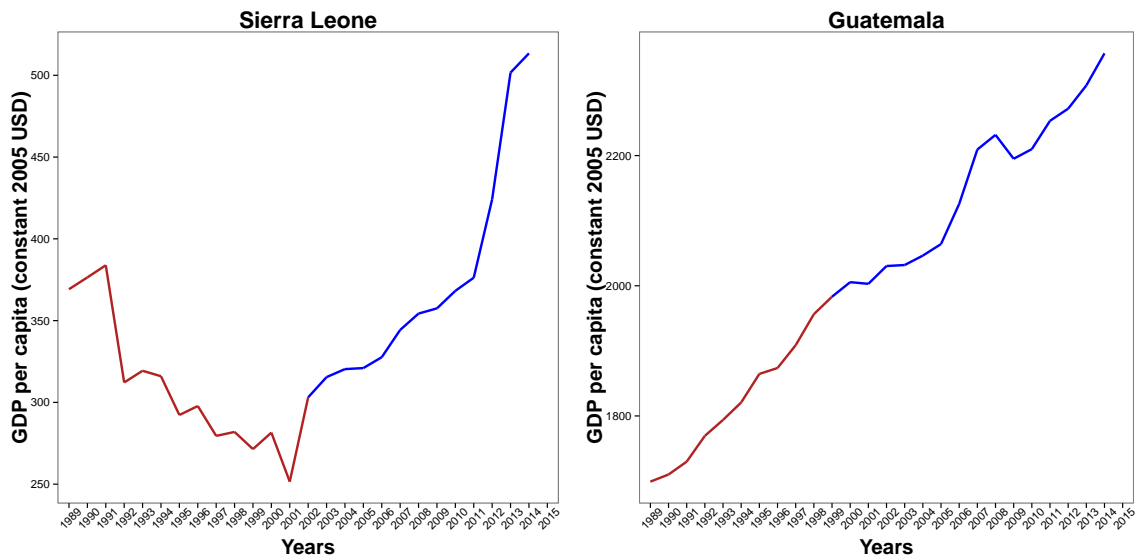
Despite the above mentioned approaches, however, we continue to witness challenges to sustain peace in post-conflict countries. Analyzing all post-civil war cases after World War II, Brancati and Snyder (2013) find that countries are able to sustain the peace after elections only in about half of the cases. Two examples of successful cases are Sierra Leone after its post-conflict election in 2002, and Guatemala after 1999. Figure 1.1 shows that both countries prospered steadily after the landmark event of a post-conflict election. However, many other post-conflict countries continue to face two main challenges after such elections. First, the level of democracy in the majority of post-conflict countries is sub-optimal, explained partly due to a low level of political accountability in less successful countries (Gurses and Mason, 2008). Second, recent research shows that more than half the intra-state conflicts around the world are a relapse of conflict (Walter, 2004; Doyle and Sam-

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<sup>3</sup>Also see Cox and McCubbins (1997) for debate about the effect of institutional design on policy outcomes.

banis, 2000), and elections are one of the primary causes in increasing the risk of relapsed conflict (Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom, 2008; Paris, 2004; Collier, 2003; Cederman, Hug and Krebs, 2010). Some recent examples of such failures include the restart of armed conflicts in Sri Lanka after 2004 post-conflict elections, in Democratic Republic of Congo after 2006, in Chad after 2001, in Afghanistan after 2004, and in Iraq after 2000.

Figure 1.1: Successful Post-conflict Elections



Note: Above figure depicts GDP per capita of the two countries in constant 2005 USD. The blue and red colors mark periods after and before post-conflict elections. Source: World bank.

Recent studies continue to focus on the puzzle of why post-conflict elections fail to sustain the peace from two different approaches. First, studies point that the timing of elections has substantive impact on peaceful sustainability later. Flores and Nooruddin (2012) and Brancati and Snyder (2013) show that post-conflict countries that hasten elections face the risk of conflict recurrence. This finding is particularly important in the recent context considering the fact that the length



of time between the end of conflict and the first post-conflict election has been declining in recent decades, from an average of 5.6 years before 1989 to an average of 2.7 years after 1989 (Brancati and Snyder, 2013, p. 823).

However, as Joshi, Melander and Quinn (2015, p. 5) point out, the finding about election timing while very illuminating, is not very useful for policymakers. Quite the opposite, all stakeholders on the ground demand elections to be held sooner rather than later. Moreover, some scholars point out that the early phase of the post-conflict period is risky irrespective of an election (Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom, 2008, p. 464; Snyder, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). Therefore, while the finding on election timing may contribute to our understanding of the failure of post-conflict elections, there is a need to identify other causal factors associated with elections that disrupt the sustainability of peace in post-conflict countries.

Joshi, Melander and Quinn (2015) instead suggest focusing on the terms of Comprehensive Peace Agreements (CPA). The authors use a bargaining framework to (1) understand why former warring groups agree to sign peace agreement and contend elections in the first place, and (2) analyze conditions in which groups would remain committed to peace after the elections. They argue that provisions of accommodation as laid out in Comprehensive Peace Agreements (CPA) significantly affect the probability of peaceful sustainment later. According to the authors, three provisions of accommodation in the CPA that reduce the likelihood of conflict recurrence are the establishment of a transitional powersharing government, the granting of amnesty and the release of prisoners of war.

Yet, while accommodative CPA has positive effects, it does not necessarily address how post-conflict elections influence the sustainability of peace later. What

factors inherent in the electoral process help a post-conflict country transition towards sustainable and peaceful country? This dissertation looks beyond the timing of election and CPA effects, and examines the role of electoral processes in raising later the risk levels. In chapter two, for example, I examine citizens' political attitudes with survey data to determine whether fear among voters influences their voting patterns. The main argument is that fear of violence causes people to vote for parties that are less moderate and more violent, which in turn contributes to the increased risk of conflict recurrence after an election. Empirically, a factor that creates variation in the levels of fear among voters in such elections is the presence or absence of pre-election intimidation and violence. The main findings in this study indicate that presence of pre-election violence increases support for violent parties, and also the risk of conflict recurrence. In summary, I argue that in post-conflict countries, pre-election intimidation fuels the cycle of violence, as fearful voters are more likely to support parties that have the potential to restart the armed conflict.

The dissertation contributes to our understanding of the short and long term consequences of election violence in post conflict regions. Despite the conviction of both policymakers and academics that elections are the primary means to manage conflict, our understanding of why they do not always maintain peace in post-conflict countries is limited. Weak institutions are often cited as the reason for failures of post-conflict elections; and, therefore, the recommendation is made to build strong institutions before holding elections, often with the help of outside actors, (Paris, 2004; Paris and Sisk, 2008; Brancati and Snyder, 2013). Yet, an election is the foundational event in building political institutions. Thus, the recommendation, while undoubtedly valid, needs to be much more specific. This research contributes by revealing the mechanisms by which violence affects the voting be-

havior of individuals, the outcome of elections and ultimately, the sustainability of peace

The main results show that the presence of pre-election violence has debilitating effects on electoral democracy and post-conflict peace. This is important because the level of pre-election violence, according to this study, need not be large to produce such effects. Perceptions of insecurity among voters, caused by some incidents of intimidations, are enough to drive the path of electoral democracy in a post-conflict country to what Ashworth, de Mesquita and Friedenberg (2015) term a sub-optimal democracy, and eventually to the failure of peace.

This research also has important implications for policymakers that are interested in building peace and democracy in post-conflict countries. In her book on election monitoring, Kelley (2012, p. 72) shows that international election monitors tend to under-report pre-election violence due to what she refers to as the “stability bias”—fear among election-monitoring bodies that reporting pre-election violence may fuel instability and protests in the country. While those fears are probably genuine, findings from this study highlight that such underreporting systematically affects the health of democracy in the long run. Considering the challenges, therefore, one policy recommendation from this study is to focus on deterring political parties from using coercive strategies, by imposing layers of direct and indirect costs. As suggested in the final chapter, I highlight the need and collective responsibility of external peacebuilders, election monitors and civil society in providing a sense of security among voters in post-conflict countries.

## 1.2 The Roadmap

There are three main empirical essays that follow to demonstrate that pre-election violence increases the recurrence of armed conflict in post-conflict elections. Following the introductory chapter, the essay in chapter two examines how the fear of violence leads mass publics to adopt anti-democratic orientations. Using psychological theories, I argue that individuals fearing violence are more likely to form political opinions based on their fears and insecurities. They are therefore more inclined to prioritize anti-democratic values, such as maintaining order, respect for authority, and the need for a stronger leader, over democracy and liberty. As evidence to support the argument, I analyze sixth wave World Values Survey dataset of more than 60,000 respondents in 52 countries, using multi-level modeling. The results show that when respondents *perceive* higher threats from war, civil war, or terrorism, they are more supportive of undemocratic leaders. Furthermore, I explore whether *actual* threats of violence generate similar effects on individual attitudes by investigating the provincial level violence in Iraq and its influence on the public opinion. Again using hierarchical models, I find that Iraqis living in provinces with greater conflict report higher levels of anti-democratic attitudes.

In the third chapter essay, I link the above findings to the electoral context of post-conflict countries. I argue that political parties in post-conflict countries are likely to gain more votes through the use of pre-election violence and intimidation. When parties are seen to use intimidation and indiscriminate violence, it intensifies voters' worries about conflict recurring. Fearing that the violent party may restart armed conflict upon losing the election, citizens become risk averse and vote for the violent party. I test this argument by analyzing results of Nepal's post-conflict elections in 2008 and the documented incidents of pre-election violence and in-

timidation by a former rebel party. As expected, regression analyses show that the former rebel party received more votes in districts where it used a higher level of pre-election violence.

In chapter four, I focus on the long term implications of voter intimidation in post-conflict countries. Following the second chapter where I argue that violent parties are likely to win elections with pre-election violence, I expect to find a strong association between voter intimidation incidents and the increased risk of renewed conflicts. Electoral victory through violent means causes opposing parties to not only challenge the electoral results but also question the winner's commitment to peace. Winners, on the other hand, are reluctant to give up their power and may even use force to repress challengers. I test this argument about spiraling violence with a crossnational dataset of post-conflict country-cases from 1950 to 2010. Using countries as the unit of analysis, I use an event history model to analyze the effects of pre-election violence on the recurrence of armed conflicts. As expected, the results show that on average, presence of pre-election violence increases the risk of conflict recurrence by more than double.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, I discuss the policy implications of the findings. Since I establish in the earlier chapters the negative consequences of voter insecurity in post-conflict countries, I suggest policy measures in four areas to physically lower the levels of violent incidents before an election and to send a positive message to voters for boosting their security perceptions. While these measures exist as a part of various peacebuilding initiatives, the main emphasis of this chapter is to consolidate these security-enhancing steps for electoral purposes. The four main steps that I discuss in the final chapter are (1) disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants before elections, (2) peacebuilding to gear towards civilian

protection starting at least six months before the election day, (3) strengthening civil society to exercise accountability, and (4) deploying election monitors early and making the security challenges early, rather than waiting to declare whether or not election was fair.

## Chapter 2 The Threat of violence and support for strong leadership

### Abstract

Does the fear of violence lead citizens to adopt anti-democratic orientations? Past studies on this topic focus primarily on consolidated democracies, despite its greater relevance for democratizing countries. In this study, I use the sixth wave World Values Survey data from 53 countries to examine how the degree to which citizens are worried about political violence—from war, civil war and terrorism—shapes their various undemocratic orientations. I argue that when fearful of political violence, citizens face competing choices between security versus liberty. The results show that citizens expressing greater apprehension about political violence are more supportive of maintaining order, respect for authority, and strong leadership over democratic governance. Further investigation shows that individuals experiencing “actual” threat of violence also express similar preferences. These findings provide a deeper understanding of mass political behavior during violent periods, with important implications for scholars and policymakers about the need to allay individual insecurities in order to effectively build sustainable democratic institutions.

## 2.1 Introduction

“You should stay here. This is your land. These are your houses. Your meadows and gardens. Your memories. You shouldn’t abandon your land because it’s difficult to live, because you are pressured by injustice and degradation . . . . You should stay here for the sake of your ancestors and descendants. Otherwise your ancestors would be defiled and descendants disappointed. But I don’t suggest that you stay, endure, and tolerate a situation you are not satisfied with.”

*Milosovic’s speech to serbs in Kosovo* (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 39)

A handful of studies highlights the role of political leaders in creating a climate of hostility, anger and aggression among the public. When Milosovic rose to power in Serbia, for instance, his speeches were bellicose, calling Serbs to fight and defend themselves against the other ethnic groups in the region, which later turned into an ethnic bloodbath. Some argue that entrepreneurial leaders like Milosovic are strategic in their decisions to mobilize radical movements and violence, as they wait for the opportune transitional periods (Pappas, 2008; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005, p. 10). Leaders, in other words, are key in shaping intolerant attitudes among citizens, often increasing the risk of conflict and the failure of nascent democracies.

Another set of studies, however, indicates that rather than the behavior of leaders, it is the fear among individuals that rallies the masses towards leaders that are aggressive, intolerant and undemocratic. Analyzing electoral patterns in post-conflict countries, Flores and Nooruddin (2012, p. 561) suggest that many voters in post-conflict elections are likely to elect “insincere candidates.” The authors use the example of Liberian post-conflict election in 1997 to illustrate their point. Liberian voters at the time elected Charles Taylor and his violent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPLF) party. According to the authors, the Liberians discarded moder-



ate and peaceful candidate and favored Taylor's NPLF party because they feared that the party would restart the armed conflict if they lost the election.<sup>1</sup> When Milosovic was campaigning to get elected, Serbia was in a similar transitional state. Yugoslavia had just disintegrated and tension was building among Serbs and Croats in the region. Amidst this tension, 86% of the Serbian population voted for Milosovic in a referendum-type election in December 1989. In both cases, citizens chose an aggressive political strongman, who were later indicted as war criminals. In this chapter, I examine these debates by focusing on the sense of insecurity among citizens and its effect on their democratic attitudes and preferences. Does fear of violence increase anti-democratic tendencies among individuals?

The main argument of the chapter is that when individuals fear the prospect of violence, they are more likely to prioritize security and protection, and show relatively less concern for liberty and democracy. To test the argument, I analyze democratic attitudes of individuals as they report the degree of their *perceived* fear of violence,<sup>2</sup> using World Values Survey (WVS) dataset of more than 60,000 individuals across 53 countries. The empirical tests strongly support the premise that apprehensions about political violence from wars, civil wars and terrorism causes individuals to prefer political order over liberty, to value respect for authority more than independence, and to show more support for strong candidates even at the cost of democracy. Furthermore, I also examine if an individual's democratic attitude is influenced by the varying levels of *actual* violence they experience. To assess the effect of threat from actual violence, I analyze survey responses of Iraqi citizens in 2004 and 2006, living in 18 Iraqi provinces that suffered varying degrees of vi-

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<sup>1</sup>Also see Lyons (1999)

<sup>2</sup>I use fear from violence and threat from violence interchangeably to mean individual's attitudinal response to the prospect of armed violence (war, civil war, terrorism).

olence because of the ongoing civil war. Results show that individuals are more likely to report the need for stronger leaders and prioritize political order, when they have experienced a higher intensity of violence.

The chapter contributes to our understanding about the risk to democratic survival that many young democracies face as voters embrace anti-democratic preferences. Insights from this crossnational study are generalizable and useful to policymakers in transitional countries, as well as the international community with interests in building sustainable democracies. It highlights the vulnerability of citizens to populist and bellicose rhetorics, when a country is facing threats from armed violence. Independent of elite manipulation, this study suggests that individuals become more inclined to support strong and anti-democratic leaders when they are fearful. The findings are particularly relevant for post-conflict countries on the path to democratization, where fear of violence is widespread.

In the following section, I briefly survey past works that show the effect of political context on public support for democracy. The discussion that follows culminates to the three main hypotheses of the study predicting that perceiving the threat of violence leads citizens to place a greater emphasis on the need for order and respect for authority, and to support a strong leader who does not have to bother with elections. The empirical section that follows uses multi-level models to analyze WVS data of individual responses nested within country characteristics. The second part of the empirical section examines the survey responses of citizens in Iraqi provinces. Since provinces in Iraq suffered varying degree of violence around the time of survey, and since their characteristics differ in terms of sectarian dominance, I once again use a multi-level modeling approach. Finally, I conclude with a brief discussion of issues that warrant consideration in future investigations.

## 2.2 Democratic attitudes under the threat of violence

Studies of mass support for democracy increasingly focus on the effect of country-level factors that shape micro-level attitudes. A central tenet of an ideal democracy is accountability, which is intricately linked to fair electoral competition and the ability of citizens to project their material interest in guarding their liberty (Kapstein and Converse, 2008, p. 20). Although the mechanism seems to function efficiently once an electoral process is introduced, the underlying complexity becomes apparent when we look at countries that fail to democratize. Past research indicates that two structural factors in young democracies are responsible for such failure: lack of economic development (Lipset, 1959; Przeworski and Limongi, 1997) and weak democratic institutions (Mansfield and Snyder, 2002).

While the debate about the structural factors continues (Boix and Stokes, 2003; Boix, 2011; Svoboda, 2008; Ramsay, 2011), other studies analyze an important micro-level determinant of a functioning democracy, the voting behavior of individual citizens (Evans and Whitefield, 1995; Duch, Palmer and Anderson, 2000; Dalton, 2000; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Anderson and Singer, 2008). These studies examine the structural and contextual factors that influence individual political attitudes, which ultimately shape the quality of democracy. Using survey sample of population from Eastern European countries, for instance, Evans and Whitefield (1995) show that rather than evaluation of economic performance, our experiences with political institutions influence our commitment to democracy. Others counter-argue and attribute democratic failures to the clientelistic culture predominant in young democracies that prompt citizens to distrust political leaders and turn towards patronage networks, thus impinging on healthy competition and democratic efficiency (Kapstein and Converse, 2008; Keefer, 2007).

But the most common context that adversely affects the democratization process in young democracies is internal armed conflict, either ongoing, eminent, or the one that occurred in the immediate past (Collier, 2003). Studies couched in a rational choice framework use the instrumentalist account suggesting the role of leaders in mobilizing such conflicts. Explaining ethnic conflicts, De Figueiredo and Weingast (1999, p. 264) argue that the security dilemma among citizens alone cannot explain the onset of conflicts; the role and incentive of the leaders is important. In their review article on ethnic conflict, Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 846) similarly state that “large-scale ethnic violence is provoked by elites seeking to gain, maintain or increase their hold on political power.” Such mobilizations form cleavages in society along ethnic or ideological lines, often leading to the initiation of either armed violence or the electoral ascendancy of militaristic leaders, thus undermining democratic processes. In other words, a major cause of democratic failures in countries with weak political institutions is the onset of armed conflict through elite manipulation.

However, others do not fully agree with the instrumentalist view. Sambanis (2002, p. 228) finds the instrumentalist argument problematic since it “suggests that ethnic conflict is not inherent in ethnic identity.” The author takes the primordialist approach to explain ethnic conflicts, as suggested by Horowitz (1985). Rather than an elite driven process, the primordialist approach contends that ethnic conflicts are manifestations of innate human tendencies to divide along ethnic or tribal lines. Sambanis (2002, p. 228) accepts that “There is still much work to be done linking macro-level theories of conflict to a theoretical treatment of individuals motives and actions.” Varshney (2003) similarly argues that individuals are drawn to nationalistic wars because of other aspects like self-respect, dignity

and recognition. In sum, the latter works suggest that even without elite manipulation, there are emotional and innate factors that can trigger the ingroup-outgroup mentality that is conducive to conflict.

Behavioral studies suggest that contextual or structural factors can also shape our political attitudes. This role of context on our political attitudes is different from the elite-focused instrumentalist argument, and also from the primordialist or purely emotion-based arguments discussed above, which regards emotions as fixed. Mansfield and Snyder allude to this contextual effect on individual attitudes when the authors posit, “It is not fixed public attitudes of belligerence, but rather something in the political process of the transition itself that turns attitude and outcomes in a warlike direction” (2005, p. 22). More recent studies have undertaken empirical investigations to identify unique psychological patterns among individuals during unusual contexts, such as transitions or other external shocks like the fall of Berlin wall (Rohrschneider, 1999) or the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Research conducted after the 9/11 attacks, for instance, shows that an increased threat perception among citizens leads to more support for the war against terrorism (Hetherington and Suhay, 2011; Huddy and Feldman, 2011), the increased willingness to trade off personal liberty for security and support for leaders and parties that are conservative, nationalist, and ready to adopt punitive policies against terrorists (Davis and Silver, 2004; Merolla and Zechmeister, 2009*b,a*). These US findings seem generalizable to other consolidated democracies, such as Israel (Berrebi and Klor, 2008), where terrorist incidents even in politically left-leaning localities produced an increase in support for right bloc parties; or in Turkey, where attacks by PKK rebel groups had similar results (Kibris, 2010). Drawing largely from psychological theories, Merolla and Zechmeister (2009*a*) argue that when individuals

face terrorist threats, coping mechanisms lead to three distinct behavioral reactions: increased distrust and intolerance, preference for strong leadership during voting decisions, and support for aggressive foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

However, the above findings, that fear leads to preference for strong leaders, are based on research on consolidated democracies. “Strong” in the studies refer to leaders that have the capability to pursue punitive policies or war against terrorism. Much less is known on how fear of violence may affect political attitudes of citizens in a democratizing country, or its consequence on the democratic process. The latter is important because in contrast to minor democratic backsliding in consolidated democracies, the reversal of a democratic regime is a real possibility for a democratizing country. Alternatively, it is plausible that people in Western democracies favor stronger leaders as a rational response, if they are confident in the ability of such a leader to fight terrorism, while assured that such support alone will not result in a democratic reversal. In any case, understanding contextual factors that shape democratic attitudes among citizens is important for a democratizing country and there is a need to examine the association between the threat of violence and the democratic choices of the public across countries with varying degree of democracy based on relevant theoretical underpinnings.

### **2.3 Fear of violence and the choice of order, authority and strong leader**

When individuals prefer more political order over civil liberty and endorse respect for authority, studies indicate that their political attitudes tend to run counter to democratic principles. Gibson (2013) finds that a person’s choice of political order

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<sup>3</sup>As fear of terrorist violence increases among citizens, studies show that the level of stereotyping and intolerance also become higher (Kinder and Kam, 2010; Davis and Silver, 2004; Peffley, Hutchison and Shamir, 2015)

over civil liberties is linked to political intolerance.<sup>4</sup> Stenner, in her study about authoritarian dispositions, similarly argues that political intolerance is one of the four components of authoritarianism (2005, p. 23) and shows that a person's choice for political order over civil liberties reflects political intolerance. The author points to studies about the rise of radical right wing populist parties in Europe that found a high degree of political intolerance among party supporters.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, an individual's choice of respect for authority is found to be closely linked with social conformity (Stenner, 2005, p. 148) and negatively related to the tolerance of opposing views. Empirically, Inglehart (1999) finds after analyzing time series WVS data that over the years, there is a decline in responses indicating that "respect for authority is good" and this decline negatively correlated with the gradual increase in support for democracy. In this section, I analyze the impact of fear on respondents' democratic attitudes by examining their choices on maintaining order and respect for authority, when they report varying degree of threat perception.

What is our reaction to fear? Psychological studies explain that our need for order and respect for authority become more acute when we feel the lack of physical security in our surroundings. This is because our perceptions about threats to personal safety and security are closely linked to how we think about and make political decisions. Studies on terror management theory posit that culture and cultural norms serve as anxiety-buffers when people are confronted with threats to their mortality. Under normal conditions, humans are in denial about their mortality. But when mortality is made salient, humans seek solace and a sense of order

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<sup>4</sup>Gibson (2013, p. 46) defines political tolerance as "whether citizens will put up with objectionable political ideas—the degree to which citizens will support the extension of civil liberties to all, including groups advocating highly disagreeable viewpoints and ideologies"

<sup>5</sup>also see (Altemeyer, 1981)

and permanence by bolstering our cultural values, such as religious views or dogmatic political views (Rosenblatt et al., 1989, 681).<sup>6</sup>

Studies after 9/11 shifted the focus from normative threats to terrorist threats, as they find that the perception of terrorist threats increased intolerance and hatreds against outgroups and support for punitive measures such as the “war against terrorism” (Hetherington and Suhay, 2011; Asbrock and Fritsche, 2013; Napier and Jost, 2008; Duckitt, 2013). Because armed violence, be it from war, civil war or terrorism, evokes similar concerns about safety and security, we should find that when people are fearful of armed violence, the importance for maintaining order and security should prevail over civil liberties and individual freedom. Likewise, such fears should necessitate the demand for more social conformity and therefore, respect for authority.

*H1: Citizens who perceive greater threat from war, civil war and terrorism are expected to express greater support for order (H1a) and respect for authority (H1b), independent of other individual level and country level characteristics.*

Studies show that threat perception creates in-group out-group boundaries, generates intolerance towards the “other,” and increases support for powerful leaders who can punish the out-groups. According to Greenberg and Arndt (2011), such reaction is the result of the primal instinct to survive. Revisiting our discussion about normative threat, psychological studies show that mortality salience is linked to self-preservation by upholding cultural and moral values. Rosenblatt and his colleagues (1989, p. 688) state, “Those who deviate from cultural standards are

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<sup>6</sup>Terror management theory is linked to Fromm (1941), who argues that German citizens after the first World War adopted authoritarian ideology as a result of threats to German values. These earlier psychological studies defined threat normatively—perceiving threat to existence when individual’s norms and cultural values are threatened (Fromm, 1941; Rosenblatt et al., 1989).



responded to with disdain because such behavior threatens the values that underlie the individual's source of security." Furthermore, Greenberg et al. (1990) use experimental evidence to show that activating death-related cognition causes a person to evaluate others positively and reward them when they agree with the person's cultural world views, and to evaluate them negatively and punish them when they transgress the person's world views or values. This explanation indicates that individual's instinctive response to threat perception not only heightens their intolerance against outgroups but also increases their endorsement of aggressive leaders.

The international relations literature on ethnic conflict and polarization use a rationalist framework and provide a slightly nuanced explanation for why fear from another group or person causes individuals to manifest prosocial behavior among in-group members and punish the out-group. Founded on classic inter-state conflict theories, Posen (1993, p. 28-29) argues that individuals show aggressive behavior towards a group that they perceive as hostile, mainly due to the superiority of offensive action against defensive action. Similarly, Horowitz (1985, p. 187) argues that fear of ethnic domination and suppression to be the primary reason to acquire a more powerful position. In Rwanda, for instance, Kaufman (2006) argues that the fear of domination is one of the main factors that fueled the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in the 1990s. When Hutu President Habyarimana agreed to start a dialogue with Tutsis, the extremist northwestern Hutu clique viewed it as an abject surrender to the Tutsis, who in their view, "would seize the spoils of their rule and seek retribution" (Kuperman, 2000, p. 96). Although the perpetrator who fired and brought down the President's airplane has remained mysterious, it is clear that the fearful Hutus were in favor of a more aggressive policy towards the Tutsis and were not happy about the President's approach to start a peaceful dialog. In

other words, as Kalyvas (2006, p. 61) argues, individuals are more supportive of a “warmongering” leader when they are fearful and uncertain about the opponent’s intention to harm physically. When people are fearful of armed violence, I therefore expect them to support leaders that are strong and aggressive, with little regard for the democratic process.<sup>7</sup>

*H2: Individuals who perceive greater threat from war, civil war and terrorism should be more supportive of strong political leaders.*

## **2.4 Research design**

I test the above hypotheses using data from the sixth wave of the WVS (World Values Survey Association, 2014) administered cross-nationally between the years 2010 and 2014. In total, there are 61,548 observations nested within 53 countries. Considering the country-level variations, I use multi-level modelling approach to explore how fear of violence, *perceived* or *real*, affects the anti-democratic attitudes among respondents.

### **2.4.1 Dependent Variables**

The expectation in this chapter is that perceived threat from war, civil war and terrorism influences individuals’ expressed support for undemocratic attitudes—i.e., order, respect for authority, and strong leadership. I use three batteries of questions from the WVS to measure undemocratic attitudes, the dependent variables in the

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<sup>7</sup>I do not differentiate the anger and anxiety response from distinctive threat and fear stimuli (Huddy, Feldman and Weber, 2007). This is because theoretically I expect both responses to result in support for extremist leaders—for a extremist nationalist leader when angry, or comply with the perpetrator’s demand when filled with anxiety, thus providing support for, say, a coercive rebel group. In both cases, there is no room for moderate and peaceful candidate. Electoral defeat of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to

Charles Taylor during the 1997 in Liberia is a good anecdotal example for the latter.

analysis. First, a question asks respondents to select a response that they think is the most important from among the following list: maintaining order, giving people more say in important government decisions, fighting rising prices, and protecting freedom of speech. I create a binary variable *maintaining order* coded as 1 if “maintaining order” was the respondent’s first choice and 0 otherwise.<sup>8</sup> Another question in the WVS asks whether respondents think greater respect for authority is “good,” “bad” or they “don’t mind”. The resulting variable *respect for authority* is coded 1 if respondents think it is good and 0 otherwise.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the third question asks respondents about their preference for “a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections.” The variable *strong leader* is coded 1 if respondents choose having such leader is “very good” or “fairly good” and 0 if they choose “fairly bad” or “very bad”.<sup>10</sup> I model individual variables nested within country characteristic variables to explain the three dependent variables as below.

Country level: Model for country j

$$\beta_{00} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(GDP (log)) + \gamma_{02}(Polity)$$

Random intercept: Model for individuals i’s nested within country j’s :

$$Dependent Variable^{11}_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(GDP (log)) + \gamma_{02}(Polity) + \beta_{01}(Threat index) + \beta_{02}(Gender : m - 1, f - 0) + \beta_{03}(Age) + \beta_{04}(Education level) + \beta_{05}(Income) + \beta_{06}(Predisposed authoritarianism) + u_{0j} + \epsilon_{ji}$$

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<sup>8</sup> WVS Quesiton: “If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important? Maintaining order in the nation; Giving people more say in important government decisions; Fighting rising prices and; Protecting freedom of speech.”

<sup>9</sup> WVS Quesiton: ”Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don’t you mind? Greater respect for authority”

<sup>10</sup> WVS Question: “For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country? Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections”

<sup>11</sup>Need for order, respect for authority and strong leader

#### 2.4.2 Individual level explanatory and control variables

Using WVS data, I use self-reported threat perception or fear from violence as the main explanatory variable. Three questions in the survey asks respondents how much they worry about war, civil war and terrorism on a 4-point scale: “very much,” “a good deal,” “not much,” or “not at all.” While responses to these questions tap different events in different countries, theoretically it is safe to state that they all measure the same latent concept: their perception of threat or fear from armed violence. Using principal component factor analysis, I find that the factor loadings for all three items are above .9. I then create a factor index of the three items that ranges from 1 (“no threat” ) to 12 (“highest level of threat”). The factor index variable that reports individual’s level of fear from violence, *threat index*, has eigenvalue of 2.59.

Numerous other factors may influence the degree to which respondents express their democratic attitudes. Past research, for example, shows that we are more likely to find anti-democratic attitudes and lower support for civil liberties among individuals who are pre-disposed to authoritarianism (Feldman and Stenner, 1997; Hetherington and Suhay, 2011). Following past studies (Feldman and Stenner, 1997; Duckitt, 1989), I use child rearing values to measure predisposed authoritarianism among individuals. A question in the WVS asks respondents to pick from a list of qualities in children that they think are important. Individuals who choose obedience as the most important value in children from a list of 11 possible values are coded as *pre-disposed authoritarians*.<sup>12</sup>

Education is also an important determinant of democratic attitudes. Thyne

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<sup>12</sup>The other choices are independence; hard work; feeling of responsibility; imagination; tolerance and respect for other people; thrift, saving money and things; determination, perseverance; religious faith; unselfishness; and self-expression.

(2006) argues that education contributes to political stability by creating social cohesion and increasing tolerance. Other studies have also found education level to correlate positively with tolerance, which in turn is associated with democratic attitudes (Bobo and Licari, 1989; Stubager, 2008).<sup>13</sup> Therefore, I control for the *level of education* of the respondents using an ordinal scale that ranges from 1 (no formal education) to 9 (university level education). Finally, I include in the model the gender, age and income level of the respondents from the WVS data. Variable *female* is coded as 1 for female and 0 for male. Finally, *age* is measured with continuous scales, and *income level* is the self-reported household income-group of respondents in ordinal scale that ranges from lowest of 1 to highest of 10.

Individuals are nested within countries. We find that the sample of countries in the survey are fairly varied in terms of their regime types and wealth. I use the *polity* scale of the country to indicate their regime types: -10 for autocratic regimes and 10 for the countries with consolidated democracies (Marshall, Jaggers and Gurr, 2002). The pooled sample distribution of Polity scores shows that 27% of the countries are below the Polity score of 1, 19% are between 1 and 6, and 54% are 7 or higher. This sample distribution is fairly representative of the population. In 2012, for instance, polity data shows that 49% of the countries worldwide had polity score of 7 or higher. This is reassuring since the second level units need not necessarily be large and normally distributed (Greene, 2011, p. 183). Finally, I control for the log of the country's GDP using data from World Bank (2013). In the pooled sample, *GDP (log)* ranges from 1 to 8.

If we are to assume that unobserved characteristics of residents in each country are constant, then I could use a pooled model of the responses using logit or

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<sup>13</sup>See also Peffley and Rohrschneider (2003) on tolerance and democracy.

probit models. However, since we expect variability among countries even when controlling for basic indicators like wealth or regime type, I can either use a fixed or random effects model. Scholars argue that using fixed effects, a dummy variable for countries, assumes high variability and ignores some similarities across countries that may be due to factors like shared borders or regions. Using a random intercept or partial pooling model produce estimates that are closer to population parameters (Gelman and Hill, 2007, p. 353).<sup>14</sup> The estimates for the multi-level model in this study is computed using the lme4 package (version 1.1-12) in R.

## 2.5 Analysis and results

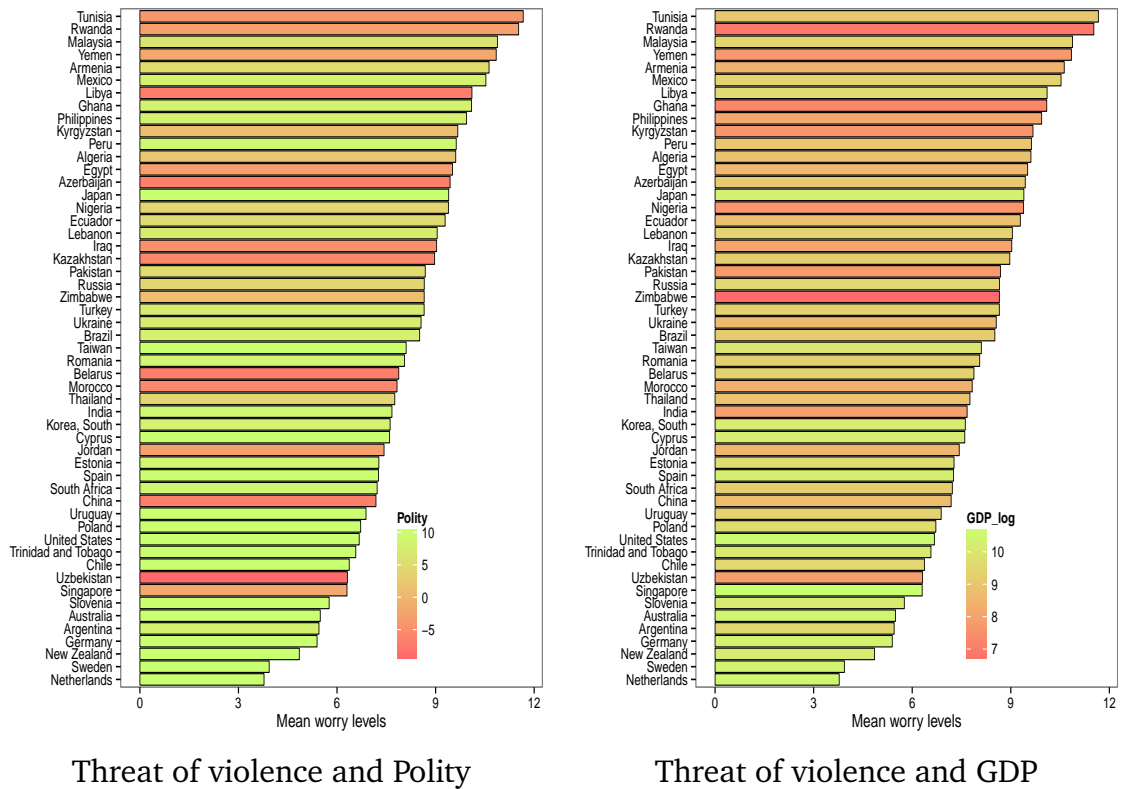
The main argument in this chapter is that perceived or actual fear of violence influences political preferences. In order to test this relationship, I first examine the distribution of the main explanatory variable, perceived threat, and its bivariate relationship with the three dependent variables measuring undemocratic attitudes. The main independent variable, the index of self-reported threat or fear levels, ranges from 3 to 12. The mean threat index for each country in the study and its relationship with Polity and GDP is shown in Figure 2.1. The shades in the panels of the figure represent (a) polity scales and (b) GDP (log). According to the figure, Tunisia has the highest mean threat index of 11.67 for the survey year 2013, and Netherlands has the lowest value of 3.78 for the survey year 2012. We find that on average, respondents in wealthy consolidated democracies perceive relatively less threat from violence.

What is the association between respondents' threat perception and their democratic preferences? Bivariate analysis of the sample in Figure 2.2 shows the distri-

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<sup>14</sup>Also see Clark and Linzer (2012)

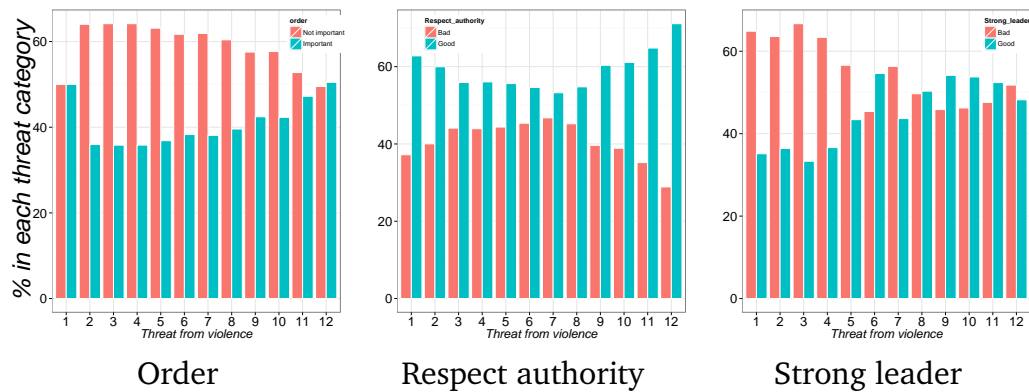
Figure 2.1: Mean self-reported threat of violence index in sampled countries



Note: Figures in both panels above show mean level of self-reported threat index among 64,0033 respondents in 53 countries in the World Values Survey dataset. Threat index is created from questions in the survey data that asks respondents how much they worry about war, civil war and terrorism. The threat index ranges from 3 to 12. In the above figure the highest mean index is 11.67 in Tunisia and the lowest mean index is 3.78 in Netherlands. In panel (a), the darker shades represents autocratic regime along polity scales and in panel (b), darker shades represents poorer countries as measured by their GDP. In general, above figure shows higher level mean index among respondents in less democratic and poorer countries.

tribution of attitudinal responses for different levels of threat perception. Note that the y-axis in all three panels are percentages rather than frequencies. For instance, in the left-most panel of the figure, 2610 individuals report threat index of level three. Among these, 64.2% report that the need for order is *not important*, compared to 35.8% respondents that report it as *important*. As the threat level in the x-axis increases, I find that the proportion of respondents that value the need for

Figure 2.2: Threat from violence and support for authority



Note: The figure above depicts bivariate analysis of mean self-reported threat of violence and three dependent variables: maintaining order, respect for authority and support for strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament or election. (n=64,000) Source: World values survey

order also becomes higher. In the center panel of the figure, I similarly find that the proportion of respondents endorsing “respect for authority” increases with the threat index in x-axis, while the proportion of those that do not like respect for authority decreases. Finally, in the right-most panel of figure 2.2, I find increased support for strong undemocratic leaders among individuals that perceive higher threat levels from armed violence. While these bivariate results show support for the three hypotheses, it is hard to conclude about such associations from bivariate analyses alone. In the following, I use multilevel modeling to test the relationship between x and y, that can also control for numerous other confounding factors at individual and contextual levels.

Table 2.1 presents the results of multi-level logit models estimated using lme4 package in R, version 1.1-12. To reiterate, my objective is to estimate the effects of threat perception on individuals’ anti-democratic orientation. The header rows in the table display the three main dependent variables of the models. Models 1,



Table 2.1: Crossnational survey on the effect of threat on democratic attitude

|                         | Maintain Order      |                     | Respect for Authority |                    | Strong Leader       |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                         | (1)                 | (2)                 | (3)                   | (4)                | (5)                 | (6)                 |
| <b>Individual level</b> |                     |                     |                       |                    |                     |                     |
| Threat index            |                     | 0.02***<br>(0.001)  |                       | 0.05***<br>(0.001) |                     | 0.03***<br>(0.001)  |
| Female                  | -0.13***<br>(0.02)  | -0.13***<br>(0.02)  | 0.02<br>(0.02)        | 0.01<br>(0.02)     | 0.02<br>(0.02)      | 0.01<br>(0.02)      |
| Age                     | 0.001***<br>(0.001) | 0.001***<br>(0.001) | 0.01***<br>(0.001)    | 0.01***<br>(0.001) | -0.001**<br>(0.001) | -0.001**<br>(0.001) |
| Education               | 0.01<br>(0.001)     | 0.01*<br>(0.001)    | -0.02**<br>(0.001)    | -0.01**<br>(0.001) | -0.06***<br>(0.001) | -0.06***<br>(0.001) |
| Income                  | 0.03***<br>(0.001)  | 0.03***<br>(0.001)  | -0.01<br>(0.001)      | -0.00<br>(0.001)   | 0.02***<br>(0.001)  | 0.02***<br>(0.001)  |
| Predisposed auth        | 0.07***<br>(0.02)   | 0.06**<br>(0.02)    | 0.17***<br>(0.02)     | 0.16***<br>(0.02)  | 0.08***<br>(0.02)   | 0.07***<br>(0.02)   |
| <b>Country level</b>    |                     |                     |                       |                    |                     |                     |
| GDP (log)               | -0.23**<br>(0.07)   | -0.20**<br>(0.07)   | -0.33*<br>(0.15)      | -0.29*<br>(0.15)   | -0.05<br>(0.14)     | -0.02<br>(0.14)     |
| Polity                  | -0.05***<br>(0.01)  | -0.05***<br>(0.01)  | -0.03<br>(0.02)       | -0.03<br>(0.02)    | -0.001<br>(0.02)    | 0.001<br>(0.02)     |
| (Intercept)             | 1.64*<br>(0.65)     | 1.23<br>(0.64)      | 3.47**<br>(1.31)      | 2.71*<br>(1.33)    | 0.51<br>(1.22)      | -0.04<br>(1.20)     |
| AIC                     | 78062               | 77987               | 70400                 | 70161              | 72439               | 72318               |
| BIC                     | 78143.06            | 78077.67            | 70480.74              | 70251.19           | 72519.58            | 72407.59            |
| Num. obs.               | 61548               | 61548               | 60817                 | 60817              | 59150               | 59150               |
| Countries               | 53                  | 53                  | 53                    | 53                 | 53                  | 53                  |
| Var: Country            | 0.22                | 0.21                | 0.90                  | 0.92               | 0.77                | 0.75                |
| Model compare           |                     | 78.07***            |                       | 248.15***          |                     | 125.93***           |

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

Note: Table above shows the effect of self-reported threat from violence—war, civil war and terrorism— on anti-democratic orientation. For each of the three dependent variables, the two sets of models depict a significant increase in model fit, as shown by the last column in the table, when the main explanatory variable is included in the models.

3 and 5 are the baseline models without the main explanatory variables, mainly for model comparison after adding the main explanatory variable, threat index. Examining the AIC and BIC scores reported at the end of the table, smaller scores

for the full models suggest a better fit after adding the main explanatory variable. In addition, chi square values in the full models show similarly that adding threat index significantly improves the model fit in all three cases.

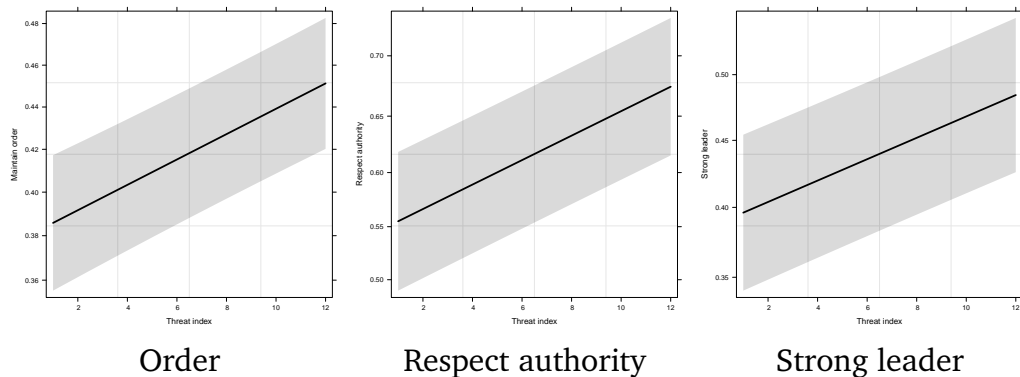
The variable threat index has positive coefficients in all three models, suggesting that as self-reported threat level becomes higher, individuals are more likely to endorse support for order, respect for authority and the need for strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections. Marginal effects of models 2, 4 and 6 are shown in figure 2.3. According to the figure, when an individual's perception of threat level rises from 1 to 12, we find, on average, the need for maintaining order increases by approximately 6 percent, respect for authority increases by 12 percent, and support for strong leadership increases by 12 percent, controlling for other variables in the model. Substantively, interpreting these results with predicted probabilities provides a clearer picture of how change in threat perception affects the outcome. When threat perception level increases from 3 (25th percentile in the pooled data) to 12 (75th percentile in the pooled data), I find that need for maintaining order increases from 37.6% to 47.9%, respect for authority increases from 59.5% to 69.03%, and the support for strong leader increases from 39.5% to 46.6%, when all variables are held at global mean, and among females and pre-disposed authoritarians,<sup>15</sup>. These are significant increases. However, lets look at two countries for a more realistic estimates of the threat index: Uzbekistan and Tunisia. If threat level increases from the level of Uzbekistan (6.3) to the level of Tunisia (11.66), I find that need for order increases from 39.5% to 42.7%, respect for authority increases from 63.1% to 68.7%, and the support for strong leader increases from 42.2% to 46.4%, when other control variables are at held global

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<sup>15</sup>I use merTools in R, version 0.2.1, to calculate the predicted probabilities

mean, and among females and pre-disposed authoritarians. The results hold true when I replace the aggregate threat index with individual response on worry about war, civil war or terrorism. In other words, I find strong evidence in support of the main argument that individuals that perceive higher level of threat from violence are likely to display higher degree of anti-democratic orientation.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 2.3: Substantive effects



Note: Predicted probabilities on how threat index affects dependent variables in table 1

Other variables in the models are generally in the expected direction. In congruence with past studies, pre-disposed authoritarians are more likely to show support for more order, respect for authority and strong leadership. The country level indicator GDP has negative coefficients in all models but is statistically significant only for the first two dependent variables. This suggests that on average, citizens in wealthy countries, are less likely to manifest anti-democratic attitudes. The variable polity has negative coefficient in all but the last model, and is significant only for the first dependent variable. Education is positive and significant in model 2, suggesting that educated individuals are more likely to choose maintaining order

<sup>16</sup>Using squared-age to examine a potential non-linear relationship between age and dependent variable does not change the main results.

as important. However, this variable is negative and significant in model 4 and 6, with a coefficient value in the last model much higher compared to the other two. This suggests a highly negative association between education level and support for strong and non-democratic leaders. In sum, we find that individual threat perception and predisposed authoritarianism positively explain a person's anti-democratic attitude whereas more educated individuals and those living in wealthy countries do not show such preference for strong leaders or respect for authority.

## **2.6 Actual threat of violence and anti-democratic orientation: The Iraqi case**

The analysis above suggests that individual attitude is affected by self-reported “perceived” threat or fear from violence. It does not tell us whether or not citizens living in conflict-prone contexts—those facing “actual” threats—are likely to show similar political preferences. Estimating this effect with the crossnational WVS data is difficult due to two main reasons. First, the sample of countries in the WVS dataset generally does not include high conflict zones due to physical risks involved in conducting survey in such environments. Second, there are few countries in the WVS sixth wave dataset that are categorized as armed conflicts in the Armed Conflict Dataset (Gleditsch et al., 2002).<sup>17</sup> Yet, rather than widespread conflicts, most countries categorized as conflicts had ongoing territorial conflicts mainly on the fringes. The effects are therefore limited only to certain hot spots, which makes it difficult to capture using country-wide random sampling. For example, while India is coded as an armed-conflict country during the year of survey, the three main conflicts around the time of survey were Kashmir conflict, conflict in the northeast

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<sup>17</sup>Following countries in WVS-6 are categorized as armed conflict countries, with 25 or more battle-related deaths in the survey year: India, Rwanda, Yemen, Philippines, Azerbaijan, Nigeria, Iraq & Pakistan.

region (Bodoland and Garoland) and the Maoist insurgency in the central region of Chhattisgarh State. According to government data, the Maoist conflict was the most severe among the three. During the year 2013 and 2014, the state of Chattisgarh, among the total of 27 Indian states, had the highest fatalities (222 civilians) from the Maoist conflict. Yet, the conflict in Chhattisgarh is concentrated within just the three of its 27 districts.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the geographical spread of the conflict is small. Even when considering all three conflicts in India, the total population of conflict regions is less than 5 percent of the overall population. Therefore, these localized conflicts in India are likely to have very small effects, if at all, on the 95% of the population. The national random sample of 1581 in the WVS is unlikely to capture the effect of the conflict accurately. Hence, it is hard to capture the contextual effect in a random effect model with the WVS sixth wave dataset.

One country where violence level was at its peak when WVS was conducting the survey is Iraq. Wave four and five of the WVS includes two surveys administered in Iraq in 2004 and 2006. The overall level of armed conflict in the country at the time was high, but it varied significantly across provinces. Within-country comparison of individual political attitudes in the context of a large variation in conflict-level across provinces makes the Iraq study close to natural experiment. Therefore, I test the above hypotheses using Iraqi data to examine the effect of “actual” threat of violence, as opposed to the self-reported “perceived” threat. Moreover, because of the common battery of questionnaires in different waves of WVS, we can closely replicate the crossnational findings and run similar models in the Iraqi context. The country-level variables GDP and polity scores are dropped, adding instead the

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<sup>18</sup>Information on the conflict available at the website of Home Ministry of India [http://www.mha.nic.in/naxal\\_new](http://www.mha.nic.in/naxal_new) [Accessed: October 10, 2015]  
Another source of data for conflict is <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/Assessment/2013/chhattisgarh.htm> [Accessed: October 10, 2015]

population of each province. I also add a few more individual level variables, such as religious denomination and religiosity, which are the defining characteristics of the Iraqi provinces. In the following, I will briefly explain the background of Iraq, before describing the research design.

## **2.7 Violence level in 2004 and 2006**

Iraq experienced the most gruesome violence in its history in 2004 and 2006. The violence level in 2006 was much higher than in 2004. The dynamics of conflict also differed significantly. After Saddam Hussein was removed from power in 2003, conflict in the following year was between the Western forces present in the country and Saddam's loyalists, predominantly Sunni sect Muslims in collaboration with the Al Qaeda. In 2006, however, the first free election had been held in 2005, and the conflict was primarily among the three religious sects: Shiite, Sunni and the Kurdish, all competing to fill the power vacuum at regional and national levels. The Shiite-dominated party, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), proposed a united Shiite region towards the south of Baghdad in August 2005 (Visser, 2005). Later, in February 2006, sectarian violence in the country reached its pinnacle after the Shiite shrine in Samarra was bombed, allegedly by the Sunnis. This led to a full-fledged civil war not only between the Shiites and Sunnis, but also between the Kurds and the others in the North. Yet, the level of violence was not uniform across the 18 provinces. The Shiite-dominated south and the Sunni-dominated center around Baghdad were much more violent than the Kurd-dominated northern region. In the following, I analyze how this variation in provincial violence level affected the political attitude among the residents.

WVS conducted two waves of surveys across the country during these high-

conflict periods. The first wave was administered to 2525 Iraqi individuals above the age of 18 years from November 16, 2004 to December 16, 2004. Out of the total 18 Iraqi governorates or provinces, only 16 were sampled in 2004. The survey document<sup>19</sup> states that the bad security situation in Mosul and the obstruction by security forces in Dihok prevented surveys in these locations. The second wave of Iraqi survey lasted from March 22 until April 4, 2006, covering all provinces. The sample in the latter year consisted of 2880 respondents above the age of 18. Both surveys are multi-stage probability samples, based on Iraq's 1997 population census, and the number of respondents in each province was determined by its population size as well as the rural-urban divide.

I use two dependent variables for the Iraqi analysis from the WVS dataset: whether or not *maintaining order* is important, and approval of *strong leader* who does not have to bother with elections and parliament. The variable respect for authority could not be included in the Iraqi analysis because the specific questionnaire is missing in the Iraqi battery. Measurement of these two dependent variables are identical to the crossnational study explained above.

To explain the democratic attitude, I model the provincial violence data and individual level data from the WVS using a multi-level modelling approach. Since provincial surveys in Iraq in these two years are not panel surveys, I take each province from both 2004 and 2006 as unique second-level units. Additionally, control for the two years as explained in the section below.

The main explanatory variable in the Iraqi case is the level of “actual” threat that individuals experienced in their provinces. Instead of using self-reported measure

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<sup>19</sup>Available in WVS online portal, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp> [Accessed January 7, 2016]

of threat,<sup>20</sup> I use the number of civilians killed in conflict in each province as a proxy for the actual threat of violence for its residents. The data on civilian fatalities is obtained from the Iraqi Body Count (IBC) website,<sup>21</sup> which provides comprehensive account on Iraqi civilians killed in the conflict since 2003. To account for the temporal effect, I use the number of civilians killed in a province within the time period of six months before the end of the survey. For the survey in 2004, I aggregate civilian deaths in each of the 16 provinces from July to December 2004. Similarly for the 2006 survey, I aggregate numbers of civilians killed in each of the 18 provinces from October 2005 to the end of March 2006.<sup>22</sup> The panels in figure 2.4 show the level of violence in Iraqi provinces, measured by the number of people killed in conflict six months before the survey.

A local dynamics that needs to be included in the Iraqi analysis is the three main ethno-religious sects that are dominant in different regions. Kurds are majority in the northern most provinces of Dihuk, Erbil, Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya. Sunni majority provinces include Tikrit, Al-Anbar, Mosul and Diyala. The rest are Shiite majority provinces located mainly in the South. While approximately 65% of the population are Shiites, the Sunni elites dominated the politics of the country during Saddam's rule prior to 2003. As a result, both Shiites and the Kurds struggled against the repressive rule of Saddam Hussein (Thyne, 2009, p. 149-168). Therefore, I expect that Sunnis are more likely to favor strong leadership of the previous regime, while

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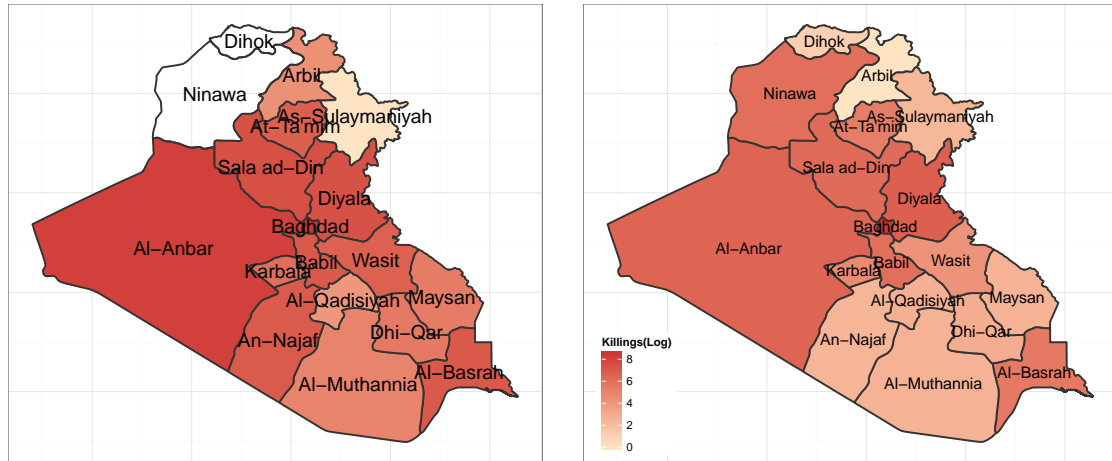
<sup>20</sup>The Iraqi survey wave does not include questionnaires on how much respondents worry about war, civil war or terrorism, as in the sixth wave.

<sup>21</sup>Available: <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/> [Accessed February 20, 2015].

<sup>22</sup>Assuming that memory of events that are closer temporally has greater effect compared to events that happen long time ago, I create an index of decay function:  $d = (\sum_{i=1}^n v_i (0.5)^i)$ , where  $i$  is the number of month before the survey month and  $v_i$  is the aggregate level of killings due to conflict in that month.  $d$  has higher weights for months immediately preceding the survey month and decreasing weights for lagging months. Using this decay function has almost identical results to that of six month aggregate violence. The result of the decay function is provided in the chapter appendix.



Figure 2.4: Level of violence in Iraq 2004, 2006



Note: The figure above depicts levels of violence measured in the number of civilians killed due to conflict in Iraq. The color scheme depicts the log of civilians killed between the month of July and December in 2004, and between October 2005 and March 2006.

others are more likely to prefer democratic change. To account for these sectarian preferences, binary variables are included in the model that measure whether or not a respondent is Shiite or Sunni, using the WVS questionnaire that asks about the religious denomination of the individuals.<sup>23</sup> At provincial level, I include in the model the population of each province obtained from the 1997 Iraqi census data.

At individual level, respondent's age, education level and financial satisfaction level are used as control variables, similar to the crossnational analysis earlier. I also control for the individual's level of religiousness, measured as self-reported scale

<sup>23</sup>The response choice does not include Kurds as a religious denomination. Kurds are Muslim but the term Kurds is used to denote ethno-nationalist or territorial connotation rather than religious (Stansfield and Anderson, 2009). Therefore, "Muslims" are the reference category. Out of the total 5026 respondents, 534 identify themselves as Sunni, 1351 as Shiite, 3086 as Muslim and 36 as other religion like Orthodox and Catholic. I also control for regional dominance variable—whether a province is Shiite, Sunni or Kurds dominant—and the results hold. The table that include the regional dominance variable is provided in the chapter appendix.

from 1-10. Past studies on authoritarianism have established that highly religious persons are more likely to uphold conservative values such as obedience or low tolerance for sexual freedom. Since religion is more salient in Iraq, I control for this variable rather than pre-disposed authoritarian as in the crossnational survey, although controlling for the latter does not change the results.

Finally, I also control for the year of the two surveys. I use year dummy (variable *year 2006*) as fixed effects, since I find variation in the level of violence not only across provinces but also between the same province across different years. Furthermore, unlike in 2004, the Iraqis in 2006 had experienced the first democratic election after Saddam's fall in 2005. As indicated by the literature on democratic learning (Rohrschneider, 1999; Peffley and Rohrschneider, 2003), people should be more supportive towards democracy in 2006. Yet, the changing nature of conflict in 2006 should also influence their level of insecurities and the attitude towards the support for strong leadership. These two competing expectations run in the opposite direction, and using the fixed year effect should account for the change.

## **2.8 Results**

Results of the Iraqi analyses are presented in table 2.2. There are two models in the table and in both, I find positive and statistically significant relationship between the number of civilians killed and the support for maintaining order and the need for strong leadership. The explanatory variable in the models is in log transformed scale since the data are highly skewed. Substantive results of the models are shown in figure 2.5. According to left panel of the figure, which shows the marginal effect from the first model in table 2.2, respondents in the most violent provinces are 15% more likely to report the need for maintaining order as most important compared

to those in the least violent provinces, on average and when controlling for other variables.

Table 2.2: Provincial violence in Iraq and support for anti-democratic orientations

|                            | Support for           |                      |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
|                            | Maintain Order<br>(1) | Strong Leader<br>(2) |
| <b>Provincial level</b>    |                       |                      |
| Civilians killed (log)     | 0.08**<br>(0.04)      | 0.26***<br>(0.09)    |
| Sunni majority prov        | 0.30**<br>(0.12)      | 0.22<br>(0.16)       |
| Shiite majority prov       | -0.10<br>(0.09)       | -0.27**<br>(0.13)    |
| Year 2006                  | -0.23**<br>(0.11)     | -0.30<br>(0.25)      |
| Population                 | -0.08<br>(0.20)       | 0.01<br>(0.47)       |
| <b>Individual level</b>    |                       |                      |
| Age                        | -0.00<br>(0.00)       | 0.00<br>(0.00)       |
| Education                  | -0.05<br>(0.04)       | -0.20***<br>(0.06)   |
| Religious                  | 0.13*<br>(0.07)       | -0.04<br>(0.10)      |
| Financial satisfaction     | -0.00<br>(0.01)       | 0.07***<br>(0.02)    |
| (Intercept)                | 468.02**<br>(215.13)  | 607.11<br>(509.78)   |
| Num. obs.                  | 4603                  | 4165                 |
| Num. groups: prov          | 34                    | 34                   |
| Variance: prov.(Intercept) | 0.33                  | 1.95                 |

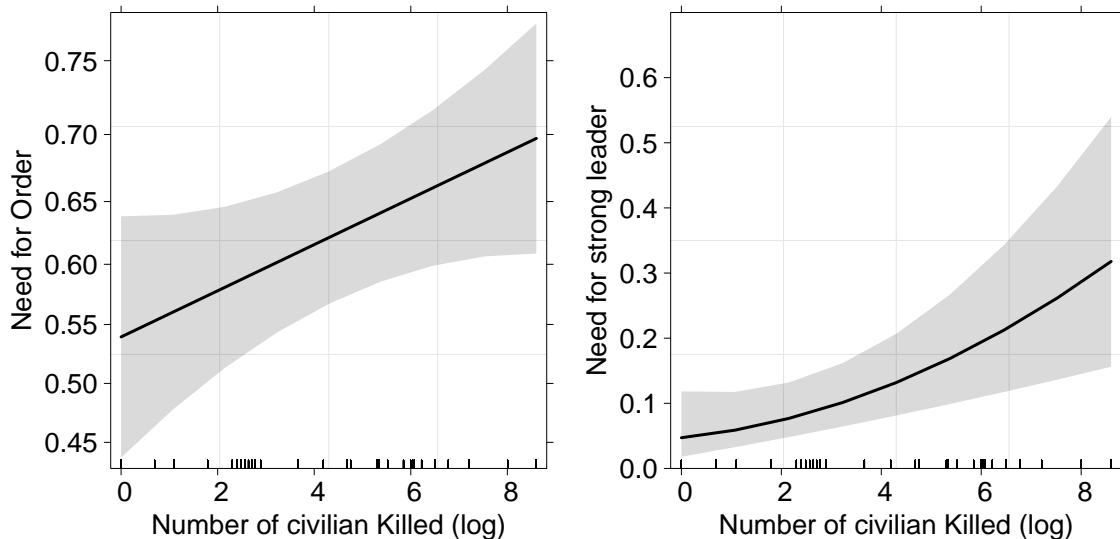
\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Note: Table above shows the effect of provincial violence level in Iraq on anti-democratic orientation. The log of civilians killed in a province is used as a proxy for the level of violence. Baseline category for sectarian dominance is Kurds majority provinces.

The right panel of the figure suggests that the effect of violence on the need for a strong and undemocratic leader is large. Compared to provinces with lower level

violence, respondents in more violent provinces are four times more likely to report the need for strong leader. In summary, the contextual effect of violence shows that threat from actual violence has a significant effect on individual’s anti-democratic orientation. This result is similar to results from crossnational study above, where the main explanatory variable was the self-reported “perceived” threat.

Figure 2.5: Effect of violence on democratic attitude



Note: Above figures depict the substantial effect of violence intensity in Iraqi provinces on the anti-democratic orientation among their residents, from model 2 and 3 in table 2. They show that when violence intensity increases, as measured by number of civilians killed in x-axis, need for order and strong leadership increases. The confidence interval level is at 95%.

I find that other variables in the model are also in the expected direction. On average, respondents who identify themselves as Sunnis are more likely to report that maintaining order is important, whereas Shiites have expressed that strong leadership is not bad, suggesting their lower support levels for such strongman rule. As discussed earlier, this result is in congruence with other studies (Nasr, 2007), that Shiites are generally more opposed to rule under strong leadership because of their past experience with Saddam’s regime. Moreover, they also are more likely to view

electoral democracy as favorable because of their overwhelming majority status in Iraq.

Among individual level variables, education level has negative coefficient in both models, but is significant only in the second, suggesting that respondents with higher education level are less likely to show support for strong leader. Finally, year 2006 has negative coefficient but with statistical significance only for the first model. This suggests that compared to respondents in 2004, Iraqis in 2006 were less likely to report that maintaining order is the most important aspect for the country. I also check for robustness by including the provincial mean of the individual level variables to remove second level unobservable effects (Bell and Jones, 2015), and the main results hold.<sup>24</sup> In sum, we find evidence, in both cross-national analyses and a more focused Iraqi study, in support of the theory that threat from violence increases an individual's proclivity towards adopting an anti-democratic attitude.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

Democratic systems are considered ideal for peaceful management of social conflict and for building sustainable peace in post-conflict countries. Since conflicts are costly for common citizens, it seems intuitive to think that voters fearing conflict and violence will endorse candidates or parties that are democratic, tolerant and peaceful. However, quite the contrary, I argue in this study that when people fear armed violence—perceived or real, they are less likely to adopt democratic attitudes. I test this theory, first, by using crossnational survey data to examine the influence of perceived fear of violence. I find that level of threat perception

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<sup>24</sup>See table in chapter appendix.

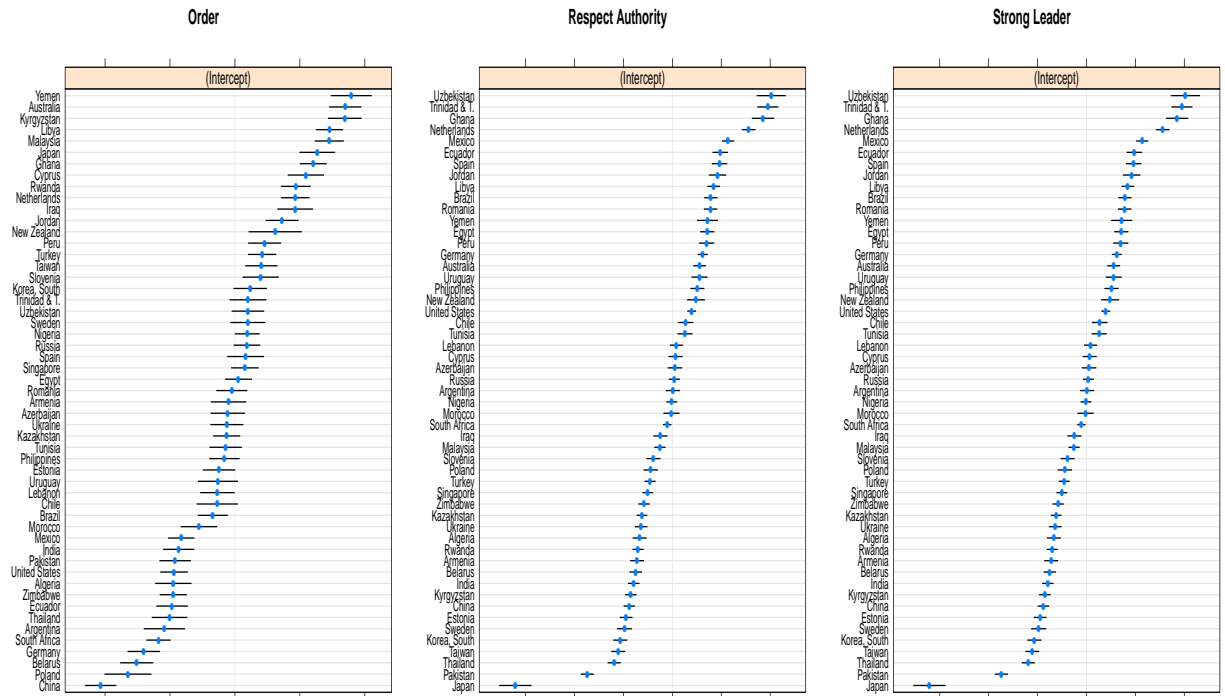
among citizens across nations has direct bearing on their undemocratic orientation. Second, I examine whether *actual* threat of violence has similar effect. Using provincial level violence data from Iraq, I find that the number of people killed in conflicts in each Iraqi province within six months prior to the 2004 and 2006 WVS has direct effect on people's support for democracy. In provinces with higher levels of violence, individuals are more likely to prioritize the need for order and prefer an undemocratic leader.

The findings in this study have important implication for post-conflict democratizing countries, where fears of violence are common and national elections are prescribed as the first important step towards the transition. The study questions the popular trend of holding national level elections as panacea for challenges faced by such countries. It indicates that national elections held without accounting for the individual level insecurities can be counter-productive. During post-conflict transitional periods, policymakers and peacebuilders are often required to shift their focus, in a short time period, from security to development, as conflicts in the country end. This creates policy volatility and leaves a gaping hole in terms of managing insecurity at individual level. As result, individuals at such times tend to prioritize security over liberty and accountability, as indicated by this research. It also compels us to think more on some of the measures that can enhance the quality of democracy by building a sense of security among individuals—events like disarmament of ex-combatants, responsibility to protect the civilians, strengthening civil society to exercise accountability, and deploying election monitors earlier rather than waiting until the election day, which can raise cost for actors that seek to intimidate civilians. More important, an area that seems more promising to study in future is conducting local level elections before the national level election in

transitional periods, since these can better address the local concerns. Without first addressing the micro-level insecurity among the voting mass, national elections can only increase the risks of democratic failures.

## Appendix for chapter 2

Figure 2.6: Random intercept for countries



Note: Figures in panels above show the random intercepts of countries in models reported in table 1 in the main text.

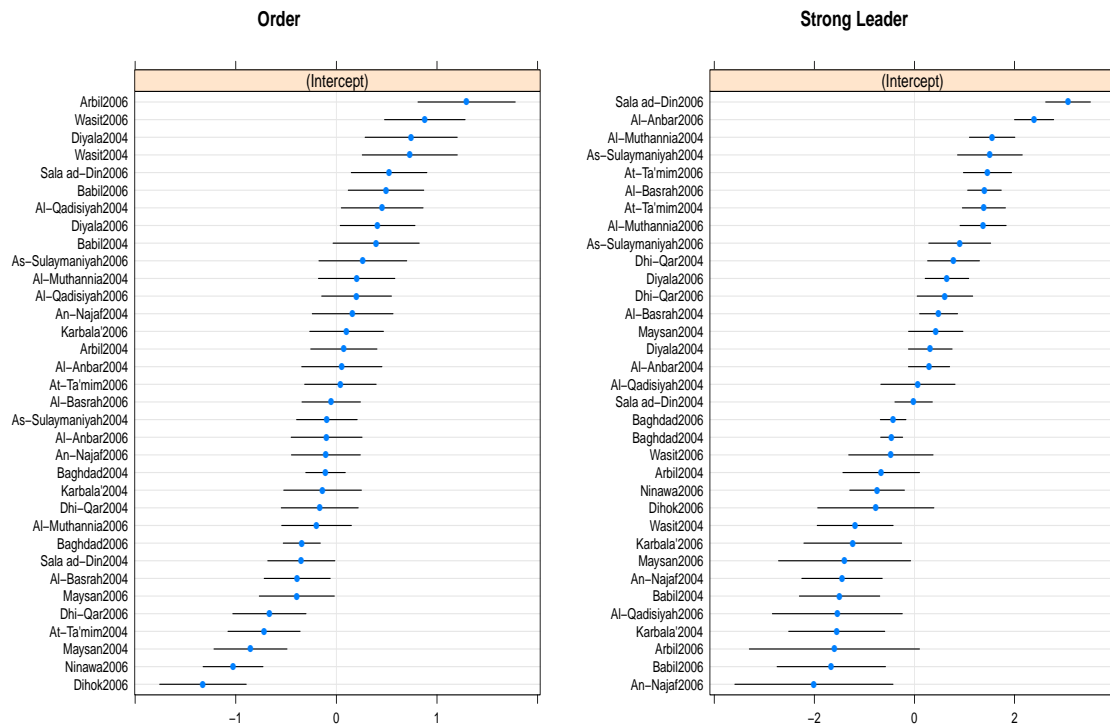


Table 2.3: Controlling for mean of individual variables

|                                      | Order important    | Respect authority | Strong leader      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| (Intercept)                          | -2.34<br>(1.40)    | 4.78<br>(3.00)    | -2.26<br>(2.69)    |
| <b>Individual level vars</b>         |                    |                   |                    |
| Threat index                         | 0.02***<br>(0.00)  | 0.05***<br>(0.00) | 0.03***<br>(0.00)  |
| Female                               | -0.13***<br>(0.02) | 0.01<br>(0.02)    | 0.01<br>(0.02)     |
| Age                                  | 0.00***<br>(0.00)  | 0.01***<br>(0.00) | -0.00**<br>(0.00)  |
| Education                            | 0.01<br>(0.00)     | -0.01**<br>(0.00) | -0.06***<br>(0.00) |
| Income                               | 0.03***<br>(0.00)  | -0.00<br>(0.00)   | 0.02***<br>(0.00)  |
| Predisposed auth                     | 0.06**<br>(0.02)   | 0.16***<br>(0.02) | 0.07***<br>(0.02)  |
| <b>Country level vars</b>            |                    |                   |                    |
| Polity                               | -0.04***<br>(0.01) | -0.03<br>(0.02)   | 0.01<br>(0.02)     |
| GDP (log)                            | -0.20*<br>(0.10)   | -0.18<br>(0.20)   | -0.05<br>(0.18)    |
| <b>Mean of Individual level vars</b> |                    |                   |                    |
| Mean age                             | 0.03<br>(0.02)     | -0.02<br>(0.05)   | 0.01<br>(0.04)     |
| Mean educaiton                       | -0.03<br>(0.07)    | -0.28<br>(0.16)   | 0.23<br>(0.14)     |
| Mean income                          | 0.29*<br>(0.13)    | -0.03<br>(0.28)   | -0.07<br>(0.25)    |
| Mean threat index                    | 0.13**<br>(0.05)   | -0.11<br>(0.10)   | 0.15<br>(0.09)     |
| AIC                                  | 77986.82           | 70163.02          | 72318.86           |
| BIC                                  | 78113.21           | 70289.24          | 72444.69           |
| Log Likelihood                       | -38979.41          | -35067.51         | -36145.43          |
| Num. obs.                            | 61548              | 60817             | 59150              |
| Num. groups: cname                   | 53                 | 53                | 53                 |
| Var: cname (Intercept)               | 0.18               | 0.82              | 0.66               |

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

Figure 2.7: Random Intercept of Iraqi provinces



Note: Figures in both panels above show the random intercepts of Iraqi provinces.

Table 2.4: Iraq Case: Controlling for mean of individual level variables

|                                      | Model 1  | Model 2  |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Civilians killed (log)               | 0.09*    | 0.27**   |
|                                      | (0.06)   | (0.11)   |
| Age                                  | -0.00    | 0.00     |
|                                      | (0.00)   | (0.00)   |
| Education                            | -0.05    | -0.20*** |
|                                      | (0.04)   | (0.06)   |
| Religious                            | 0.13*    | -0.04    |
|                                      | (0.07)   | (0.10)   |
| Financial Satisfaction               | -0.00    | 0.07***  |
|                                      | (0.01)   | (0.02)   |
| Sunni                                | 0.30**   | 0.20     |
|                                      | (0.12)   | (0.16)   |
| Shiite                               | -0.11    | -0.24*   |
|                                      | (0.09)   | (0.13)   |
| Year                                 | -0.21**  | -0.24    |
|                                      | (0.10)   | (0.20)   |
| Population                           | -0.01    | -0.25    |
|                                      | (0.22)   | (0.43)   |
| <b>Mean of Individual level vars</b> |          |          |
| Province Mean Age                    | 0.12     | 0.49***  |
|                                      | (0.09)   | (0.18)   |
| Province Mean Education              | -0.98    | -3.64*   |
|                                      | (1.13)   | (2.18)   |
| Province Mean Religious              | 0.27     | 0.07     |
|                                      | (1.00)   | (1.92)   |
| Province Mean Finance satis          | 0.04     | 0.37     |
|                                      | (0.28)   | (0.54)   |
| Provincial dominance Kurds           | -0.08    | 0.74     |
|                                      | (0.34)   | (0.64)   |
| Provincial dominance Sunni           | 0.01     | 1.97***  |
|                                      | (0.38)   | (0.71)   |
| (Intercept)                          | 426.50** | 473.23   |
|                                      | (208.60) | (401.19) |
| Log Likelihood                       | -2930.51 | -1665.10 |
| Num. obs.                            | 4603     | 4165     |
| Num. groups: prov                    | 34       | 34       |
| Var: prov (Intercept)                | 0.29     | 1.08     |

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

Table 2.5: Iraq Case: With Decay Effect of Violence

|                                  | Model 1             | Model 2              | Model 3            | Model 4            |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Civilians killed (monthly decay) |                     | 0.07**<br>(0.03)     |                    | 0.21**<br>(0.08)   |
| Age                              | -0.00<br>(0.00)     | -0.00<br>(0.00)      | 0.00<br>(0.00)     | 0.00<br>(0.00)     |
| education                        | -0.05<br>(0.04)     | -0.05<br>(0.04)      | -0.20***<br>(0.06) | -0.20***<br>(0.06) |
| Religious                        | 0.13*<br>(0.07)     | 0.13*<br>(0.07)      | -0.04<br>(0.10)    | -0.04<br>(0.10)    |
| Financial Satisfaction           | -0.00<br>(0.01)     | -0.00<br>(0.01)      | 0.07***<br>(0.02)  | 0.07***<br>(0.02)  |
| Sunni                            | 0.29**<br>(0.12)    | 0.30**<br>(0.12)     | 0.21<br>(0.16)     | 0.22<br>(0.16)     |
| Shiite                           | -0.10<br>(0.09)     | -0.10<br>(0.09)      | -0.27**<br>(0.13)  | -0.27**<br>(0.13)  |
| Year                             | -0.20*<br>(0.11)    | -0.24**<br>(0.11)    | -0.21<br>(0.28)    | -0.33<br>(0.26)    |
| Population                       | 0.08<br>(0.19)      | -0.08<br>(0.20)      | 0.53<br>(0.49)     | 0.07<br>(0.48)     |
| (Intercept)                      | 403.74*<br>(225.87) | 489.52**<br>(215.19) | 411.87<br>(561.52) | 647.56<br>(520.52) |
| AIC                              | 5888.48             | 5886.24              | 3375.63            | 3371.29            |
| BIC                              | 5952.82             | 5957.02              | 3438.98            | 3440.97            |
| Log Likelihood                   | -2934.24            | -2932.12             | -1677.82           | -1674.65           |
| Num. obs.                        | 4603                | 4603                 | 4165               | 4165               |
| Num. groups: prov                | 34                  | 34                   | 34                 | 34                 |
| Var: prov (Intercept)            | 0.38                | 0.33                 | 2.47               | 2.01               |
| LR test (Model Fit)              |                     | 4.24**               |                    | 6.33**             |

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

Note: Table above shows the effect of provincial violence level in Iraq on anti-democratic orientation. Variable civilians killed in a province is the log of decay index, from the following function:  $d = (\sum_{i=1}^n v_i (0.5)^i)$ , where  $i$  is the number of month before the survey month and  $v_i$  is the aggregate level of killings due to conflict in that month.  $d$  has higher weights for months immediately preceding the survey month and decreasing weights for lagging months. Using this decay function has almost identical results to that of six month aggregate effect.

## **Chapter 3 Legacy of Violence and the Barriers to Democratization: Nepal's Post-conflict Election**

### **Abstract**

Recent studies indicate that holding elections in post-conflict countries is risky, as they are likely to reignite violence. In this chapter, I examine the voting patterns in such elections in order to understand why post-conflict elections are unique and how fear of violence influences voting outcomes. When a party perpetrates pre-election violence and intimidation, I argue that fearful voters are likely to support the violent party, mainly because of their past experiences and the anxiety that similar violence may recur in the future if the intimidating party lose the election. I use Nepal's post-conflict election in 2008 to test the argument. Using a unique district level dataset, I find that higher levels of voter support for a rebel-turn political party in areas where the party is reported to have used higher levels of violence in the past and during the pre-election period. The findings have direct implications for democratization in post-civil war countries. By highlighting the perils of pre-election violence on electoral outcomes, the results suggest that policymakers and election monitors should pay more attention to pre-election periods rather than just the election day.

### **3.1 Introduction**

Post conflict elections (PCEs) at the end of violent intra-state conflict are some of the many important events for building sustainable and democratic peace. A handful of post-conflict case studies in countries like El Salvador in 1994, Liberia in 1997, Cambodia 1993 and Angola 1992, surprisingly, indicate that voters often support former belligerent groups or their affiliate parties (Allison, 2010; Lyons, 2004). In

the Liberian PCE in 1997, for instance, citizens chose to elect Charles Taylor and his violent party, the National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPLF), against a close contender, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent struggle. Such electoral results—where voters elect violent groups—present interesting puzzles for two reasons. First, for an average voter, violence and conflicts are exceedingly costly; therefore, electing a violent group is seemingly far more dangerous than electing a moderate party with peaceful agenda. Second, almost all PCEs are secret ballot and are often accompanied by international election monitors, as was the case of Liberia in 1997.<sup>1</sup> For an individual voter, therefore, casting a vote against violent parties should seem less risky, at least when considering the relatively high incentive of a peaceful party in power. Why then do citizens in PCEs vote for violent parties given the clear benefits of electing a moderate party and the relatively low risk of voting against violent parties in a secret ballot?<sup>2</sup>

One prominent challenge in such elections is voter intimidation, since former belligerent parties are less likely to renounce the use of violence—the very resource they have amassed over years of conflict. I argue that when exposed to pre-electoral violence and intimidation, voters’ desire to maintain the peaceful status quo plays an important role in their decisions. Due to their past experiences, voters who fear recurring violence tend to support parties that they perceive are militarily stronger and have the capability to resume violence if they lose the election. As evidence, I present a within-case analysis of Nepal’s Constitutional Assembly (CA)

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<sup>1</sup>This puzzle becomes more perplexing as election observers in PCEs often report no major violent incidents on election day. Liberia in 1997, Sierra Leone in 2002, Nepal in 2008 are few examples where election observer reports do not indicate any major violent incidents on the election day.

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that by “violent party”, the essay refers to a party that is affiliated with belligerent group in the past conflict that has the potential to reignite violence. Another term used in the chapter to indicate such violent party is “strong party” (that is, strong in terms of its violence wielding capacity).

election held in April 2008, eighteen months after the signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended a decade long insurgency. This case provides a rich explanation of the underlying patterns in voting behavior that are often masked in cross-national studies. It also introduces a unique district-level dataset on Nepal that includes district characteristics, including past violence levels and the CA results. The results show that a former rebel-turn-political party, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), were able to secure higher levels of voter support in districts where they reportedly used higher levels of past and pre-election violence.

Understanding the influence of violence on voting behavior is crucial for the post-conflict peace building literature. Recent works on PCE show that elections in such contexts increase the risks of reigniting armed conflicts. They argue that election timing is the key factor affecting the risk level, but do not systematically examine the voting patterns or outcomes (Brancati and Snyder, 2013; Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom, 2008; Flores and Nooruddin, 2012). Others focusing on the process of democratization find a pattern that election monitors often under report pre-election violence due to what they refer to as “stability bias.” Election observers, according to the authors, fear that reporting pre-election violence might disrupt stability and, therefore, readily endorse elections in spite of the high levels of pre-electoral violence (Beaulieu and Hyde, 2009; Kelley, 2012). This chapter contributes to the discourse by further highlighting the perils of pre-election violence on the outcomes of elections in post-conflict countries.

More specifically, this chapter (1) sheds light on the deeper underlying mechanisms that link violence with voting behavior, (2) illustrates the challenges that fear of violence pose to post-conflict democratization process, and (3) indicates how ignoring these processes can lead to the institutionalization of violence later. A point

of departure from the conventional wisdom is that violence in this chapter does not necessarily refer to election day violence. Rather, the focus is on violence and intimidation that occur prior to the main election day and how such activities may influence electoral support in favor of the perpetrators. By exposing the mechanism that systematically influences voters preferences, this research sheds light on how policymakers can better deal with the challenges of building sustainable electoral institutions in countries that have recently emerged from armed conflicts.

### **3.2 Voting Behavior in Fearful Contexts**

Research on the impact of terrorist violence in democracies shows that contextual factors shape individuals' emotions and their electoral support for specific political parties (Brader, 2005; Marcus, Neuman and MacKuen, 2000). Merolla and Zechmeister (2009a, p. 579), for instance, provide experimental evidence showing that citizens tend to support conservative governments that prioritize national security agendas in the context of high terrorist threats. The focus of these studies, however, is on political behavior in Western democracies. Our understanding of mass voting behavior in the aftermath of long and uninterrupted violence like civil wars is limited to few empirical studies. A recent article by Ishiyama (2014) argues that a large and dominant party tends to emerge after post-civil war elections. The author finds that the bloodier the past war, the more likely it is for a dominant party to get elected. Yet, the role of fear on electoral outcomes is not the main focus of the paper and the mechanism of the voting behavior under the influence of fear remains unclear.

Recent works also examine factors that increase the risk of conflict after PCEs and point to two main reasons to explain conflict recurrence. First, they suggest



that lack of institutions and unfair electoral practices cause the rise of violent parties, and their electoral competition heightens the likelihood of conflict recurrence (Paris, 2004; Reilly, 2003). According to Paris (2004:68) electoral competition among former belligerents often turns into a “war by other means,” and in absence of institutional capability to contain electoral malpractice, violence is often the result. This theory, however, looks primarily at the violent group actors and fails to integrate the consequence of voting decisions of the mass and its effect on the actors. In many cases of PCE, election observers are often present and rather than violence peaking on the election day, it is in the aftermath of election results that armed conflicts begin. In the Angolan PCE in 1992, for instance, the leader of the former rebel group, Jonas Savimbi, restarted the war after the election results declared the incumbent party candidate, Eduardo dos Santos, the winner. Savimbi claimed that his protests and complaints registered against electoral manipulation by the incumbent party remained largely unheeded during the pre-election period (Bayer, 1992, p. 16). The missing link in these discussions is the voting patterns of the masses. While it is likely that political groups merely make allegations against the opponents upon losing, it is unclear if Savimbi would have chosen to go to war had there been fewer incidents of pre-electoral violence. The more important question related to this chapter is whether or not the intimidation by the incumbent party, MPLA’s blue uniformed police influenced the voters, as alleged by Savimbi’s UNITA.

Second, others argue that people’s exposure to prolonged violence leads to a violent culture (Hirsch-Hoefler et al., 2014) and, therefore, the support for violent groups (Boyle, 2014; Steenkamp, 2009, p. 29-53). This argument assumes that people in post-conflict societies are divided along the fault lines of conflict. While

this may be true in certain types of ethnic conflicts, people in general have more to lose from conflicts, especially when they are prolonged. Quite the opposite of the cultural argument that hostilities and distrust increase after an armed conflict, empirical works suggest that when exposed to costly wars, war-weariness sets in among both fighting groups and the population. As a result, peace tends to last longer if a country has sustained higher cost in terms of civil war duration or battle deaths (David Mason et al., 2011, p. 185;Walter, 2004, p. 380). Instead of supporting violence, the war-weariness hypothesis implies that voters should support moderate parties in PCEs, rather than supporting violent groups.

Building on the past work, I present an argument on how fear explains voting pattern in PCEs. I draw mainly from Lyons (2004), who argues that Liberians in 1997 voted for Charles Taylor's violent group due to the fear that Taylor may spoil the peace upon losing the election. Flores and Nooruddin (2012, p. 561) cite Lyons and argue that, ironically, electing the violent party was one of the prime reasons that led to the recurrence of violence in Liberia. Yet, while Lyons (1999) claim is novel, the book offers several other possible explanations for Taylor's electoral success that make the above claims difficult to disentangle. Along with the fear among voters, the author posits that other measures, such as financial and organizational advantages, Taylor's populist approach, and the perceived need for strong leadership among voters, also contributed to Taylor's victory (Lyons, 1999, p. 58-60). Thus, the question of why fear of violence leads to an increase in support for a violent party remains empirically unexplored. The following sections provide a theoretical explanation on why this might be so, along with the analysis of Nepal's PCE as evidence to support the theory.

### 3.3 Voter Behavior in the Aftermath of Armed Conflicts

Civilians bear heavy costs in internal armed conflicts. Eck and Hultman (2007) show that as many as 572,767 civilians were killed in intra-state armed conflicts in 41 countries in the brief period since 1989. Civilians not only become the direct targets of the warring factions, but also suffer indirect costs like displacements, famine, and disease. In short, the cost of conflict for an average voter is very high. Given that citizens in post-conflict countries experience such high costs, a voter's decision to choose a party in a PCE is largely shaped by the fear of recurring violence and the party's potential to sustain the peace. From a rationalist standpoint, the median voter takes this future cost into account and chooses a party that is strong in terms of its violence-wielding capability since it can spoil the peace process upon losing the election. This is the central assumption of Wantchekon's (1999) game theoretic model that analyzes the strategic behavior of political parties in PCEs. Based on the assumption that fear influences voting behavior, the author argues that political parties in PCEs have an incentive to threaten reneging on the peace agreement if they lose. However, the authors rationalist assumption that voters will remain fixated on the fear of conflict recurrence and not consider other positive policies of the contending parties is somewhat simplified. Why do voters not focus on long-term policies that address economic or developmental issues since former belligerents are already committed to peace and have agreed to move forward peacefully? In other words, why do such threats work in yielding support from the voters?

We can explain voters' fixation on the fear of future violence and its effect on their voting decisions through a psychological approach. As indicated by Lupia and Menning (2007), psychological approaches of emotions often provide the right frame to explain how rational actors assign payoffs when making decisions. In the

following section, I use a psychological approach to theorize how a rational median voter in PCEs decides to choose a violent group.

Studies show that people are more likely to make cognitively biased political judgments in the context of anxiety (Arceneaux, 2012; Tversky, Kahneman and Choice, 1981). Rather than making rational judgments based on long-term gains, people in fear are loss averse. Arceneaux (2012, p. 281) states, “Because humans appear to have built-in preferences to avoid losses, arguments that claim to avert losses have the potential to be more persuasive than those that claim to realize gains.” Although not written precisely for post-conflict contexts, the author’s description of how anxiety impacts decision-making is directly applicable to the fearful atmosphere prevalent in post-conflict societies. While voters living in peaceful contexts might focus on factors like a candidate party’s long term policies, ideology, interest, and campaign (Alvarez, 1997; Cheibub and Przeworski, 1999), those living in societies that have undergone violent conflicts in the immediate past are likely to remain fearful of its recurrence and value peace more. In game theoretic terms, voters that fear conflict recurrence will assign higher payoffs for electing a party—even if it is violent—if doing so sustains the peace. This psychological explanation, therefore, helps to explain the rationalist assumption that voters decision-making in PCE is overridden by fear of conflict recurrence in PCEs.

Theoretically, we can extrapolate two other possibilities from the discussion above. Since voters’ senses of fear are influenced by their past experience, their fears, on average, should vary with (1) the intensity of past violence and (2) the time spent in peace. Holding time constant, I expect to find variation in voting patterns across space as explained by the variation in past violence level. Voters in districts with higher past violence should choose a militarily stronger party rather

than a moderate party with peaceful policy position. This leads to the first hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: In post-conflict elections, the likelihood of voter support for a violent former belligerent party should be higher in districts that had greater scale of violence in the past conflict.*

In addition to high levels of past violence, the amount of time elapsed after the end of armed violence should play a healing role. Psychologists have researched the topic of human resiliency to cope with losses in the past (Bonanno, 2004). One experimental study, coincidentally conducted in Nepal after the conflict, shows that societies develop collective coping mechanism over the years spent in peace (Gilligan, Pasquale and Samii, 2014). However, when the peaceful aftermath period is interrupted with frequent violent events, people will continue to remain in fear. Therefore, the presence of pre-election violence in first PCEs is likely to influence electoral choices of the voters. All else being equal, people in districts that continue to experience pre-election violence will be more fearful of the cost of conflict recurrence compared to those where there is no pre-election violence.

Past works, however, do not specify how pre-election violence may affect electoral outcomes in PCEs. Wantchekon (1999), for instance, argues that political parties in PCEs have an incentive to scare voters. The author argues that Taylor in Liberia often scared voters by threatening to go back to war (1999, p. 253). However, the work does not explain why Taylor's threats were credible. More important events are the large scale physical intimidation carried out by his NPLF party, which made his threats credible among the fearful voters. NPLF's chilling campaign slogan at the time was, "He killed my Ma, he killed my Pa, but I will vote for hi" (Outram, 1999).

In sum, if people in post-war countries continue to experience some level of intimidation and violence in their surroundings prior to the election, they should be more loss averse than others who have experienced peace. As a result, voters in regions that experience pre-election violence are likely to vote for a party in their constituency that uses coercion and intimidation. Therefore:

*Hypothesis 2: In post-conflict elections, the likelihood of voter support for a violent former belligerent party should be higher in districts that had more incidents of coercive pre-election violence.*

While the above hypothesis establishes how mean levels of pre-election violence influence voting behavior in post-conflict elections, a more dynamic relation between past violence and pre-election violence can be evaluated by simultaneously considering time and violence. I further argue that fear is much higher when a region has both high past violence and pre-election violence. When a district has not experienced high past violence, pre-election violence by a party may not lead to higher support for the party. It may even evoke anger from voters and backfire, thus resulting in fewer votes for the violent party, as seen in the case of stable Western countries where fear of violent groups lead voters to choose parties on the right that have agendas to punish the perpetrators (Kibris, 2010; Merolla and Zechmeister, 2009a). But when the level of past violence and pre-election violence are both high, there should be multiplicative effect of the two variables on the outcome of support for the violent party. Statistically, this implies an interaction of the two variables, past violence and pre-election violence, producing a positive coefficient but with statistical significance only towards the side with higher values. We thus expect to see much higher vote gain for the party in districts that have both high level pre-election and past violence.

*Hypothesis 3: In post-conflict elections, when a party uses high levels of pre-electoral violence, its likelihood of gaining voter support is higher in districts that have experienced higher levels of violence in the past.*

### **3.4 The First Post-Conflict Election in Nepal**

To test the above expectations, I analyze Nepal's 2008 Constitution Assembly (CA) election. Focusing on a single case is often the best approach for exploratory studies as it provides the rich dynamics and depth necessary to better understand the causality (Gerring, 2004) . Nepal's case is recent and representative of most post-conflict transitional countries. The CA election was held eighteen months after the end of a decade-long insurgency that started in 1996 and claimed the lives of more than 16000 people. Nepal's CA election is an interesting case because, despite the presence of moderate democratic parties and a brief history of electoral politics in the past, people chose to elect the revolutionary Maoist party—the party that had been engaging in the violent struggle against the government prior to the 2008 election. A comprehensive study on the origin of Maoist insurgency shows that the movement started in the early 1990s from the heartland districts of western Nepal, Rukum, Rolpa, Salyan and Jajarkot. Maoists in those districts first boycotted the multiparty elections in 1994 and started to use violence against other local political activists and police stations (Gersony, 2003, p. 39). A means of mobilization that later became popular among the Maoists was mass abduction, either for ideological indoctrination reasons or for using the abductees forcefully as manual labors when attacking security force bases. For instance, in January 2005 alone, reports suggested that Maoists had abducted 600 civilians from the Doti district in Western Nepal, 177 students and 38 teachers from the Raamechhap district, 500 youths

in the Acham district, and 1100 students and teachers from the Sankhuwasabha and Dhading districts.<sup>3</sup> These forceful mass indoctrination campaigns towards the end of insurgency signal the challenge that the movement was facing in mobilizing the mass. In light of such a challenge, it is puzzling that the party got the highest number of votes a few months later in the CA elections.

### **3.4.1 Why Focus on the Rebels?**

Three key actors during Nepal's conflict period were the monarchy, the Maoists, and the democratic parties. Among the three, the two actors that used armed violence were the state under the monarchy and the Maoists. However, after the end of conflict, the monarchy ceased to exist as an institution and the only actors competing for power through elections were the Maoists and other democratic parties. During the election in 2008, other political parties did not have the violent capacity like the Maoists. In 2005, the constitutional monarch, who was the head of the armed forces, had taken over political power from the democratic parties by launching a coup with the help from army. As a result, all parties, including the Maoists, had formed a united front against the king, who eventually gave in to the pressures of the united front, thus leading to the monarchical defeat and signing of the peace agreement (Phayal, 2011). Later, the new interim constitution declared Nepal a republic and monarchical system came to an end.

During the CA elections, the only pro-monarchical party was Rastriya Prajantatra Party (RPP), which had very few supporters to make any substantive difference in national politics. Among the democratic parties, Nepali Congress (NC) and a democratic socialist party, United Marxist-Leninist (UML), were the two largest

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<sup>3</sup>See news from archive on January 21, 22 and 28 of the national daily, The Kathmandu Post, <http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/archive/> [Accessed: February 2013].



parties against which the Maoists had to compete during the CA elections. The military and armed police who were initially loyal to the king became indifferent towards the two large democratic and non-violent parties during the transitional period, since the latter had been protesting against absolute monarchical rule since 2005. The two big parties, therefore, were not backed by military capabilities like the Maoists and were not in a position to credibly threaten violent conflict if they lost the election. Only the Maoist party was militarily intact and could spoil the peace if it lost the election.

A number of violent events in the country dropped significantly after the peace agreement in 2006, but the Maoists continued using low scale violence after the election date was declared. The violence level during the pre-election period was far lower than the level seen during civil war days; nevertheless, it was much higher than in normal pre-civil war days. Maoists formed an organization called the Young Communist League (YCL) in the same month as the signing of the CPA in 2006. Many YCL members had previously been a part of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), and they continued to dominate local politics by using force and coercion, which they referred to as their “law enforcement” activities (UNOCHA, 2007). International observers, such as the Carter Center and the International Crisis Group, explicitly reported widespread concerns about the deliberate use of pre-electoral violence by the Maoists (Carter Center Report, 2008; ICG Report No.149, 2008, p.6). These incidents indicate that Maoist violence prior to the election was neither sporadic nor isolated, but more deliberate and significant and that it was a significant cause of concern for various actors. This trend of violent intimidation peaked as election day approached, and diminished later after the Maoists won.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>See South Asian Terrorist Portal website:  
<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/nepal/database/targetingpartyceasefire.htm>

### 3.5 The 2008 Constituent Assembly Election

Nepal's CA election in 2008 was significantly different than regular parliamentary elections of the past. To make it more inclusive and representative, a mixed-electoral system was implemented and the total number of seats available was almost three times larger than that of past elections. Out of 601 seats, 240 seats were allocated to winners of the first-past-the-post (FPTP) election from single member constituencies spread across 75 districts. Of the remaining, 335 seats went to list proportional representation (PR) system, and the final 26 seats were reserved for minority candidates, nominated from the parties in proportion to their sizes. The Maoists won both FPTP and PR as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Nepals Constituent Assembly Election results, April 2008

|             | List PR seats<br>(335) |    | First Past the Post seats<br>(240) |    | Total (575) |    |
|-------------|------------------------|----|------------------------------------|----|-------------|----|
|             | n                      | %  | n                                  | %  | n           | %  |
| CPN-Maoists | 120                    | 50 | 100                                | 30 | 220         | 38 |
| NC          | 37                     | 15 | 73                                 | 22 | 110         | 19 |
| CPN-UML     | 33                     | 14 | 70                                 | 21 | 103         | 18 |
| MPRF        | 30                     | 12 | 22                                 | 7  | 52          | 9  |
| TMLP        | 9                      | 4  | 11                                 | 3  | 20          | 3  |
| Others      | 11                     | 5  | 59                                 | 18 | 70          | 3  |

Note: CPN-Maoists, Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist; NC, Nepali Congress; CPN-UML, Communist Party of Nepal Unified Marxist-Leninist; MPRF, Madhesi Peoples Rights Forum; TMLP, Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party; Others, 20 parties and two independents. Source: Nepal Election Commission, <http://www.election.gov.np>

This chapter will focus only on the FPTP results. In mixed electoral systems, the PR system ensures the inclusion of smaller parties that have significant proportion of supporters but very small chances of getting representation in an exclusively FPTP system. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I use district-wide FPTP results for two reasons. First, the number of votes gained by parties in district-wide FPTP and PR results are correlated positively. Second, FPTP results should pro-

vide a clearer and more accurate picture of the local dynamics, since voters were voting for local party candidates in the FPTP ballot, but in the list-PR ballot, they were voting for a party at national level. In the next section, I systematically analyze whether or not fear and intimidation marginally increased Maoist votes as predicted by the hypotheses.

### **3.6 Data and Model**

The unit of analysis for this study is the district, and the hypotheses are tested using district-level election data. I find district to be the most appropriate level of analysis since it is the standard unit across various data sources. The dependent variable is the Maoists vote share in the FPTP race, which is the sum of vote counts for the Maoist party candidates in all electoral constituencies within a district divided by the total number of valid casted votes in the district.<sup>5</sup> Data for the Maoists vote count comes from the official website of Nepal Election Commission, and it varies substantially across all 75 districts.<sup>6</sup> The following section provides a brief description of the independent and control variables used, followed by a discussion of the statistical method employed in this study.

#### **3.6.1 Measuring Violence: the Main Explanatory Variables**

The two main variables of interest are past violence and pre-election intimidation. The variable *past killings* is the aggregate number of people killed in each district from 2002 until the insurgency ended in 2006. The starting year is 2002 since the level of violence escalated after the state of emergency was declared in November

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<sup>5</sup>Depending on the size and population of a district, electoral constituencies for FPTP race range from one to seven per district, and are all single member constituencies.

<sup>6</sup><http://www.election.gov.np/reports/CAResults> [Accessed February 2013].

2001 and the country's military mobilized for the first time to counter the insurgency. The variable *pre-election violence* is the count of violent incidents by the Maoists aimed to intimidate civilians in each district after the declaration of the election date and before the main election day. The variable is an index created by aggregating the four different forms of violence perpetrated by the party cadres in the pre-electoral period—threats, beatings, abductions, and killings.<sup>7</sup> Data on all of the above forms of violence comes from a human rights NGO, the Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), which has been operating in Nepal since 1988. The organization maintains a network of representatives in almost all districts even during the civil war period, and has built the most comprehensive dataset on human rights violations perpetrated by both state and non-state actors.<sup>8</sup> The INSEC dataset is referred as a reliable source by more than one author (Hafner-Burton and Ron, 2009, p. 391; Kalyvas, 2008), and has been used extensively in social science research (e.g. Do and Iyer, 2010; Nepal, Bohara and Gawande, 2011). The incidents of pre-election violence are coded as one-sided violence against civilians, making it a pure indicator of the party's attempt to impose control over population.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.6.2 Control Variables

It is important to first isolate people's support for the Maoists out of fear by identifying a potential confounding factor: people's support due to congruence with the

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<sup>7</sup>The factor loadings are quite high: abductions (0.79), threats (0.7), beatings (0.86) and killings (0.22). Although the factor loading for killings is the weakest, the results do not change significantly even when it is dropped. Factor loadings without killings are abductions (0.769), threat (0.752) and beatings (0.857). The low factor loading for killings reflects the different dynamics in the Madhes region that had more killings.

<sup>8</sup>See INSEC online information at <http://www.insec.org.np>.

<sup>9</sup>The data is not contaminated by violence data from military clashes and combatant deaths, as the data before 2006 ceasefire tends to contain in similar previous works that use the INSEC data on violence. This is the main reason for the high spikes in death tolls in areas that saw military clashes during the insurgency period.

party's policy or ideology. Maoist policy can be best understood by looking at the 40-point demand list that they presented before the government prior to declaring the Peoples War in 1996 (Hutt, 2004). The list emphasizes three main issues: (1) call for nationalism against foreign intervention, (2) mobilization against ethnic and economic inequality, and (3) miscellaneous issues concerned with peoples livelihood and economic poverty (Hutt, 2004). This demand list reflects the core mobilizing narrative of the Maoists and their policy aims. The Maoist agenda during the electoral period in 2008 was not markedly different from the past. Considering such policy orientations, I expect voters in districts with larger inequalities and large poverty rates to show more support for the party. Economic inequality among the voters is measured with data on a district-wide land holding GINI index. The GINI index, along with human development index used in descriptive statistics, comes from the United Nations Development Program document, the Nepal Human Development Report (2004). I also control for the horizontal inequality using a variable identifying caste polarization in the main model, since Nepal is a country with a caste-based system. Caste polarization is based on 2001 district-level census data on population.<sup>10</sup>

After the CPA in 2006, a different set of political events were seen in the southern plains of Nepal called the Madhes. Local ethnic Madhesi people had been politically marginalized by the non-Madhesi center for generations. The Madhesi movement started with assertive demands for political inclusion (ICG Report No.136., 2007) and was predominant in 14 of the 75 districts of southern Nepal under the leadership of indigenous local leaders that had splintered from the Maoist party

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<sup>10</sup>Polarization index= $4\sum\psi^2(1-\psi)$ , where  $\psi$  is the proportion of caste  $i$  in the population (Duclos, Esteban, & Ray, 2004). Similar to Do and Iyer (2010), castes that make up more than 1% of the district population were retained, and castes that total less than 1% of the district population were classified as "others."

(Miklian, 2009). After the first major general strike by the Madhesi groups in January 2007, more violent events followed (Hachhethu, 2007). Violence levels in 14 districts continued to escalate after Madhesi groups started to clash with cadres of other non-Madhesi based parties, including the Maoists.<sup>11</sup> Later, the Madhesi parties won most of the electoral constituencies in these 14 districts. Since there was a different dynamic ongoing in the 14 districts, these districts are controlled for by using a binary variable called *madhes* in the models.

The next control variable, *red districts*, represents Maoist-dominated districts. Gersony (2003) explains how the Maoist movement started from the two districts in remote western Nepal: Rukum and Rolpa. By 2003, the number of districts where the Maoists had established Jan Sarkar or the peoples government had expanded to 25. These 25 core districts were declared as liberated, or the red districts (Hachhethu, 2004). Although state forces sometimes conducted short military operations in the hinterlands of these districts, Maoist militias dominated the areas most of the time.<sup>12</sup> Villagers paid revolutionary taxes to the Maoists and the local militias kept a strict watch over peoples movement (Marks, 2007). Despite the improved human rights situation after the CPA, challenging Maoists politically in these red districts where YCL remained active was risky. The control variable red districts is a binary variable coded as 1 for these 25 red districts and 0 otherwise.

Finally, I control for literacy and population in each district. Past research shows a strong association between violence and education (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000; Thyne, 2006; Doyle and Sambanis, 2000). Specifically, *literacy rates* in each district could influence people's choices towards the Maoist party. The variable

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<sup>11</sup>See IRIN News (2008) as some examples on Terai violence. Of the 109 armed groups and outfits present in the country, as reported by the government in 2009, nearly 75 % concentrated in Madhesi region (Manandhar, 2009)

<sup>12</sup>District headquarters usually had garrison military and police units

*log population* is used for controlling population in each district. Data for both the variables is obtained from the Nepal census data (2001).

Before exploring the regression analysis, I provide descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses to show how general ideological or policy reasons explain general voting patterns. I then employ an ordinary least squares (OLS) model,<sup>13</sup> since the dependent variable is the Maoists district vote share on a continuous scale. Robustness of the finding for the second hypothesis, pre-election violence, is examined using coarsened exact matching (or CEM) before OLS. Pre-election violence acts as a perfect treatment effect and CEM helps to determine its influence on the dependent variable while avoiding model dependency (Iacus, King and Porro, 2011). The 75 districts are first matched on four aspects: income index, literacy percent, caste polarization and total population, and then treated with the pre-election violence index before testing the OLS model with the CEM weights.<sup>14</sup> Finally, the third hypothesis about interaction of the two independent variables is also tested using the OLS model. In the next section, I first analyze people's support for the party using descriptive statistics, and then discuss the results of the full model.

### 3.6.3 Explaining Support for the Maoists

A number of scholars indicate that poverty and inequality are the main cause behind the rise of the violent Maoist revolution in Nepal (Acharya, 2010; Do and Iyer,

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<sup>13</sup>I cross checked by using truncated regression, as the dependent variable Maoist vote share is in percent form, and also with a negative binomial model, using Maoist vote count in each district as the dependent variable and controlling for district population (among other variables). The results from these models that show the effects of main independent variables do not differ from the main model.

<sup>14</sup>CEM reduces observations from 75 to 41 observations, but the imbalance factor in the model decreases from 0.875 to 0.5 after coarsening. The combination of bins to reduce imbalance is found to be optimum, since reducing imbalance further results in losing observations. The cut point for violence treatment is taken as the 25th percentile of the violence level—that is violence index of 13. In other words, violence level more than this indicates the presence of violence.

2010; Nepal, Bohara and Gawande, 2011; Murshed and Gates, 2005; Thapa and Sijapati, 2004). In order to test whether these factors were responsible for Maoist voteshare in the elections later, I conduct bivariate analysis of the election outcome and two measures of poverty and inequality: income index and human development index (HDI) in table 3.2. The first column of the table presents the economic situation in Maoist dominated red districts. Comparing the first two columns, I find that the mean of all red districts have a lower HDI and a higher poverty rate than in non-red districts, indicating that Maoist stronghold area during the conflict years were indeed those that were lagging behind economically. However, the third column shows that the districts where the Maoists won the elections are not as poor and that they have higher levels of HDI. In other words, there is a weak correlation between the Maoist grievance-based narrative and their level of support in poorer districts during the CA election. This is not to say that economic grievance played no role, but from the bivariate result in table 3.2, it is difficult to credit Maoists economic policy as the basis of their electoral success. A counter argument could perhaps be that the overall low poverty rate of the country and the poor performance of the incumbent parties to control instability may have led the people to support the former rebels. This counter argument, however, does not explain the within-country variation seen in the electoral results.

Perhaps the Maoist electoral victory is merely a reflection of unwavering popular support since the beginning of democratic change in the 1990s. Nepal, Bohara and Gawande (2011, p. 887) imply widespread popularity of the Maoists, as the paper states that the United Peoples Front (UPF), the mother party of present day Maoists, in 1991 was the third largest political party in the lower house parliament. However, this is questionable due to the fact that they won only 9 out of 205 seats



Table 3.2: Comparing the grievance factor

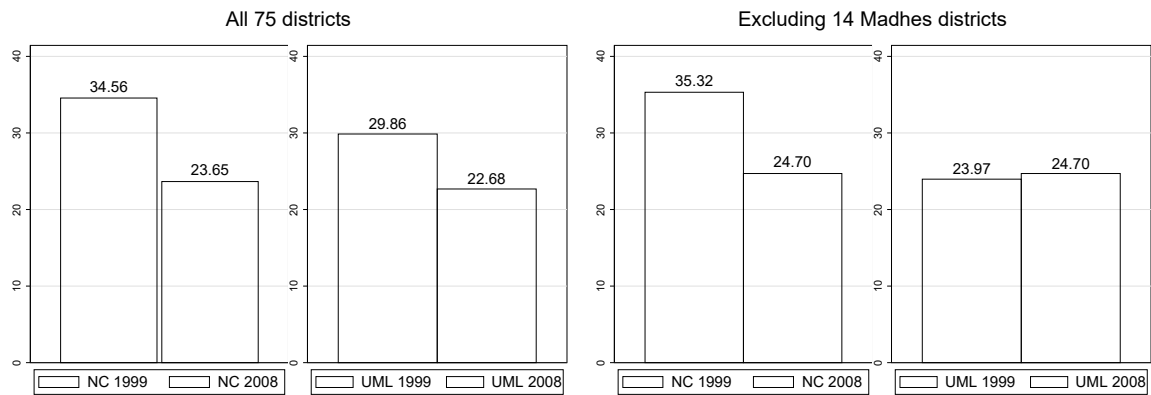
|                          | Red districts Mean<br>(n=25) | Average in non-red<br>districts (n=50) | Districts where Maoists<br>won 3 or more<br>Constituencies*<br>(n=15) |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| Human Dev Index<br>(HDI) | .311                         | .324                                   | .337  |
| Income Index             | .459                         | .394                                   | .356  |

Note: The above table shows human development index (HDI) and poverty rate in Maoist dominated red districts, in districts where the Maoists won in 2008 elections, and, finally, in districts that were non-red. It shows the contrast that the Maoists mobilized red districts were poorer and less developed in HDI terms, but where they won elections are richer and relatively more developed. Source: UNDP 2001

(4.8%) in the 1991 elections, while the other two major parties, UML and NC, won 69 (28%) and 110 (38%) seats, respectively (Gaige and Scholz, 1991). This suggests that the Maoists were a distant third in terms of their popularity at the time. In the 1994 elections, the Maoists did even worse. A faction of UPF boycotted the elections and two years later declared the peoples war against the state. Therefore, we cannot be confident that the party enjoyed popular support since the pre-war days. Another possibility is that a large number of people may have shifted their ideological positions after the Maoist movement that started to peak since mid-1990s. However, if this was the case in the 2008 elections, then we should have seen this shift from the people that are on the ideological left rather than the ones on the right. Quite the contrary, we find that the Maoists in 2008 seem to have pulled majority of the NC votes from the right and not the leftist UML votes (see figure 3.1).<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the logic of mass ideological shift in 2008 election does not match well with the evidence.

<sup>15</sup>As mentioned earlier, the two other dominant parties in the Nepalese politics have been the NC and the UML, which are on the right and left from the political spectrum, respectively. In 2008, compared to 1999 midterm elections, UML lost total 300,000 votes approximately, while NC lost 1 million votes.

Figure 3.1: Vote share comparison of the two major parties for the year 1999 and 2008



Note: The figure above depicts the voteshare of the two major parties, Nepali Congress and United Marxist Leninist (UML), in 1999 and 2008 elections. Compared to 1999 when the Maoist party was not contending, NC in 2008 suffered much loss. This comes as a surprise since NC supporters are more on the right of the political spectrum compared to the UML.

Comparing with earlier elections further, I find similarity between 2008 election and the one held in 1991 with respect to two key aspects: both were held after a major change in the political context,<sup>16</sup> and in both, the Maoist party was a competitor. The differences, however, are the absence of widespread violence before the 1991 elections and the weak support for the Maoists at the time. There were only a few sporadic incidents of intimidation and violence then, which the local police were able to contain at the district level (Gaige and Scholz, 1991). In contrast, the 2008 elections followed a decade-long civil war and reports of substantial pre-election violence by the same party. Although the international election monitors declared the election fair, their report cites the pre-election period as marred by insecurity and violence, undermining the freedom of movement (Carter Center Report, 2008, p. 27). Do we find the level of violence, both during civil war period

<sup>16</sup>1990 saw the end of one party monarchy and the rise of constitutional monarchy; 2006 marked the beginning of end of monarchy, and the monarchy was formally abolished in 2008.

and pre-election phase, partly explaining the voteshare for Maoists? Following section analyzes this effect of violence more systematically and tests the hypotheses.

### 3.7 Fear of violence and Election Results

Table 3.3 presents results of regression models on the effect of violence on election outcome. The first three columns in the table are coefficients from the OLS regression, and the rightmost column is the result from an OLS estimate after coarsened exact matching (CEM). Model 3 is the main model. To restate, the two main variables of interest in the models are: (1) district-wise past killings measured as the number of people killed during the last four years of conflict, and (2) pre-election violence by the Maoist cadres to intimidate voters, an index created from different forms of violent activities reported in each district. Since both past killings and pre-election violence are correlated, the results are presented separately in the first two models and then combined in Model 3.<sup>17</sup>

First, model 3 shows that past violence is positive and statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . The coefficient for the variable is 0.032. This tells us that, on average and holding all other variables constant, if a district experiences 100 more deaths in the past, then the voteshare of the Maoist party is likely to increase by 3.2 percent. This is significant since number of deaths in the last four years of the past conflict ranged from 1 to 639 per district. 55 districts out of the total 75 suffered more than 100 deaths in the past and 29 districts had more than 200 deaths. This increase of 3.2 voteshare is important since the mean margin of victory across districts—that is, the mean difference of vote counts between the winner and the second big party—is 34,782, which is 3.35 percent of Maoist voteshare. In summary, an

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<sup>17</sup>Despite the correlation, placing both variables in the same model as in model (3) or (4) is not problematic since the variance inflation factor (VIF) is 6 (Greene, 2011, p. 90).

Table 3: Effect of violence on vote share in Nepal's 2008 elections

| VARIABLES             | (1)<br>OLS           | (2)<br>OLS            | (3)<br>OLS            | (4)<br>OLS after<br>CEM |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Past killings         |                      | 0.041 ***<br>(0.012)  | 0.032**<br>(0.012)    | 0.036**<br>(0.015)      |
| Pre-election violence | 0.123***<br>(0.040)  |                       | 0.087**<br>(0.041)    | 0.080**<br>(0.039)      |
| Literacy percent      | -0.135<br>(0.114)    | -0.097<br>(0.114)     | -0.090<br>(0.111)     | -0.093<br>(0.176)       |
| Caste polarization    | 29.145*<br>(15.618)  | 10.440<br>(15.688)    | 17.411<br>(15.616)    | 30.700*<br>(18.112)     |
| Gini                  | 20.692<br>(27.909)   | 0.814<br>(26.726)     | 14.911<br>(26.837)    | 12.342<br>(41.480)      |
| Red districts         | 6.845**<br>(2.991)   | 5.851*<br>(2.963)     | 5.972**<br>(2.886)    | 8.449**<br>(3.827)      |
| Madhes                | -12.219**<br>(5.885) | -14.990**<br>(5.810)  | -13.957**<br>(5.678)  | -7.915<br>(7.446)       |
| Population (log)      | -2.847<br>(2.035)    | -4.499**<br>(2.174)   | -5.159**<br>(2.139)   | -8.269**<br>(3.828)     |
| Constant              | 47.148*<br>(26.375)  | 83.177***<br>(28.612) | 78.555***<br>(27.946) | 108.928**<br>(44.822)   |
| Observations          | 75                   | 75                    | 75                    | 41                      |
| R-squared             | 0.548                | 0.562                 | 0.591                 | 0.828                   |
| Adjusted R-squared    | 0.501                | 0.517                 | 0.542                 | 0.785                   |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (one tailed).

Note: Dependent variable above is the Maoist vote-share per district. Models (1), (3) and (4) show the positive association of Maoist pre-election violence on their vote gain, controlling for other variables. Models (2), (3) and (4) also show the positive effect of past violence in each district for Maoist vote gains. People in districts that suffered higher cost in the past conflict have voted more for the Maoist party. The main model is model (3). Model (4) is result after matching district characteristics in four measures: literacy, income index, caste polarization and population, and treating with pre-election violence at 25<sup>th</sup> percentile.

increase in the level of past killings is found to strongly increase the vote share for the Maoist party. This finding provides support for the hypothesis that that peoples violent experience in the past is related to their voting behavior (H1). All else equal, people in districts where levels of past violence was high were more likely to vote for the Maoists.

Next, we turn to the effect of intimidation on voting behavior of people in PCEs. Model 3 in table 3.3 shows that the coefficient for variable pre-election vi-

olence is 0.087 and statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Interpreting this result, an increase of pre-election violence level by 30 units increases the Maoist vote share by 2.61 percent. In substantive terms, with 10 incidents each of abduction, threat and beating by the Maoists, their vote share increases by 2.61 percent on average. This is meaningful and the increase in vote share substantively since the mean number of abductions, threats and beatings by the Maoists is 6.56, 8.5 and 12.7 respectively. In other words, pre-election violence has a very strong effect on their victory. Analyses to examine the treatment of pre-election violence can be best observed using matching, where other characteristics of the districts are matched and the effect of treatment of pre-election violence observed. The result in the matching or CEM model is robust even when reducing the pre-election violence level cut point to as low as 10th percentile.<sup>18</sup> This shows that post-conflict society in Nepal was sensitive to even a small increase in pre-election violence (H2).

In addition to the violence, control variables red districts and Madhes produce interesting results. The variable red districts has positive coefficient that is statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . As mentioned earlier, this variable indicates that the 25 districts that were declared as liberated districts by the Maoists party during the conflict had higher levels of support. As expected, the positive coefficient indicates that Maoist party received larger vote share from these districts compared to others. Finally, the variable Madhes is negative and statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ , indicating lower levels of support for the Maoists in Madhesi districts. This result accurately portrays the violent conflicts in the 14 Madhesi districts that were ongoing between the local indigenous groups and the Maoists. As explained above, the

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<sup>18</sup>As mentioned earlier, the cut point for violence for matching is 25th percentile, which is the violence of 13 units. 10th percentile reduces the violence to 9 units. In other words, even when the aggregate violence index is 9, the effect of violence is significant in increasing the vote count. However, reducing it to the 10th percentile shrinks the observation to 30 with significance at  $p < 0.1$ .

rift between the two started earlier and culminated to the highest level just a few months prior to the elections.

### **3.7.1 The Interaction Effect**

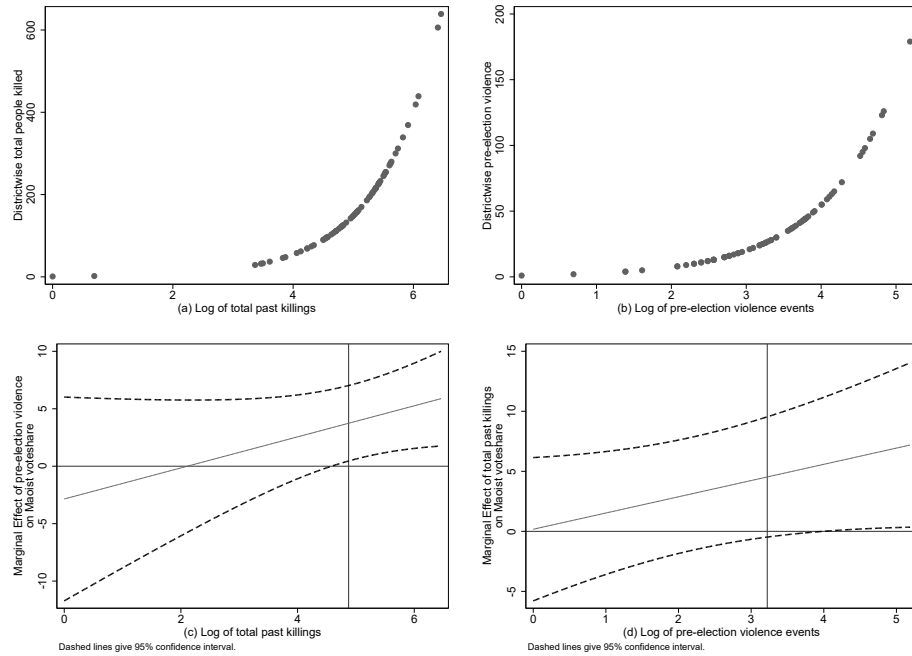
The third hypothesis indicates that levels of past violence interacts with pre-electoral violence by the Maoists, and thus affect their vote share. According to the hypothesis, I expect the marginal effect of high level pre-election and past violence on Maoist vote share to be positive and statistically significant. In other words, we should observe higher level of voter support for the party in those districts where both past violence level and pre-election violence by the party is high. While this suggests an interaction term of the two variables, the theoretical expectation is that the combined effect of the two variables should be significant only when both variables are high, but not when both are low.

I first convert the two variables (past killings and pre-election violence) to logarithmic scale since the conversion of these non-linearly distributed variables makes their interaction effect easier to trace in the OLS model. The result of the interaction is presented in figure 3.2(c), (d) and figure 3.3.<sup>19</sup> The interaction term in the model is not statistically significant, but following (Brambor, Clark and Golder, 2006, p. 74), it is important to examine the details of the interaction effect in order to interpret it correctly. The two lower panels in figure 3.2 show the effect of the interaction for each of the two variables, pre-election violence and past-violence. The top two panels help to interpret the logged variables and show the threshold points after which they become significant. They show that the interaction of the two variables become significant when a district in the past has experienced more than 152

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<sup>19</sup>In the interaction model (presented in chapter appendix), all other variables except the interaction term are substantively identical to those in model 3.

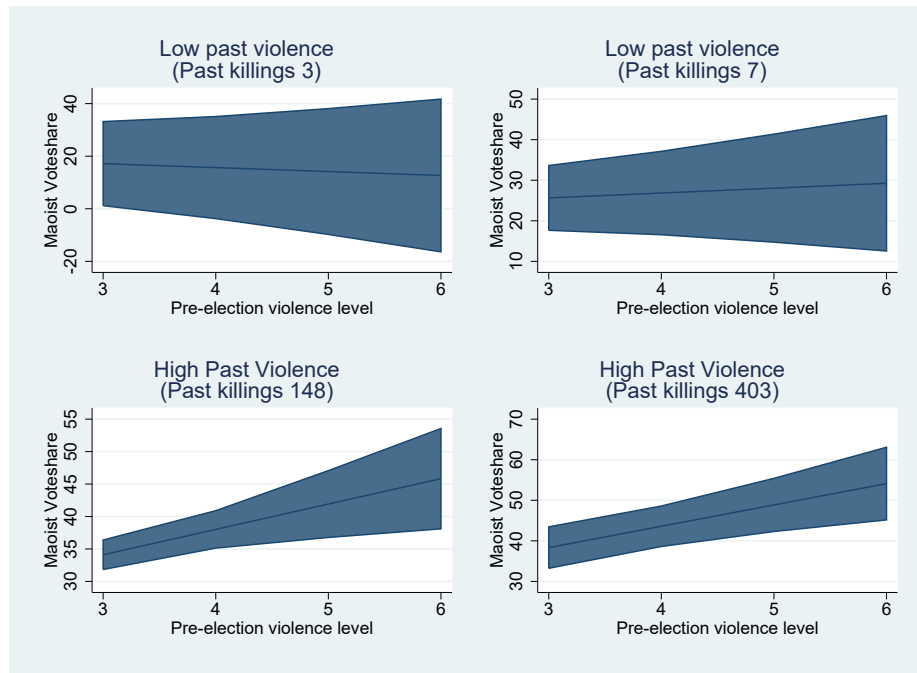
Figure 3.2: Log transformation and interaction of past killings and pre-election violence



Note: The top two figures above depict the logarithmic transformation of (a) total people killed during the last four years of conflict (2002-2006) and (b) the number of pre-election violent events, per district. The bottom two figures are the marginal effects of (c) pre-election violence (logged) and past violence (logged), and; (d) past violence (logged) and pre-election violence (logged), on the Maoist vote share. The bottom two provide the threshold of the two interaction variables. In the last four years of conflict, when a district suffered around 152 deaths (mean in the 75 districts) or more, pre-election violent events by the Maoists that were a little above mean level yielded a positive vote gain for the Maoist party, significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

killings in the period of 2002 and 2006, and when numbers of pre-election violent events were higher than 40. Figures 3.3 shows the substantive effect of pre-election violence at varying level of past violence. As expected, only higher levels of past violence show the conditioning effect (lower two panels of figure 3.3). When the log of past violence is at a low value of 1 (substantively when only 3 people killed in a district, as in the top left panel of figure 3.3), the effect of pre-election violence

Figure 3.3: Marginal effects of pre-election violence and past killings on Maoist vote share



Note: Above figures depict the result of interaction term past killings and pre-election violence on vote gain for the Maoists in Nepals 2008 election, controlling for all other variables in model 3 of table 3.3. The 4 panels show the conditional of higher level of pre-election violence on Maoist vote share, when past killings are kept constant at various levels.

has a negative, though not statistically significant, effect. Although not statistically significant, this negative reaction against perpetrators of pre-election violence in areas with less past violence seems to align somewhat with the past studies on the effect of terrorist threats in Western democracies, where voters are found to support conservative parties, viewed as more aggressive in seeking to punish perpetrators. Similarly, when the log of past violence level increases only slightly to 2 (representing 7 people killed in the past, as shown by the top right panel of figure 3.3), pre-election violence does not produce much change in the Maoist vote share. However, when the log of past violence is 5 (the number of people killed in the



past is 148, bottom left panel in figure 3.3), then an increase in log of pre-election violence from 3 to 6 (increase in the number of actual events from 20 to 403) increases the Maoist vote share from 34% to 46%. When the log of past violence is 6 (the number of people killed in the past is 403, bottom right panel in figure 3.3), then an increase in the log of pre-election violence from 3 to 6 increases the Maoist vote share from 38% to 54%. In short, higher intimidation levels in a district due to higher levels of pre-election violence by the party would result in a very large party vote share (more than 10%), but only when the district has a history of high past violence.

In summary, results show that among many factors, levels of past violence and the levels of pre-election violence by the Maoists during Nepal's post conflict election in 2008 had a significant effect on people's voting behaviors. In other words, voters in PCEs tend to make their voting decisions based predominantly on fear and not on the evaluation of other policy agendas of contending parties. This may be the primary reason as to why violent parties emerge after PCEs, ultimately increasing the risk of conflict recurrence.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The aim of this article is to uncover the effect of violence on voting patterns. It presents a theoretical account of how violent experiences of the past and pre-election period cause voters to choose a party affiliated with violence. The theory sheds light on the understanding of electoral mobilization in post-conflict scenarios and on the micro-level study of violence. Evidence presented in the study shows that the level of past violence and the fear it generates among people can result more in support for a violent party in a post-conflict country. One limitation of

the study is that the individual level of fear and the desire for peace is measured indirectly using the level of violence in the district. A survey study conducted in Nepal during the pre-election period shows that the majority of population associated the CA election with peace, security and stability (Hachhethu, Kumar and Subedi, 2008). However, the survey lacks questionnaires that are more relevant or specific to the research question of this study and provides only summary statistics. A future survey or field experiment at a cross-national level would be helpful in capturing such individual level dynamics.

Theory and evidence presented here opens avenues for further research to understand how the fear of violence and election timing may be associated. While timing in this study is constant, it suggests that when other factors are constant, holding PCEs early leads voters that have fresh memories of past conflict to choose violent groups because of the fear that doing otherwise may result in armed conflict recurrence. This is in agreement with Flores and Nooruddin (2012), that electing violent groups leads to institutionalization of violence and increases the risk of conflict recurrence. However, findings here indicate that even when a country holds PCE at a later date, its risk of armed conflict will be high when there is pre-election violence. Future research at a cross-national level could identify the interaction of timing and pre-election violence. Finally, the results inform policymakers of the need to evaluate the pre-election period more seriously as it has substantial impact on the results later. Complementing Kelley (2012), the results here show the need for election monitors to check not just the election-day violence, but also to focus on building mechanisms that deter violence and intimidation much earlier. Future inquiry should also be made on the longer term effects of the outcomes whereby violent parties rise through the use of pre-election violence and intimidation.

## Appendix for chapter 3

Figure 3.4: Violence data

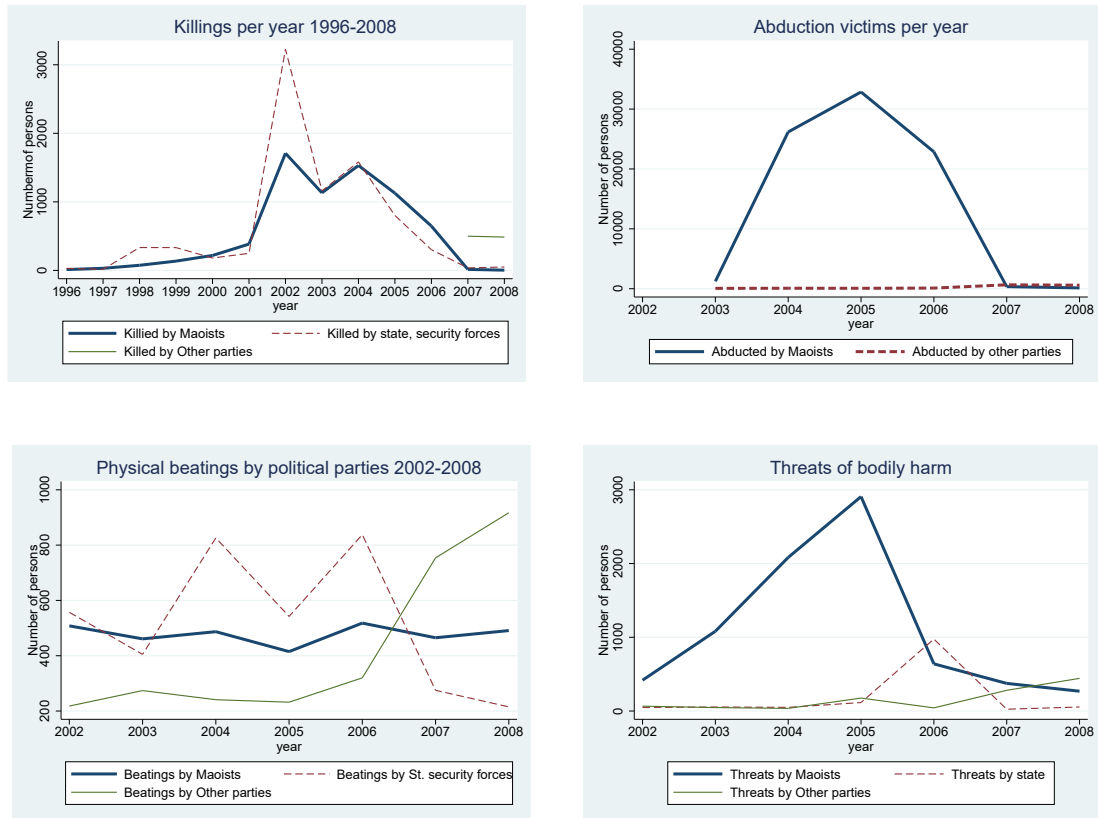
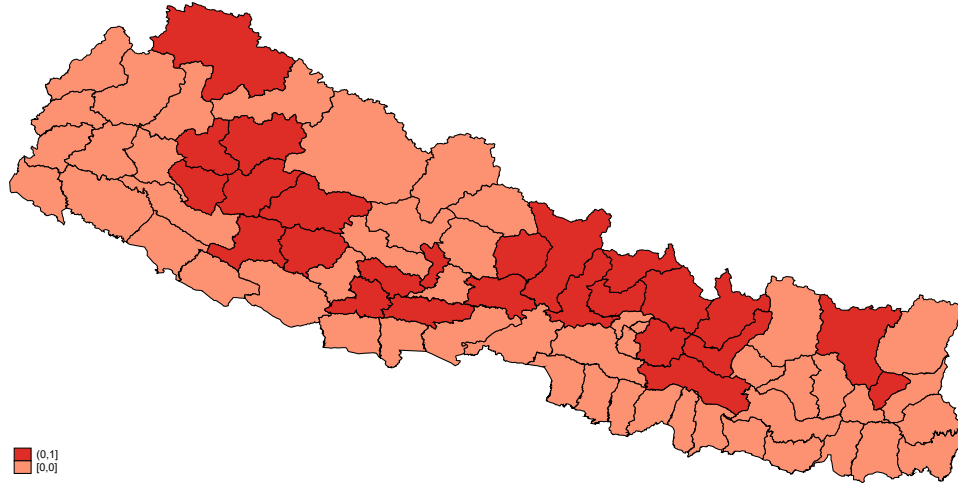


Figure 3.5: Red districts and Maoist Voteshare

Red districts



Maoist vote share

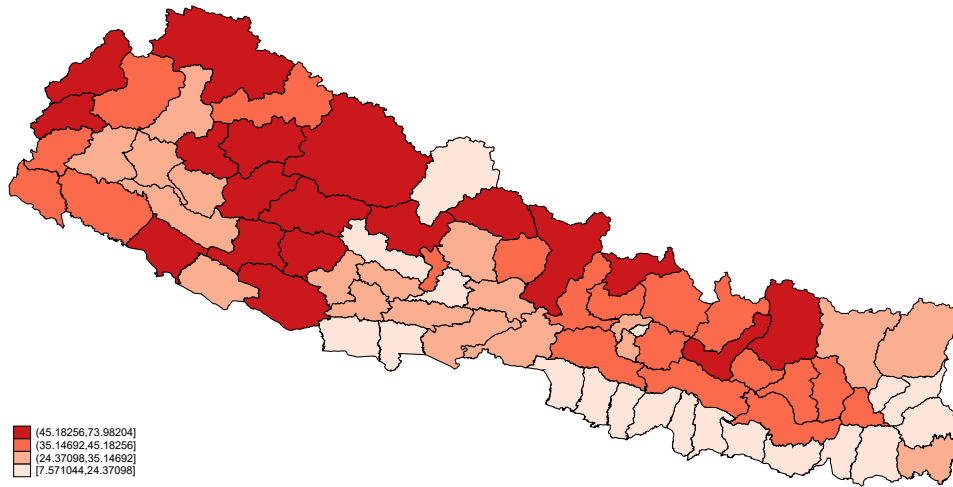


Table 1B: Vote-share and Maoist Violence before 2008 elections (OLS Regression)

| VARIABLES          | (1)                 | (2)                  | (3)                | (4)                | (5)                 |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Violence           | 4.119**<br>(1.053)  |                      |                    |                    |                     |
| Abductions         |                     | 0.430**<br>(0.136)   |                    |                    |                     |
| Threats            |                     |                      | 0.162*<br>(0.074)  |                    |                     |
| Beatings           |                     |                      |                    | 0.259**<br>(0.070) |                     |
| Killings           |                     |                      |                    |                    | -0.125<br>(0.161)   |
| Literacy percent   | -0.210<br>(0.123)   | -0.261<br>(0.131)    | -0.187<br>(0.129)  | -0.190<br>(0.124)  | -0.211<br>(0.134)   |
| Caste polarization | 30.229<br>(18.332)  | 20.223<br>(17.874)   | 30.954<br>(19.474) | 33.814<br>(18.980) | 25.568<br>(19.263)  |
| Gini               | 10.983<br>(16.846)  | -4.745<br>(15.340)   | 6.491<br>(17.541)  | 8.385<br>(17.560)  | -10.752<br>(18.343) |
| Red districts      | 5.580<br>(3.208)    | 5.384<br>(3.291)     | 7.229*<br>(3.280)  | 5.113<br>(3.233)   | 6.855*<br>(3.388)   |
| Madhes             | -13.934*<br>(6.071) | -17.536**<br>(6.024) | -12.707<br>(6.528) | -12.234<br>(6.443) | -13.888*<br>(6.295) |
| Past violence      | -1.226<br>(1.902)   | -0.967<br>(1.996)    | -0.473<br>(1.956)  | -1.062<br>(1.662)  | -0.018<br>(1.843)   |
| Total valid votes  | -0.000<br>(0.000)   | 0.000<br>(0.000)     | 0.000<br>(0.000)   | -0.000<br>(0.000)  | 0.000<br>(0.000)    |
| Constant           | 25.585<br>(18.262)  | 37.884*<br>(17.354)  | 22.255<br>(20.003) | 20.336<br>(19.185) | 35.836<br>(18.607)  |
| Observations       | 75                  | 75                   | 75                 | 75                 | 75                  |
| R-squared          | 0.551               | 0.536                | 0.510              | 0.544              | 0.489               |
| Adjusted R2        | 0.496               | 0.480                | 0.451              | 0.488              | 0.427               |

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

DV: Maoist vote-share per district

(Note: The OLS regression above is for unmatched data. Since DV Maoist voteshare lies between 1-100, truncated regression was also used. The result is not different from the above OLS regression. These results do not differ significantly from the main result in table 1)

## Chapter 4 Risk of Conflict Recurrence After Post-Conflict Elections

### Abstract

National elections held after armed conflicts are crucial parts of a transitional phase. Quite the contrary to our expectations, however, research suggests that post-conflict elections increase the risk of conflict recurrence, and that the risk is higher when they are held early. This chapter seeks to build on the past work and examine causal factors that exacerbate this risk. I use event history analysis to examine cross-national cases from 1950-2010 and find initially that incidents of pre-election violence are generally much lower in post-conflict countries, since contending parties in such countries are fearful of costly conflict escalations. However, the result shows that when present, even a low scale pre-election violence can become a significant predictor of recurrence of violence later. The study suggests that rather than focusing on just election day irregularities, policymakers seeking to sustain peace after such post-conflict elections should pay more attention to the incidents of electoral violence and intimidation around six months ahead. Overall, this chapter analyzes the role and relevancy of elections in keeping the peace after an armed conflict.

### 4.1 Introduction

The first election held after the end of intrastate wars are important transitional events in achieving peace and stability. Because of their symbolic value, holding such elections is often a high priority among peacebuilders and other stakeholders. Some scholars recommend to policymakers capitalize on the consensus reached among the key players by holding elections and starting the process of democratic institutionalization. Analyzing seven<sup>1</sup> post-conflict election (PCE) cases,

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<sup>1</sup>El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, Tajikistan and Angola

Lyons (2004, p. 57), for instance, emphasizes on setting up electoral administration sooner rather than delaying to hold an election that meet certain conditions. Setting up for elections early, according to the author, helps to start the process of political norm-building.<sup>2</sup> However, more recent work on armed conflicts and civil wars suggest that elections increase the risk of conflict recurrence (Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom, 2008), especially when they are held early (Brancati and Snyder, 2013; Flores and Nooruddin, 2012). This chapter seeks to go beyond the issues of timing and investigate other election related factors that make post-conflict elections (PCEs) risky events. In particular, it seeks to answer, does pre-election violence along with electoral fraud increase the risk of conflict recurrence for countries that hold elections for the first time after the end of a war?

Upon a cursory look at a few countries with first PCEs, I find that the level of pre-election violence is one of the key difference between those where violence recurred and others where peace sustained. In Sierra Leone's PCE in 2002, for instance, the violent events in the election year dropped by more than 50 percent compared to the year before. This tapering of violence during the pre-electoral period has been followed by stability and growth. From 2002 to 2012, the average GDP growth rate of the country has been 8.66 percent (World Bank, 2012). In contrast, the case of Mali, since the PCE in the early 1990s has been an example of recurring conflict. In 1992, the government held peace talks with the Tuareg rebels and made constitutional changes to accommodate rebel demands, followed by a

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<sup>2</sup>Lyons (2004:43) argues that Institutional change is an incremental process in which opportunities seized in the short run accumulate to create long run outcomes that may be unanticipated and that Precedents, expectations and fledgling institutions created during the interim period will form context for post conflict elections and will shape the path of transition. One example the author provides is the post-conflict elections in Tajikistan in 2000 that was regarded as flawed by the election observers. Yet, the author points to the United Nations observer mission in the country that ended in the same year, suggesting that despite the election irregularity, peace prevailed.

PCE at the national level. Within one year of the election, however, conflict broke out again. The next peace settlement in 1996<sup>3</sup> was followed by subsequent elections in April 1997 (Humphreys and Mohamed, 2005; Wallensteen, 2011, p. 212). The second PCE also resulted in an armed conflict ten years later. Scrutinizing the pre-electoral periods of both Malian PCEs in the UCDP georeferenced events dataset (Sundberg, Lindgren and Pads kocimaite, 2010), we find that the number of violent incidents during the year preceding the election day is quite high. In the 1992 election, the violence level in the election year rose by more than three times compared to the year before, followed by an outbreak of civil war two years later. During the second PCE in 1997, the number of violent events in the election year was 50 percent more compared to that of the previous year. Isolated examples like these beg for a more systematic analysis of the effects of pre-electoral violence on conflict recurrence.

In this chapter, I argue that an election loses its credibility as a conflict management tool if it is rigged, thus increasing the risk of conflict recurrence. In particular, I focus on two events that are expected to lower credibility and legitimacy of elections, incidents of election fraud and pre-electoral violence. By identifying these causal factors, this study illustrates the role and relevancy of elections in keeping the peace after intra-state conflicts. Theoretically, it highlights the mechanism of conflict recurrence after the first PCE and helps us understand how elections can serve as a tool in managing internal conflicts. At the policy level, the implications are relevant in at least two areas: democratization efforts and peacebuilding. Not only do the findings help enhance our understanding of the dynamics of peacebuilding, they also highlight the areas that election monitors need to ex-

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<sup>3</sup>Peace settlement known as the *Flamme de la Paix* (Flames of Peace), symbolized by a ceremony of big fire, burning the weapons handed by the fighters.



amine more closely in order for peace to be sustained after a PCE. For instance, Kelley (2012) shows that international election monitors tend to underreport pre-election violence to prevent their negative assessment from fueling further violence in country—what she calls the *stability bias*.<sup>4</sup> This study complements prior research by clearly demonstrating how such biases can actually undermine democratic stability in a country. In summary, the findings in this chapter can help enhance our understanding of the transitional process of post-civil war countries towards building a sustainable peace.

Rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. I first discuss the past literature and highlight the lack of clarity on how conflicts recur after the first PCE. I then discuss different conditions, built on the past works that best predict a peaceful or violent politics after holding a PCE. The empirical section begins with the introduction of data and proposed methodology, followed by the analysis aimed at testing hypotheses. I conclude by summarizing the main findings of this study along with important implications for policy-making and future research.

## **4.2 PCE through two lenses: Democratization and conflict studies**

The study of PCEs straddles the two main sub-fields in political science—conflict and peace studies in international relations and the democratization studies within comparative politics. The comparative literature views transitional elections as an important event for building stable democracies, in part because repeated elections help strengthen the role of political parties and smoothen democratic transitions (Howard and Roessler, 2006; Manning, 2002; Schedler, 2002b). Some further ar-

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<sup>4</sup>Kelley (2012, p. 72) argues that election monitors consider how their assessment may affect the stability of the country. By stability bias, she refers to the worry among the monitors that their negative assessment may fuel violence in the country.

gue that repeated elections not only consolidate democracies but also resolve dispute peacefully since habituation of democratic process helps channel grievance among the people politically without having to resort to violent means (Reilly, 2003; Rustow, 1970).

Prior studies on democratization point that holding a number of fair elections over time positively influences the process of democratic consolidation. Examining a universe of 232 African elections, for example, Lindberg (2006) argues that violence-free repetitive elections contribute to the consolidation of democracy in the long run. The author uses the presence of electoral violence as one of the key indicators to gauge electoral legitimacy. Similar to Lindberg, more recent works on election monitoring highlight the perils of electoral irregularities on consolidation of democracies and how the presence of election monitors help democratic transition by minimizing such irregularities (Beaulieu and Hyde, 2009; Hyde, 2011; Kelley, 2012). Hyde (2011) argues that autocratic incumbents adopt more appeasing policies and choose moderate positions, especially in presence of election monitors. According to Beaulieu and Hyde (2009), oppositions also bargain for more political space through non-violent means of electoral boycotts, when election monitors are present. Others argue that international observers help diffuse democratic norms and deter electoral misconducts by local actors, thus enhancing the quality of political participation (Kelley, 2012, p. 166). However, while the focus of these studies is on democratic consolidation through elections, they do not specifically focus on the universe of post-conflict cases necessary to examine the research question of this chapter.

Very few studies that intersect the areas of democratization and conflict examine the role of actors in sustaining the peace as they transform from violent

organizations to functioning political parties (Manning, 2002, 2008; Söderberg Kovacs, 2007). While Söderberg Kovacs (2007) argues that group cohesion, popular support and international legitimacy are the main determinants of such transformations, Manning (2008) emphasizes the role of repeated elections that help build the peaceful norm. Both studies present a detailed comparative analyses of a few interesting cases over a longer period of time and remain optimistic about the role of elections on democratic transition, much in line with other comparative studies mentioned above. But other research focusing particularly on the instrumental use of violence by actors is more cautious, suggesting that electoral competition often increases the risk of large scale violence even in mature democracies (Wilkinson, 2004; Sives, 2010), or, during regime transitions, when violence is often the key tool for manipulating outcomes (Schedler, 2002a).

The conflict literature, that focus on why countries fall into the armed conflict trap, finds that post-conflict elections are significant factors in increasing the risk of conflict recurrence. Conflict studies often focus on group level actors and their decisions, rather than macro level factors like economy that democratization studies emphasize (Collier, 2003; Jarstad and Sisk, 2008; Paris, 2004; Snyder, 2000)<sup>5</sup>. In his detailed analysis of the post-conflict transitional period, Collier (2009, p.39) states that PCEs increase the risk of violence because of the high stakes that the contending parties have in the event. The author provides a summary of causal process: “the winner gleefully anticipates untrammelled power: no checks and balances here. The loser anticipates its fate under the thumb of its opponents and knows there is but one recourse: back to violence” Collier (2009, p.82).

Yet, the seemingly simple definition of how the insider parties—those con-

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<sup>5</sup>Often referred to as spoilers of peace (Stedman, 1997)

tending the election—can choose to start violence, is complex when scrutinizing at the process. Spoilers of post conflict peace may not always be insiders, but also groups that are not part of the peace process (Nilsson, 2008; Stedman, 1997). Even when we consider the insider spoilers as suggested by Collier (2009), it is somewhat counter-intuitive that the insider parties agree to contend the elections in order to avoid the cost of war, and not anticipate the fate of losing. Moreover, if a party chooses to take up arms after losing an election, it has to incur the cost of impending war in addition to the credibility cost among international audiences. Therefore, the puzzle is: what motivates groups to take the violent route and reignite the conflict once they participate in the elections?

The conflict literature points to two reasons for instability and conflict recurrence after a PCE: institutional weakness and the untimeliness of elections. First, the institutional argument suggests that competition generates high intensity conflict and the institution in place, if poor, will not be able to placate it (Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom, 2008). We find that the term *weak institution* is used mainly in two ways. More narrowly, it refers to the capacity and infrastructure to hold free and fair elections. In broader terms, weak institution indicates to the lack of democratic institutional mechanisms such as, bureaucracies, courts or other infrastructures, committing to reform which signals that the incumbent will not exploit the victory and renege on the agreement to accommodate the opponents (McBride, Milante and Skaperdas, 2011). In the context of first PCEs, the narrower definition of institution—capacity to hold fair elections— is more apt since it is unlikely that opponents will buy the incumbent’s commitment to broader reforms in the future. However, the argument that weak state of institutions leads to recurrence of civil war is not particularly sound since this does not explain the variation in outcome.

In other words, prevalence of weak institution in a country ravaged with civil war is true in almost all PCEs. The puzzle is, why some countries experience instability after the first PCE and not others?

Second, few studies point to the election timing as the cause of conflict recurrence. The main argument is that when PCEs are held early, the hostility level is higher compared to when more time is provided to settle the animosity. This makes it harder for former foes to trust each other and that the other will remain committed to peace after the elections (Flores and Nooruddin, 2012). The basis of this argument is institutional, as discussed above, that immature democracies cannot sustain the high intensity competition that election induces. But the effect of timing may be exogenous to electoral process. Other studies have observed that immediate years after the end of conflicts, irrespective of whether or not an election is held, are very risky in terms of recurrence of violence (Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom, 2008, p. 464; Snyder, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). This makes it difficult to untangle the effect of timing from other election-related variables that causes the risk of conflict recurrence to soar.

In summary, while democratization studies show that habituation because of repeated elections lead a post-conflict country towards democratic stability, conflict literature suggests that first elections are risky as they might push the country towards conflict trap. Yet, the reason is unclear and there is much to explore why this first elections increase the risk of conflict recurrence. I approach this puzzle by focusing on the decision making of groups or parties during the PCE since it has more bearing on the likelihood that they will stay on the chosen course later. In other words, what factors motivate the parties to restart armed conflict once they commit to compete in PCEs?

### 4.3 Conditions of recurring conflict after PCE

Why do groups choose to fight? Can an election change the war equilibrium—that is, inclination of groups to fight—to a peaceful political competition as envisaged? Rationalist explanations posit that fighting is a function of three problems: information problem, credible commitment, and issue indivisibility (Fearon, 1995; Powell, 2006). The first two are more relevant for this chapter especially since conflicts due to issue indivisibility relate more to local or regional level elections and not to those held at national level (see Höglund, Jarstad and Kovacs, 2009, p. 545). Below, I will briefly elaborate the two rationalist perspectives, information problem and credible commitment problem, which prevent actors from cooperating peacefully; followed by a discussion on how they are applicable to the context of PCE.

First, problem of incomplete information states that conflicts arise as actors bargain for the allocation of resources based on their military capability. The actors have the incentive to misrepresent their capability in order to get a better deal in the peaceful bargaining process. The alternative means to find out each others capability is through fighting. War, therefore, is a costly means of communication (Fearon, 1995; Garfinkel and Skaperdas, 2007; Hirshleifer, 2000). According to this theory, peaceful settlement is possible only when the information about each others capabilities are fully revealed and players are ready to accept the deal accordingly. This incomplete information approach however does not fully explain groups' propensity for violence in the context of post-conflict cases or cases of prolonged violent conflicts, where they become aware of each other's capability but are still inclined to continue fighting.

Second, Powell (2006) points to another main problem in bargaining processes that leads to fighting among groups: the problem of credible commitment to

peace. The problem arises since committing to peace unilaterally does not ensure similar level of commitment from the opponent. Groups therefore resort to continue fighting. Garfinkel and Skaperdas (2007, p. 680) further contribute by theorizing the war equilibrium model, where both sides have the best utility in choosing to fight, rather than any other alternative, whether they are (1) in fighting state, or (2) in a state of negotiated settlement<sup>6</sup> (see also Leventoglu and Slantchev, 2007). While the first is quite intuitive, the second one, on why they choose to fight after a negotiated settlement is linked to the main argument of this chapter and requires further elaboration. Similar to Powell (2006), the authors first build a theoretical model to show how credible commitment problem prevents belligerents to settle peacefully. They argue that since the settlement deal cannot be enforced indefinitely, players end up facing the problem of credible commitment, whether or not the opponent will remain committed to peace. Similar to prisoners dilemma, the shadow of the future in their model prevents the groups from cooperating peacefully.

Drawing from these rationalist logics, especially the latter, I expect to find aftermath of violent conflicts risky in terms of conflict recurrence. Political institutions, according to institutionalists, help alleviate the commitment problem by increasing the cost of cheating, creating prospect for future gains and rewarding actors that develop reputation for faithful adherence to agreements (Keohane, 1984). Below, I discuss how elections can be helpful in changing the preferences of the actors and transform the war equilibria into peaceful ones. Moreover, since the level of mass support for a group often represents its legitimacy and political power, elections can also be helpful in revealing information about a groups capability.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>That is, negotiated settlement without decisive victory

<sup>7</sup>This is quite a stretch as it suggests that military capability and political support are the same

### 4.3.1 Self-enforcing democracy and the utility of PCE

Przeworski (2006) defines self-enforcing democracy as the equilibrium where people and parties adhere to electoral results. The author argues that in the equilibrium, democratic government is retrained and made moderate by two constraints not due to “some exogenous rules but for endogenous reasons: either because of the rebellion or the electoral constraint, whichever bites first.” Przeworski also warns that the equilibrium can be disturbed due to events such as economic shocks, but, in relation to the main argument of this chapter, the work does not tell us how such equilibrium comes about in the first place. In other words, how can countries in a state of any other equilibria, like conflict, can transform to a democratic equilibrium that is self-enforcing. Fearon (2011) builds on this theory and provides a more detailed picture.

Self-enforcing democracy according to Fearon (2011) is the result of a credible threat of protest or rebellion by the voting mass, if the incumbent does not hold timely election. When held on time and the result of the election made public, the mass acquires the incumbents private information about public support, once again helping solve the coordination problem to rebel, if the ruler does not obey the result. Elections thus work to produce a self-enforcing democracy.<sup>8</sup>

Extending Fearons model to post-conflict situation, we can think of a simple model of how elections can help establish self-enforcing democracy. Let us consider the three main players: the incumbent or the winner of the first post conflict elec-

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thing. However, this is more so in the context of civil wars, where both groups vie for mass support, as the literature on winning hearts and minds suggests. Cox (2009) presents a similar argument that if authoritarian leaders do not hold elections for a long time, then they become unaware of the opposition capability, often leading to their violent removal.

<sup>8</sup>A caveat however is the subtle electoral fraud by the incumbent. Fearon argues that with subtle electoral fraud, the incumbent can manage to chip away the fairness of election resulting in democratic reversals (2011: 1685).



tions, the opposition and the civilian mass.<sup>9</sup> As stated in the section above, credible commitment problem hinders cooperation between opposition and incumbent. One way to minimize such group insecurities according to scholars is through oversight of peace agreements by external third parties, making it costlier for contenders to renege on their peaceful commitments (Walter (2009)). Voting mass in an election can play similar third party role in a post-conflict country.

Armed violence is costly to public mass and are therefore they are likely to support parties that make the effort to build peace. Moreover, parties have the incentive of getting a better deal in the future. Therefore, elections when held fairly, can incentivize former belligerents to remain committed to peace and increase the prospect of public support in future. In other words, elections, in theory, should work in preventing the recurrence of armed conflict. This is important since elections are the foundational institution that sets the self-enforcing mechanism rolling. Contrary to such ideal scenario, election irregularities by the parties delegitimizes the electoral institution. Without legitimacy, elections lose the institutional power to check parties from reneging on the peace deals. In the section below, I hypothesize how two forms of electoral irregularities, pre-election violence and election day fraud, lead to increased risk of conflict recurrence.

#### **4.3.2 Pre-electoral violence: Selective or indiscriminate?**

At the outset, it seems obvious that pre-election violence by one contending party against another lead to tit-for-tat response and spiraling violence. However, such indiscriminate violence is less common once parties agree to stop the conflict and contend elections. Former warring parties are more likely to use violence selectively

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<sup>9</sup>The assumption is that the incumbent and the opposition represent groups that participated in the past conflict, which is often the case.

and strategically targeting civilian voters rather than opponents. In contrast to the free-riding argument that civilians take sides with the winning factions attracted by the spoils of victory, Kalyvas and Kocher (2007) highlight the trend of how armed groups coerce and intimidate non-combatants to join them. The authors explain that people tend to take side not because others are participating, but because non-participation in civil war scenario is risky and that collective action problem applies only if insurgent collective action is risky relative to non-participation (2007:179). More striking is the empirical study of Mason and Krane (1989), who argue that the use of coercion can generate popular support. Analyzing events of state violence in El Salvador, they find that state used selective violence and intimidation to generate popular support. When violence by state was indiscriminate, they show that popular support shifted towards the opposition. However, when the state used violence selectively, the sense of fear increased the level of popular support for the state. More recently, Wood (2010) argues in similar vein that strategic violence used by rebels against civilians and the fear that it creates boosts support for the rebels.

These works show that political groups during the times of armed conflict commonly use selective violence to exert coercive control and garner popular support. We expect this pattern to be even more pronounced during pre-election period, as parties are careful not to escalate costly conflict but mobilize voters using resource they possess since war years. As a result, we expect to find lower level violence rather than indiscriminate ones, since the actors are careful to avoid a full-fledged costly escalation by targeting opponents. In other words, rather than indiscriminate and lethal violence against the opponent members, groups are likely to use lower scale violence such as threats, abductions, beatings or assassinations, to

terrorize the voters, which often do not make headlines in major international media. Scholars working to build data on electoral violence acknowledge this problem and address the issue by generating ordinal scale measures of pre-election violence by qualitatively analyzing reports, rather than counting events reported by the media.<sup>10</sup> This also means that we should see lower level violence during pre-election period when the context is post-conflict, compared to pre-election violence in regular countries. A quick look at the Armed Conflict Location and Event (ACLED) data presented in table 4.1 reinforces this claim (Raleigh et al., 2010). Analyzing all African elections between 1997-2007, we find that post-conflict elections are preceded by much lower level fatalities than regular elections. While systematic empirical evidence to check this assumption can make a good research in itself, this evidence shows the ironic result that post-conflict elections are associated with lower level of pre-electoral violence compared to regular elections. Yet, despite the lower scale violence in post-conflict countries, I explain below how presence of pre-election violence lead to increased risk for conflict recurrence later.

Table 4.1: Comparing Pre-election Violence Fatalities in Africa

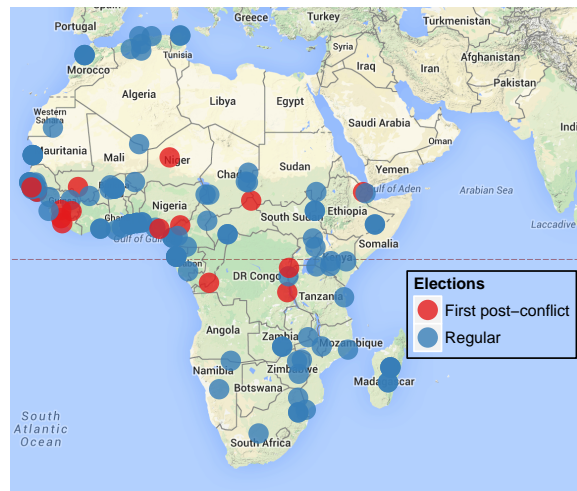
| Elections     | n   | Mean                |
|---------------|-----|---------------------|
| Regular       | 110 | 262.65              |
| Post-conflict | 17  | 74                  |
|               |     | Difference (p<0.05) |

Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED)

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<sup>10</sup>See Strauss and Taylor (2012)

Figure 4.1: Pre-election violence in Africa 1997-2007



Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED)

### 4.3.3 Lower legitimacy and violence after PCE

Pre-election violence and intimidation can increase the risk of conflict recurrence in two main ways. Losing party in such elections can directly challenge the election result or raise any other minority issues and create a political impasse in order to push towards another election. For instance, post conflict periods in countries like Iraq in 2004 and Nepal in 2008, face tremendous challenge of accommodating the divergent interest of domestic groups that are often zero sum in nature while providing opportunities for oppositions to capitalize these issues to overthrow the incumbents (Ottaway, 2009; The Economist, 2011). The incumbent too has the option to choose either a more repressive measure or comply to hold violence free election, depending on its belief about how much support it actually has from the people. If subsequent election takes place, it is likely to be either very violent or completely free of violence. Nepal's election in 2012 following the post-conflict election in 2008, is an example of the latter. The Maoists party gained overwhelm-

ing seats following the first PCE but election monitoring reports suggest the presence of rampant pre-electoral violence and intimidation by the party (Carter Center Report, 2008). In the subsequent election, the party did not use pre-election violence after the overwhelming support in the earlier elections. The election in 2012 was free of violence and intimidation, but the Maoists lost badly.

In summary, pre-election violence can serve as the basis for the conflict recurrence on following three grounds. First, it masks the true preferences of people. The losing parties are more likely to challenge the result and incumbent position on the ground that the outcome could be in their favor if the election was fair. In other words, pre-electoral violence and intimidation serve as the barrier to information regarding true popular support, and provides incentive for the losing party to challenge the electoral results.

Second, as a result of electoral misconduct and the uncertainty, the neutral third party arbitration by people loses its meaning. When there is pre-election violence, for instance, irrespective of which side perpetrates, two following mutual mechanisms work to increase the probability of violence onset later. On the one hand, when pre-electoral violence is predominantly by an incumbent party, the losing oppositions are likely to choose the tough resistance approach to challenge and oust the incumbent. Since the prospect of better result in fairer election remains much high, groups are prepared to challenge the results using violence. Moreover, odds of attracting voters due to its moral stand and the legitimacy is fairly high. On the other hand, if the pre-electoral violence is by an opposition, the incumbent should find it easy to justify the use of repressive means thus escalating the situation. The recent case of violence outbreak in Ivory Coast is the perfect example, where widespread condemnation of election fraud by incumbent president Laurent

Gbagbo led the opposition party to initiate the armed conflict in March 2011.<sup>11</sup> Either way, violence is likely to escalate.

Third, electoral misconducts lower the legitimacy of the winners. While such lack of legitimacy may not be catastrophic in most regular democracies,<sup>12</sup> post-conflict situations remain vulnerable due to numerous high stake issues that opposition can capitalize upon and escalate the tension, as discussed above. Literature on coups d'état show that lack of legitimacy is one of the key conditions to overthrow the incumbents (Belkin and Schofer, 2003). In such situations, repressive measures taken by the incumbent to thwart anticipated coup attempts by the opposition can flare the violence.

One potential concern is that pre-election violence and recurrence of conflict later might be endogenous in the sense that they both are caused by the same latent cause. However, if this is the case, then we should witness eruption of conflict *during* the election when the competition is at its peak, and not later. While hostility level remains high in all post-conflict cases, the mechanism outlined above suggests that it is the event of pre-election violence that causes the outcome of armed conflicts later.

Therefore, we expect the following:

*H1: As the incidence of pre-electoral violence in the first PCE increases, there should be higher likelihood for conflict recurrence after the election.*

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<sup>11</sup>The Economist.2011, March. "Fighting in Cote d'Ivoire Shifting Lines" no. 8725, (March 19, 2011): 56 (Available: <http://www.economist.com/node/18400458>)

<sup>12</sup>Daxecker's (2012) analysis of African cases show how election monitors reports on electoral fraud can facilitate collective action problem among mass, leading to violent movements. Tucker (2007) argues similarly by examining the cases of post-communist countries.

#### 4.3.4 Election Fraud

Electoral fraud is similar to pre-election violence, mainly in its effect. Parties contending the PCE see it as the one-shot game that can make or break the war effort and are therefore likely to indulge in fraudulent activities, such as proxy voting and capturing ballot boxes. Since cost of engaging in fraudulent activities may not be as high as using coercion—that is the danger of escalating into a full scale civil war—we expect to see more instances of electoral fraud in PCEs. Weidmann and Callen (2013) argue similarly and show by analyzing the 2009 election in Afghanistan that when the level of violence is high, there are less electoral fraud incidents, but when the level of violence is low, there are more incidents of electoral fraud, which eventually taper off as countries develop and consolidate the democratic practice. In summary, actors are likely to engage in election fraud in PCEs. The mechanism of how fraudulent elections lower the legitimacy of the electoral institution and the rise of opposition challenge is similar to the discussion above, leading to the following hypothesis:

*H2: As the incidence of electoral fraud in the first PCE increases, there should be a higher likelihood of conflict recurrence after the election.*

#### 4.4 Research Design

I test the above hypotheses using cross-national longitudinal data of all countries from 1950 to 2010. The unit of analysis is country-year for which I use event history analysis as the appropriate statistical method. The dependent variable is binary, signifying absence or presence of violence in a post conflict country. A country enters the dataset in the year when the first PCE is held. After entering the dataset,

all subsequent country-years without violence are counted as one peace episode and the dependent variable is coded as 0. If violent conflict occurs anytime during the peace episode, the dependent variable is coded as 1 and the country is taken out of the data set. From 1950 to 2010, for instance, a country may have more than one peace episode.

Researchers face two main challenges when coding peace episodes. First, there may be more than one ongoing conflict in a country followed by different levels of elections. Which conflict and election do we choose as the start of a peace episode? In an earlier study, Brancati and Snyder (2013) consider each conflict episode as unique and regard any election after the end of a violent armed conflict as the PCE, irrespective of any other ongoing conflicts in the country.<sup>13</sup> In this chapter, I take a slightly different approach since conflicts within the same set of borders are often related to similar factors (Akcinaroglu, 2012). I therefore consider an election as the first PCE and code the election year as the start of a peace episode, only when all armed conflicts in the country have ended. I consider only the presidential or legislative elections at national level, whichever occurs first after the end of conflicts, as the first PCE. I use the PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset for information on armed conflicts across states and the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) version 3 for all election related information (Hyde and Marinov, 2012).

Second, a common problem in the study of armed conflict is determining the right threshold: what is the threshold of violence to define a case as armed conflict and include it in the data? If we use the higher threshold of 1000 battle related

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<sup>13</sup>If a country has more than one violent conflicts going on simultaneously, say conflict A and B, the authors code an election as the first PCE after the end of conflict A, even when conflict B is ongoing.



deaths per year, we overlook a number of recurring conflict cases that suffer battle deaths below the 1000 threshold but still generating higher costs like 900 battle related deaths per year. I therefore use the minimalist definition of armed conflict as defined in the PRIO dataset 25 or more battle related deaths per year (Gleditsch et al., 2002; Themnér and Wallensteen, 2013). One downside of using the low threshold is that it captures even smaller or regional based conflicts which may not have the same level of relevancy associated with the national level elections as larger scale civil wars. For instance, if the conflict is peripheral or regional, electoral conditions at the central or national level is likely to have a very weak influence on the restart of the conflict. To illustrate it further, armed conflict in the North East part of India is least likely to affect its national level elections. Therefore, the national elections if held after the end of that particular conflict cannot be claimed as the post-conflict election in a meaningful way. In general, such territorial conflicts are closely associated with more local level elections or regional politics than central or national level elections (Cederman, Hug and Krebs, 2010; Höglund, Jarstad and Kovacs, 2009). The variable Incompatibility in the Armed Conflict dataset distinguishes between the territorial conflicts and national conflicts fought over governance issues. Since this analysis focuses on national level elections, this variable is an important control measure theoretically.<sup>14</sup>

The main independent variables for this study are the two types of election irregularities in the first PCE: electoral fraud and pre-election violence. A drawback of the election irregularity data is the lack of preciseness in terms of scale or intensity. This is especially true for countries in post conflict periods, since the infrastructure necessary to record the details of these events are likely to be non-

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<sup>14</sup>I discuss in the later section how the results are robust when we use all cases controlling for this variable or when excluding the territorial conflicts altogether.

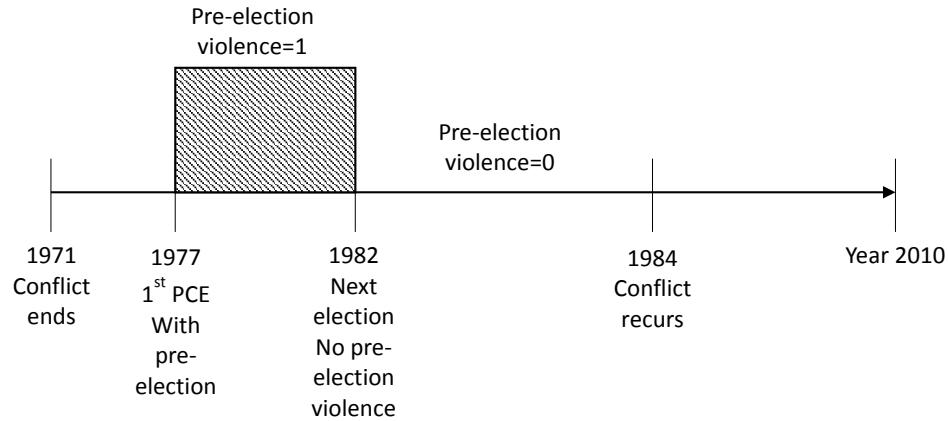
existent and election monitors are not present in all such elections. This is one of the main reasons why datasets on cross-national election code election irregularities in either binary or ordinal scales based on qualitative reports and documents<sup>15</sup> (Hyde and Marinov, 2012; Kelley, 2012; Strauss and Taylor, 2012). I use the two variables from NELDA dataset. It codes pre-electoral violence variable as 1 if there is any election related violence immediately before, during or immediately after the election; and similarly codes variable election fraud based on the election day reports of the election monitors (Hyde and Marinov, 2012). While indicating the presence of election irregularities, it is necessary that we take care not to exaggerate the effects of the two variables by coding them as 1 throughout the entire period after the first PCE, if there is presence of election irregularities only during the first PCE but not in the elections thereafter. I therefore code variable pre-election violence or election fraud as 1 when present in the first PCE for all following years until when no such event occurs in the subsequent election, after which it is coded as 0. In Sri Lanka for instance, there was an armed insurrection by Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in 1971 causing 1260 battle related deaths according to PRIO estimate. The first election after the event was six years later in 1977, the year that the country enters the data. Coding this event, the dependent variable takes the value of 0 until the conflict recurs in 1984, when it is coded as 1 (See figure 4.2).

If a country enters the data after the first PCE but does not return to conflict, the dependent variable is considered right censored and is coded as 0 for all years after its entry. According to NELDA, Sri Lanka experienced pre-election violence preceding the 1977 election but not during the subsequent 1982 election (no election fraud in both). As explained in figure 4.2, the variable pre-election violence for

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<sup>15</sup>Strauss and Taylor (2012) use ordinal scale to code pre-election violence but their data set is limited to Africa and only for years after 1990.

Figure 4.2: Coding dependent variable conflict recurrence and main independent variable pre-election violence using Sri Lanka case



the country is coded as 1 after 1977 until the second election in 1982, after which the variable is coded as 0.

#### 4.5 Control Variables

Researchers have identified few important structural factors responsible for conflict onset. It is important that we control for them in order to isolate the confounding factors responsible for conflict recurrence in the later years. Wealth of a country is often cited as the reason for the onset of conflicts. To measure a country's wealth, I use the logged value of real GDP in 2000 US dollars (in millions) from Gleditsch and Ward's 1999 updated dataset. Also used from the same dataset is the next control variable, population of a country. Similar to wealth, ethnic fractionalization also impacts the onset of conflict and countries with higher level of ethnic fractionalization are considered risky. I therefore use variable ethnic fractionalization from the updated dataset of Alesina et. al. (2003) that has fractionalization measures

for 190 countries from 1946-2012.

How conflicts ended in the past can have direct bearing on the likelihood of armed conflict in the future. Compared to any other conflict outcomes, studies indicate that countries are likely to be more peaceful after a decisive victory by one side (David Mason et al., 2011; Licklider, 1995; Luttwak, 1999). Using Kreutz (2010) dataset, I code variable victory as 1 if the conflict ended with decisive victory by one side and 0 otherwise. The number of people that died or the cost of past war can also influence the durability of peace later (Zartman, 2003). To measure the human cost of war, I use battle related deaths from Lacina and Gleditsch (2005). If a country has more than one ongoing conflicts in a given year, then this variable represents the sum of battle related deaths in all ongoing conflicts in the country. In terms of electoral system, the two main popular ones are majoritarian and proportional electoral system. While some argue that majoritarian elections lowers the probability of intergroup conflict by binding voters across different cross-cutting cleavages, others find that proportional representation system provides a better institutional framework as it incentivizes groups to join political dialog (Horowitz, 1985; Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003; Lijphart, 1969). I use data on the two types of electoral systems in the main model from Bormann and Golder (2013). Another relevant finding of past studies is that conflicts are likely to recur in post conflict countries when elections are held early. I control for the count of years after the end of conflict until when a PCE is held. Presence of UN peacekeeping operations in a country can also affect the likelihood of peace. I code UN peacekeeping as a binary variable using the data from UN Department of Peacekeeping website.<sup>16</sup> Finally, I control for the presence of election monitors using a variable from NELDA dataset.

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<sup>16</sup>Details on the UN peacekeeping missions since 1948 are summarized in: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/operationslist.pdf> [accessed January 2015]

## 4.6 Statistical model

To examine how election irregularities affect political stability after PCE, I use the event history model or the survival model. To restate the basic framework of the model, a country enters the dataset after the first PCE and exits the dataset with the recurrence of violence or if violence does not recur until the year 2010. Each country may have one or more peace spells within the period from 1950 to 2010. To account for the repeated peace spells in the same country, results are clustered by country. I use the gompertz parametric model<sup>17</sup> to estimate the hazard or risk. The choice of Gompertz distribution is based on the theoretical expectation that hazard of conflict recurrence should decrease over time. Generalized gamma test rules out the possibility that the shape of the hazard is weibull, thus leaving gompertz to be the closest fit (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 2004; Jenkins, 2005).<sup>18</sup>

In general, there are 123 peace episodes in 60 countries from 1950 to 2010. 55 of these 123 peace episodes fail. These numbers shrink to 78 peace episodes in 48 countries, when we examine only countries governance incompatibility conflicts, and exclude the territorial ones. On average, the duration of wars before elections in these countries are 4.6 years, with standard deviation of 5.9 years. However, exceptional cases are countries like Guatemala, United Kingdom, Cambodia, South Africa and Iraq that experienced post-conflict elections after experiencing conflicts for more than 20 years. Since UCDP dataset provides the start and end of armed conflicts by month, I also code conflicts that occur in the same year ut few months after the elections. Some examples of countries where conflicts recur at a later

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<sup>17</sup>Frailty model shows no unobserved heterogeneity in the model. I do not expect the proportional hazard due to pre-election violence and fraud to remain constant over time; I expect it to decrease, thus not ideal for semi parametric cox model. However, using time varying covariates in cox model, the main variables of interest pre-election violence and election fraud are statistically significant.

<sup>18</sup>Weibull model also provides similar result

date in the same year after first PCE are Azerbaijan 1995, Congo 2002, DRC 2006, Angola 1992, Cambodia 1993 and Afghanistan 2009.

#### 4.7 Findings

The main hypotheses seek to test the effect of election irregularities on the risk of conflict recurrence after first PCE. Results of the event history analysis is reported in table 4.2, where the coefficients are the hazard ratios. If a variable has hazard ratio greater than 1, then it signifies that increasing the unit of the variable, *ceteris paribus*, causes the risk of conflict recurrence to increase. Hazard ratio below 1 on the other hand has opposite effect.

The two main explanatory variables are pre-election violence and election fraud, and since they are significantly correlated with each other,<sup>19</sup> I first test them separately, and then together in the full model. Models 3 and 4 are the main models since both exclude territorial or nationalist conflicts tend to associate less with national level elections, as explained in the theory section. As a measure to check robustness, model 1 and 2 include all cases but use type of conflict as a control variable.

As expected, we find that pre-election violence has a strong influence on the risk of conflict recurrence. Compared to countries without pre-election violence, on average and controlling for other variables in the model, a country with pre-election violence before the first PCE has a 165 percent higher risk of returning to conflict. For electoral fraud, the risk is 108 percent higher. We find in models 1 and 2 that the effect of pre-election violence continues to remain strong even

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<sup>19</sup>Correlation coefficient = .304 at  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.2: Risk of conflict recurrence after PCE, 1950-2010

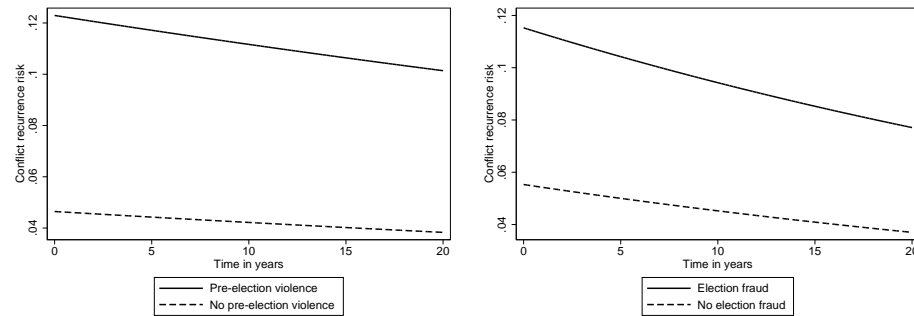
| VARIABLES                          | (1)                | (2)               | (3)                  | (4)                  | (5)                  |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                                    |                    |                   | Governance<br>Incomp | Governance<br>Incomp | Governance<br>Incomp |
| Pre-election violence              | 2.41***<br>(2.74)  |                   | 2.65***<br>(2.70)    |                      | 2.41**<br>(2.10)     |
| Election fraud                     |                    | 1.68<br>(1.34)    |                      | 2.08*<br>(1.68)      | 1.26<br>(0.45)       |
| Battle related deaths              | 0.88**<br>(-2.51)  | 0.89**<br>(-2.36) | 0.92<br>(-1.56)      | 0.93<br>(-1.35)      | 0.92<br>(-1.49)      |
| PR election                        | 0.91<br>(-0.32)    | 0.93<br>(-0.26)   | 0.70<br>(-1.11)      | 0.73<br>(-0.94)      | 0.70<br>(-1.08)      |
| Victory outcome                    | 0.85<br>(-0.58)    | 0.89<br>(-0.42)   | 0.90<br>(-0.34)      | 0.96<br>(-0.14)      | 0.91<br>(-0.28)      |
| Electoral monitors                 | 0.79<br>(-0.86)    | 0.81<br>(-0.75)   | 0.78<br>(-0.79)      | 0.78<br>(-0.77)      | 0.76<br>(-0.83)      |
| No. of years (since last conflict) | 0.90**<br>(-2.53)  | 0.90**<br>(-2.38) | 0.91**<br>(-2.10)    | 0.91**<br>(-1.98)    | 0.91**<br>(-2.09)    |
| Population (log)                   | 1.65***<br>(2.67)  | 1.60**<br>(2.46)  | 1.38<br>(1.38)       | 1.36<br>(1.31)       | 1.38<br>(1.37)       |
| GDP (log)                          | 0.68***<br>(-2.72) | 0.70**<br>(-2.51) | 0.76<br>(-1.62)      | 0.78<br>(-1.45)      | 0.76<br>(-1.59)      |
| UN peacekeeping                    | 1.46<br>(0.82)     | 1.42<br>(0.76)    | 2.14<br>(1.50)       | 2.00<br>(1.33)       | 2.01<br>(1.32)       |
| Ethnic fractionalization           | 2.60*<br>(1.85)    | 2.55*<br>(1.77)   | 2.27<br>(1.45)       | 2.26<br>(1.41)       | 2.25<br>(1.43)       |
| Incompatibility                    | 0.77<br>(-0.82)    | 0.79<br>(-0.75)   |                      |                      |                      |
| Constant                           | 0.10*<br>(-1.90)   | 0.10*<br>(-1.90)  | 0.10*<br>(-1.88)     | 0.08**<br>(-2.00)    | 0.09*<br>(-1.92)     |
| Observations                       | 1,176              | 1,176             | 971                  | 971                  | 971                  |
| ll                                 | -157.7             | -160.2            | -126.3               | -128.2               | -126.2               |
| chi2                               | 31.80              | 26.79             | 23.98                | 20.11                | 24.18                |
| p                                  | 0.001              | 0.005             | 0.008                | 0.03                 | 0.01                 |

z-statistics in parentheses

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

Note: Table above shows the risks of conflict recurrence after the first post-conflict elections (PCE). The coefficients are the hazard ratios from event history model. The dependent variable is whether or not a country returns to violence after the first post-conflict elections. The first two models include types of intra-state conflicts, territorial or government incompatibility as defined in UCDP armed conflict dataset, as control variable. Models 3 and 4 are the main models that include only conflicts that are governance incompatibility.

Figure 4.3: Risk of conflict recurrence after first post conflict elections



Note: The figure displays the predicted risk of conflict recurrence from estimates of models (3) and (4) in Table 3. It shows that risk is almost three times higher in the presence of pre-election violence and almost twice as high in the presence of electoral fraud, controlling for all other predictors in the models.

when we include cases with territorial conflicts. Variable election fraud is significant at  $p < 0.1$  only in the main model and loses significance after adding cases with territorial conflicts. The substantive effects of the two variables are displayed in figure 4.3. *Ceteris paribus*, we find that the presence of pre-election violence and election fraud increases the risk of conflict recurrence. The effect of pre-election violence is stronger than electoral fraud. Overall, we have strong evidence to show that election irregularities in post-conflict countries can increase the risk of conflict recurrence after the election.

The finding on pre-electoral violence has important implications since it suggests that the pre-election period has an important impact on post-election violence and thus democratic stability later. Election monitors often focus on the election day violence and ignore the violent intimidation that precedes election day. Using empirical study on cross-national level elections, Kelley (2012) finds that pre-electoral violence is often ignored by election monitors as they fear igniting tension if they report such pre-election violence as critical, when no violence is observed on the



main election day. She calls this “stability bias” where election monitors under report the pre-election violence. As noted by the author, election monitors do report the pre-election violence but understate the gravity of the problem because of the bias and endorse the election as long as there are no visible violent events on the election day. The findings here augment Kelleys work as it shows how pre-election violence in PCEs can have a negative consequence.

Let us now analyze two different case studies to evaluate the empirical findings by examining two PCE cases in Africa, Angola 1992 and Mozambique 1994, where violence recurred only in the former but not the latter. Analyzing the reports of election monitors, we find evidence of pre-election irregularities in Angola by both the incumbent MPLA and the opposition UNITA. A report of the 1992 election was prepared by International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) after dispatching 39 IFES observers to 400 of Angolas 5579 polling stations. The observers visited these locations just 3 days before the election day and gathered information on the political context covering a period of about 6 months before the election day. The IFES report states that both the parties filed complaint alleging the other of fraud and intimidation in a number of areas. On the one hand, the Angolan government complained that parties could not campaign freely in the South Eastern part of the Angola, which was under UNITA control. On the other hand, UNITA “registered frequent complaints with the government about the high visibility and the potential intimidation effect of the blue uniformed riot police or the Ninjas” (Bayer, 1992, p. 16).<sup>20</sup> They also complained that their supporters were harassed and intimidated in many provinces and that UNITA campaign headquarters were at-

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<sup>20</sup>UNITA further complained that “registration of voters was halted before as many as one million eligible voters were able to register, particularly in its areas of support. UNITA differed with the CNE’s [Commission for National Election] estimate of 5.3 million eligible voters, favoring instead a total of 6.16 million eligible voters” (1992:16).

tacked in many MPLA strongholds including Malange. While allegations like these not uncommon, we should note that these complaints were lodged prior to the counting of votes and although detailed event logs for these incidents is difficult to obtain, there is consistency about the allegations in various reports.<sup>21</sup> In comparison, Mozambique's pre-electoral phase during the 1994 PCE was reported as being "surprisingly peaceful" (Haines and Wood, 1995, p. 362). Later, Angola returned to violence but Mozambique was able to sustain the peace. This anecdotal evidence lends credence to the main claim of this chapter that pre-election irregularity increases the risk of conflict recurrence.

The estimated effects of some of the control variables are also worth noting, even though they are not the primary focus of this study. In terms of election timing, we confirm the results of past studies. The numbers of years between the end of conflict and the election has a negative coefficient and is statistically significant, suggesting that the risk of conflict recurrence is higher when the elections are held earlier. Compared to elections held in the first year, we find that the risk is less by almost half in those countries where the first election is held in the 5th year, and less by almost 3 times in elections held in the 8th year. Yet, there are other factors that dampen or increase risk. The first two models show that cost of past conflict in terms of battle deaths lowers the risk of conflict recurrence. The relationship is non-linear as the measure is log transformed battle deaths. We find that one unit increase in the log of battle deaths lowers the risk of conflict recurrence by 10 percent at  $p < 0.1$ . Substantively, this result from the first two models means that compared to a country that saw approximately 3000 battle deaths (log 8) before the election, a country with nearly 5000 battle deaths (log 9) has 10% less risk of

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<sup>21</sup> Strauss and Taylor (2012) categorize Angola 1992 election as having occasional but large scale pre-election violence

conflict recurrence. For comparison among lower level conflicts, a country where 55 people died in violent conflicts (log 4) has 10% more risk of conflict recurrence than another country that suffered approximately 150 battle related deaths (log5). Why this might be so is unclear since as stated by Walter (2004, p. 377), costs of war such as battle-related deaths may increase either the desire for revenge or the war fatigue, and the evidence here suggests the latter. However, battle related deaths is not statistically significant in main models 3 and 4, similar to Walter's (2004) findings.

GDP has similar dampening effect, which again is a log transformed variable. From model 1, We find that 1 unit increase in the variable lowers the risk of conflict recurrence by nearly 30%. In more substantive terms, if we compare the lower quartiles of GDP log in two countries, we find that a country with the GDP of 3.6 bn US dollars (log8.2) has 30% less risk of conflict recurrence than that with the GDP of 9.9 bn dollars (log 9.2). The comparison is close to the GDP of two post-conflict countries in Africa in the 1990s, Sierra Leone and Mozambique respectively. After the first PCE, conflict recurred only in the former that had lower GDP. Yet, the effects of both the dampening variables, battle deaths and GDP, are not as strong as the opposite effects of the election irregularities. Finally, another variable that has strong effect on conflict recurrence is the outcome of victory. This result is in accordance with past study (Quinn, Mason and Gurses, 2007) and shows that we are less likely to see recurrence of conflict when elections are held after one side wins the war. Model 4 indicates that the risk decreases by about 70%, when the PCE is held after the outcome of victory. Overall, the findings show that we are able to predict the likelihood of conflict recurrence in future by examining the conditions surrounding a PCE.

## 4.8 Conclusion

First PCE are important events that mark a new beginning after the end of violent armed conflicts. This chapter provided a systematic analysis to show how election irregularities in PCEs can increase the risk of conflict recurrence later. We find that PCEs are acutely sensitive to such irregularities. For instance, I have discussed in the chapter that the levels of pre-election violence in PCEs are generally low. On average, they are close to half the pre-election violence levels in regular countries. This low level pre-election violence may perhaps be one of the reasons that election monitors tend to under report such events as shown by Kelley (2012). This study contributes by highlighting the grave consequence that follow such election irregularities no matter how low they appear when compared to regular elections. The study therefore highlights the need for policymakers to pay more attention to pre-election period long before the actual election day, in order to sustain the peace.

This study also opens up several interesting questions for future research undertakings. First, a theoretical contribution in future would be to encapsulate the process through dynamic modeling of events. How do variables escalate or lower the risk, as the actors anticipate each other's move? Second, the chapter does not scrutinize the role of specific actors. For instance, it is still not clear how the risk of conflict recurrence would be impacted if more or less number of groups or factions that were a part of the past conflict contended in a post-conflict election. Finally, another important strand of study would be to analyze political behavior not only at individual level but also at elite level. Research in this direction would be relevant directly to the policy-makers.

## **Chapter 5 Policy implications and concluding remarks**

### **5.1 The Coercive nature of violence in post-conflict election**

Terminations of armed conflicts and civil wars are important events for host-nation governments, and for international actors that have a stake in peace and stability of the country. Equally important is to ensure that the peace becomes sustainable. According to bargaining literature on armed conflicts, the cumulative cost of war has a prominent role in warring parties' decisions to deescalate conflicts and engage in a peaceful dialog (Fearon, 1995; Zartman, 2003). The decision to terminate conflicts, along with the decisions to contend in national elections once peace ensues, is key in the process of conflict termination and building sustainable peace. While the parties continue to harbor doubts about opponents' commitment to peace, they choose to contend in elections when they find that this is a relatively less costly path compared to continuing the armed conflict.

As a consequence of this bargaining process during the conflict termination phase, the nature of electoral violence in post-conflict elections is coercive rather than competitive. This is in contrast to electoral violence in non-postconflict countries, where such events are the results of competitive mobilization that political parties pursue in a specific geographical territory. When parties are competing, opposition party members often become the targets of violence, causing violence to expand beyond the geographical area. An example of the competitive electoral violence is when party affiliations run along ethnic lines, generating polarization and intense out-group hatred and in-group unity (Posen, 1993). Such inter-party

competition that peaks during electoral periods is strongly linked to violent protests and inter-ethnic clashes, as seen in India between the Hindus and the Muslims. According to Wilkinson (2004, p. 172), parties aiming to mobilize lower caste Hindu voters in Northern India used extreme Hindu nationalist narratives, which created intense hostility against the Muslims. Leading Hindu parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party showed a willingness to confront the competitors in order to mobilize the followers, creating what Tilly (2003) describes as the mechanism of boundary activation. I argue in this study that such a competitive electoral violence is *not* usually the case in post-conflict elections.

Elections in post-conflict countries to some extent intensify the competitive atmosphere. However, the likelihood of violence due to such competition alone is somewhat less in post-conflict elections compared to regular elections. This is because any act of violence against the other group in a post-conflict context is likely to escalate and re-ignite a full fledged armed conflict, which is precisely the cost that former combatants want to avoid when agreeing to terminate the conflict and participate in such elections. In other words, post-conflict elections become the fine line where parties do not want to resume the armed conflict and yet are on the verge of it because of the distrust they harbor from the past. In this context, parties compete to amass votes but are often careful not to resume hostilities. Therefore, if and when contending parties choose to use violence, it is primarily against civilians in a certain geographical area, aiming to achieve control rather than to drive the opponent out of an area. In other words, rather than competitive violence, post-conflict election violence is coercive, with the purpose of controlling the voting mass.

The last three chapters of this dissertation explained the effects of violence

on individuals' political attitudes and voting preferences. Built on psychological studies, the main theory suggested that individuals are more likely to make anti-democratic political choices when they are under the threat of violence. This is because at such times, they are more likely to value security, order and survivability than freedom and liberty. I argued and provided evidence that this need for security leads people to support groups or parties that they perceive will prevent the violence from re-occurring. However, quite the contrary to an individual's perception, electing a "strong" party only increases the likelihood of armed conflict recurrence. These findings are further echoed in Bekoe (2012, p. 244), where she sums up that election times in sub-Saharan Africa are delicate, since even a small scale pre-election violence can have a long term impact on democratization and sustainable peacebuilding.

## **5.2 Gaps for Future Research**

Two puzzles that surface from this study require further investigation. First, this study focused on individual preferences as the consequence of fear and anxiety, but not on an equally important emotion, anger. An assumption in this study is that civilians in post-conflict contexts are more likely to be fearful of the conflict, having suffered the cost of war. Because of such fear, I argued that voters in post-conflict countries are likely to prefer extreme parties to moderate ones. I used the exploratory study of Nepal where voters chose the Maoist Party fearing that the party would return to violence upon losing the election.<sup>1</sup> The more fearful they were of the Maoist pre-election violence, I found a higher degree of voter support for the same Maoist party that were perpetrating the violence. However, I

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<sup>1</sup>Which was also the case in Liberian election in 1997

expect this mechanism, say mechanism 1, to be different from mechanism in ethnic conflicts where hostility is not limited to elite party members but runs at a deeper societal level that includes individual voters (mechanism 2). In other words, when citizens become part of the conflict as in mechanism 2, political support should be greater for the leadership or group that seeks to aggressively fight or punish the opponent—the more fearful they are of violence from the opponent, they should be more likely to support aggressive leader that can punish the opponent group or the perpetrator. Yet, a common consequence in both the mechanisms is that citizens are more likely to prefer “strong” parties, although for different reasons: citizens in mechanism 1 are driven by fear and anxiety whereas those in mechanism 2 are driven by anger and aggression. Future research could investigate the nuances between the two mechanisms.

Second, the main argument in the study is that risks of conflict recurrence increases with pre-election violence because stronger parties get elected in such fearful contexts. However, the study does not provide evidence for this association between pre-election violence and the emergence of strong parties at crossnational level. Instead, it uses exploratory case study of Nepal and other previous works (Lyons, 1999) as evidence. Future research can test the external validity of the finding from the study with crossnational data of post-conflict elections.

Despite the limitations, evidence provided in the study supports the theory that fear of violence among individuals has a substantive effect on their anti-democratic political attitudes. As such, the presence of pre-election violence in the first post-conflict elections of a country increases the risk of conflict recurrences, as anti-democratic forces come to the political fore. This finding has an important policy implication for democratization after armed conflicts through electoral means. It



highlights the importance of a voter's "sense of security" during a pre-election period for paving way to a peaceful and sustainable democratic process. In the following section, I discuss what this means for policymakers and international actors who have a stake in the peacebuilding process and in the long term stability of a post-conflict country, and a set of actions that should be taken to improve the sense of security among the voters.

### **5.3 Policy Implications: Security by whom and by what means?**

Past works on conflict termination and peacebuilding focus on warring parties, analyzing what it takes to bring them to peace with each other. In this study, I shifted the gaze to voting citizens in post-conflict countries and their role in building sustainable peace through elections. In doing so, I sought to uncover the full potential of the conflict resolution capacity of the democratic process. Stated briefly, the main policy-relevant message of the study is that in post-conflict elections, we need to pay attention to the sense of security of voters and ensure that they are casting their votes in a relatively secure environment. Since citizens in post-conflict countries are more sensitive to violence compared to others, we have discussed in the preceding chapters that even minor fear-inducing activities by contending parties can have substantial effects on the voting behavior of the citizens, increasing their support towards a more violent or strong parties.

I discuss four different measures to build pre-electoral civilian protection in a country out of armed conflicts: (1) Disarmament and demobilization of combatants, (2) third party peacekeeping intervention with a mandate to protect civilians, (3) strengthening civil society for greater political accountability, and (4) deployments of election monitors at least six months prior to the election. The proposed

four measures are not novel and different combinations of these measures are found at various stages of many ongoing and past post-conflict cases. What I propose differently here is that these four measures should be geared specifically to address pre-election security challenges. Such election-oriented measures will uphold civilian protection at various levels, helping to kick-start a sustainable democratic process in a more efficient manner compared to current practices.

### **5.3.1 Disarmament and demobilization of combatants**

Demobilizing ex-combatants not only signals the commitment of peace to the opposing former warring parties, but also to citizens. This is usually negotiated as a part of the peace agreement process. However, the parties have incentives to refrain from demobilizing their combatants at least until the elections. This was the case in Nepal where both the former rebel group and the government forces agreed to disarm and restrict movement of their troops.<sup>2</sup> However, the disarmed weapons were locked in containers located in different cantonment areas where the combatants (both rebel and equivalent size of government troops) remained intact. Rather than demobilization, the combatants continued to remain under the hierarchical structure of the conflict years. Moreover, higher-level experienced combatants in the former rebel group were excluded from the disarmament process and were in the leading positions of the youth group, Young Communist League, that were active during the election time (Bleie and Shrestha, 2012, 17). While Nepal has not returned to armed violence, the level of democracy and governance has remained poor, with a handful of violent incidents during the second post-conflict elections in 2013. In 2015, at least 23 people died in an unrest related to political differences

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<sup>2</sup>According to Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies

and party stances when drafting the new Constitution.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, El Salvador had a similar 12-year long armed conflict that ended in 1992, but the disarmament process was more efficient. The size of the national army was reduced from 63,175 to almost half its size by mid-1993, while the former rebel group FMLN, demobilized all of their 12,362 combatants in 1992 (Arnson and Azpuru, 2008). Comparing few cases of post-conflict elections, Lyons (2004) attributes the process of demilitarization before elections to be the success of El Salvador in democratizing and establishing sustainable peace.

### **5.3.2 Strengthening civil society for greater political accountability**

Civil society can provide positive contributions in fostering secure environments for elections in a non-violent manner. Civil societies are volunteer groups and organizations representing local communities that are not affiliated with the state. Since civil society is formed from members of the local community, its activism in demanding political accountability from contending parties will have a long term impact (Nilsson, 2012).

Explaining the role of civil society in Ghanaian election, for instance, Oduro (2012) states that a key player in checking electoral violence in 2008 election was the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO). Nine months prior to the election day, local CODEO members were positioned in 56 selected constituencies of the total 275. These observers acted as early warnings, drawing attention of all the stakeholders to breaches and practices that undermined fairness and peace. In addition to monthly reports from the CODEO, other civil society organizations, such

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<sup>3</sup>International Crisis Group, 2 September 2015, Nepal: Conflict Alert. Kathmandu/Brussels: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/alerts/2015/nepal-conflict-alert.aspx> ; Also see <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/01/opinion/slipping-backward-in-nepal.html>

as religious and professional bodies along with media, helped to identify electoral wrongdoers and held them accountable publicly throughout the electoral time-frame. Although Ghana in 2008 was not a post-conflict country, the example helps to illustrate the watchdog role that civil society can play in warning against the use of violence and intimidation by contending parties.

However, civil society in post-conflict countries may not be as active as in the case of Ghana, which in 2008 was not a post-conflict country. Policy studies suggest that an approach to build the culture of strong civil society in these contexts is through a liaison with international NGOs. According to Forster and Mattner (2007, p. 18), the impact of civil society monitoring activity is maximized by close coordination among local, national and international actors. Therefore, initiating and funding the creation of civil society organizations to monitor electoral fairness at least one year before the election day is important. It is equally important to make sure that reports from these organizations are disseminated to citizens, host-nation governments, political parties, international organizations and international communities.

#### **5.4 Deployments of international election monitors at least six months prior to the election**

Countries holding first elections after the end of armed conflicts generally lack the experience in democratic accountability mechanisms. Since false accusations of electoral fraud can lead to protests, political power holders have incentives to invite international election monitors to legitimize the electoral process. According to Hyde and Marinov (2014), election reports by international election monitors provide information for citizens to protest credibly in cases of fraudulent elections, or,

to deflate false-accusation protest. In this respect, election monitors can bolster the civil society movement discussed above.

Regional and international non-governmental organizations, such as Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES), frequently send election observers to monitor elections in various countries. In her book about international election monitoring, Kelley (2012) notes that the political power holders of countries started to welcome the practice of external election monitoring because it provided the rulers legitimacy both externally and internally. By 2004, 85% of all non-established democracies had some sort of election monitoring. However, based on her data from 108 countries from 1980 to 2004, the mean number of days that the first monitoring delegations stay in an election-country is 24.21 (standard deviation 28.59) and the mean number of people in the delegation is 28.9 (mode is 2). For the second monitoring delegation, the mean number of days spent in the country drops to 3.92. Typically, these delegation visits peak around the election day. Kelley's data suggest that the mean number of pre-election assessment visits is 0.57 (mode 0).

These results suggests that the focus of the monitoring bodies is on the main election day, rather than the pre-election period. Kelley's work also states that monitors tend to have the tendency to under report pre-election violence, fearing that reporting it might trigger violence and instability. She calls this the "stability bias" (p. 73) among the monitors. This further suggests that election monitoring is primarily done to assess the election quality in retrospect, rather than providing contending parties an incentive to participate in elections fairly or imposing cost for malpractices. In fact, the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation endorsed by a core group of leading organizations like the Carter Center

and the United Nations discourage election monitors to ask questions that might obstruct the electoral process.<sup>4</sup> While keeping in mind the political ramifications of an overly interventionist agenda, a policy recommendation that follows the findings of this study is that international election monitors in post-conflict elections must raise costs for the indulgence in electoral malpractice by any party. Rather than concluding in the aftermath whether or not an election was fair, a more constructive approach would be to start the monitoring process right from the pre-election period. As argued by Kelley (2009), interpreting what is a fair electoral practice has been a subjective assessment, given the number of election monitoring organizations and their political agendas. Declaration of Principles and Carter Center's recently published election assessment manual is a good first step forward towards creating objective oriented assessment standards (Carroll and Davis-Roberts, 2013). This study contributes further by highlighting the need for a more focused assessment criteria, especially in post-conflict countries where unfair electoral practices during pre-election period can result not only in protests but the derailment of the entire peace process.

#### **5.4.1 Peacekeeping mandate to protect civilians before an election**

Regional and international organizations deploy peacekeeping missions to post-conflict countries often with the consent of warring parties. African Union missions in Somalia and Darfur after 2009 are examples of such regional peacekeeping missions.<sup>5</sup> The scope of international peacekeeping missions has shifted from traditional peacekeeping in inter-state conflicts to intra-state conflict or complex emer-

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<sup>4</sup>See [http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/democracy/des/declaration\\_code\\_english\\_revised.pdf](http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/democracy/des/declaration_code_english_revised.pdf) [Accessed January 7, 2016]

<sup>5</sup> United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is the first hybrid mission since 2009.

gencies. Hultman (2010) argues that peacekeeping missions help to lower violence levels overall, especially violence from government's side. However, while the number of military clashes decrease after the deployment of peacekeeping troops, she finds that rebel violence against civilians continues to increase. However, peacekeeping missions with specific mandates to protect civilians are the exception. Peacekeeping missions started to include a mandate to protect civilians since the mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 1999. Holt and Taylor (2009, p. 3) state two reasons for the need to include the protection of civilians clause in a peacekeeping mission mandate. First, protecting civilians builds the legitimacy and credibility of peacekeeping missions, as missions rely on local populace "to help build maintain political momentum behind the peace process." Second, deployment of peacekeepers raises high expectations among locals that they will be protected. The authors therefore mention that this mandate needs to be included as a political strategy to build peace through its incorporation in various sub-tasks, such as monitoring and advocating for human rights, supporting humanitarian access, enhancing effective governance or rebuilding the rule of law, including organizing elections.<sup>6</sup> As the report further suggests, expectations in terms of protecting all civilians all the time is too vague and unachievable. But the report falls short of in pointing the way forward.

A high-level independent panel was formed in 2015 to make a comprehensive assessment of the peace operations undertaken by the United Nations. The report was presented to the 70th session of the General Assembly, in June 2015. One of the areas of the assessment was a discussion on the protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations. As noted above, peacekeeping mandates today invariably

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<sup>6</sup>See p. 149 of the report in: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446) [Accessed March 27, 2016]

include human rights and protection-related clauses, which were absent prior to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 60/1 on the 2005 World Summit Outcomes. But the implementation part of the mandate—protecting civilians under imminent threat—has been a challenge. One aspect of the challenge that the report boldly highlights is the lack of “adequate infantry and enhanced mobility assets” in UN missions (p. 39).

As Diehl and Druckman (2010) point out, evaluation of peacekeeping missions to maximize future efficiency and outcomes has been a continuous effort, but the assessment technique has remained weak. The authors contribute by creating an assessment template with several goals and indicators of success. They emphasize the need to clearly articulate different dimensions of peacekeeping goals before analyzing their measure of success. They provide three instances of conceptualizing the interaction across the dimensions. First, a mission with more than one objective can be assessed by profiling that uses aggregate index of combined indicators. This method can be used in evaluating the dual objective goals, such as for the mission in Sudan, which has characteristics of both inter-state and intra-state conflict. Second, they show how each sub-goal can reinforce or offset the other sub-goals: “Troop withdrawals are offset (or reinforced) by reluctance (or eagerness) to demobilize and disarm” (p. 172). Third, they discuss the prioritization and sequencing in peacekeeping missions. According to this line of thought, one sub-goal might “trump” the other or may act as a pre-requisite for the other. For instance, violence abatement may be a pre-requisite to conducting elections (p. 173).

However, the complexity and competing goals and sub-goals make it difficult not only for academic scholars to assess, but also for practitioners on the ground to operate. For example, in the absence of a clearly defined overarching goal, it is



difficult to choose which competing goals to prioritize first since resources are almost always limited. In my own experience as a peacekeeper in Sudan in 2009, the UNMIS headquarter faced a tough choice when the focus on disarming North and South Sudanese combatants around the border to deescalate the tension between the two was faced with a new scenario of inter-tribal fighting when members of Nuer tribes attacked and killed at least 453 Murle tribe members in Jonglei state, including many women and children, alleging that the latter raided their cattle in January of that year.<sup>7</sup> The mission established UN bases in the affected Pibor and Akobo counties, each with 120 UN peacekeepers.<sup>8</sup> This is a positive example where the UN was able to divert its resources in reaction to civilian insecurity, despite the initial loss. But without a clear set of priorities, unforeseen events like these on the ground can easily divert attention and resources from the main goal.

I propose that better results could be achieved with a reasonably focused goal of civilian protection geared towards establishing free, fair and peaceful elections. As discussed in the beginning chapter, elections in post-conflict countries are often the foundational political institution. Electing a party in a free and fair atmosphere not only provides legitimacy for the party, but also kick-starts a political process that has higher accountability, thus avoiding what some scholars refer to as the lower form accountability traps (Ashworth, de Mesquita and Friedenber, 2015). Current practices of broad civilian protection mandates can also force UN missions to deploy in pursuit of local security, which can portray external peacekeepers negatively as encroaching upon the host nation's area of responsibility and even cultivating the dependency culture. Instead, civilian protection mandates specific to the task of cre-

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<sup>7</sup>See <http://af.reuters.com/article/sudanNews/idAFLN29719920090923> [Accessed December 20, 2015]

<sup>8</sup>See UN report available at: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/publications/yir/yir2009.pdf> [Accessed December 20, 2015]

ating safe elections are more focused and more effective in generating sustainable peace later, and also for delineating a clearer exit strategy for the peacekeepers.

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## Degrees

**MA**, Political Science, 2014. University of Kentucky, USA

**MSc**, Comparative politics (Conflict Studies), 2010. London School of Economics,  
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**MA**, Political Science, 2008. Tribhuvan University, Nepal

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## Publications

### Peer Reviewed Journals

**Phayal**, A, Khadka, P. & Thyne, C. L. 2015. What Makes an Ex-Combatant Happy?  
A Micro Analysis of DDR in South Sudan. *International Studies Quarterly*,  
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on the Provisional Irish Republican Army & the Communist Party of Nepal  
(Maoists). *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 4(1):1-20.

### Policy paper

**Barron**, P., Chingchit, S., Phayal A. & Pillai, S. 2015. *Aid and Recovery in Post  
Earthquake in Nepal*. The Asia Foundation.

## **Awards & Grants**

- Presidential Fellowship Award, University of Kentucky 2016
- Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, University of Kentucky 2016
- Malcom E. Jewell Award, University of Kentucky 2016
- EITM Summer Fellowship (NSF), Duke University, 2016
- Emerging Global Scholars Award, University of Kentucky 2014
- EITM Summer Fellowship (NSF), University of Houston, 2014
- EITM Travel Scholarship (NSF) to attend MPSA, Chicago 2013
- Jim Winkates Best Graduate Paper Award, ISA-South 2012