

**Making Democracy Safe:  
How Institutions and Democratization Influence the Use of Violence as an Electoral  
Strategy**

Megan Reif  
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Michigan  
Department of Political Science

**Chapter 2**

**A Typology of Election-Related Violence:  
An Event-Based Approach to Political Violence from Precipitating Offenses to Emergent  
Lethality**

**2.1 Introduction**

The line of about 20 people who stood on the sidewalk along the chain-link fence 10 meters from the building that housed the polling site looked intimidating. Imposing men and a few equally formidable women, decked out in vivid t-shirts screen-printed with candidate names and numbers corresponding to the lever-number on the city's antiquated circa-1952 voting machines--A-1, A-4, B-13, C-24, and so on, distributed voting slates to electors as they arrived. Some appeared to yank a slate from a voter's hand to replace it with another, competing slate. Sound trucks blaring loud music, slogans, candidate names, and lever numbers also idled in front of the building periodically, obscuring our view from the car. "Vote A-5, Ronald Rice for Mayor," broadcast a SUV decked out in slick images of smiling candidates. We had spent about three hours since the polls opened driving from one precinct to another, watching this sort of electioneering, which erupted occasionally into a fight or verbal shouting match where passions seemed to run high.

It was mid-morning before Bitá, my research assistant, and I, as outsiders to Newark, mustered up the courage to get out of the car and approach one of the precinct locations on

foot. After trying our best to differentiate ourselves from journalists or officials by explaining our social-scientific purpose, we benignly questioned a couple of the African-American men campaigning for competing candidates about the reasons for their involvement in Newark politics. "I'm just a house painter from Jersey City," one said, "A bus showed up outside our building and they offered us \$100 to be here all day and make sure people get these papers."<sup>1</sup> These men turned out to be outsiders too. I wondered if, in a city like Newark, which--at least in politics--is like a small town wearing urban clothing, a non-negligible portion of the altercations that broke out were due not so much to deeply-held passions about the candidates or issues but recognition and anger that more than a few of the intimidating men were interlopers.

The importance of some notes from the 2002 campaign headquarters that I had obtained from former campaign counsel became apparent. Scrawled on yellow legal paper, the following notes illustrate the types of problems that legal monitors had called in on May 14, 2002 from polling sites:

District 48: 15-20 people outside. Sound Truck. Send Visibility.

District 2: Send someone for support.<sup>2</sup>

District 340. District 46: Van intimidation.

District 23, 24, 34: Police riding around in unmarked cars.

The notes reminded me of an obscure provision in the election crimes section of Guatemala's **DATE** election law, which prohibits unnecessary traffic on election day and restricts vehicles

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<sup>1</sup> Quote paraphrased as faithfully as possible to the original sense of the conversation, based on field notes, May 9, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Interview, law firm in Hackensack, NJ, September 23, 2005. Notes from central campaign headquarters, titled "Election Day," and dated May 14, 2002.

from parking or idling outside of polling sites, as well as a more common provision in many electoral laws restricting the number of people who may congregate on election day to **MIN** to **MAX** people.<sup>3</sup>

These sketches illustrate the challenges involved in measuring and interpreting the causes and impact of violence when precipitating acts of questionable legality that stop short of physical assault are either rarely visible or not as straightforward in meaning as they appear to be. For an outsider, such events, appear to be, at best, good-natured cajoling of voters and supporters of opposing candidates, or, at worst, the eruption of conflict based on expression of deeply-held attachments to candidates and the policies or patronage they represent. Even events that appear to be spontaneous and unintended, however, can be part of a broader electioneering effort based on the expected vote margins in and across districts, as well as the behavior of competing candidates and parties.

The strategy of 'sending visibility' in response to the presence of vehicles and crowds favoring one competitor, for example, is a common one across diverse electoral contexts. If one candidate deploys a visible crowd of supporters to an area, the voters who support the opponent, especially in a community in which identities and addresses are well-known to local ward and precinct captains, may feel as uncomfortable as Bitá and I did venturing to the polling site. To protect its own supporters from intimidation, one side may feel compelled to deploy its own measures in response to tactics that the other side is using, contributing to circumstances more likely to escalate to physical violence. As one ward captain for the 2006 Cory Booker for Mayor campaign said, "People don't think they sit around a table and plan these things. They

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<sup>3</sup> Megan Reif. 2007. Election Laws on Election Crimes Database (ELECD).

do."<sup>4</sup> There is often more than meets the eye, then, in many of even the simplest, and ostensibly spontaneous, election-related incidents of coercion and violence.

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<sup>4</sup> Observation of Campaign Fundraiser for Luis Quintana, City Council Candidate on Cory Booker Ticket, 2006 Newark Municipal Election, September 22, 2005. The Newark Club. 1 Newark Center – 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor. Newark, NJ.

## **2.2 Before Lethality: Empirical Implications of Aggregating and Disaggregating Violence**

Newark's Election Day dynamics illustrate how a climate of fear and intimidation may be more widespread and exist long before a spark—an insult, trespassing onto the wrong turf, crossing the wrong person—could have transformed an initial situation of tension into a successful, if unintended, use of lethal violence participants decided to draw weapons. If the climate of intimidation is widespread, it is not clear that adding one incident of lethality would change the overall effect on voters or the election outcome, yet only a death would allow these kinds of patterns of intimidation to enter most violence databases.

With the challenges of measuring underreported, invisible forms of coercion, studies of violence in the social sciences tend to use deaths as a dependent variable, which accounts only for the *lethality*, not the broader causes and impacts of non-lethal violence, such as economic coercion and psychological abuse (Dahlberg and Krug 2002). If studies of political violence focus only on lethality, the dynamic nature of violence as a sequence of interrelated events involving participants with distinct motives who can employ an almost infinite variety of coercive tactics at specific times and locations against a variety of potential targets, will remain undertheorized.

While many studies have sought to differentiate between the choice of nonviolent or violent political action with respect to recruiting and maintaining solidarity and loyalty among group members (Lichbach 1998), securing collaboration from civilian populations (Weinstein 2007), and explaining why individuals choose whether or not to participate in riots or other forms of collective action (Scacco 2008; DeNardo 1985; Lohmann 1994; Scott 1985; Chong 1991;

Coleman 1990), few studies have attempted to explain the circumstances under which political actors choose their particular mix of coercive tactics.

Violent events are complex moments characterized by five essential dimensions necessary and sufficient to constitute an incident, not unlike the criteria for documentation of disease in the criminology and epidemiology<sup>5</sup> literature: (1) perpetrator(s)/participant(s); (2) target(s)/victim(s); (3) designation of the *type of violence* involved, or violation of the law [tactic/action dimension]; (4) geographic location(s) [the spatial dimension], and (5) time [the temporal dimension]. Noting that the literature on violence in the social sciences examines at most two dimensions at any one time, with geographers focusing on location, for example, or sociologists on perpetrators and targets, Verma and Lodha characterize analyses of violent incidents along all of these dimensions simultaneously as in a developmental stage (2002). Similarly, Kalyvas calls for the elaboration of event structure to create 'analytical autonomy' and a means of overcoming some of the 'pathologies' in studies of violence (2006, **page**).

These dimensions form the basis for further classification of incidents according to the varying theoretical interests of researchers, who have examined the relationship between perpetrators and victims [relational dimension], the characteristics at the location and time at which the incident occurred [situational dimension], the impact or costs of the incident, such as

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<sup>5</sup> The public health approach to violence is based on the rigorous requirements of the scientific method, which begins with uncovering as much basic knowledge as possible about all the aspects of violence—through systematically collecting data on the magnitude, scope, characteristics, and consequences of violence to facilitate their scientific measurement and investigating why violence occurs, that is, conducting research to determine the causes and correlates of violence; the factors that increase or decrease the risk for violence. Dahlberg, Linda L., and Etienne G. Krug. 2002. "Violence a global public health problem: Version of the introduction to the World Report on Violence and Health (WHO)." Geneva: World Health Organization Division of Violence Prevention.

harm to persons or property; and the motives of those involved [motivational dimension], the last of which is often derived based on the type of violence perpetrated in absence of observable information about motive. Cooney and Phillips, for example, argue that the *types of action* (tactics) used are related in a theoretical way to the motive. Robbery, rape, and serial murder tend to be predatory, while homicide and assault usually result from moralistic motives aimed at punishing the target/victim, whether an individual, group, or institution, for an action perceived as a wrong or transgression by the perpetrator (85).

The validity of these criteria and typologies derived from them, from a theoretical perspective, is based on whether rates for *different types of incidents* are associated with different predictor variables. Many studies have found support for the hypothesis that disaggregated incident data are associated in different ways by causal factors or different factors and occur in different locations (Flewelling and Williams 1999).

This section elaborates some of the limitations of treating violence in the aggregate, with reference to these units of analysis important to the study violence as sets of disaggregated *incidents*. Section 2.3 advances an event-based analysis of coercion and violence focused on electoral violence, and Section 2.4 elaborates an explanatory typology of electoral violence and how it is operationalized to include the disaggregated dimensions discussed here. The typology forms the foundation for deriving the theoretical predictions and empirical implications in the remaining chapters with respect to explaining variation in the five-dimensions of a violent incident: WHO commits WHICH acts of violence against WHAT targets, WHEN and WHERE, drawing on several violence typologies from the criminology literature.

### 2.2.1 Actor Specificity

A number of theories of political violence associate individual- or group-level factors, such as frustration-aggression (Davies 1997) or the activation of boundaries between individuals and groups that become perpetrators and victims (Tilly 2003), with violence, but evaluation of their empirical implications remains constrained by the absence of data collected beyond the aggregate level. Tilly (2003), for example, notes the limitations of Gurr's Harff's (Gurr and Harff 1994; Gurr 1970) **(CITATIONS of the other Gurr work here)** identification of the kinds of activity in which groups are involved, from 'political banditry' to 'protracted civil war' because the research strategy does not differentiate between important actors such as minorities, movements, militias, and state-backed forces, even though the theoretical argument emphasizes state-society relationships of difference in power, majority-minority, etc. (Tilly 2003, 64).

In their meta-analysis of homicide typologies and their usefulness, Flewelling and Williams (1999) find that, while difficult to operationalize, actor specificity is important because it focuses attention on the fact that many homicides represent the ultimate act in an escalating cycle of violence between persons who know each other, as distinguished from homicides in which the victim was uninvolved in any prior conflict with the perpetrator" (97). Without basic information about which actors were involved, theories about the relational status between them cannot be evaluated empirically.

A lack of actor specificity also leaves the sequence of events, including the first use of violence or the precipitating act that led to violence, inside of a black box. Yet very different motives might explain violence carried out by different actors. Just knowing the type of actor

that committed an act can offer more information about likely motives. In Marvin Wolfgang's classic *Patterns in Criminal Homicide*, for example, it is important to identify victim-perpetrated homicides, in which the homicide victim was "the first to commence in the interplay of resort to physical violence" (Flewelling and Williams 1999, 97). Current studies of political violence simply cannot explain *which actors account for the most incidents of violence and which are responsible for greatest lethality*.

Actor-level specificity, then, is an important feature of theories and measurement of political violence. Without it, we must infer, or "reason back" (Kalyvas 2006, 76) to the individual actions and motives believed to motivate violence from the aggregate counts and associations of characteristics measured at a level beyond the individual. This is, as Kalyvas writes, "akin to ecological fallacy," extrapolating from the aggregate to the individual level in the absence of individual-level data about particular acts of violence (Kalyvas 2006, 76).

### **2.2.2 Specificity of Tactics and Types of Violence, not Impacts**

Although non-lethal violence is difficult to measure, the failure to do so misses a lot of the 'action', so to speak. Lethality is not a method or a tactic, it is an impact or outcome. While data on mortality is the most readily available, the vast majority of violent offenses in the United States, according to Mosher et al., "are attempts or threats that involve little or no injury to the victim...are grossly underreported...especially when they involve no physical injury, mutual combat, and arguments among peers...." (Mosher et al. 2002, 174). Global data is similarly incomplete, as Dahlburg and Krug note in their introduction to the first World Health

Organization comprehensive report on violence as a public health problem: "while mortality data are useful for comparing the *magnitude* of the problem of violence across time and countries, non-fatal outcomes are much more common than fatal outcomes...." (2002, 280).<sup>6</sup> Finally, referring to political violence, Kalyvas characterizes violent conflicts as "the complex, and often invisible, nonviolent actions and mechanisms that precede and follow them" (21). Measuring lethality measures outcomes, not actions.

In addition to missing precipitating incidents and non-lethal violence, existing lethality data are themselves subject to error, because they only take into account what is reported, not what goes unreported. Even while many social scientists rely upon police data thought to be the most reliable source of cross-national violence data in advanced industrialized democracies, they miss a significant percentage of incidents that never enter the criminal justice or health care systems (Mosher et al. 2002, 59). In addition, in countries with police that are not neutral or simply underfunded and incompetent, homicide data are notoriously unreliable (Mian et al. 2002). Measurement issues in the study of violence hinder the development of good theory, yet most theories of crime and violence assume that the dependent variable is accurately measured (Mosher et al. 2002, 171). Mosher et al. state that "When variation in crime patterns and characteristics is partially attributable to unreliability in the measurement of crime, it is impossible to empirically validate the accuracy of competing criminological theories" (2002, 180).

The World Health Organization's first major report on violence views tactics and types of violence in a comprehensive way as the "intentional use of physical force or power, threatened

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<sup>6</sup> Emphasis mine.

or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation." The inclusion of the word 'power' in addition to the phrase 'use of physical force', broadens the nature of a violent act and expands the conventional understanding of violence "to include those acts that result from a power relationship, including threats and intimidation...and all types of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, as well as suicide and other self-abusive acts" (Dahlberg and Krug 2002, 279).

In the collection of data on crime, acts that do not rise to a certain threshold of severity are not counted. For example, the Uniform Crime Reporting system has a hierarchy rule applying to the classification and scoring of crimes when multiple offenses are committed at the same time by a person or group of persons, reporting only *the most serious offense* and ignoring the others (Riedel 1999, 69). Similarly, many studies in political science use datasets in which incidents of violence are included only if the number killed reaches a minimum threshold, such as 35, in a commonly used dataset on civil violence, or 1000, in studies of war (**CITATIONS**). It is no wonder then, that electoral violence, which rarely reaches such high levels, is a phenomenon little studied in the discipline. Only Jamaica's 1980 election, in which more than 800 people were killed, or Kenya's 2008 electoral violence, which killed at least 1,133, injured 3,561, and displaced more than 230,000 would seem to warrant close examination (**CITATIONS**).

These problems point to a need to measure and examine specific acts and offenses, rather than their severity. A relatively new National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) has attempted to do this, eliminating the hierarchy rule and including up to 10 separate offenses

per incident, as well as data elements on up to 99 victims and offenders, as well as property (Riedel 1999, 91). NIBRS also includes sequence information and data linking multiple offenders and victims. With the growing recognition that distinction of sequence and tactics multiple-action incidents, some criminologists advocate study the "the precipitating offense" (Cooney and Phillips 2002, 98), rather than the last or most serious offense, theorizing about and measuring incidents of crime that better connect background factors and individual characteristics that lead to the choice to use a particular form of violence.

Precipitating offenses offer a promising lens through which to view political violence. In Sri Lanka, for example, long-term studies by the Center for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) found that a large percentage of incidents of lethal electoral violence emerged out of disputes over the location and vandalism of very large campaign posters and banners. By limiting the size, location, and timing of the placement of such election materials, electoral regulations limited opportunities for lethal violence.<sup>7</sup> Literature on the symbolism of targets and political spaces could shed light on the theoretical explanations for such escalation, a task which is beyond the scope of this project.<sup>8</sup>

Since mortality figures typically used in comparing countries "represent the 'tip of the iceberg' as far as violence is concerned" (Dahlburg and Krug 2002, 285), aggregate counts of mortality and highly visible events, such as riots that involve more than a minimum threshold of people, may bias our understanding of the actual degree of coercion in a society. Associations

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<sup>7</sup> Internal Report on the International Foundation for Election Systems Election Violence Education and Resolution Project's Fact-Finding Mission to Sri Lanka, 2005. **CHECK CITATION**

<sup>8</sup> The reader may at this point contemplate the idea that such incidents must really be a function of inter-ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, it is important to note that most coercion in elections in Sri Lanka occurs *within* the Sinhalese population.

between country-level characteristics, such as economic development or regime type, and violence, will be biased as a result. Kalyvas also emphasizes the importance of selection bias in the study of political violence, arguing that "instances of violence cannot be considered independently of instances where violence does not occur" (Kalyvas 2006, 48).

There are important substantive theoretical implications to the almost exclusive focus on the isolation of lethal violence as a separate phenomenon. Where a high level of psychological threat exists, the actual *use of fatal violence may be unnecessary* and thus the violent climate of the society understated in measures of *lethality*. Furthermore, in some cases, incidence of physical violence may in fact be an indication of a greater levels of freedom or contestation and a *lessening* of the broader climate of fear and terror. Theorist Hannah Arendt (**CITATION**), for example, argues that violence is employed in the absence of legitimate political power capable of maintaining institutions to manage conflict. When central authorities that keep conflicting groups from fighting are weakened or relax their control, non-violent but coercive social control by one actor may give way to open violence employed by multiple actors. Where authorities and dissidents may prefer forms of invisible or non-violent coercion during a particular time period, a change in the constellation of resources and/or competition may induce them to shift strategies.

A few studies that have sought to disaggregate and identify explanations for actors' tactics and target selection have mirrored the literature on the economics of crime (Sandler and Scott 1987, 36), focusing on the ways in which groups overcome collective action problems (Tilly 2003; Lichbach 1998), group resource and access constraints (Oots 1986; Enders and Sandler

1993), substitute between tactics as a response to countermeasures such as the introduction of metal detectors or other factors that create variable access to targets (Eyerman 1998; Cauley and Iksoon Im. 1988), or emulate previously successful strategies by other actors (Midlarsky et al. 1980).

Leaving theorizing about the choice of particular tactics to economic or criminology literature on deterrence and punishment sees tactics as largely substitutable and that external factors, not political considerations, largely shape the sort of tactic an actors uses, resulting in a rather unsatisfying and atheoretic understanding of strategies of political violence. This study advances theoretical explanations for the choice of tactics used and actors involved in violence based on political factors such as the constellation of electoral institutions, the quality of electoral administration, reputational costs of violence, and electoral competitiveness. While literature on crime and economics can help illuminate the study of political violence, it is important to understand *all of the dimensions* of political violence that make it so, including the nature of the tactics used.

### **2.2.3 Timing Specificity**

Although political scientists acknowledge and make statistical adjustments for the fact that violence is a rare event (King and Zeng 1999, 2001), the fact that rare events occur at discrete times and locations is rarely addressed in cross-national and even national studies. Monthly or annual counts are a conventional way of making temporal variation in violence more analytically tractable. Reliance on annual or other time-aggregated counts of violence makes studies that rely on such data again subject to the ecological fallacy with respect to time, giving

primacy to background conditions to infer attributes of perpetrators, presuming their agency in choosing tactics and actions as a function of those aggregate background conditions (e.g., regime type). Yet time and space are both essential, as the act of crime or violence a matter of knowing both "*where* to go...and *when* to do it" (Verma and Lodha 2002). Arguably, where predatory crime may depend on opportunity and assessment of likely payoff from attacking a target at a particular time and place, timing and location is likely to be even *more important* with respect to political violence.

Measuring counts of lethal violence in politics assumes that it is largely *independent*, temporally and spatially, of other forms of violence. Lethality may represent the end-point—and a very rare one at that--of a longer process or a much more complex picture. Lethality is often dependent on temporally prior or spatially proximate precipitating non-lethal events, the causes of which may be separate from the reasons why the incident became lethal. Research may therefore confound variables co-occurring with lethal violence as causal, rather than prior circumstances that created the risky situation that led to lethal use of force in the first place. Often, those prior circumstances or background factors, such as ethno-linguistic fractionalization or economic development, do not vary significantly from one time period to the next, telling us little about why violence occurs when it does, or why it does not occur despite the presence of background conditions thought necessary for violence. With such a widespread electoral strategy of intimidation in Newark, for example, a city facing widespread poverty and unemployment, high rates of gun violence, inter-ethnic tension, and other underlying factors thought to contribute to violence, one might wonder why there were so *few* incidents of injury

or lethal violence during Newark's two most recent, hotly-contested municipal elections, given the large number of opportunities and incidents that stopped short of producing casualties and high baseline rates of non-political, lethal violence before and during the electoral period.

Finally, aggregation of violence data over time makes temporal patterns of violence analytically indistinguishable, in that a month of connected incidents involving the deaths of 25 people, one bombing killing 25 people, or a death every week for 25 weeks would be measured in the same way. Are they comparable? Do the *size* of the impact matter for any one incident? Supposing the same actor carries out the three different temporal patterns of violence, is the difference important in understanding his or her motives and strategy? Does the temporal clustering of incidents have different meaning and burden for the target of the violence and society at large?

While answering all of these questions is beyond the scope of this project, the study proposes a way to make temporal disaggregation practically feasible and attempts to exploit temporal variation in violence to better understand its causes and effects. A question that the literature applying rare events methods to violence has not answered is why rare events should and can be explained by prevalent, common conditions.

#### **2.2.4 Location Specificity**

Like temporal aggregation of violence data, spatial aggregation overstates the extent to which country-level variables explain violence, overlooking proximate, local factors that determine the particulars of a violent incident (Kalyvas 2003; Shellman 2004) and suffers in the same way from the ecological fallacy. DeNardo (1985) and others often make the assumption

that violence is more costly than other actions with respect to resources and reputation, so that those who use it choose carefully where and when to do so. If most violence occurs in a particular region, aggregation to the national unit of analysis has the effect of biasing the results in favor of finding a stronger relationship between the explanatory and independent variables (O'Sullivan and Unwin 2003). The tendency to aggregate data means that there have been few efforts to theorize about the location of acts of political violence, which, unlike predatory crime, may often be tied not just to the specific location of human or material targets, but also their size, symbolic nature, and affiliation with ethnic groups, parties, leaders, economic interests, etc.

In aggregate data, spatial patterns and autocorrelation of violence (events of violence tend to be located near to other events of violence) are ignored so that widespread deaths occurring in all administrative districts in one country would be measured the same way as the same number of deaths in one city, and attribute their causes to the same sets of background factors, such as ethnic division. In Pakistan, however, high levels of violence in Karachi occur *within* an ethnic group as well as between it and other groups, a pattern which would overstate the degree of inter-ethnic violence.<sup>9</sup> Annual count data makes it difficult to look at micro level and mechanisms behind the *choice to use violence over a range of nonviolent and violent tactics or abstain from action by strategic (goal-seeking) actors.*

### **2.2.5 Motive Specificity**

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<sup>9</sup> A bias in reporting on violence from areas where racial minorities and those lower in socio-economic status live, possibly inflating the association of already stigmatized groups with crime. Annual count data, the modal unit of analysis for many studies in criminology and political science, should at least be, but rarely are, calculated in proportion to the population or some relevant base, including variations in the age, sex, racial, and urban-rural composition of populations (Mosher et al. 2002, 41). Scacco applies this method in her study of riot behavior. See Alexandra Scacco. 2008. "Who Riots? Explaining Individual Participation in Ethnic Violence." New York: Columbia University.

The definition of violence used by the World Health Organization (op cit. **PAGE**) associates intentionality with the committing of the act itself, irrespective of the outcome it produces. Dahlberg and Krug (2002, 279) point out the difficulty of "distinguishing the intended behavior and intended consequence....and the intent to injure and the intent to 'use violence'...Some people mean to harm others but, based on their cultural backgrounds and beliefs, do not perceive their acts as violent" (279). This emphasis on of the importance of intent in measuring, explaining, and preventing violence corresponds to motivational typologies of violence in the criminology literature, which distinguish types of violence based on the assailant's motive or reason for acting" (Cooney and Phillips 2002, 84).

In an important review of the theoretical and empirical implications of the assumption that many scholars make about the motives behind violence, Kalyvas (2006, 24-26) notes that many studies privilege an conceptualization of violence as expressive, or based on hatred or simply inflicting pain with no explicit, instrumental purpose. Deducing motive from behavior, especially using highly aggregated data, is problematic. Given the lack of information about motives or skepticism about stated or post-hoc rationalizations by the actors themselves about their intent, many explanations tend to bias interpretations based on an assumption of expressive motives such as ethnic hatred. Yet, he argues, "expressive motivations may be less widespread than is often assumed. People involved in the production of political violence appear to lack the kind of 'extreme' personality features that tend to correlated with expressive violence" (2006, 25, 32-35)

While motive is rarely observable, a disaggregation of the five dimensions of violent incidents discussed does a better job of developing testable causal models of violence can be developed for specific types of acts, which are committed with different motives and under different situational circumstances. Identifying the motives as an inductive, theoretical exercise based on knowledge about *actors' interests centered around an event*, rather than violence itself, is a useful strategy for developing propositions from which empirical implications about the actors and tactics can be derived and tested. Overcoming the many problems of studying violence calls for research designs that, in the words of Brubaker and Laitin (1998, 447), are "firmly committed to disaggregation in both data collection and theory building" (quoted in Kalyvas 2006, 51). This study aims to do both by proposing an event-based typology and analysis of violence and coercion.

### **2.3 Elections as a Salient Moment for an Event-Based Analysis of Political Violence**

Political scientists tend to compartmentalize their study of violence into literatures that speak to each other in limited ways. Research on violence in political science is characterized by largely separate literatures focusing on a category or type of participant involved (e.g., "ethnic violence", "religious violence", "state-sponsored", "Islamist violence, "Extremist violence"), the variety of tactic<sup>10</sup> used (e.g. terrorism, state repression, torture, detentions, suicide bombing; sexual violence; riots; assassination; demonstrations; protests), the aim of violence (e.g.,

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<sup>10</sup> Almost all categories of violent behavior in both the international relations and comparative literatures constitute rare events. Because most studies explore one category of behavior, the range of strategies available to political actor at a given juncture is omitted (Most and Starr 1984; Most et al. 1992, 52). Ignoring multiple strategies leads to inconclusive results at the statistical level (Most et al. 1992, 52; Most and Starr 1984 386-7; Palmer and Bhandari 2000, 3-4), particularly if strategies are substitutable. **GET**

"secessionist/separatist"; hate-crimes), or its end result when a certain degree of lethality transforms the problem into a separate phenomenon to be explained (e.g., civil war; rebellion,<sup>11</sup> genocide). Many studies use the same type of event or lethality count data to evaluate various theories about the causes of these varieties of political violence. Perhaps our inability to answer a few basic but important questions points to both the lack of adequate, comparable data across types of violence as well as interrelated, but less visible, forms of coercion. Which of these is the most lethal, predictable, or preventable? Or the greatest burden to society as a whole? What are the proximate causes and near-term conditions for such events? Which escalates from non-lethal to lethal violence most quickly, or why does one demonstration remain peaceful while another results in bloodshed? In other words, why study one of these forms of violence over another?<sup>12</sup>

While this study does not attempt to answer these questions nor to advance a comprehensive research strategy for doing so, it pursues an event-based approach to the study of political violence. One motivation of the study is to understand the circumstances under which political actors choose between strategies of non-violence, non-lethal and lethal violence and to differentiate between the situations in which non-lethal violence escalates to lethal violence as opposed to a deliberate shift from non-lethal to lethal tactics. The research aims to

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<sup>11</sup> This method of case selection emphasizes what King et al. call retrospective research design and leaves little variation on the dependent variable. See King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>12</sup> While it is natural that social scientists would be drawn to incidents of lethal violence, such a focus to the exclusion of lesser forms of violence may both neglect the role of small-scale violence in creating preconditions for later lethal violence, but also the relative impact of non-lethal violence on the human well-being. As Mosher writes with reference to the study of crime, "there is a growing recognition among researchers and practitioners of the need to include violence that does not necessarily result in injury or death, but that nonetheless poses a substantial burden on society" (Mosher et al. 2002, 279).

determine whether violent and nonviolent action, and different types of violent action, have similar or distinct theoretical underpinnings. Rather than selecting as the unit of analysis the tactic, magnitude, or the nature of the perpetrator, the study focuses on a salient event around which both lethal and non-lethal incidents of coercion occur in a concentrated--yet time-limited, manner, under a greater level of scrutiny and public reporting of a range of tactics than would occur under normal or highly abnormal (e.g., civil war) circumstances. Elections occur on a semi-regular basis in a large number of political contexts, from municipal to the national, in both old and new democracies, and thus offer a means by which to compare dynamics of violence in very different cultural, institutional, and socio-economic contexts.

Electoral processes represent a unique moment around which to study variation in violence. Those forms of violence and coercion, even of the spiritual and psychological variety, are typically defined concretely in electoral law.<sup>13</sup> As a result, multiple actors have vested interests in the event, they have heightened awareness of incidents that constitute coercion and are more likely to call attention to those incidents. During an election period, small gatherings, accusations of violence, and even rumors are likely to be documented in some way. Because election-related violence is centered around a moment, it isolates and makes more tractable the challenge of measuring lethal and non-lethal acts of violence. Using the election as the unit of analysis, we can track over time within and across elections both perpetrators and targets, such as parties and candidates, for which we can also measure certain actor-level characteristics. As an event around which *a broad range of political action occurs*, elections are an ideal unit of analysis in which to examine more systematically the interdependent continuum of *tactics*,

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<sup>13</sup> Megan Reif. 2006. Election Laws on Election Crimes Database (ELECD).

*perpetrators and participants, targets, victims, locations, and timing* that make up incidents of violence. In the context of this study, notably distinct from the lethality of its impact, electoral violence is:

any spontaneous or organized act by candidates, party supporters, election authorities, voters, or any other actor that occurs during an electoral process, from the date of voter registration to the date of inauguration of a new government, that uses physical harm, intimidation, blackmail, verbal abuse, violent demonstrations, psychological manipulation, or other coercive tactics aimed at exploiting, disrupting, determining, hastening, delaying, reversing, or otherwise influencing an electoral process and its outcome.<sup>14</sup>

By narrowing the time period during which we measure violence and expanding the likelihood that we might capture a larger range of types coercion and the motives behind them, event-level analysis also permits a finer-grained measurement strategy that can begin to differentiate between the *occurrence* of violence in the first place and the factors that contribute to its *lethality*. As Kalyvas writes, "Approaching violence as a dynamic process allows an investigation of the sequence of decisions and events that intersect to produce violence, as well as the study of otherwise invisible actors who partake in this process and shape it in fundamental ways" (2006, 21).

Other studies of violence and aggression employ event-based analysis. Leonard et al., for example, address the relationship between alcohol consumption and aggression, noting that the relationship between alcohol consumption and aggression is robust but that the mechanisms of

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<sup>14</sup> This is a modified definition of that offered by Jeff Fischer in his seminal study of Electoral Conflict and Violence for the International Foundation for Election Systems: "Electoral conflict and violence can be defined as any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse a political stakeholder to determine, delay, or to otherwise influence an election process. Election security can be defined as the process of protecting electoral stakeholders, information, facilities, or events." Fischer, Jeff. 2002. "Electoral Conflict and Violence: A Strategy for Study and Prevention." In *IFES White Papers*, ed. IFES. Washington, DC: International Foundation for Election Systems.

the relationship are disputed (2003, 347). They address the question of whether the circumstances surrounding drinking or the drinking itself produce greater changes in behavior, and whether individual-level factors such as personality are more important than the alcohol consumption—that is, whether alcohol *causes* aggression or is a moderator of the alcohol-aggression relationship (348). Selecting incidents of varying severity in barroom settings, the event-level approach allows the authors to "examine factors that relate to the occurrence of any physical aggression by the participant, the occurrence of potential injurious aggression, and the occurrence of some level of harm or injury" (349), along with personality factors and the *amount* of alcohol consumed among those involved. They find that the amount of alcohol consumption did not predict the *occurrence of aggression, but rather the severity of aggression once it had occurred*. This simple example demonstrates the importance of disaggregating the precipitating events or circumstances that lead to aggression, since the incidence of aggression may have different causes than the severity. By focusing on lethality in studies of political violence, political scientists may be confounding correlates of lethality with causation.

Like the literature on political violence, the literature on electoral fraud aggregates, both theoretically and operationally, non-coercive means of manipulating electoral outcomes, such as vote-buying, ballot stuffing, and counting fraud, with coercive means such as intimidation and violence. Within a broader menu of ways in which political actors seek to gain from altering electoral outcomes undemocratic means, for example, electoral coercion is a subset of what Schedler calls the 'menu of manipulation' (Schedler 2002). The neglect of electoral violence as a distinct phenomenon reflects the extent to which political scientists may have implicitly assumed

that non-violent fraud and violent coercion in elections have the same set of causes and that they are interchangeable as methods of manipulating electoral outcomes. Just one form of electoral violence—the opportunistic gain-seeking criminal who takes advantage of the deployment of police to election-related locations to settle private scores or to use predatory violence for material gain—suggests that electoral violence and fraud warrant separate study and theory-building. In addition, existing theories of the causes and consequences of electoral fraud tell us little about why political actors favor one strategy in one election and another strategy in the next election, or variant strategies over different locations. Why is one election characterized by massive vote fraud and the next by transparent electoral administration but severe violence? This study, then, contributes both to the literatures on political violence and the causes of electoral fraud and corruption as a function of democratic transition and consolidation, electoral systems, and other institutional arrangements.

#### **2.4 A Typology of Electoral Violence**

Trying to navigate what Kalyvas calls "a conceptual minefield" (2006, 19), scholars of violence in criminology and political science frequently begin by establishing a typology of violence for the purpose of the study at hand. Typologies are a not uncontroversial analytical tool that students of violence have used to establish conceptual boundaries, but with separate typologies for each study, establishing standards of evaluation between them is difficult and there is no one typology of violence that has emerged in political science or other disciplines useful across a range of theoretical questions and data. The choice of classification strategy depends ultimately on the underlying purpose of the research (Cooney and Phillips 2002). Some

typologies of violence can be grouped as motivational, relational, and motivational-relational (Cooney and Phillips 2002, 83), looking at both the motive of the perpetrator and the relationship between the perpetrator and victim (e.g., whether they are strangers or not). Other typologies distinguish between instrumental, or predatory, violence, the primary purpose of which is not to hurt the other party, but to gain something else from the violence, such as money or property, and expressive violence based on an interpersonal confrontation (Flewelling and Williams 1999, 21). Dahlburg and Krug distinguish between similar concepts of proactive and reactive violence (2002, **page**). I combine or reframe some of these concepts to elaborate a typology of electoral violence.

#### **2.4.1 Why another typology?**

A typology is a set of classification categories that aim to reduce the diversity of social reality into a manageable number of classes that can be extended across time and space. Typologies can be descriptive (based on a deductive organization of existing patterns in the data into categories and evaluated based on how meaningful they are), instrumental (based on and evaluated according to practical criteria to guide decision-making or other real-world applications), and explanatory (derived inductively to generate a body of testable ideas that parsimoniously explains a broad range of data). The first two tend to be deductively derived, for example, after analysis of the data or the policy options at hand, while explanatory typologies facilitate the *explanation* of facts through a prior, inductive logic that forms part of a theory (Cooney and Phillips 2002). The typology elaborated below is an explanatory typology. Details

about the methodology used to develop the typology are discussed at length in Appendix 2.III

(Not included in CPS presentation file).

#### **2.4.2 Event-Driven Motivational Typology for Non-Violent and Violent Strategies of Electoral Manipulation**

Addressing the call for inclusion of the five dimensions of incidents of violence (**Section 2.3**), I develop a typology of these dimensions in addition to the motives not of electoral violence specifically, but rather a general class of motives reflected in the range of ways in which actors try to influence elections, from campaigning and persuading voters about policy to vote buying to violence, with only minor additions of categories of electoral violence that existing motives of electoral manipulation do not explain.

Because the motivations I identify are associated with both violent and nonviolent actions which are typically aggregated and described together as electoral manipulation or fraud, the elaboration of my theory must attempt to explain not only how actors choose between violent tactics but also between nonviolent and violent strategies. Only when the constellation of explanatory variables results in a shift from nonviolence to violence on a particular motive does the typology about the actors, tactics, and targets kick in. A simple example illustrates what I mean by this. When vote-buying is easy—generally when political actors have ways of verifying how voters have voted as individuals or in the aggregate, as precincts and neighborhoods, it is to their advantage to buy as many votes as possible and get people to the polls. This can be characterized as a turnout-inflating variety of a turnout-biasing strategy. With the introduction and enforcement of the secret ballot, however, voters may take

the bribe and still vote against the party, costing resources and votes. If the party can identify certain voters it expects will choose the other side (e.g., by identifying factors such as ethnicity), the turnout-biasing motive is the same, but it shifts to one of turnout-suppressing (see, e.g., Langohr 2000; Dinnen 2001; Campbell 2003; Reilly 2002; Argersinger 1985 as examples from the case study literature). What is the best way to suppress the vote? In many cases, it is either economic threat, libel, or direct physical suppression, all of which are defined as electoral crimes in the vast majority of the world's electoral laws. Like any campaign strategy for office-seeking parties, the motive of maximizing the votes received is the same, but the institutional factors that change incentives for using turnout-inflating or turnout-suppressing strategies change and as a result, the choice of tactics changes along with them.

#### **2.4.2.1 Motivational Dimension**

I classify the motivational dimension first as *proactive or reactive*, with proactive motivations divided into predatory and instrumental categories, and reactive motivations divided into moralistic and expressive categories.

##### **PROACTIVE MOTIVES**

###### ***Predatory***

Opportunistic gain-seeking

###### ***Instrumental***

###### Cycle-biasing

Election-inducing or -postponing

###### Turnout-biasing

Turnout-inflating

Turnout-suppressing

Boycott-enforcing

###### Choice-biasing

Image-enhancing/detracting

Resource/Support-signaling

Entry-deterring

- Coalition-controlling
- Campaign-biasing
  - Opponent-discrediting
  - Response-manufacturing (baiting) (first-mover disadvantage)
  - Fear-mongering / unity-enhancing (Wilkinson)
- Access-biasing
- Means-biasing
- Result-biasing
  - Fraud-defending
  - Recount-seeking
  - Reversal-seeking

### **REACTIVE MOTIVES**

#### ***Moralistic***

- Justice-seeking
- Fraud-deterring/redressing
- Retaliatory/self-defending
- Insult-redressing/Offense-taking

#### ***Expressive***

- Outcome-celebrating/grieving
- Situational-emotional (crowds, frustration waiting in line)

## **Chapter 2 Appendices:**

### **I. Electoral Laws on Election Crimes Database (ELECD) Coding form**

### **II. Election Violence Incidents Database (EVID) Coding form**

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