

## International Influences on Nonviolent and Violent Contention

Jori Breslawski  
*University of Maryland*

David E. Cunningham  
*University of Maryland &  
Peace Research Institute Oslo*

**Abstract:** How do international actors influence dissidents' decisions whether to challenge their states using violent means, nonviolence, both or neither? We argue that the presence of important actors affects dissident decisions to engage in violent or nonviolent contention by affecting whether dissidents expect that governments will repress or concede to dissident demands in response to this contention. We examine the effect of two prominent types of actors—powerful states with close ties to the government and Highly Structured Inter-Governmental Organizations (HSIGOs) on dissident behavior in all national level elections in Africa from 2000-2012. Using integrated data drawn from four leading conflict events datasets, we find that dissidents are less likely to engage in violent contention when their government receives higher levels of military aid from the United States and in former French colonies, and more likely to engage in both violent and nonviolent contention when their state is a member of a greater number of HSIGOs.

Civil wars, such as those currently raging in Syria and Yemen, and mass nonviolent protest campaigns, like those occurring in Venezuela from 2014-2017 and Egypt in 2011, happen because dissidents make decisions to take up arms or go out into the streets in protest. A large literature has examined the interaction between states and dissidents that affect these decisions. Particular focus has been paid to how state repression and dissident-led contention influence each other.

Much less is known about how international influences impact dissidents' decisions whether to take up arms, go out into the streets to protest, or to stay home. While the literature has examined how international action influences dynamics of conflicts once they have begun, we know much less about the effect of international influences before dissidents initiate violence or take to the streets in mass numbers.<sup>1</sup> However, dissidents certainly consider the response of international actors when deciding whether and how to challenge their states. During the “Arab Spring” of 2010/2011, for example, dissidents across the Middle East/North Africa region watched as international actors did not come to the aid of governments in Tunisia and Egypt and backed rebels in Libya, and this international involvement (or lack thereof) contributed to a spread of dissent across the region.

In this article, we examine the effect of international influences on dissident strategic choice in a broader set of cases than civil wars or mass nonviolent campaigns. We focus specifically on two types of actors frequently present in developing countries that we expect to have a strong influence on dissident decision-making—powerful external supporters of the government and Highly Structured Inter-Governmental Organizations (HSIGOs). We argue that these actors can influence the state-dissident interaction by either constraining or enhancing the government's willingness and

---

<sup>1</sup> A few studies (including Cetinyan 2002, Jenne 2004, and Thyne 2009) do look at international influences on the behavior of potential rebels in the pre-civil war period.

ability to repress dissidents and by pressuring governments to concede to dissident demands in the face of contention.

We test implications of this argument by focusing specifically on the effect of powerful states with close ties to the government and HSIPOs on dissident-led contention (both violent and nonviolent) around national-level elections in Africa. We focus on elections because they are a time when dissidents are increasingly likely to be mobilized, as they can provide focal points for organizing dissent (Harish and Little 2017). Elections tend to be particularly contentious in developing democracies as less checks on executive power and clientelist relationships mean actors see elections as very consequential. Still, contention around most elections does not rise to the level of civil war or mass nonviolent campaign. As such, we can examine the effect of international influences on dissident decision-making in cases with the potential for violent and nonviolent mobilization but where, in many cases, large-scale contention has yet to break out.

We examine the level and type of dissident-led contention around elections using new integrated data drawn from four leading conflict event datasets.<sup>2</sup> Some recent work examines violence and nonviolence together,<sup>3</sup> but studies of contention generally focus on either violent or nonviolent contention. This division influences data collection efforts as well, and many existing data projects focus on nonviolent activity (such as protest) or violent contention. Using integrated data allows us to examine both violent and nonviolent activity, and to focus specifically on dissident-led activity.

---

<sup>2</sup> We discuss the integration in more detail in the Empirical Analysis section.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Asal, Legault, Szekely, and Wilkenfeld (2013), D. Cunningham, Gleditsch, Gonzalez, Vidović, and White (2017), K. Cunningham (2013), K. Cunningham, Dahl, and Frugé (2017), Pearlman (2011).

Our empirical analysis shows that the presence of international actors exerts a substantial influence on dissident-led conflict events. Specifically, we find that when governments have close ties to a powerful state there is less violent contention, but that governments constrained by membership in a greater number of HSIGOs see higher levels of both violent and nonviolent contention. Further, we demonstrate through causal mediation analysis that the effect of powerful supporters on violent contention is direct, and not driven by these governments being less repressive or committing less electoral fraud.

### **The State-Dissident Interaction**

We draw on a large literature on state-dissident interactions and argue that both violent and nonviolent contention result from identifiable incompatibilities and interaction between dissidents and states.<sup>4</sup> When we refer to dissidents, we generally mean individuals within the country that are outside of the government and have preferences for changes in the status quo policy of the state. This can include the organized political opposition, but also individuals who are not participating in politics directly but who may choose to mobilize against the government by participating in a protest or joining a violent organization. Dissidents are generally motivated to challenge states by economic, political, and/or cultural grievances. They can use violent means (for example, insurgency or terrorism), nonviolent means (such as protests, strikes or electoral boycotts), conventional political participation (for example, petitioning, forming a political party, or running for office), or some combination of these means to challenge states. Dissidents can also fail to mobilize or be deterred from mobilizing; collective grievances are much more common than collective political action.

---

<sup>4</sup> Prominent examples of this literature include Lichbach (1998), Moore (1998) and Young (2013).

We assume that incumbent governments would like to stay in power. Dissidents would like to shift the status quo toward their preferences. Both seek to achieve these objectives at the lowest possible cost. Dissidents decide whether to challenge states and, if so, whether with violence, nonviolent resistance, or a mix of the two. Governments decide between conceding to dissident demands, repressing dissidents or some combination. This interaction is strategic. Dissidents and governments take the anticipated response of the other into consideration when deciding how to act (Ritter and Conrad 2016).

Dissidents can use both violent and nonviolent contention to shift the status quo toward their preferences. In rare cases they can do this directly, either by winning a violent conflict or by a nonviolent movement leading to regime change. More commonly, dissidents achieve some of their objectives by imposing enough costs on the government that it concedes to some of their demands.

Governments, meanwhile, pick a mix of concessions and repression in an effort to minimize the costs of contention (which includes the threat of being removed from power) while minimizing the concessions given to groups. In some cases, governments' response to dissidents is nearly entirely repressive, as in the 2011 crack-down in Bahrain. In others, such as Morocco in 2011, the government responds primarily with concessions. Frequently, however, governments try to give dissidents some of what they want—such as constitutional reform, wage increases, or the removal of an unpopular figure in the government—while also engaging in some repression to try to discourage further contention. This mix was used (unsuccessfully) in Egypt in the initial days of the revolution of 2011.

Dissidents evaluate the likelihood that contention (either nonviolent or violent) will lead to desired change, and compare this likelihood to the anticipated costs of contention (primarily governmental repression). This strategic interaction means that there is a type of implicit bargaining taking place, with both dissidents and governments seeking to evaluate the capabilities and resolve

of the other side. If both sides were fully informed and able to resolve commitment problems and divide the issues, we would not expect to observe costly contention (Fearon 1995). However, there is generally some uncertainty about the capabilities and resolve of dissidents and governments. These actors also vary in their ability to make credible commitments. Both uncertainty and mistrust can lead bargaining to break down and to contention.

This general framework can explain when we see dissident-led contention. A large literature examines the conditions under which governments respond to dissent with repression and/or concessions.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, this general framework can help to explain the form that contention takes. While violence and nonviolence can both impose costs on governments, dissidents may anticipate different levels of repression or chances of success through violence or nonviolence.

### **International Influences on Dissident Strategic Choice**

The above discussion presents a basic rationalist framework for examining dissident decisions whether to engage in violent or nonviolent contention (or both, or neither). In general, the existing work on which this framework builds focuses on the role of the state in affecting dissident decisions. In this article, we examine how international influences affect whether and how dissidents engage in contention.

International actors frequently have a significant presence in developing countries and substantial influence on governments. We argue that external states can affect the interaction between states and dissidents through two main mechanisms. First, external actors can encourage

---

<sup>5</sup> In the social movement literature, this environment is generally referred to as the “political opportunity structure.” See Schock (1999) for a discussion of the various elements of the political opportunity structure.

the government to concede to dissident demands, thus increasing the benefits of contention. This can make dissidents more likely to engage in contention, *ceteris paribus*. Second, external actors can either constrain or enhance the government's ability to respond to contention with repression, affecting dissidents' anticipated costs. Each of these mechanisms will affect dissidents' decisions whether to engage in contention and their expectations about what form of contention is most likely to maximize the chances of concession at the lowest cost.

Our argument is focused on dissident led contention in developing countries. Our empirical analysis focuses specifically on Africa. We see two key types of external actors as playing these roles in developing countries—powerful states with close ties to the government and HSIPOs.

### ***Powerful external supporters of the government***

Governments in developing countries are frequently weak. This weakness means they often face both external and internal threats to their rule. States facing these threats often seek to enhance their security by forming close ties to more powerful states. They can be limited in their ability to do so, as some powerful states are much more likely to work with certain types of governments (like democracies) or in strategically important areas or where there are important resources, like oil. Additionally, former colonial powers differ in the degree to which they are involved in their former colonies. In cases where developing countries do form these “hierarchical” relationships, they give up some autonomy over policy-making in return for protection from internal and external threats (Cunningham 2016; Lake 2009).

There are a number of powerful states that form these types of relationships. The United States is the most powerful state in the international system, and has hierarchical relationships with many states throughout the world. Many developing countries have close ties to their former colonial power, particularly former French (and British) colonies in Africa. Russia has close ties to

several former Soviet states and is building relationships in Central Asia and the Middle East. China is seeking to expand its global influence.

When weaker states have the backing of these powerful states, it can enhance their ability to repress dissent. Governments frequently respond to perceived threats to their power with repression (Davenport 1995; Hafner-Burton, Hyde & Jablonski 2014). Expectations of this repression can have a deterrent effect on contention (Ritter and Conrad 2016). Powerful states that form these relationships with weaker states generally prefer the incumbent government to stay in power, as it is that government that has adopted policies more closely tied to the powerful state's interests. They can provide support to governments through military aid and arms sales, enhancing those governments' repressive capacity.

When preventive repression fails and contention does break out, powerful supporters can intervene to boost the government's chances of prevailing. As examples, France intervened to support governments in a coup d'état in Gabon in 1964 and in the civil war in Chad in the 1970s and 1980s. The United States, likewise, intervened to support an allied government in Haiti in 1994.

Powerful states, then, can increase the perceived costs to dissidents of engaging in contention either directly—by enhancing the repressive capacity of the government—or indirectly, through the potential for military intervention. Because ties between powerful states and governments are generally visible these costs are observable by both dissidents and governments, which can reduce uncertainty about the government's repressive capacity. The increased costs and decreased uncertainty can make dissidents less likely to engage in contention.

These dynamics are particularly likely to affect the decision to engage in violent contention. In many developing countries, the government's coercive reach does not extend throughout the country, and it may have difficulty repressing violent challenges in the periphery. However, external

states can boost the strength of the government, raising the costs of violence and making a violent challenge less likely.

*H1a: Dissidents in countries where the government has close ties to a powerful state will engage in lower levels of violent contention.*

The relationship between external support to the government and nonviolent contention is more complicated. While external supporters generally prefer allied leaders to stay in power, in many cases this preference will not be so strong that the external state becomes involved militarily to repress a protest campaign. The literature on nonviolence argues that it can be more effective because of the international costs to states of repressing nonviolent movements (Chenoweth & Stephan 2011).

Given these costs, it is generally unlikely that external states would intervene directly to facilitate governmental repression of nonviolent protest, even if the external states had close ties to the government. There are exceptions, including Russia and Iran's willingness to continue backing the Syrian government while it commits massive human rights abuses. However, many powerful states express a commitment to human rights (and, in some cases, work to promote protection of human rights) and these states will be hesitant to support governments that repress protesters. While it is not true that democracies always show a commitment to human rights, nearly all of the states that Hafner-Burton (2013) refers to as "human rights stewards" are advanced democracies. There are also likely to be higher domestic audience costs to democracies of supporting repression of nonviolence. We would expect, then, that dissidents would not see powerful democratic external supporters of the government as raising the costs of nonviolent contention in the same way we expect for violent contention, and so would not expect them to deter nonviolent contention. And,

to the extent that violent and nonviolent contention are substitutes for dissidents, if external supporters raise the anticipated costs of violence but not nonviolence, this may lead to more nonviolent contention. We acknowledge, however, that the autocracy/democracy distinction is blunt and return to this point in the discussion of the results.

*H1b: Dissidents in countries where the government has close ties to a powerful democratic state will engage in higher levels of nonviolent contention.*

### ***Highly Structured Inter-Governmental Organizations***

Another effect of the weakness of developing states is that these governments often find themselves highly dependent on inter-governmental organizations to fill holes in budgets and fund development and humanitarian aid projects. Following Karreth & Tir (2012) and Tir & Karreth (2018), we anticipate that a sub-set of these organizations, specifically Highly Structured Inter-Governmental Organizations (HSIGOs), are well positioned to have a significant influence on the state-dissident interaction. HSIGOs are international agencies that have permanent staffs and resources and which are able to make decisions independent of particular member states. This permanent staff and autonomy of decision-making mean that they can respond to developing crises quickly and without direct interference by other states that may have specific interest in a domestic conflict. In addition, HSIGOs' substantial resources give them leverage over governments and rebels and their autonomy of decision-making mean that they can operate largely free of political concerns. As such, we expect this specific type of international organizations to play a more substantial role in the state-dissident interaction than other organizations.

We assume that HSIGOs have a preference for domestic stability because conflict makes it extremely difficult for them to carry out their objectives (such as development projects). Unlike

powerful supporters of the government, we do not expect HSIPOs to have a specific preference for the incumbent government, as their development and humanitarian work may be less dependent on who controls the government.

Tir & Karreth (2018) argue that HSIPOs' preference for domestic stability and leverage over governments mean these organizations pressure governments to compromise with rebels in low-intensity conflicts by limiting repression and offering concessions to rebels to de-escalate conflicts. In addition, because HSIPOs base in countries for long periods of time, their presence helps to overcome commitment problems that lead bargaining to break down. In support of this argument, Tir & Karreth (2018) show that low-intensity violent conflicts in states where governments are members in a greater number of HSIPOs are less likely to escalate to civil wars.

HSIPOs have a number of ways to pressure governments to concede to dissident demands as well as to limit their willingness and ability to repress dissidents. In 2010/2011, there was a political crisis in Cote D'Ivoire after the incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo refused to step down following a disputed election. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) placed pressure on Gbagbo to concede the election and end the stalemate by threatening military intervention. In addition, ECOWAS, along with the World Bank, IMF, and other HSIPOs, cut off access to funds which made it difficult for Gbagbo to pay his security forces (Tir & Karreth 2018, p. 168-172). In The Gambia, ECOWAS intervened militarily in 2017 after incumbent president Yahya Jammeh refused to accept electoral defeat. Facing a military intervention which would represent a direct threat to his rule, Jammeh agreed to step down and go into exile (Hartmann 2017). In Indonesia, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank coordinated to put substantial financial pressure on the government to restrain the use of violence by the security services and to allow East Timor to hold an independence referendum in 1999. This financial pressure was particularly

effective as Indonesia was emerging from the Asian financial crisis and needed substantial economic assistance from international actors (Tir & Karreth 2018, pp. 157-165).

We argue that these anticipated effects of HSIPOs if a low-intensity conflict occurs affect dissident decision-making about whether to engage in violent or nonviolent contention at all. When contemplating engaging in contention, dissidents can anticipate that HSIPOs may pressure governments to concede to some dissident demands. At the same time, they can anticipate that these HSIPOs will use their leverage to pressure governments to minimize repression so as not to escalate conflict. Together, these raise both the potential benefit to dissidents of engaging in contention and lower the potential costs of doing so. These effects increase as the government is a member of a greater number of these organizations because more memberships mean that there are more organizations that can put greater pressure on the government, either individually or as a network.

Thus, we expect that, when the government is a member of a greater number of HSIPOs, dissidents will engage in greater levels of contention. While HSIPOs have a general preference for nonviolence, we also expect their presence to lead to greater violent contention. Violent conflict can generate greater visibility and governments constrained by HSIPOs may anticipate significant costs for repressing that violence.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Karreth, Strayhorn & Tir (2014) argue that, when governments are constrained by membership in a larger number of HSIPOs, dissidents can make greater demands and push governments harder for concessions. They find that dissidents in states that are members of more HSIPOs engage in more low-level violence in an analysis of 12 countries in the Middle East/North Africa. Our argument is consistent with theirs.

*H2a: Dissidents in countries where the government is a member of a greater number of HSIPOs will engage in higher levels of violent contention.*

*H2b: Dissidents in countries where the government is a member of a greater number of HSIPOs will engage in higher levels of nonviolent contention.*

## **Research Design**

Our theoretical argument leads to predictions about the effect of powerful external supporters of the government and HSIPOs on dissident-led violent and nonviolent contention. We test these hypotheses in the six-month period around national-level elections in Africa. There is a vibrant, rapidly expanding, literature on electoral-related contention that examines how features of the election and characteristics of the country it takes place in influences levels of electoral violence and protest.<sup>7</sup> Several studies have examined how international actors that seek to oversee the conduct of the election—particularly election monitors—influence election-related contention.<sup>8</sup> In this literature, it has become the convention to use data focused specifically on contention related to the election, rather than a general measure of protest or violence in the election time period.

We are not seeking to explain electoral related contention specifically and so do not structure our analysis in this way. Rather, we use elections as a lens through which to focus our analysis. Elections represent a time of potentially heightened contention in which dissidents are more likely to mobilize to challenge states. As such, the periods around elections represent an opportunity to

---

<sup>7</sup> Prominent examples include Collier (2009), Cederman, Gleditsch & Hug (2013), Beaulieu (2014), Fjelde & Höglund (2016), Brancati (2016), and Butcher & Goldsmith (2016).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Daxecker (2012) and Smidt (2016) on election monitoring and von Borzyskowski (2016) on technical election assistance.

capture the observable implications of our hypotheses in cases with the potential for violent and nonviolent contention but variation in whether contention occurs and what form it takes.

We test hypotheses 1a-2b using data from all executive and legislative elections that took place in Africa from 2000-2012. Our election cases are drawn from the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) dataset, version 4 (Hyde & Marinov 2012).<sup>9</sup> We focus our analysis on Africa primarily for data reasons—the four datasets that we draw events from only overlap in Africa. We see Africa as a good sample of cases, however, because the set of elections we examine demonstrate significant variation in whether they experience contention and, if so, whether it is primarily violent, primarily nonviolent, or a mix.

### ***Dependent Variables***

Our dependent variables are counts of either nonviolent or violent events in a number of time periods surrounding each election. We use separate periods for pre- and post-election<sup>10</sup> We test our theory using the month following the election, as well as the three months before and after.

---

<sup>9</sup> We collapse legislative and executive elections that take place on the same day into one observation. When two elections in the same country take place within three months of one another, the later one is dropped.

<sup>10</sup> Theoretically, there are different processes occurring in these time periods. In the post-election time frame, dissidents may react to the results of the election, whereas in the pre-election time frame dissidents do not yet know the outcome. Empirically, we use different control variables for each time period to account for election-related variables such as fraud, anticipated fraud, and election observers.

To measure the number of violent and nonviolent events we integrate events from four datasets—the Armed Conflict Location Event Data (ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010), the Global Terrorism Database (GTD; START 2017), the Uppsala Conflict Data Project-Georeferenced Event Data (UCDP-GED; Sundberg & Melander 2013) and the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD; Salehyan et al. 2012). Research into the timing and location of violent and nonviolent contention has been facilitated by the emergence of datasets such as these that provide fine-grained geographic and temporal information on different types of conflict events. These data have been widely used, however, each dataset has specific foci in terms of the type of events they measure and their approach to coding. In addition, each data project likely misses events that are picked up in some other datasets. These data projects rely primarily on media sources and the phenomenon of systematic underreporting in news reports is well identified (Weidman 2015; 2016). Several studies which seek to compare specific of these events datasets have found evidence they miss substantial events that are picked up in other data projects (Donnay et al. 2019, Demarest & Langer 2018, Eck 2012).

In individual studies, scholars almost always draw on only one of these datasets. However, integrating from different conflict events datasets has the potential for creating a more accurate measurement of contention and facilitates analysis of different types of contention. We are interested in the influence of external actors on both violent and nonviolent dissident-led contention, and so can achieve a better measure through integration.

To accomplish the integration, we use Matching Event Data by Location, Time and Type (MELTT; Donnay et al. 2019). MELTT uses an automated protocol to match events from different events datasets that have overlapping spatiotemporal coverage but with the potential for differences in the way specific events are measured (including the label, time stamp, and geolocation). The protocol utilizes user-inputted information about the way that the datasets generally match up in

terms of event types and actors to generate new data which identifies which events are duplicate entries contained in multiple datasets and which are unique events.

We draw on these four datasets because they cover a wide variety of types of violent and nonviolent events and they all cover this period in Africa. We classify events as nonviolent or violent. Nonviolent events include those described as limited strikes, general strikes, spontaneous demonstrations, organized demonstrations, and protests. Violent events include those described as assassination, armed assault, bombing/explosion, hostage taking, facility/infrastructure attack, unarmed assault, anti-government violence, battles, hijackings, state-based conflict, violence against civilians, organized violent riots, remote violence, and spontaneous violent riots. We sub-set the integrated data to only include events that involve non-state actors and use this classification scheme to generate a count of the number of violent and nonviolent events around the election. The Appendix provides more detail on the data integration.

Figures 1 and 2 present histograms showing the distributions of our two dependent variables in the three-month post-election time frame. Both figures reveal that the vast majority of elections in Africa are not followed by dissident-led violent or nonviolent activity, rendering the question of what drives contention in those that are even more intriguing. The means for violence and nonviolence are 26 and 10 events respectively, with the maximum number of violent events being 394 (Zimbabwe 2008) and the maximum of nonviolent events being 261 (Egypt 2010).

### **Figure 1. Violent Events in the Three Months Following Election**

## **Figure 2. Nonviolent Events in the Three Months Following Election**

Figure 3 illustrates the variation in our dependent variables across four different elections characterized by varying levels of violence and nonviolence. The histograms depict the number of events in the three months before and after the election, by week. Kenya 2007 was associated with high levels of both violence and nonviolence. Zimbabwe 2002 experienced high levels of violence and low levels of nonviolence. South Africa 2009 had higher levels of nonviolence than violence. Niger 2009 saw low levels of all forms of contention.

## **Figure 3. Levels of Violence and Nonviolence Surrounding Four Elections**

### ***Independent Variables***

Hypotheses 1a and 1b refer to the effect of powerful supporters of the government. Our empirical analysis focuses specifically on Africa from 2000 to 2012, and we expect that the states most likely to play this role during this time period are the United States and France. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has been the most powerful state in the international system, with an ability to project power throughout the world. In addition, the United States has built a large network of hierarchical relationships with developing countries in which those weaker states give up some degree of autonomy for U.S. guarantees of protection from threats and willingness to provide order (Lake 2009).

We use measures of United States economic and military assistance in a given year to proxy the closeness of the U.S. to the government in question.<sup>11</sup> For both, we look at the total amount of

---

<sup>11</sup> These data come from the US Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook 2014).

aid in a given year (log-transformed). Many countries receive aid from the United States, indeed, in our sample, 147 of 168 elections take place in country-years that receive some U.S. military aid, and all countries receive some U.S. economic aid. Because it is so ubiquitous, we do not see the presence of aid as a clear signal of close ties between the government and the United States. However, the United States generally gives more aid to countries it is more closely aligned with. Thus, we expect that dissidents view a higher volume of aid as a signal the United States is more likely to support the government (potentially by intervening directly) in the event of a violent challenge. For this reason, our measure is the total level of aid rather than aid divided by population. To address concerns of reverse causality, we lag the variable by one year.

France has had a special relationship with the governments of its former colonies in Africa. Several African countries use the Central African Franc as their currency and its value is pegged directly to the Euro. France has provided aid to support governments in former French colonies. It has military bases in several former colonies in Africa. Since independence, France has shown a willingness to use military force to support allied governments (including autocratic governments) in Africa. This willingness means dissidents in former French colonies in Africa have to consider the potential for French intervention when deciding whether to organize a violent challenge to the government. These considerations appear to affect their propensity to rebel. Fearon and Laitin (2003) find that civil wars are less likely in former French colonies in Africa. Collier (2009) attributes the low occurrence of civil war in these states to France's "over-the-horizon guarantees" to protect governments of former French colonies, arguing they reduced the risk of civil war in Francophone Africa by nearly three-quarters.

To measure ties between France and the government, we create a measure of whether or not the country was a French colony. This is somewhat of a blunt measure, as it does not change as

governments within these former colonies do. In general, however, France has retained close, supportive, relationships with the governments of its former colonies in Africa.

While other countries (such as the United Kingdom) are also active in Africa, we do not expect their relations to have the same effect as France and the United States. When the United States acts in Africa, it generally does so to support governments it is allied with. France, likewise, has shown a willingness to support governments, including those with poor human rights records. The United Kingdom acts in its former colonies, but this action is generally less targeted at supporting specific governments than to protect UK citizens living in these countries or to seek to manage conflicts.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b refer to the effect of the number of HSIPOs the government is a member of.<sup>12</sup> Tir & Karreth (2018) identify 46 HSIPOs, which they define as “IGOs that are designed in such a way that they can generally operate without requiring consent from member states for each organizational decision. Often, they also possess policy, material, and/or economic resources that provide them with tangible leverage over member states” (p. 42). We follow their method to create a variable measuring the number of HSIPOs a country is a member of in a given year, based on the Correlates of War (COW) IGO data (Pevehouse, Norstrom and Warnke 2004).

Our theoretical argument led to different expectations about the effect of a government’s ties to a powerful external state and membership in HSIPOs on dissident decisions whether and how to engage in contention. To examine how closely related these are, we examine the correlation

---

<sup>12</sup> Karreth & Tir’s (2012) data only extends to 2000. We follow their procedure to update the data to 2005. The COW IGO data only extends to 2005, values to 2012 are iterated from the 2005 value. This strategy is justifiable because the number of HSIPOs in each country does not vary much over time.

between each of them (the correlation matrix is in Appendix Table 1). There is a low, positive, correlation between U.S. military aid and U.S. economic aid (0.33), suggesting that while some countries receive both types of aid the exact allocations are driven by different logics. The correlation between French colonial history and U.S. military aid is very low (0.08) and that with economic aid is negative (-0.22), suggesting that African countries that are former French colonies generally do not have as close ties with the United States as those that are not. The number of HSIPOs the country's government is a member of has a relatively low positive correlation with U.S. military (0.33) and economic aid (0.39), but essentially no correlation with French colonial history (-0.01). This suggests that the process that leads countries to be members in a greater number of HSIPOs is at least somewhat different from that leading countries to form close ties to powerful countries such as the United States or France.

### ***Control Variables***

We include a number of additional variables to deal with the likelihood that countries that have ties to powerful states or are members of a greater number of HSIPOs are systematically different than those that do not (or are members in fewer HSIPOs) and that these differences might also affect dissident-led contention. First, we control for the country's GDP per capita (log-transformed).<sup>13</sup> Weaker states are more likely to be willing to enter into hierarchical relationships with more powerful states and to join HSIPOs as a way to provide their constituents with goods that the government is unable or unwilling to provide on its own (Shanks et al. 1996, 617). The

---

<sup>13</sup> From Gleditsch (2002). Gleditsch's data runs through 2011; we extend it to 2012 using the observation from the previous year. GDP per capita is in current prices.

country's average income can measure state weakness and has been shown to be associated with contention (Fearon and Laitin 2003).

Second, we control for the country's regime type. Democratic states may be more likely to ally with other democracies and are more likely to join IGOs than military dictatorships (Rey & Barkdull 2005). Consolidated democracies are less likely to experience violent contention than mixed regimes (Reynal-Querol 2002). We use the x-polity measure, which removes indicators associated with factionalism and violence, and ranges from -6 to 7 (Vreeland 2008).

Third, many countries in Africa are rich in natural resources. These resources can potentially explain both colonial ties and the attractiveness of support from a country like the United States. Reliance on natural resources can have a detrimental effect on countries' economies, leading potentially to a need to join more HSIPOs, and has also been shown to be associated with violent contention. We include a measure of resource rents as a percentage of GDP.<sup>14</sup>

We compare the values of these control variables across our theoretical variables to determine if there is a systematic pattern in the countries that have ties to powerful states and/or are members in greater numbers of HSIPOs. In comparing African countries, those that receive above average U.S. military assistance<sup>15</sup> tend to be more democratic, have higher GDP per capita, and higher natural resource rents than those with lower levels, however these differences are minimal. States with a history of French colonialism tend to be less democratic, have lower GDP per capita and natural resource rents. These tendencies would actually drive the hypothesized relationship in the opposite direction, as less democratic, lower GDP, and lootable natural resources are associated

---

<sup>14</sup> We use data from the World Bank (available at

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.TOTL.RT.ZS>)

<sup>15</sup> Using the mean value of U.S. military assistance in our sample.

with a higher likelihood of violent conflict. Finally, higher levels of HSIPO involvement tend to be associated with states that are more democratic, wealthier, but with lower natural resource rents, again biasing results in the opposite direction that would be expected by the hypothesis regarding violence, although the differences are very small. See Table A2 in the appendix for the differences in mean values across these variables. Our general conclusion is that a selection process in which states with ties to powerful states or that are members in a greater number of HSIPOs are systematically different is unlikely to bias our empirical results.

While our focus on elections is primarily for empirical reasons, there are several election-related factors that have been shown to be related to contention. In addition, ties with powerful states and membership in HSIPOs could also influence the behavior of the government during elections and have an effect on contention different from that presented in our theory. We control for election-related factors to deal with that potential. We include the variable from NELDA indicating whether “Before elections, are there significant concerns that elections will not be free and fair?” in the pre-electoral models to measure anticipated fraud. In the post-election models we include a measure of fraud based on Human Rights reports from the US State Department.<sup>16</sup> We include an indicator of whether opposition leaders were prevented from running (NELDA 13) as prevention of running may affect international attention devoted to the election and the strategies dissidents choose to pursue. We also measure whether there were international monitors present (NELDA 45) as international observers can lead dissidents to use violence when the government commits serious fraud (Daxecker 2012). Finally, in the post-election contention models, we include a control for whether there was “significant violence involving civilian deaths immediately before,

---

<sup>16</sup> Daxecker (2012) collected these data for elections that took place before 2010. We collected the data for the remaining elections through 2012 following her method.

during, or after the election?” (NELDA 33), as violence against civilians by the government may increase contention.

We also include a measure of state repression (lagged one year) (Fariss 2014), since government repression may also affect both our explanatory and outcome variables. We include a measure of the number of years since the country was involved in an armed conflict<sup>17</sup> due to the tendency for elections that take place closer to the end of conflict to be more contentious. When the country is currently involved in a civil war, this measure takes a value of zero. We control for country population (log-transformed), as population may be related to the number of contentious events.<sup>18</sup> To address potential reporting biases in the number of reported contentious events, we control for the amount of news coverage by country. We use Factiva to count the number of news articles in the two months surrounding the election written by a news agency inside the country.<sup>19</sup> Table A3 in the appendix provides descriptive statistics of the variables of interest.

## Statistical Results

We use a negative binomial model to estimate the relationship between the variables of interest and the amount of contentious activity following each election. A count model is

---

<sup>17</sup> We use the conflict termination dates from Kreutz (2010) based on the 25 annual battle-death threshold from the Uppsala Conflict Data Project/Peace Research Institute Oslo Armed Conflict Dataset (Gleditsch, Wallensteen, Eriksson, Sollenberg, and Strand 2002; Pettersson & Eck 2018).

<sup>18</sup> From Gleditsch (2002).

<sup>19</sup> To be included, the country’s name must be in the article’s headline. For a robustness check, we also count the number of New York Times articles about the country in the two months surrounding the election, which does not change the results.

appropriate since our outcome variable is the number of events and the negative binomial model in particular is appropriate because the data are over-dispersed. We cluster the standard errors on the country to account for the expectation of some degree of homogeneity between elections within the same country. Table 1 presents the results of six models. The first two include the three-month pre-election time frame, the second two the month after the election, and the last two the three months post-election. We describe the effects of our variables of interest, but not the results of the control variables, as they do not themselves have controls.

Table 1. The Effect of International Factors on Contention Surrounding Elections

Variables	3 Months Pre-Election		1 Month Post-Election		3 Months Post-Election	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Violent Contention	Nonviolent Contention	Violent Contention	Nonviolent Contention	Violent Contention	Nonviolent Contention
U.S. Economic Aid	0.02	0.04	-0.13	0.04	-0.02	0.11
	-0.11	-0.12	-0.08	-0.16	-0.06	-0.14
U.S. Military Aid	-0.04	0.02	-0.076*	-0.01	-0.091***	-0.03
	-0.05	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.03	-0.04
French Colony	-1.131***	-0.55	-0.929***	-0.01	-0.702***	0.05
	-0.35	-0.35	-0.28	-0.42	-0.24	-0.34
HSIGOs	0.386***	0.156*	0.443***	0.257**	0.444***	0.285***
	-0.09	-0.08	-0.09	-0.11	-0.08	-0.10
GDP	0.20	0.13	-0.25	-0.30	-0.17	-0.22
	-0.19	-0.17	-0.15	-0.29	-0.12	-0.23
X Polity Score	0.06	0.02	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.06
	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04	-0.07	-0.04	-0.06
Natural Resources	-0.01	-0.021**	0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.00
	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Opposition Prevented	0.47	0.32	0.47	0.24	0.502**	-0.10
	-0.32	-0.39	-0.31	-0.40	-0.26	-0.44
Observers Present			0.620*	0.41	0.13	-0.13
			-0.37	-0.70	-0.32	-0.57
Serious Fraud			0.611*	0.677**	0.34	0.826**
			-0.35	-0.32	-0.30	-0.34
Concerns of Fraud	0.734***	0.03	1.277***	1.040***	1.047***	0.561
	-0.24	-0.29	(0.286)	(0.382)	(0.274)	(0.409)
Violence Against Civilians			1.277***	1.040***	1.047***	0.56
			-0.29	-0.38	-0.27	-0.41
General Repression	-1.107***	-0.570**	-0.523*	-0.09	-0.714***	0.16
	-0.22	-0.25	-0.28	-0.36	-0.21	-0.28
Population	0.15	0.11	0.366*	0.32	0.376**	0.555**
	-0.20	-0.17	-0.22	-0.30	-0.18	-0.27
News Coverage	-0.002**	0.00	-0.001*	0.00	0.00	0.003**
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Conflict	-0.027***	0.00	-0.023***	0.023***	-0.027***	0.014*
	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	156	156	153	153	153	153

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

These models provide support for Hypothesis 1a, which predicts that dissidents in countries where the government has close ties to a powerful state will engage in lower levels of violent contention. Indeed, across the different time frames tested by our models, and controlling for a whole host of other variables, dissidents appear less likely to use violent contention in countries that receive higher amounts of US Military Aid as well as countries that have a French colonial history. Interestingly, US economic aid does not have a significant or consistent effect on the amount or type of contention around elections. One explanation may be the tendency for US economic aid to be used for development and humanitarian purposes, rather than to advance strategic interests.<sup>20</sup>

The models in Table 1 are not consistent with Hypothesis 1b, which predicted higher levels of nonviolent contention in countries where the government had a powerful democratic supporter. In none of the models are the measures of U.S. aid or French colonial history statistically significantly associated with nonviolent events. This suggests that our expectation that the deterrent effect of the government having a powerful external supporter could lead dissidents to substitute nonviolent contention for violent contention is not met in these cases. This could be because neither the United States nor France have typically used protection of human rights as a key determinant of which governments they support in Africa, and so this dynamic does not appear in those cases.

The models provide support for Hypotheses 2a and 2b, which predict that dissidents in countries where the government is a member of a greater number of HSIPOs will engage in higher levels of both violent and nonviolent contention. This relationship is robust across the different time frames. This suggests support for our argument that dissidents anticipate that the presence of a large

---

<sup>20</sup> In unreported tests we find that the effect of U.S. military aid and U.S. economic aid on violence remain robust when they are tested in separate models.

number of HSIPOs means that contention can lead to increased pressure on governments to not repress dissidents and to concede to their demands.

This finding is particularly interesting in combination with that of Karreth & Tir (2013) and Tir & Karreth (2018) that membership in a greater number of HSIPOs reduces the likelihood that low-intensity conflicts escalate to full-scale civil wars. Because we draw on events data, we are primarily picking up more isolated incidents or actions in lower intensity conflicts, and a greater number of HSIPOs appears to make those incidents more likely, which is also consistent with Karreth, Strayhorn & Tir (2014).

We explore the substantive significance of our variables of interest, generating the predicted number of events for the three-month post-election time frame using the observed value approach (Hanmer and Kalkan 2013). Countries with 12 HSIPOs (the minimum in our data) are predicted to experience three violent events in the month following the election, while that number jumps to 114 violent events in countries with 20 HSIPOs (the maximum in our data). This is a very large substantive effect. The substantive effect of HSIPOs on the number of nonviolent events is more modest, with six predicted nonviolent events at the low end of HSIPO presence, and 50 predicted nonviolent events at the high end. The substantive effects are plotted in Figures 4 and 5 below, with the shaded area denoting the 95 percent confidence interval.

**Figure 4. Predicted Count of Violent Events Across HSIPO Presence**

**Figure 5. Predicted Count of Nonviolent Events Across HSIPO Presence**

An increase in U.S. military aid, from the minimum in our dataset (0) to the maximum (1.8 billion), results in a substantial suppression of violent contention—a decrease from 143 predicted violent events to 23. This suppression points toward the tension between the U.S.’s interest in political stability and its avowed commitment to democratic norms. The U.S. has consistently backed authoritarian regimes like Egypt, giving non-state actors little hope of effectively challenging

these governments. The substantive effect is plotted in Figure 6 below, which illustrates the significant decrease in events at high levels of U.S. military aid.

#### **Figure 6. Predicted Count of Violent Events Across Amount of U.S. Military Aid**

A country without a French colonial history on average experiences 40 violent events in the three months following an election. A country with French colonial history on average experiences 19 violent events. This is a smaller substantive difference than the other variables of interest, however, in the span of three months, still significant. Figure 7 below illustrates the drop in predicted violence when a country has a history of being a French colony.

#### **Figure 7. Predicted Count of Violent Events Across French Colonial History**

### **Alternate Pathways**

These results suggest that U.S. military aid and French colonial history are significant suppressors of violence and that governments constrained by HSIPOs experience more violent and nonviolent contention. The finding that states where the government has powerful external supporters see less violent contention is consistent with our theoretical argument that dissidents see the potential for external intervention on behalf of the government as raising the costs of organizing a violent challenge. However, there are other potential pathways through which external support to the government could lead to less violence. Both France and the United States express a commitment to promoting democracy, good governance, and human rights in their foreign policy. If support from the United States and France lead governments to engage in less repression, this could decrease the motivation dissidents have to engage in contention. In the specific contexts of elections, if these powerful supporters pressure governments to conduct the election with less fraud, that could also decrease the motivation for contention. These effects would lead to the same outcome we observe in Table 1, but through a different process than that emphasized in our theory.

To explore the possibility that dissident choices whether and how to engage in contention following the election are affected by the government's use of fraud and repression in the lead up to and during the election we run a series of causal mediation models (Kosuke, Keele, Tingley, and Yamamoto 2011). Causal mediation analyses allow for comparing the direct and indirect effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable. In this case, the direct effect is that of U.S. military aid or being a former French colony in Africa. The indirect effect is the effect those variables have through their effect on fraud and repression. We do not have expectations for an indirect effect of repression and fraud in the case of HSI GOs and contention and so do not use causal mediation analysis for that relationship.<sup>21</sup>

The results (presented in the Appendix) show that neither fraud nor repression play a mediating role in the effect of U.S. military aid and French colonial history's negative effect on violent contention. Instead, the mediation analysis provides evidence for a direct relationship between the international influences and violent contention, pointing towards the mechanism that dissidents calculate higher costs for using violence when a powerful ally supports the government.

---

<sup>21</sup> Our measure of repression picks up the general repressiveness of the state. Our argument is that HSI GOs will pressure governments to engage in less repression and offer greater concessions to dissidents in response to contention. Thus, it is the anticipation of less repression (not the baseline level of repression) that affects dissident decisions. For there to be a mediating influence of fraud, HSI GOs would have to lead to more electoral fraud, and we have no theoretical expectation for that.

## Disaggregating Events

Our main analysis tests our theory on aggregated data, so the results demonstrate broad trends of international influences on myriad types of violence and nonviolence. One advantage of integrated data is that it allows for sub-setting the data to focus on the relationship between our variables of interest and specific types of violent and nonviolent contention contained in different datasets. We describe results of disaggregated analyses using these sub-setted data here. Regression tables presenting them are in the Appendix (Tables A4-A6).

The disaggregated analyses show that HSIPOs have a consistently positive relationship with violence across each of individual datasets—GTD, UCDP-GED, and ACLED. This consistency provides evidence that dissidents are using all types of violence when the government is a member of a greater number of HSIPOs—terrorism, civil conflict, as well as lower level violence. The negative relationship between powerful allies and violence is less consistent across the individual datasets, pointing towards a more nuanced relationship between powerful allies and dissidents' calculations of their use of violence. Powerful allies seem to have little negative impact on the likelihood of organized violence taking place within a low intensity civil war (as measured by UCDP-GED), perhaps due to the possibility that other factors play a stronger role in suppressing civil war than the threat of powerful allies intervening on behalf of the government. This means that powerful allies have a much more robust effect on lower level violence outside of organized armed conflict. However, the established findings that countries in more hierarchical relationships with the United States (Cunningham 2016) and that are former French colonies in Africa (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier 2009) are less prone to civil war, *ceteris paribus*, leads us to think that the violence-detering effect of these close ties applies to civil war as well, just not to the specific events picked up in UCDP-GED around elections here.

## Further Analyses

We conduct a series of additional analyses to evaluate the robustness of the results in Table 1. We describe them briefly here and present tables in the Appendix. We run all of the main models dropping outliers (Table A7), combining the six months around the election into single analyses (Table A8), and reclassifying demonstrations with at least one death as violent (rather than nonviolent) events (Table A9). We use zero-inflated models in place of the negative binomial models (Table A10), predicting the zeroes using serious fraud (or concerns of serious fraud in the pre-election period) and time since civil war. Across these models, the results of our theoretical variables are the same as in Table 1, with the exception of a loss of significance in a couple models.

We include models that examine how a history of contention (including election-related contention) influences the current election. We run models that drop all observations of countries involved in armed conflict at the time of the election (Table A11), include a measure of whether the previous election in the country was violent (Table 12) or had widespread protests and/or demonstrations (Table 13). These models show very similar effects to those presented in Table 1, with a few small changes in the statistical significance of particular variables.

We run a number of models that control for additional election-related variables. We control for whether elections are for an executive (Table A14), whether the vote count is a gain for the opposition (Table A15),<sup>22</sup> and whether the election results in a victory for the incumbent (Table A16). The results on our theoretical variables are all in the same direction, with some small changes in statistical significance in a few models.

We run a final set of robustness checks to examine the specific measures of powerful supporters of the government. We run a model that includes an indicator of whether or not the

---

<sup>22</sup> NELDA 27 is used for this control variable.

country was a British colony (Table A17). The relationship between being a former British colony and contention does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance and adding the variable does not change the results of any of our main findings. Because a number of factors can affect the provision of military aid, we use an alternative measure of close ties between the United States and the government—the number of U.S. troops on a country’s soil (lagged by one year) (Table A18). We find results consistent with those in Table 1 when we replace the U.S. military aid variable with this variable.

## **Conclusion**

When dissidents pick up arms or take to the streets, they do not make these decisions independently from the influences of international actors. Foreign states, IGOs, and other transnational entities can all influence the dynamics of contention at the domestic level. In this article, we developed a theoretical framework for understanding why dissidents engage in violent and nonviolent activity and examined how international actors can influence these decisions. Our analyses show that, in the context of elections in Africa, dissidents are less likely to engage in violence when the government receives higher levels of US military aid or the country is a former French colony. They also show that countries that are members in a greater number of HSIPOs experience both more violent and nonviolent dissident action around elections.

This argument and analysis make key contributions to our understanding of dissident strategic choice and of international influences on domestic conflict. First, they show that the presence of powerful international actors (such as the United States and France) can have a deterrent effect, suggesting to dissidents that challenging governments (particularly through violence) will be costly and unlikely to be successful. This deterrent effect is interesting when considered in relation to existing work that finds that external military intervention is generally

associated with longer conflicts.<sup>23</sup> Recent civil wars such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq show that, even when powerful states back weak governments, insurgencies can continue. The analysis here suggests a deterrent effect may help to shed additional light on this pattern. If powerful states can deter dissidents' from taking up arms against their governments, this could create a selection effect whereby the cases where dissidents do rebel are systematically different from the cases where they do not, leading them to be longer and more resistant to termination.

The analysis in this article shows a second effect external actors can play—they can provide an audience to dissidents. When dissidents with a motivation to challenge their government decide whether and how to do so, they consider how the government is likely to respond to them. If they anticipate international pressure being applied to governments to settle with dissidents, engaging in contention can be more beneficial. Indeed, our findings on HSIPOs in this article, combined with those of Tir & Karreth (2018) reveal an interesting pattern. When governments are members of a greater number of HSIPOs, we observe both higher levels of violence and nonviolent activity. Tir and Karreth (2018), however, find that low-intensity disputes in these states are less likely to escalate to civil war. While these findings may appear contradictory, we argue that they actually show an interesting dynamic. If dissidents anticipate HSIPOs will put pressure on governments to resolve violent disputes by giving dissidents some of what they want, then they have incentives to initiate those disputes in cases where these actors are present.

While powerful states and HSIPOs are key international actors, other actors are likely to have influence as well—including regional states and non-governmental organizations. In addition, while elections are key times where political contention is possible and international actors pay attention, there are other contexts of intrastate disputes where these international influences could

---

<sup>23</sup> Such as Balch-Lindsay & Enterline (2000) and Regan (2002).

matter. Finally, while the analysis in this article focused on Africa, developing countries across the world form close ties with powerful states, are members in international organizations, and have relations with other prominent international actors. We expect that our argument would apply in developing countries generally. Further research focused on a larger set of actors in a broader set of disputes could further enhance academic understanding of dissident strategic choice and policymakers' understandings of how to work to prevent periods of contention from escalating to civil war.

## Works Cited

- Asal, Victor, Richard Legault, Ora Szekely & Jonathan Wilkenfeld (2013) Gender ideologies and forms of contentious mobilization in the Middle East. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(3): 305-318.
- Balch-Lindsay, Dylan, & Enterline, Andrew J. (2000). Killing time: The world politics of civil war duration, 1820–1992. *International Studies Quarterly* 44(4): 615-642.
- Beaulieu, Emily (2014). *Electoral Protest and Democracy in the Developing World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brancati, Dawn (2016) *Democracy Protests*. Cambridge University Press.
- Butcher, Charles, and Benjamin E. Goldsmith (2016) Elections, Ethnicity, and Political Instability. *Comparative Political Studies* 50(10): 1390-1419.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, & Simon Hug (2013). Elections and ethnic civil war. *Comparative Political Studies* 46(3): 387-417.
- Cetinyan, Rupen (2002). Ethnic bargaining in the shadow of third-party intervention. *International Organization* 56(3): 645-677.
- Chenoweth, Erica & Maria J Stephan (2011) *Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Collier, Paul (2009). *War, Guns, and Votes. Democracy in Dangerous Places*. London: The Bodley Head.
- Cunningham, David E. (2016). Preventing Civil War: How the Potential for International Intervention can Deter Conflict Onset. *World Politics* 68(2): 307-340.
- Cunningham, David E., Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, Belen González, Dragana Vidović, & Peter B. White (2017). Words and deeds: From incompatibilities to outcomes in anti-government disputes. *Journal of Peace Research* 54(4): 468-483.

- Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher (2013). Understanding strategic choice: The determinants of civil war and non-violent campaigns in self-determination disputes. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(3): 291-304.
- Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, Marianne Dahl & Anne Frugé (2017). Strategies of Resistance: Diversification and Diffusion. *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3): 591-605.
- Davenport, Christian (1995). Multi-dimensional threat perception and state repression: An inquiry into why states apply negative sanctions. *American Journal of Political Science* 39(3): 683-713.
- Daxecker, Ursula E. (2012). The cost of exposing cheating: International election monitoring, fraud, and post-election violence in Africa. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(4): 503-516.
- Demarest, Leila, and Arnim Langer (2018). The study of violence and social unrest in Africa: A comparative analysis of three conflict event datasets. *African Affairs* 117(467): 310-325.
- Donnay, Karsten, Eric Dunford, Erin McGrath, David Backer and David E. Cunningham (2019). Integrating Conflict Events Data. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 63(5) 1337-1364.
- Eck, Kristine (2012). In data we trust? A comparison of UCDP GED and ACLED conflict events datasets. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47(1): 124-141.
- Fariss, Christopher J. (2014). Respect for human rights has improved over time: Modeling the changing standard of accountability. *American Political Science Review* 108(2): 297-318.
- Fearon, James D (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization* 49(3): 379-414.
- Fearon, James D., & Laitin, David D. (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American political science review* 97(1): 75-90.
- Fjelde, Hanne, & Kristine Höglund (2016). Electoral institutions and electoral violence in Sub-Saharan Africa. *British Journal of Political Science* 46(2): 297-320.
- Gleditsch, Kristian Skrede (2002). Expanded trade and GDP data. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(5): 712-724.

- Gleditsch, Nils Petter, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand (2002). Armed conflict 1946-2001: A new dataset. *Journal of peace research* 39(5): 615-637.
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., Susan D. Hyde, and Ryan S. Jablonski (2014). When do governments resort to election violence?. *British Journal of Political Science* 44 (1): 149-179.
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. (2013) *Making human rights a reality*. Princeton University Press.
- Hanmer, Michael J., and Kerem Ozan Kalkan (2013). Behind the curve: Clarifying the best approach to calculating predicted probabilities and marginal effects from limited dependent variable models. *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 263-277.
- Harish, S.P. and Andrew T. Little (2017). The Political Violence Cycle. *American Political Science Review* 111(2): 237-55.
- Hartmann, Christof (2017). ECOWAS and the Restoration of Democracy in The Gambia. *Africa Spectrum* 52(1): 85-99.
- Hyde, Susan D. and Nikolay Marinov (2012). "Which Elections can be Lost?" *Political Analysis* 20(2): 191-210.
- Imai, Kosuke, Luke Keele, Dustin Tingley, and Teppei Yamamoto. (2011). Unpacking the black box of causality: Learning about causal mechanisms from experimental and observational studies. *American Political Science Review* 105(4): 765-789.
- Jenne, Erin (2004). A bargaining theory of minority demands: Explaining the dog that did not bite in 1990s Yugoslavia. *International Studies Quarterly* 48(4): 729-754.
- Karreth, Johannes & Jaroslav Tir (2012) International Institutions and Civil War Prevention. *The Journal of Politics* 75(1): 96-109.
- Karreth, Johannes, Joshua Strayhorn & Jaroslav Tir (2014). Inviting rebellion? IGOs, minority groups, and low-level violence in intrastate conflicts. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Peace Science Society (International), Philadelphia, PA.

- Kreutz, Joakim. (2010). How and When Armed Conflicts End: Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset. *Journal of Peace Research* 47(2): 243-250.
- Lake, David A. (2009). *Hierarchy in international relations*. Cornell University Press.
- Lichbach, Mark I. (1998). *The rebel's dilemma*. University of Michigan Press.
- Moore, Will H. (1998). Repression and dissent: Substitution, context, and timing. *American Journal of Political Science* 42(3): 851-873.
- National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2017). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>.
- Pearlman, Wendy (2011) *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pettersson, Therése, and Kristine Eck (2018). Organized violence, 1989–2017. *Journal of Peace Research* 55(4): 535-547.
- Pevehouse, Jon C., Timothy Nordstrom, and Kevin Warnke (2004). The COW-2 International Organizations Dataset Version 2.0. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 21(2): 101-119.
- Raleigh, Clionadh, Andrew Linke, Håvard Hegre and Joakim Karlsen (2010). Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data. *Journal of Peace Research* 47(5): 651-660.
- Regan, Patrick M. (2002). *Civil wars and foreign powers: Outside intervention in intrastate conflict*. University of Michigan Press.
- Rey, D., & Barkdull, J. (2005). Why do some democratic countries join more intergovernmental organizations than others?. *Social Science Quarterly*, 86(2), 386-402.
- Reynal-Querol, Marta. (2002). Ethnicity, political systems, and civil wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(1): 29-54.

- Ritter, Emily Hencken, and Courtenay R. Conrad. (2016). "Preventing and responding to dissent: The observational challenges of explaining strategic repression." *American Political Science Review* 110 (1): 85-99.
- Salehyan, Idean, Cullen S. Hendrix, Jesse Hamner, Christina Case, Christopher Linebarger, Emily Stull, and Jennifer Williams (2012). Social conflict in Africa: A new database. *International Interactions* 38(4): 503-511.
- Schock, Kurt (1999). People power and political opportunities: Social movement mobilization and outcomes in the Philippines and Burma. *Social problems* 46(3): 355-375.
- Shanks, C., Jacobson, H. K., & Kaplan, J. H. (1996). Inertia and change in the constellation of international governmental organizations, 1981–1992. *International organization*, 50(4), 593-627.
- Smidt, Hannah (2016). From a perpetrator's perspective: International election observers and post-electoral violence. *Journal of Peace Research* 53(2): 226-241.
- Sundberg, Ralph & Erik Melander (2013). Introducing the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(4): 523-532.
- Thyne, Clayton L. (2009). *How International Relations Affect Civil Conflict: Cheap Signals, Costly Consequences*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Tir, Jaroslav, and Johannes Karreth (2018). *Incentivizing Peace: How International Organizations Can Help Prevent Civil Wars in Member Countries*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations. July 1, 1945 – September 30, 2014. USAID. <https://www.usaid.gov/open/greenbook/2014>.
- von Borzyskowski, Inken (2016). Resisting democracy assistance: Who seeks and receives technical election assistance? *The Review of International Organizations* 11(2): 247-282.

- Vreeland, James Raymond (2008). The effect of political regime on civil war: Unpacking anocracy. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52(3): 401-425.
- Weidmann, Nils B. (2015). On the Accuracy of Media-based Conflict Event Data. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(6): 1129-149.
- Weidmann, Nils B. (2016). A Closer Look at Reporting Bias in Conflict Event Data. *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1): 206-18.
- Young, Joseph K. (2013). Repression, dissent, and the onset of civil war. *Political Research Quarterly* 66(3): 516-532.