

A Farewell to Arms?

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Election Results and Lasting Peace after Civil War

After postwar elections, belligerents decide to either return to war or consolidate peace. Many scholars and policymakers herald postwar democratization and elections after civil war as being positive for peace because institutionalized channels for opposition generally reduce violent conflicts and limit social unrest.¹ If avenues for political expression and nonviolent ways to redress one's grievances are restricted and war ensues, then providing political rights, especially to excluded groups,² should lead to sustained peace and prevent revolution.³ An open political system, access to political participation, and the ability to seek change nonviolently have a significant negative effect on the likelihood of renewed war.⁴ Inclusive elections, in particular, are well suited to inoculating a society against a return to civil conflict.⁵ Generally, postwar democratization and the

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1. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Electoral Systems and Democracy* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); and Christian Davenport, "State Repression and Political Order," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 10 (2007), pp. 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.101405.143216>.

2. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

3. Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945–1991* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

4. Barbara F. Walter, "Does Conflict Beget Conflict? Explaining Recurring Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (May 2004), pp. 371–388, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022343304043775>.

5. Aila M. Matanock, "Bullets for Ballots: Electoral Participation Provisions and Enduring Peace after Civil Conflict," *International Security*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Spring 2017), pp. 93–132, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00275. See also Michael Christopher Marshall and John Ishiyama, "Does Political Inclusion of Rebel Parties Promote Peace after Civil Conflict?" *Democratization*, Vol. 23, No. 6 (2016), pp. 1009–1025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2016.1192606>; Carrie Manning and Ian Smith, "Political Party Formation by Former Armed Opposition Groups after Civil War," *Democratization*, Vol. 23, No. 6 (2016), pp. 972–989, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2016.1159556>; and Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, "From Rebellion to Politics: The Transformation of Rebel Groups to Political Parties in Civil War Peace Processes," Ph.D. dissertation, Uppsala University, Sweden, 2007.

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ability to compete for power through the ballot box instead of on the battlefield help keep the peace.

Scholars also acknowledge that with the advent of elections in postwar societies comes risk.⁶ The lack of institutionalized democracy in many postwar settings prompted Dawn Brancati and Jack Snyder to warn of the strong likelihood that electoral “losers will refuse to accept the results peacefully.”⁷ Some dramatic exemplars include warlord Charles Taylor in Liberia and Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebel Jonas Savimbi. In the words of Terrence Lyons, “A great many Liberians believed that Taylor would return to war if he lost the election.”⁸ Because Taylor won, the state progressed toward peace, albeit one that was short-lived. Following the Bicesse Accords in Angola in 1991, Savimbi allegedly told a British television crew that “If I lose . . . I will send my men back to the bush to fight again. We will not accept [electoral] defeat.”⁹ When Savimbi did lose the UN-monitored election, he refused to accept the result and Angola plunged back into civil war.¹⁰

The assumption that electoral losers will resume hostilities has motivated a robust body of scholarship aimed at determining how to harness the benefits of democracy for peace while mitigating democracy’s risks, such as through power-sharing,¹¹ election timing,¹² and international monitors.¹³ Whether election *results* affect the durability of a state’s transition from anarchy to order

6. Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

7. Dawn Brancati and Jack L. Snyder, “Time to Kill: The Impact of Election Timing on Postconflict Stability,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 57, No. 5 (October 2013), pp. 822–853, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022002712449328>.

8. Terrence Lyons, “Liberia’s Path from Anarchy to Elections,” *Current History*, Vol. 97, No. 619 (May 1998), pp. 229–233, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45317808>.

9. Ian S. Spears, *Civil War in African States: The Search for Security* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2010), p. 201.

10. Stephen John Stedman, “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,” *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 5–53, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539366>.

11. Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, “Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (April 2003), pp. 318–332, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3186141>; and Chelsea Johnson, “Power-Sharing, Conflict Resolution, and the Logic of Pre-emptive Defection,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (July 2021), pp. 734–748, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022343320924699>.

12. Dawn Brancati and Jack L. Snyder, “Rushing to the Polls: The Causes of Premature Postconflict Elections,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (June 2011), pp. 469–492, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022002711400863>; Brancati and Snyder, “Time to Kill”; and Thomas Edward Flores and Irfan Nooruddin, “The Effect of Elections on Postconflict Peace and Reconstruction,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (April 2012), pp. 558–570, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022381611001733>.

13. Susan D. Hyde, *The Pseudo-Democrat’s Dilemma: Why Election Observation Became an International Norm* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011); and Sarah Sunn Bush and Lauren Prather, “The Promise and Limits of Election Observers in Building Election Credibility,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (July 2017), pp. 921–935, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/691055>.

is unexplored, however, as is whether combatant parties who lose postwar electoral contests will return to war. This article illuminates when and how these belligerent electoral actors choose to either sustain or break the postwar peace. I posit that postwar elections increase the chance of war if the military balance of power inverts after war and the war-loser performs poorly in the elections.

In founding postwar elections, I argue that citizens are likely to elect the party that they deem best able to secure the state, which I refer to as “security voting.” I contend that citizens use the outcome of the war as a heuristic for competence on security to guide their votes, electing the militarily successful belligerent for its promise of prospective peace. The implication of such security voting is that war-winners often have an advantage in postwar elections. Absent power shifts, this scenario should tend to be stabilizing because the victorious belligerent party emerges as the most capable of both suppressing its own violence and deterring its opponent—the loser, who is militarily weaker—from remilitarizing.¹⁴ With an unaltered distribution of military power after war, there exists little reason for either the victorious or the vanquished belligerent parties to reinitiate violence; the election results reflect this underlying power balance, and a new war would be unlikely to yield a different outcome. Peace should thus hold.¹⁵

Yet, the tendency for citizens to use war outcomes to heuristically guide their security vote can also create a perilous tension when the war-winners are no longer more powerful than the war-losers. In these circumstances, citizens often do not accurately update their expectations about who is better able to provide stability in the future. If the war-winner, downgraded in power, wins the election, the loser will remilitarize because it now has an electoral incentive to do so, thereby causing bargaining to fail.¹⁶ In particular, demonstrating advantageous outcomes on the battlefield endows belligerent successor parties with a unique ability to claim credit for the security that military successes

14. Leonard Wantchekon, “Strategic Voting in Conditions of Political Instability: The 1994 Elections in El Salvador,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 7 (October 1999), pp. 810–834, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0010414099032007003>; and Leonard Wantchekon, “On the Nature of First Democratic Elections,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (April 1999), pp. 245–258, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/174279>.

15. Robert Powell, “War as a Commitment Problem,” *International Organization*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (January 2006), pp. 169–203, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818306060061>; and Suzanne Werner, “The Precarious Nature of Peace: Resolving the Issues, Enforcing the Settlement, and Renegotiating the Terms,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (July 1999), pp. 912–934, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991840>.

16. James D. Fearon, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 379–414, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300033324>.

bring and to own the prospective security issue in subsequent elections.¹⁷ In sum, shocks that misalign electoral results with military power are likely to spark war recurrence.

The rest of this article proceeds as follows. First, I explore the relationship between election results and the decision to resume war in the existing literature, and I outline my argument. In the second section, I analyze organizational-level data on postwar election outcomes and remilitarization to show how postwar elections increase the chance of renewed war if the military power balance after war inverts and the war-loser is also the electoral loser. Then, I use survey evidence on issue salience and voting to show the prevalence of the security voting mechanism globally. Finally, I use qualitative case studies to bolster claims about how power balances and polling results affect decisions to resume hostilities or keep the peace. I conclude the article with implications for scholarship and policy aimed at sustaining peace following civil wars.

Existing Theories of Elections and War Recurrence

Many scholars associate the sustainable resolution of civil war with the ballot box.¹⁸ New governments often must be formed after armed conflicts and, if the citizenry elects these governments, it confers upon them legitimacy.¹⁹ Democracies tend to peacefully resolve conflicts.²⁰ If ballots can substitute for bullets, then allowing the former should diminish having to resort to the latter, a finding echoed in studies of democratization and war.²¹ Inclusive elections in

17. See John R. Petrocik, "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (August 1996), pp. 826–850, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111797>.

18. On democracies born from the cinders of war, see Virginia Page Fortna and Reyko Huang, "Democratization after Civil War: A Brush-Clearing Exercise," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (December 2012), pp. 801–808, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2012.00730.x>; Reyko Huang, *The Wartime Origins of Democratization: Civil War, Rebel Governance, and Political Regimes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Mehmet Gurses and T. David Mason, "Democracy Out of Anarchy: The Prospects for Post-Civil-War Democracy," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (June 2008), pp. 315–336, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2008.00534.x>; Leonard Wantchekon, "The Paradox of 'Warlord' Democracy: A Theoretical Investigation," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 1 (February 2004), pp. 17–33, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404000978>; and Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

19. On the fragility of these democratic elections held after violent conflict, see Thomas Edward Flores and Irfan Nooruddin, *Elections in Hard Times: Building Stronger Democracies in the 21st Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

20. Diamond and Plattner, *Electoral Systems and Democracy*; Davenport, "State Repression and Political Order"; and Walter, "Does Conflict Beget Conflict?"

21. Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*;

particular—those that permit rebel groups to form legal parties and contest power nonviolently—should lengthen the duration of peace after civil war.²²

But absent United Nations (UN) interventions and power-sharing arrangements, researchers document the tendency for postwar elections to cause renewed war.²³ Building on Arend Lijphart's writings on democracy in divided societies,²⁴ scholars argue that institutions can mitigate the risk that belligerents will resume fighting by providing them with some guaranteed power, either through proportional representation or seat/cabinet quotas.²⁵ Indeed, the conventional wisdom in the academic literature, among policymakers, and even in the UN's standard operating procedures is that delayed elections embedded in power-sharing regimes constitute the path to peace. According to this wisdom, quick elections and majoritarian systems are dangerous in postwar contexts.²⁶

These prescriptions for peace center specifically on overcoming the risk that electoral *losers* will return to war.²⁷ Yet, focusing on the structural dimensions of the elections, these pioneering studies of postwar politics and peace posit—but do not empirically test—a series of hypotheses about the relationship be-

Håvard Hegre et al., "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (March 2001), pp. 33–48, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055401000119>; and Wood, *Forging Democracy from Below*.

22. Marshall and Ishiyama, "Does Political Inclusion of Rebel Parties Promote Peace after Civil Conflict?"; Manning and Smith, "Political Party Formation by Former Armed Opposition Groups after Civil War"; Söderberg Kovacs, "From Rebellion to Politics"; and Matanock, "Bullets for Ballots."

23. Brancati and Snyder, "Rushing to the Polls"; Brancati and Snyder, "Time to Kill"; Flores and Nooruddin, "The Effect of Elections on Postconflict Peace and Reconstruction"; Hartzell and Hoddie, "Institutionalizing Peace"; and Terrence Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics: Elections on the Uncertain Road to Peace* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

24. Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977). On the potentially pernicious effects of conflict-mitigating institutions on democratic quality and peace, see Philip G. Roeder and Donald Rothchild, eds., *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005); Sarah Zukerman Daly, "The Dark Side of Power-Sharing: Middle Managers and Civil War Recurrence," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (April 2014), pp. 333–353, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43664109>; and Matanock, "From Bullets to Ballots."

25. Monica Duffy Toft, *Securing the Peace: The Durable Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010); Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002); Hartzell and Hoddie, "Institutionalizing Peace"; and Johnson, "Power-Sharing, Conflict Resolution, and the Logic of Pre-emptive Defection."

26. UN Secretary-General [UNSG], *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, A/63/881-S/2009/304 (New York: UNSG, June 11, 2009), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4a4c6c3b2.html>.

27. Brancati and Snyder, "Time to Kill." See also Benjamin Reilly, "Elections in Post-Conflict Scenarios: Constraints and Dangers," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2002), pp. 118–139, <https://doi.org/10.1080/714002729>; and Flores and Nooruddin, "The Effect of Elections on Post-Conflict Peace and Reconstruction."

tween election results and the decision to resume war. In general, are postwar election losers likely to remilitarize? And what is the likelihood that those who lose postwar elections in either majoritarian or proportional representation systems will resume hostilities?²⁸ Is the risk of returning to war greater among those who lose elections held soon after war, or years after the conflict terminates?²⁹ Finally, does international surveillance help consolidate peace by deterring electoral losers from remobilizing?³⁰ This article will empirically demonstrate that losers do not invariably contest the election results through violence, nor do they become more likely to do so absent arrangements to share power, delay polling, or involve external monitors.

A Farewell to Arms? Postwar Military Power and Electoral Results

I argue against the conventional wisdom that, absent guarantees, electoral losers will remilitarize. Postwar election results in and of themselves are not likely to lead to a return to violence. Instead, I find that elections tend to be stabilizing if the balance of military power holds after war. If it instead shifts after the war's end, and electoral results become misaligned with military power, the newly strengthened belligerent is incentivized to return to war. Table 1 intersects the distribution of power with the post-conflict election outcomes to generate predictions for resumed war and consolidated peace. The table yields four potential outcomes, which I call "leviathan peace," "revisionist war," "residual peace," and "recalibrated peace." The next sections discuss each explanatory factor (i.e., power balance and election outcomes) and the process by which they combine to generate enduring peace or a return to war, as illustrated in figure 1. This section also examines how my theory applies to military draws, and it sheds light on why the theory's explanatory power

28. Toft, *Securing the Peace*; Hartzell and Hoddie, "Institutionalizing Peace"; and Johnson, "Power-Sharing, Conflict Resolution, and the Logic of Pre-emptive Defection."

29. Brancati and Snyder, "Time to Kill."

30. Inken von Borzyskowski and Ursula Daxecker argue that when international observers detect electoral manipulation and criticize the credibility of an election, they encourage losers to challenge the result through violence. Existing studies document the strong relationship between the institutional and structural features of the elections and the duration of peace (i.e., power sharing lowers the risk of war recurrence; delayed elections extend peace), but these studies do not evaluate the behavior of the elections' winners and losers. See Inken von Borzyskowski, "The Risks of Election Observation: International Condemnation and Post-Election Violence," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (September 2019), pp. 654–667, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz024>; and Ursula E. Daxecker, "The Cost of Exposing Cheating: International Election Monitoring, Fraud, and Post-Election Violence in Africa," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (July 2012), pp. 503–516, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022343312445649>.

Table 1. War and Peace after Postwar Elections

		Postwar Balance of Power	
		stable power balance	upset power balance
Election Outcome	war-winner wins election	leviathan peace	revisionist war
	war-winner loses election	residual peace	recalibrated peace

diminishes over the medium-term, defined as more than five years after civil wars conclude.³¹

POWER BALANCE AND ELECTION OUTCOMES

Postwar upsets to the balance of power have varied exogenous and endogenous sources.³² Importantly, they vary in their legibility by citizens and by belligerent parties. Sources of shocks include changes in external military sponsorship and international policy brokers (including intervener entry or exit),³³ shifting domestic alliances involving third-party violent actors, and differential processes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform.³⁴

Figure 2 depicts a continuum of different outcomes for how wars end, ranging from “government victory” to “rebel victory.” In the middle are two

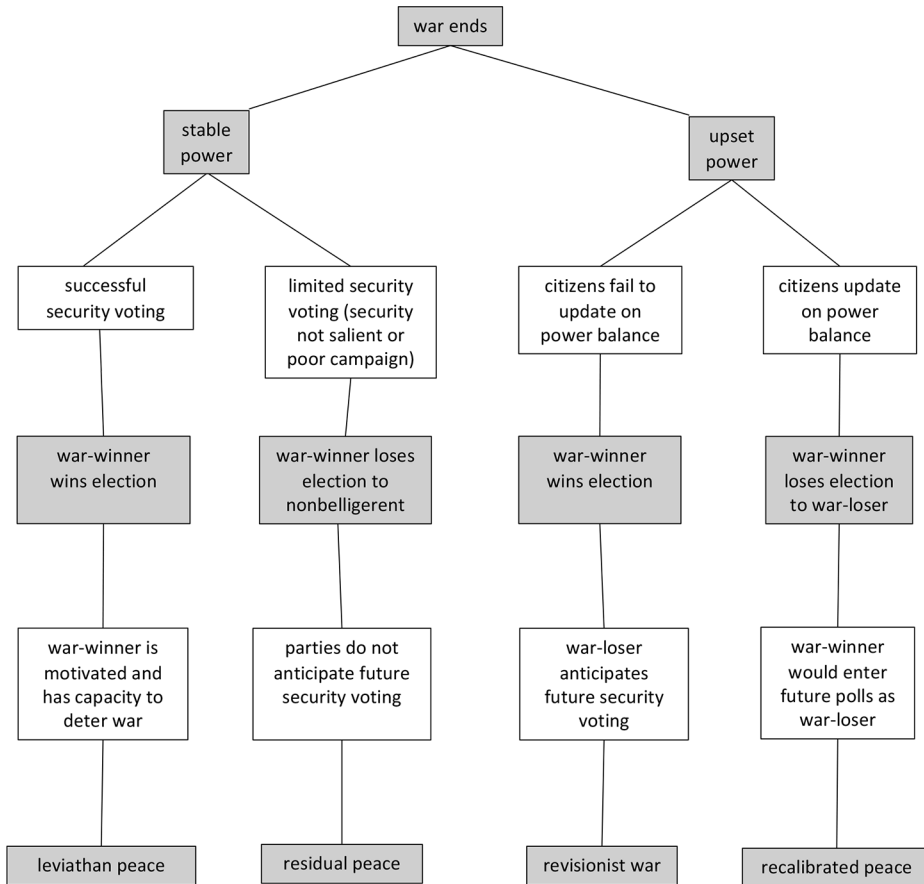
31. Many scholars rely on a five-year cutoff for remilitarization after a war’s end. On this commonly employed metric, see, for example, Walter, *Committing to Peace*. I follow this trend and define the time threshold for remilitarization as five years post-conflict termination.

32. For example, consociational reforms in the peace accords may influence whether rebels seek out new allies or sponsors. It is worth noting that if war-losers predict that they are likely to lose the election, they could seek ways to shore up military power in the interim, rendering changes in the balance of power endogenous to the election outcome. In this case, the leviathan peace scenario might reflect electoral losers’ lack of opportunity to bolster military capacity and overturn the balance of power rather than a lack of incentive to remilitarize. I do not find evidence of such endogenous power shifts, but this dynamic merits future empirical investigation.

33. Alex De Waal, “Mission without End? Peacekeeping in the African Political Marketplace,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 99–113, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2009.00783.x>; Katherine Sawyer, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and William Reed, “The Role of External Support in Civil War Termination,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 6 (July 2017), pp. 1174–1202, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022002715600761>; and Henning Tamm, “Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources: How State Sponsors Affect Insurgent Cohesion,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (December 2016), pp. 599–610, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqw033>.

34. Niklas Karlén, “The Legacy of Foreign Patrons: External State Support and Conflict Recurrence,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (July 2017), pp. 499–512, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022343317700465>; Peter B. White, “The Perils of Peace: Civil War Peace Agreements and Military Coups,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (January 2020), pp. 104–118, <https://doi.org/10.1086/705683>; Fotini Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Toft, *Securing the Peace*.

Figure 1. Causal Pathway of Power, Elections, War, and Peace

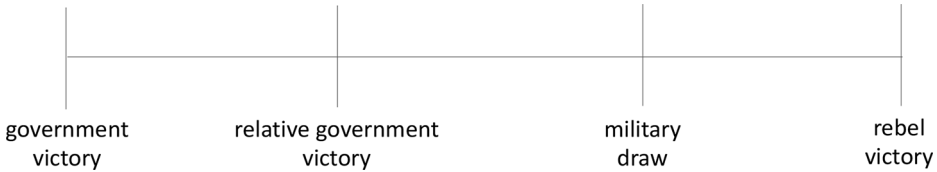


indecisive outcomes in which neither side wins the war outright.³⁵ For the “relative government victory” category, the government wins the war, but the rebels’ organization remains viable. The “military draw” category features belligerents who ended war at military parity or a “mutually hurting stalemate.”³⁶

35. This article’s continuum of war outcomes closely matches Virginia Page Fortna’s but omits the “ongoing war” category (given its focus on postwar dynamics). Moreover, I posit that rebellions that fizzle out may have peace agreements, while those that conclude in a draw may end without peace agreements. See Virginia Page Fortna, “Do Terrorists Win? Rebels’ Use of Terrorism and Civil War Outcomes,” *International Organization*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (Summer 2015), pp. 519–556, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000089>.

36. I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* (New York: Oxford

Figure 2. A Continuum of War Outcomes



In my framework, the power balance between the belligerents is either stable/reinforced or inverted. In the former case, the war-winner remains or becomes even more militarily superior, and in the case of a draw, the military symmetry is maintained. In the latter case, the war-loser becomes more militarily powerful than the war-winner, and in the case of a draw, the military symmetry becomes military asymmetry. The definitive power shift of this latter case alters expectations for future war outcomes and, therefore, future election outcomes. I focus on a shock to the distribution of military power after the civil war ends but before the first election occurs. Below, I discuss what happens if the distribution of power changes after the first election.

The framework's second explanatory factor is the founding postwar election outcomes. Specifically, I examine whether the war-winner wins or loses the election, or whether the stalemated belligerents in the case of a military draw either split the vote or one party wins it outright. The war-winner's successor party can lose the election to either the war-loser's successor party or a nonbelligerent party. I define nonbelligerent parties as conflict-era organizations that did not have a coercive apparatus in the armed conflict, or new parties that emerge after the war whose platforms and memberships do not represent the wartime armies.

MECHANISMS: SECURITY VOTING AND HEURISTICS

When emerging from civil conflict, as Thomas Hobbes contends, the "final cause, end, or design of men (who naturally love liberty, and dominion over others) . . . is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war."³⁷ Following mass violence, "people [are] desperate for

University Press, 1985). These middle two categories might terminate either in: (1) negotiated settlements that conclude the military behavior of the parties through negotiated surrender (in cases of military asymmetry) or robust peace agreement (in cases of a draw); or (2) sustained ceasefires, truces, armistices, or some other mode of "freezing" that results in a cessation of hostilities and a termination of military operations but does not address the underlying incompatibility so as to resolve the conflict.

37. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 111.

peace.”³⁸ Of course, myriad other non-security issues concern voters, including clientelism, ideology, partisanship, the economy, coercion, and the mistrust, hatred, and resentment that may stem from violence.³⁹ Additionally, the salience of insecurity varies significantly across states, regions, and individuals, and belligerents also draw on core supporters who are committed to the wartime cleavage. Nonetheless, as I defend empirically, in most post-war states, an important segment, if not a majority, base their votes on security issues.

Security constitutes a valence issue. In contrast to position issues—on which voters have different ideal points and parties stake out specific positions on a policy spectrum—valence issues include those on which there is consensus about a policy’s purpose, such as lower crime or economic growth, or in this case, enhanced security. On valence issues, voters judge parties on the basis of their reputations and “accumulated historical evidence,”⁴⁰ which determine the parties’ credibility at being able to handle the issues.⁴¹ To determine who is the most competent provider of future societal peace, voters use the war’s outcome as a heuristic. Winning the war, even if not outright, enables a belligerent to claim credit for ceasing the wartime violence and thereby evade blame for war’s atrocities.⁴² This credit allows the war-winner party to turn its powerful coercive record into an electoral asset rather than a liability. The war-

38. Former Burundian President Domitien Ndayizeye, quoted in Nigel Watt, *Burundi: The Biography of a Small African Country* (London: Hurst, 2008), pp. 81–83.

39. Ernesto Calvo and Maria Victoria Murillo, *Non-Policy Politics: Richer Voters, Poorer Voters, and the Diversification of Electoral Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Susan C. Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Michael Steven Lewis-Beck and Richard Nadeau, “Economic Voting Theory: Testing New Dimensions,” *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (June 2011), pp. 288–294, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2010.09.001>; Sarah Birch, *Electoral Violence, Corruption, and Political Order* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2020); and Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

40. John Sides, “The Origins of Campaign Agendas,” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July 2006), p. 412, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123406000226>.

41. Donald E. Stokes, “Spatial Models of Party Competition,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (June 1963), pp. 368–377, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1952828>.

42. Winning belligerents shift citizens’ reference points for past violence such that citizens judge the gains in security and peace relative to the bleak prospect of continued all-out war. On altered reference points, see Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk,” *Econometrica*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (March 1979), pp. 263–292, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1914185>. The counterintuitive result is that if the belligerent uses violence and then, after winning militarily, ushers in peace, citizens’ assessments are higher than if the belligerent had not used violence in the first place. In effect, there is an electoral benefit associated with voters’ psychological relief that the belligerent did not double down on its violence but instead terminated the violence. For the formal underpinnings of reference-dependent preferences, see Edoardo Grillo and Carlo Prato, “Reference Points and Democratic Backsliding,” *SSRN* (2019), <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3475705>.

winner party may brandish its resulting reputation for competence on security to convince voters that it is more likely to provide future peace than its untainted nonbelligerent party rivals. It can thereby own the paramount security issue and perform well in the election.

PEACE AND WAR SCENARIOS AFTER POSTWAR ELECTIONS

Through these mechanisms of war outcome heuristics and security voting, the postwar balance of power and election outcomes yield four possible scenarios, which I discuss in turn (see figure 1).

LEVIATHAN PEACE. If the military power balance proves stable and the informational cue of war outcomes to gauge security competence leads the war-winner to election success, then peace is likely. The winning belligerent enjoys both the capacity and the motivation to keep the peace, possessing, in Hobbesian terms, the necessary sovereign power to “over-awe” and protect the population “against all others.”⁴³ Additionally, neither the winning nor the losing belligerent have reasons to reinitiate violence; their “mutual expectations about the consequences of [future] fighting . . . remain the same, the bargain struck between the belligerents should persist since neither side expects that a resumption of conflict would result in a better deal” and thus a different future election result.⁴⁴ My theory predicts that leviathan peace is thus likely to hold.⁴⁵

REVISIONIST WAR. Volatile transitions from war to peace feature significant uncertainty and indeterminacy. Information becomes incomplete and asymmetric, and citizens do not receive additional informational cues on the relative distribution of power. Accordingly, it becomes difficult for citizens to update their understandings of who is the most competent on security if the military balance changes outside of the context of war. Many power shifts—particularly those involving DDR and third-party domestic alliances—are illegible to the population. The lay voters, therefore, still tend to rely on “who won the war” as their heuristic for which party can sustain future stability. This cognitive shortcut proves perilous because citizens casting their ballots on security grounds—whom I consider to be “security voters”—elect the now militarily weaker war-winner and, in so doing, misalign electoral results with military power.

43. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters XIII and XVII.

44. Werner, “The Precarious Nature of Peace.”

45. One might wonder whether the war-winner would exploit its new powers to wipe out the opposition once and for all. This project is scoped for meaningful conflict terminations in which the belligerents have taken costly steps to transition away from war. Accordingly, I do not anticipate this trajectory and, indeed, the empirical materials do not support its prevalence.

Although war is theoretically costly, the “who won the war” heuristic and the prevalence of security voting after civil conflict diminish the costliness of remilitarization. Because military success in war yields a unique electoral dividend, if the citizenry fails to detect postwar power upsets, a return to war becomes *ex ante* beneficial rather than costly for the war-loser and the electoral loser. The war-loser, now militarily more powerful, will decide to remilitarize in order to win the next war and enter future elections from a militarily superior position. The electoral assets of winning the subsequent war—retrospective credit for bringing gains in security and the ability to own the prospective security issue—are benefits incurred only through fighting. These benefits cannot be transferred *ex ante*. The electoral loser thus initiates revisionist war.⁴⁶

RESIDUAL PEACE. In the event of a stable postwar power distribution, if the war-winner loses the election, it tends to lose to a nonbelligerent party rather than the war-loser. There are three primary reasons for war-winners to lose elections, despite still holding the military upper hand.

First, the national electorate may not view security as being a highly salient issue. For example, if war ravaged only certain parts of a state or affected specific demographics, security voting is not likely to explain national-level elections because war violence did not affect most of the population. Instead, economic voting, clientelism, and partisanship are more likely to dominate vote choice in such contexts. If these other dimensions of voting do not correlate with security voting, given their preeminence, war-winners may lose the founding political contest.

Second, despite being well-positioned to successfully campaign on the security issue, the war-winner may fail to foster a reputation for competence on security and to convince the citizenry that it is capable of restraining itself during peacetime. As a result, even though security is a salient voting issue, a poor campaign will undermine the war-winner’s performance at the polls.

The third reason why war-winners may lose the election despite military prowess rests not with the parties but with the voters. Belligerent and nonbel-

46. This begs the question, why doesn’t the now militarily weakened war-winner concede electoral defeat to avert hostilities, given that it is likely to lose the next war and subsequent election? My framework focuses on whether the population accurately updates its understanding of the military power balance. But, given high levels of uncertainty and information asymmetries that arise during transitions, the belligerents themselves may also miscalculate their postwar relative power and derive overly confident estimates of that power. Indeed, I show how belligerents vary in their abilities to correctly calculate understandings of their relative capabilities after war, depending on their geography of recruitment. Weakened organizations are particularly likely to rely on the heuristic of their power at war’s end. See Sarah Zukerman Daly, *Organized Violence after Civil War: The Geography of Recruitment in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

ligerent parties make alternative claims to the security issue. In Madisonian terms, the former promises sufficient strength to “enable the government to control the governed,” whereas the latter pledges enough restraint to “control itself.”⁴⁷ During the highly uncertain transition from war to peace, voters—particularly “those who suffered the war in their own flesh [and] who most understand the need for peace”—tend to prefer the iron-fist security that leviathan peace offers.⁴⁸ But sometimes citizens prefer to elect a party that prioritizes rule of law (i.e., an untainted nonbelligerent party) over law and order (i.e., the war-winner).

Given the unchanged military power dynamic of the residual peace scenario, it is not rational for the election-losing war-winner to resume hostilities. Remilitarizing would not change the three primary reasons that war-winners lose elections in this scenario; it would be unlikely to render security salient for the national population, amend a war-winner’s electoral missteps, or cause voters to reverse their preferences for rule of law over law and order. Any prospective election outcome would therefore remain the same. Accordingly, in these cases, residual peace consolidates.

RECALIBRATED PEACE. The final scenario involves an inverted power balance from a shock that is legible to civilians. In this case, both the citizens and the war-winner update their estimates of the postwar power balance. Citizens engage in accurate security voting and elect the newly empowered war-loser party. The strengthened war-loser deters the war-winner (which is now weaker militarily) from returning to war because the latter recognizes that it would likely fare poorly in a future military contest, and, thus, in subsequent postwar elections. The war-winner, therefore, concedes the electoral loss and a recalibrated peace emerges.⁴⁹

As table 2 shows, leviathan peace and revisionist war are the most likely outcomes because of the prevalence with which citizens use security voting and the war outcome heuristic. Although this article has thus far focused on elections that take place after clear military victories or relative wins, I argue

47. James Madison, “The Federalist 51,” in Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 257.

48. Pablo Catatumbo (@PCatatumbo_FARC), “Definitivamente son quienes padecieron en carne propia la guerra” [They are definitely those who suffered the war in their own flesh], Twitter, February 26, 2018, 10:55 p.m., accessed October 30, 2019.

49. Following an upset to the power balance, the war-winner could instead lose the election to a nonbelligerent party. In this case, the war-loser, newly empowered, may still start a second war, incentivized by the prospect of future security voting. But given that the electorate failed to reward the war-winner in the first founding election, the electoral loser may instead conclude that such a scenario would repeat itself following its own prospective win in a second war and, therefore, concede electoral defeat and demilitarize.

Table 2. Empirical Cases of Post-Conflict War and Peace

		Postwar Balance of Power			
		stable power balance		upset power balance	
Election Outcome	war-winner wins election/stalemates belligerents split vote	leviathan peace		revisionist war	
		peace	war	peace	war
		19	1	2	4
	war-winner loses election/stalemates belligerents do not split vote	residual peace		recalibrated peace	
peace		war	peace	war	
	4	0	1	0	

that this logic should also apply to cases of stalemates or draws, which I discuss next.

MILITARY DRAWS

In the case of a draw, the security voting model predicts that each side will gain comparable credit (and thus reputation for security competence) for ending the war through a ceasefire, a truce, or an accord. Although stalemated belligerents’ perceived security capabilities are inferior to those who win, these drawn parties tend to divide the security vote.⁵⁰ If the power balance remains stable, this divided security vote should facilitate peace because a second war would likely result in a similar draw and repeated split vote. If the power balance persists but the belligerents do not share the vote, either other issues matter more to the electorate than security, or the belligerent parties did not campaign effectively on the security issue. Returning to war cannot remedy these reasons for dampened electoral performance; residual peace should thus emerge.

If the balance of power instead shifts and the belligerents split the vote, this outcome becomes incongruous with the new military power balance. The recently empowered belligerents are incentivized to engage in revisionist war in order to enter future elections as the military winner. But if citizens recognize the power shift, update their calculus of security competence, and award the

50. Although I assume that voters’ access to information on the parties at a draw is comparable, it may in fact be unequal because incumbents tend to have greater control over propaganda. See Jaimie Bleck and Kristin Michelitch, “Capturing the Airwaves, Capturing the Nation? A Field Experiment on State-Run Media Effects in the Wake of a Coup,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (July 2017), pp. 873–889, <https://doi.org/10.1086/690616>.

now-advantaged side an additional share of the vote, then recalibrated peace should hold. The logic that governs military draws is therefore similar to the one that governs relative wins or decisive war outcomes.

OVER TIME

The theory emphasizes power shifts from war's end to the founding postwar elections. But what happens when the power balance inverts *after* the first election? If security voting and war outcome heuristics featured prominently in the founding election, a subsequent power shift also would encourage an empowered belligerent to remobilize, observing that strength on the battlefield would likely translate into votes at the future postwar ballot box. Over time, however, the potency of security voting diminishes because politics become more multivalent. Additionally, ex-combatants and commanders reintegrate, their networks erode, and it becomes more difficult for them to remobilize.⁵¹ My findings therefore support the literature on war recurrence, which anticipates an elevated risk of resumed hostilities during the five years following civil conflict.

OBSERVABLE IMPLICATIONS

My framework suggests several observable implications. The risk of remilitarization should increase if there is a power shift and the now-stronger party (the war-loser) loses the election to the now-weaker war-winner. Such a power shift occurs if foreign patrons withdraw or deploy troops or support, if demobilization processes preserve certain factions while weakening others, or if, in multiparty wars, third-party armed actors switch sides. As the mechanisms underpinning this posited relationship between power, voting, and war, the theory implies that security voters should favor the war-winner's party, and postwar election results should therefore correlate with war outcomes.

Implications for Theories of How Elections Affect Peace

The article's logic has several implications for existing research on war and peace. First, in the conventional bargaining model of conflict, war may result because adversaries possess private information about capabilities and resolve and are incentivized to misrepresent that information, which may lead belligerents to miscalculate the distribution of power.⁵² In my theory, constituents/spectators' (i.e., voters') miscalculations of the power balance can

51. Daly, *Organized Violence after Civil War*.

52. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War."

also cause war. This article brings the latter critical audience into the bargaining model.

Second, my logic suggests that electoral losers will not necessarily demilitarize under power sharing and return to violence in the absence of such institutional guarantees, as advanced in peace scholarship. I argue that the two key factors influencing the decision to remilitarize are the stability of the military power balance after war, and whether the election results align with that balance. The currently conceived power-sharing equation, relatively immutable and unaffected by changes in military power after war, is unlikely to guarantee that electoral losers, if strengthened in the postwar period, will gain a sufficient share of government power to disincentivize their remilitarization. Also, in my framework, DDR and delayed elections may become part of the problem rather than the solution, as they are heralded to be in the literature. While DDR may dampen electoral losers' capacity to remobilize, it can also incentivize their return to hostilities by creating postwar disruptions to the balance of power between belligerents.⁵³ Similarly, while delaying elections may allow democracy-buttrussing institutions to strengthen, it also allows more time to upset the power balance, potentially leading the eventual elections to destabilize the postwar political order.

Third, the article's logic casts doubt on an alternative explanation of organizational capacity as the cause of bargaining failure. According to this explanation, groups return to war because they have the capacity to reinstate violence, and their decision to remilitarize is independent of their desire to do so because of an electoral loss. If only capacity to resume violence matters, the belligerents should be able to reach an agreement short of war.⁵⁴ For bargaining to fail, it is necessary to consider how the prospect of future electoral rewards may make war beneficial rather than costly for the newly empowered belligerent. If the capacity argument were correct, then all military draws would eventually become recurrent wars because all belligerents have remilitarization capacity. If I am correct, then only those draws that are followed by a power shift that is not reflected in the election outcome would return to war. Additionally, if capacity alone drives remilitarization, then newly empowered groups would return to war after a power shift, even if the citizenry were to accurately update its estimate of the belligerent's strength and security competence and elect the more powerful party. If I am correct and the election results also matter, then in such a scenario the newly bolstered party should remain peaceful. I find that the evidence aligns more closely with my model's predic-

53. Daly, *Organized Violence after Civil War*.

54. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War."

tions. I turn now to how I evaluate my framework's observable implications against alternatives.

Research Design

I use mixed methods to evaluate my theory, which predicts that the risk of remilitarization rises when the balance of power shifts and the newly empowered war-loser does not win the election. My analyses require data on the stability of the distribution of military power after war, the electoral fates of civil war belligerents (i.e., who wins and who loses the postwar political contests), and whether the belligerents remilitarize or demilitarize in the aftermath of war. I also examine whether my theory or the alternative arguments centered on power sharing, delayed elections, or UN interventions are better able to explain remilitarization risks. I quantitatively probe the mechanisms of security voting to show that 54 percent of postwar populations base their votes on stabilizing their states' futures. They tend to apply war outcomes as their heuristic for security capabilities and to elect war-winning belligerent parties. Finally, I use case studies to trace how changes/stability in the balance of power and polling results influence electoral losers' decisions to resume hostilities or sustain peace.

Election Losses, Power Shifts, and Remilitarization Risks

The universe of cases that I explore includes belligerents (i.e., rebels and governments) that transitioned from civil conflict between 1970 and 2015. This results in a dataset of 205 civil war belligerents across fifty-seven different states.⁵⁵

ELECTION OUTCOMES

I collected information from various print and electronic sources to identify the successor parties of the belligerents, determine the postwar founding elections, and record the legislative vote share of the successor parties.⁵⁶ My research revealed that successor parties emerged out of all conflicts, and only

55. Sarah Zukerman Daly, "Political Life after Civil Wars: Introducing the Civil War Successor Party Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (July 2021), pp. 839–848, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320920905>.

56. See, for example, Sarah Birch, *Electoral Systems and Political Transformation in Post-Communist Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz, and Christof Hartmann, eds., *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook*, Vol. 1, *Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Albert C. Nunley, *African Elections Database*, last updated November 25, 2012, <https://africanelections.tripod.com/index.html>; and Center

seven of the 205 government and rebel cases were banned from running. On average, government successor parties gained 41.8 percent of the vote compared to 25.6 percent for rebel parties. Parties with belligerent predecessors tended to dominate the elections over nonbelligerent parties.

BALANCE OF POWER

The theory predicts that electoral losers are unlikely to remilitarize unless the power balance is upset after the war, and voters fail to accurately update their security competence estimates and vote for the newly empowered party. An ideal operationalization would code whether there was a shift, changing which military organization was dominant. Such data are not available, however, and I therefore analyzed a variable, “power shift,” which measures changes in the postwar balance of military power and indicates which side it favored.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, these data exist for only those conflicts that ended between 1990 and 2009 (n=88). But within this subset, the data are available for all cases, suggesting little selection bias. In this subsample, I find that 14 percent of war-losers gained power during the postwar period, destabilizing the power balance of 28 percent of the belligerent cases. In the remaining cases, the power balance was maintained or reinforced (i.e., the war-winner became stronger).

REMILITARIZATION

To probe the relationship between power shifts, electoral results, and the decision to reinitiate fighting, I use new data on whether the belligerents returned to war and, if they did, who initiated the new fighting.⁵⁸ This belligerent-level coding of remilitarization enables analysis of whether electoral winners or losers are more likely to restart war. I define remilitarization as “a return to organized violence by the same armed group, exploiting the assets of the prior group, that is, its coercive structure, recruits, command-and-control apparatus, organizational know-how, finances, and ties to the population.”⁵⁹ I distinguish remilitarization from violence caused by new belligerents and conflicts and

for Latin American Studies [CLAS], *Political Database of the Americas* (Washington, D.C.: CLAS, Georgetown University, 1995), <https://pdba.georgetown.edu/history.html>.

57. I constructed this variable from Thorsten Gromes and Florian Ranft’s dataset, which provides information on shifts in power due to demobilization/recruitment of troops, (de)acquisition of arms/equipment, and shifts in patterns of territorial control. Thorsten Gromes and Florian Ranft, “The Dataset on Post-Civil War Power and Compromise, 1990–2012,” PRIF Working Papers No. 33 (Frankfurt: Hessische Stiftung Friedens, 2016), <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-49037-7>.

58. Daly, “Political Life after Civil Wars.”

59. Daly, *Organized Violence after Civil War*, p. 113.

create a binary variable, “reinitiated war,” which is coded as “1” if the belligerent remilitarized after the elections and “0” otherwise. Of the belligerents who transitioned from violence from 1970 to 2015, 30 percent returned to war with the same combatants.

ASSESSING THE RISK OF WAR RECURRENCE

This section shows the risk of war recurrence associated with each of the four scenarios (leviathan peace, revisionist war, residual peace, recalibrated peace). These bivariate relationships, displayed in table 2, do not consider potentially confounding variables, but they display the broad brushstrokes of power shifts, election results, and resumed violence after war. Given that the scenarios are experienced at the state level, this analysis employs conflict-level data.

Of the thirty-one conflicts for which data on power shifts are available, five returned to war within five years, two did so thereafter, and twenty-four consolidated peace. To examine whether power upsets and election results can account for this postwar divergence, I explore the incidence of remilitarization and demilitarization across the different scenarios. My theory accurately predicts the outcomes in twenty-eight of the thirty-one cases. Confirming my hypothesis, it is more likely for belligerents to demilitarize and for a leviathan peace to emerge if the power balance stabilized and the war-winner won the election. Where the power balance inverted and the war-winner nonetheless won the election, the belligerents tended to plunge their states back into war. Scenarios in which the war-winner lost the election—with either a stable or upset power balance—were rarer but faced a negligible risk of remilitarization, substantiating the logic of residual and recalibrated peace.

In only three cases does the theory inaccurately predict the outcome. In the borderline case of Liberia, leviathan peace was sustained after the 1997 election, but a power shift occurred soon thereafter when the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) became bolstered by Sierra Leonean Kamajor fighters retreating over the border. This later, postelection power shift in 2000 incentivized ULIMO to engage in revisionist war (as Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, LURD) over the medium term. In the case of Bosnia, the theory would expect revisionist conflict when the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) took the advantage in territory and arms after the war. The state nonetheless escaped this perilous fate, likely because of the NATO-led Implementation Force.⁶⁰ Similarly, in Nepal, the Maoists dis-

60. International Institute for Strategic Studies [IISS], *The Military Balance 1996* (London: IISS, 1996).

mantled their “people’s governments” after the war,⁶¹ which temporarily conferred more territory to the government. Yet, because this interim government included significant rebel participation, the territorial shift failed to constitute a meaningful power change between forces. Finally, there are two cases beyond the framework’s time threshold for remilitarization, in which an absence of violence persisted for decade(s), but war eventually broke out again: Mozambique and Georgia. The theory can accurately account for these cases’ short- to medium-term trajectories but not their long-term ones.

These findings are largely consistent with the framework’s observable implications: Remilitarization becomes more likely when there is a shift in the balance of power, and the newly empowered war-loser does not win the election. The next section addresses whether selection bias may have affected this analysis, and whether omitted determinants of power shifts, election outcomes, and remilitarization could be confounding the results.

SELECTION AND POTENTIAL CONFOUNDERS

I examine the full universe of conflicts that ended and were followed by democratic elections. But war termination and democratic elections are nonrandomly assigned.⁶² While several factors moderate these selection concerns—nearly all post-conflict states held elections, only a few groups boycotted them,⁶³ and even unpopular groups attempted to get elected—the prospect of bias remains. To address these sources of potential selection, I specify control variables appropriately in the statistical analyses. Factors that might affect selection into the universe of cases include war duration,⁶⁴ the nature of the warring parties’ incompatibility (secession or state takeover),⁶⁵ the extent of

61. Kiyoko Ogura, “Seeking State Power: The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist),” Berghof Transitional Series 3 (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2008).

62. Nancy Bermeo, “What the Democratization Literature Says—or Doesn’t Say—About Postwar Democratization,” *Global Governance*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (April–June 2003), pp. 159–177, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27800473>.

63. In the analyses, I code boycott results as “0” and, as a robustness check, drop them from the sample.

64. I code war duration using Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)’s war start and end dates. *Uppsala Conflict Data Program*, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, <https://ucdp.uu.se>. Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis show that longer-lasting wars are more likely to end sustainably. Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006).

65. Conflicts fought over territory tend to be harder to resolve. See James D. Fearon, “Why Do Some Civil Wars Last So Much Longer than Others?” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (May 2004), pp. 275–301, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022343304043770>; and Helga Malmin Binningsbø and Siri Aas Rustad, “Sharing the Wealth: A Pathway to Peace or a Trail to Nowhere?” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (November 2012), pp. 547–566, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0738894212456952>. From the UCDP dataset, I include a variable capturing war duration and another indicating the nature of the incompatibility.

wartime violence,⁶⁶ number of veto players,⁶⁷ development levels, and democracy scores.⁶⁸

Threats to inference also stem from endogeneity and spuriousness because power shifts and election outcomes are not random. To accurately assess the explanatory weight of shifts and election results on remilitarization, I therefore focus on factors that might affect a belligerent's power balance, electoral performance, and decision to return to war. Earlier sections in this article review scholarship on several factors that might confound this relationship or independently drive the resumption of hostilities, possibilities that I analyze statistically. These include the absence of internal power-sharing guarantees, external UN intervention guarantees, and delayed political contests. Additionally, I consider whether groups with strong organizational capacity resume war irrespective of the election results, and whether electoral losers remilitarize irrespective of the power balance.⁶⁹

DO POWER SHIFTS AND ELECTION RESULTS AFFECT ENDURING PEACE?

I use multivariate models to test the effects of power shifts and election results on a binary variable, "reinitiated war," controlling for possible confounding variables and comparing the analyses with models that evaluate alternative

66. Scholars find that the cost in human lives of the war influences the likelihood of stable termination. See, for example, Walter, "Does Conflict Beget Conflict?"; and T. David Mason et al., "When Civil Wars Recur: Conditions for Durable Peace after Civil Wars," *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (May 2011), pp. 171–189, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44218657>. I use a relative atrocities index that relies on Jessica Stanton's coding criteria and data. It captures whether either the government or rebel belligerents, or both, used the most severe forms of civilian abuse, defined by Stanton as "massacres; scorched earth campaigns; cleansing of a particular ethnic or religious group; or deliberate bombing and shelling of civilian targets," or if they engaged in "deliberate efforts to avoid attacking civilian targets." See Jessica A. Stanton, *Violence and Restraint in Civil War: Civilian Targeting in the Shadow of International Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

67. David Cunningham demonstrates that a greater number of veto players makes bargaining more challenging and wars last longer. David E. Cunningham, "Veto Players and Civil War Duration," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (October 2006), pp. 875–892, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00221.x>. I use these data to count veto players.

68. Fortna and Reyko Huang find that economic development aids postwar democratization, whereas James Fearon, David Laitin, and Barbara Walter claim that development is correlated with peace. Fortna and Huang, "Democratization after Civil War"; James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (February 2003), pp. 75–90, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000534>; and Walter, "Does Conflict Beget Conflict?" Walter further shows that democratic rights prevent war recurrence. For measures of development and democracy, I use the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) indicators of the logged GDP per capita, "e_migdppln," and a clean election index, "v2xel_frefair." For the V-Dem data, see Staffan I. Lindberg et al., "V-Dem: A New Way to Measure Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (July 2014), pp. 159–169, <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/v-dem-a-new-way-to-measure-democracy/>.

69. For a list of sources, see table A.4, and for summary statistics, see table A.5, both of which are located in the online appendix.

explanations. Table A.1 in the online appendix shows the results of this series of logistic regression models. Several states in the dataset have endured multiple civil wars. Robust standard errors clustered at the state level account for the nonindependence of these observations.⁷⁰

The basic pattern revealed in table 2 generally holds in the multivariate analyses.⁷¹ The remilitarization risk rises dramatically when the balance of power inverts, but the war-winner nonetheless wins the election. Holding the other variables at their means, the predicted probability of remilitarization in this scenario is 56 percent, compared to 0.4 percent if the power balance sustains or shifts and the newly empowered war-loser wins the election.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR POSTELECTION REMILITARIZATION

This section evaluates the article's main claim—that power shifts and election results shape the decision to remilitarize—against alternatives centered on the structural and institutional features of the elections. A first alternative logic holds that the effects of electoral loss on remilitarization should depend on whether the elections were held under power-sharing arrangements rather than on shifts in power. I use information on power sharing from Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie's dataset⁷² and from the Peace Agreement Dataset,⁷³ and I measure the nature of the electoral system (i.e., majoritarian or proportional) with the Varieties of Democracy indicator, "v2elparlel."⁷⁴

Table A.1, models 2–4 in the online appendix cast doubt on this alternative's ability to explain the decision to reinstate war. Figure 3 illustrates the differences in remilitarization risk at different levels of electoral success for belligerents contesting elections enshrined in power-sharing regimes and those

70. Although there are more than fifty clusters in the data, when I use a wild bootstrap to estimate clustered standard errors as a robustness check, the results do not change. See A. Colin Cameron, Jonah B. Gelbach, and Douglas L. Miller, "Bootstrap-Based Improvements for Inference with Clustered Errors," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (August 2008), pp. 414–427, <https://doi.org/10.1162/rest.90.3.414>.

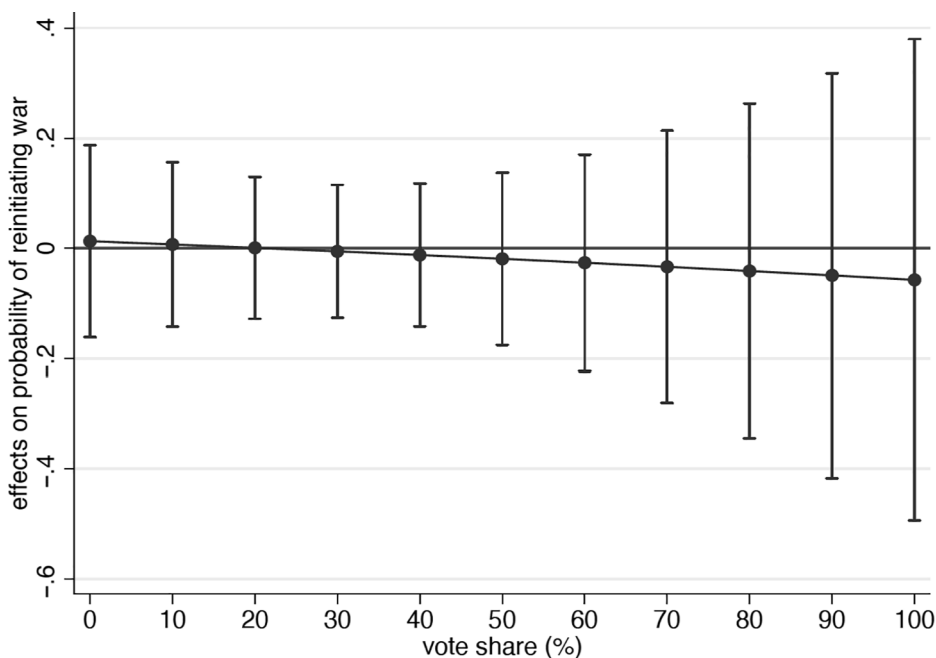
71. The sample size is relatively small, and problems of multicollinearity affect the analyses.

72. Caroline A. Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, "The Art of the Possible: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Democracy," *World Politics*, Vol. 67, No. 1, pp. 37–71, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887114000306>. For missing cases, I include the variable "pps_parlquota" from the Power-Sharing Event Dataset, which captures whether rebel representatives are promised/take over guaranteed seats in the national parliament. Martin Ottmann and Johannes Vüllers, "The Power-Sharing Event Dataset (PSED): A New Dataset on the Promises and Practices of Power-Sharing in Post-Conflict Countries," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (July 2015), pp. 327–350, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0738894214542753>.

73. Stina Höglbladh, "Peace Agreements 1975–2011: Updating the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset," in Therése Pettersson and Lotta Themnér, eds., *States in Armed Conflict*, Department of Peace and Conflict Research Report 99 (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2012).

74. Lindberg et al., "V-Dem: A New Way to Measure Democracy." As a robustness check, I use data from Johnson, "Power-Sharing, Conflict Resolution, and the Logic of Pre-emptive Defection."

Figure 3. Conditional Marginal Effects of Power Sharing on War Reinitiation

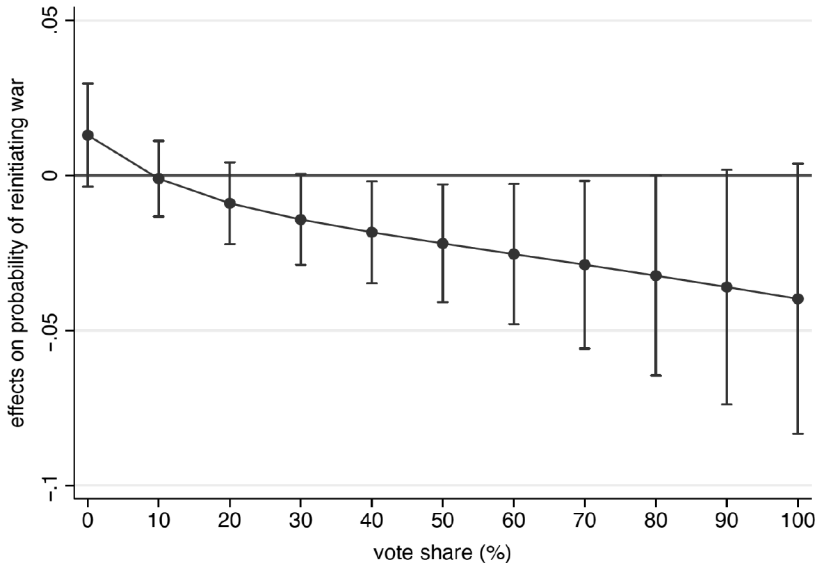


NOTE: The 95 percent confidence interval for these differences in risk includes zero across all values of electoral performance.

without such political guarantees. The 95 percent confidence interval for these differences in risk includes zero across all values of electoral performance. Similarly, as shown in figure A.1 in the online appendix, I find that, across electoral outcomes, the difference in remilitarization risk between elections taking place under proportional representation and under majoritarian voting rules is also not statistically significant.

A second explanation maintains that electoral losers of quick elections will return to war, whereas those of delayed ones will demilitarize. For election timing, I calculate the number of years between war termination and the founding elections. Table A.1, model 5 in the online appendix shows that election timing has an insignificant effect on the likelihood that a belligerent will remilitarize. But the interaction between election timing and vote share exerts a significant and negative effect on a belligerent's remilitarization. Figure 4 displays the marginal effects of election timing on the risk of remilitarization at different vote share levels. It illustrates that additional time between the end of fighting and the elections significantly lowers the remilitarization risk for elec-

Figure 4. Average Marginal Effects of Election Timing on War Reinitiation



toral losers, particularly in the middle range of vote share values. Delaying elections can allow time for institution-building, bolstering nonbelligerent parties, and eroding remobilization capacity, as argued in the literature.⁷⁵ It may also allow more time for power shifts to occur, but for these shifts to become cemented and legible to the population.

Surprisingly, the opposite is true for UN interventions. I analyze a UN intervention variable from Brancati and Snyder's dataset, which captures whether and how the UN intervened (through mediation, observation, peacekeeping, or enforcement).⁷⁶ In table A.1, model 6 in the online appendix, I find that the presence of UN oversight or enforcers raises the risk of remilitarization for electoral losers, but only in the middle range of electoral values. This result could reflect the possibility that postwar power balances become inverted more easily for belligerents in this middle range. It is also possible that two dimensions of UN standard operating procedures threaten the stability of postwar power: the UN's inevitable withdrawal; and the UN's recipe for DDR,

75. Brancati and Snyder, "Time to Kill"; Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*; and Madhav Joshi, Erik Melander, and Jason Michael Quinn, "Sequencing the Peace: How the Order of Peace Agreement Implementation Can Reduce the Destabilizing Effects of Post-accord Elections," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (January 2017), pp. 4–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022002715576573>.

76. Brancati and Snyder, "Time to Kill."

which, by relocating ex-combatants back home, tends to preserve the strength of local armed groups but weaken nonlocal ones.⁷⁷

The data suggest that organizational capacity⁷⁸ does not by itself explain remilitarization. Instead, a null relationship emerges between organizational cohesion and remilitarization (table A.1, model 7 in the online appendix). The overall empirical finding—newly powerful groups are content to stay peaceful if the power balance shifts, but the citizenry updates on this power balance and elects these newly powerful groups—indicates that not only remilitarization capacity but also election results affect decisions to resume hostilities. As discussed previously, all groups in cases of draws have organizational capacity, and yet only in the case of a power shift (that is not reflected in the election outcomes) do the groups return to war, further suggesting that belligerent parties' motivations for remilitarization are as important as their capacities.

Finally, table A.1, model 7 and figure A.3 in the online appendix reveal an insignificant relationship between an electoral loser's performance and the binary variable (i.e., "reinitiated war"), which suggests that electoral loss does not inevitably spark remilitarization. Whether a belligerent loses the election by a small or a large margin does not seem to influence its remilitarization decision. Next, I probe the mechanisms by which the power balance and poll results translate into a return to hostilities or consolidation of peace.

How the Citizenry Tends to Vote, and Why, Following a Civil War

If my framework is correct, the citizenry should tend to use war outcomes as its heuristic for a party's competence on stabilizing peace going forward, and security voters should be more likely to cast ballots for the war-winner successor parties. I first establish the prevalence of security voters and then demonstrate the citizenry's widespread use of the war outcome cognitive shortcut for deciding its vote choice in the founding elections.

SECURITY VOTERS

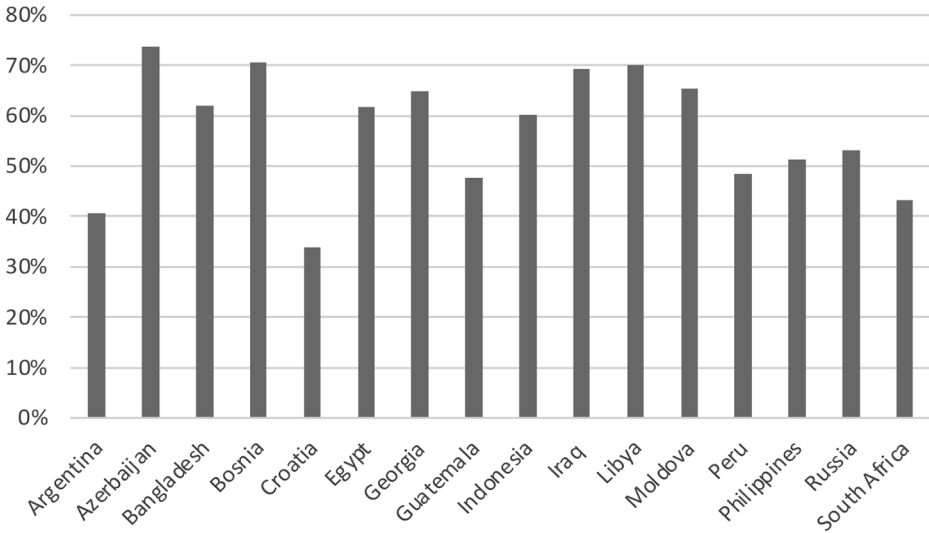
To evaluate the generalizability of the mechanism of security salience, I analyze data from the World Values Survey (WVS).⁷⁹ The WVS project conducted

77. Daly, *Organized Violence after Civil War*.

78. I use "strengthcent," an indicator from the Non-State Actor (NSA) dataset, to measure the strength of a central command's control over an insurgent movement's constituent groups. See David E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "Non-State Actor Data: Version 3.4" (Colchester, UK: University of Essex, 2013), accessed January 16, 2022, <http://ksgleditsch.com/eacd.html>.

79. Ronald C. Inglehart et al., eds., *World Values Survey: All Rounds—Country-Pooled Datafile Version*

Figure 5. Proportion of Security Voters around the World



SOURCE: World Values Survey data on the most important issue facing each state for the years listed in table A.3 in the online appendix. Ronald Inglehart et al., eds., *World Values Survey: All Rounds–Country-Pooled Datafile Version, Waves 1–6* (Madrid: JD Systems Institute, WVSA Secretariat, 2020), <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWVL.jsp>.

surveys at approximately the same times as sixteen of the cross-national dataset’s cases of founding elections and, across time and space, asked comparable questions of issue salience for political life.⁸⁰ Figure 5 displays the proportion of respondents who viewed “maintaining order in the nation” to be the most important issue facing the state. Across the cases for which WVS data exist, an average of 54 percent of respondents were most concerned with securing the future. While elections were multivalent and voters cast ballots along diverse dimensions, security proved important to a majority of voters emerging from civil war. I consider these individuals to be security voters.

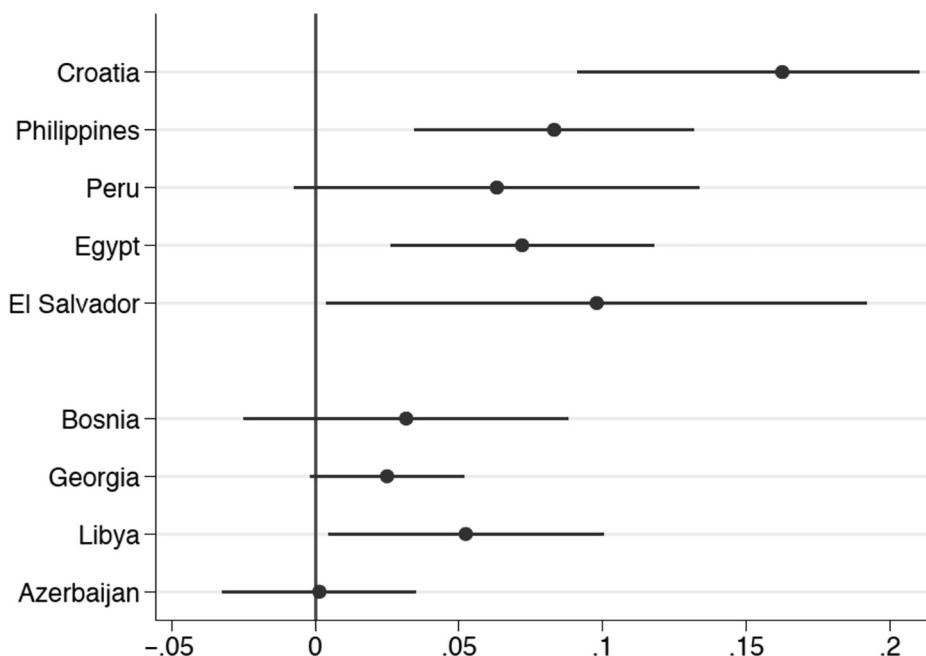
WAR OUTCOME HEURISTICS

To probe whether security voters do in fact use war outcomes as an informational cue to judge security competence, I examine whether these voters were

(Madrid: JD Systems Institute, 2014), <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWVL.jsp>.

80. For nine of the cases, the surveys asked about vote choice; table A.3 in the online appendix lists the survey and election dates to show how accurately the polls reflect public opinion.

Figure 6. Marginal Effect of Being a Security Voter and Voting for the Militarily Winning Belligerent Party



SOURCE: World Values Survey data for issue salience and vote choice for the years listed in table A.3 in the online appendix. Inglehart et al., *World Values Survey*.

NOTE: The figure displays the regression coefficient from a bivariate analysis of the effect of being a security voter on the likelihood of voting for the militarily advantaged belligerent party (as coded by the cross-national data set's "war outcome" variable). For example, in the case of Croatia, the data suggest that security voters were 16 percent more likely to cast their ballots for the winning combatant party over either militarily losing or non-belligerent parties.

more likely to vote for the winning belligerent. For nine of the WVS cases, the surveys also included questions about vote choice. For each of these cases of recorded vote choice, I run a simple bivariate analysis to determine the effect of being a security voter on the likelihood of voting for the militarily advantaged belligerent party in that election (as coded by the cross-national dataset's "war outcome" variable).⁸¹ Figure 6 displays the regression coefficients from each of these election-level analyses. The data suggest that, in most cases, security voters, who are a sizable share of the electorate, were between 6 and

81. For the case of El Salvador, I was able to analyze more comprehensive survey data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) 1995 dataset and ask whether political ideology/

16 percent more likely to cast their ballots for the winning combatant party over either militarily losing or nonbelligerent parties. This outcome holds in states where the balance of power both stayed stable and shifted, which suggests that security voters use this heuristic and tend to fail to update their estimates of war-winners' and losers' respective abilities to provide stability in the face of upsets to military might.

ELECTING WAR-WINNERS

As a result of the prevalence of security voters, and these valence voters' use of war outcomes as a cognitive shortcut for judging competence on security, founding postwar election results should tend to align with war outcomes, regardless of whether there is a change in the balance of power. To capture "war outcomes," I use data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Conflict Termination Dataset (v.2-2015).⁸² I create an ordinal variable that ranges from "0" (government victory) to "3" (rebel victory). I code "no activity" (a rebellion that petered out) as "1," and conflicts that ended in "peace agreements/ceasefire" as "2." But some cases in the UCDP "no activity" category involved significant concessions in frozen conflicts, and some cases in the "peace agreements and ceasefires" category involved negotiated surrenders. I therefore created an alternative operationalization of the indecisive war outcomes (i.e., those involving relative government victory or military draw) using the indicator "rebstrength" from the Non-State Actor (NSA) dataset, which measures the strength of the rebels relative to the government at war's end.⁸³ "Rebstrength" is a five-point indicator that ranges from much weaker to much stronger and is based on information on the rebel group's ability to target government forces, or its "offensive strength." I collapse the "weaker" and "much weaker" categories into relative government victory ("1") and use the "equally strong" or parity category to proxy for a draw ("2"). On the one hand, this alternative scale captures whether the indecisive outcomes were asymmetrical or symmetrical. On the other hand, strength is an imperfect proxy for war

popular support might be an omitted variable explaining both security voting and vote choice. "El Salvador 1995," AmericasBarometer, LAPOP (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1995). I find that security voting is robust to the inclusion of alternative explanations of vote choice, including partisanship and economic voting. On partisanship, see, for example, Eric S. Mosinger, "Brothers or Others in Arms? Civilian Constituencies and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January 2018), pp. 62–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343316675907>.

82. Joakim Kreutz, "How and When Armed Conflicts End: Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (March 2010), pp. 243–250, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343309353108>.

83. See Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "Non-State Actor Data."

outcomes, as illustrated by cases in which relatively weaker rebels nonetheless won the wars (e.g., in East Timor). The correlation between the two war outcome proxies is high (0.7). Figure A.4 in the online appendix shows the distribution of the first war outcome scale.

I regress the belligerent party's founding election vote share on the war outcome measure using ordinary least squares and controlling for a range of covariates and confounders (i.e., wartime popular support, victimization, governance, resources, unity, and coercion).⁸⁴ I analyze government and rebel belligerents separately. The "war outcome" variable is increasing in those outcomes that are favorable to the rebels (i.e., "0" is government victory, "3" is rebel victory); thus, the theory anticipates a positive relationship between "war outcome" and rebel successor party vote share and a negative relationship between "war outcome" and government party vote share.

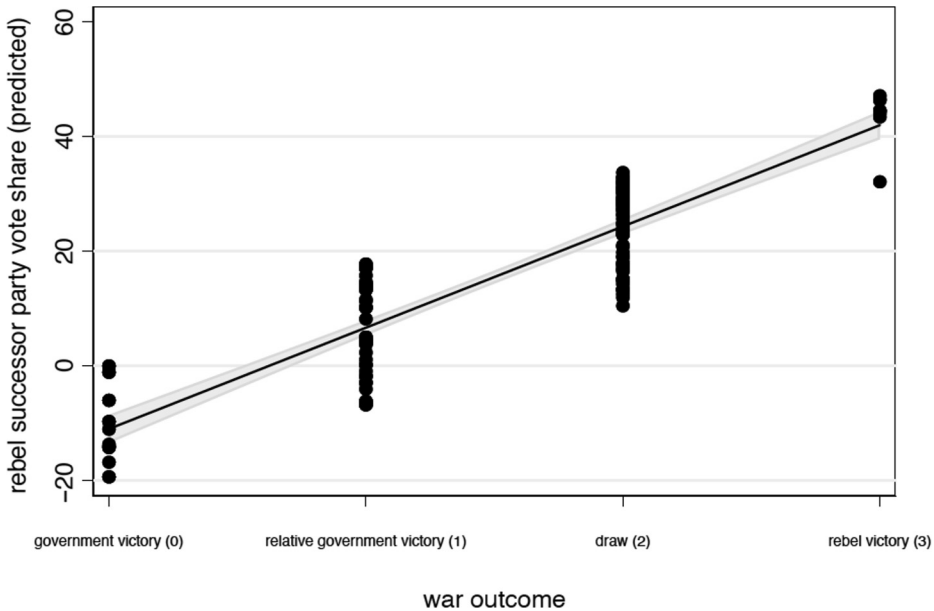
Table A.2, models 1 and 2 in the online appendix test the influence of war outcomes on rebel and government successor party success, respectively; models 3 and 4 estimate the effect of war outcomes on this electoral performance controlling for confounding variables (see table A.6 in the online appendix for robustness checks). These cross-national analyses suggest that war outcomes powerfully predict both rebel and government belligerent successor parties' electoral performances in founding postwar elections, as anticipated by the theory's mechanisms of heuristics and security voting. Figures 7 (rebels) and 8 (government) illustrate this result, suggesting that war-winners tend to win the elections regardless of whether the power balance is stable or inverted.

Case Studies

The cross-national analyses and individual survey data are consistent with my argument that, against oft-cited fears, electoral losers, even those contesting quick elections without guarantees of shared or proportionate power and UN oversight, do not necessarily return to war. The findings further indicate that shifts in relative military power may be associated with an elevated risk of a return to civil war if citizens do not update their understanding of the power

84. Megan A. Stewart, "Civil War as State-Making: Strategic Governance in Civil War," *International Organization*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Winter 2018), pp. 205–226, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818317000418>; Huang, *The Wartime Origins of Democratization*; and Isabela Mares and Lauren Young, "Buying, Expropriating, and Stealing Votes," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 19 (May 2016), pp. 267–288, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-060514-120923>. For an in-depth description of the confounders and data, see Sarah Zukerman Daly, "Voting for Victors: Why Violent Actors Win Postwar Elections," *World Politics*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (October 2019), pp. 747–805, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887119000091>.

Figure 7. War Outcomes and Rebel Vote Shares in Founding Elections



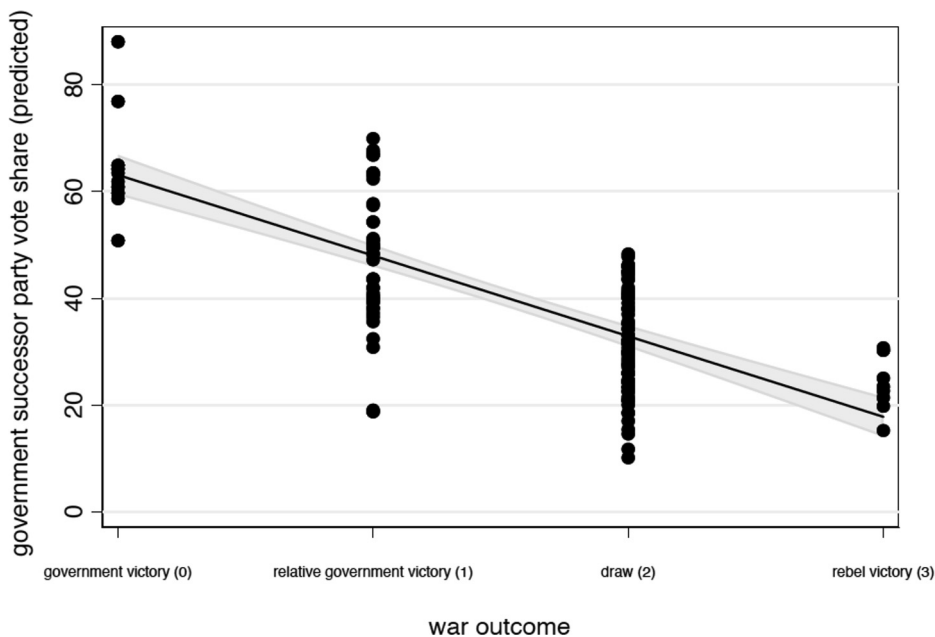
NOTE: Fitted line from an ordinary least squares regression; the gray shading denotes 95 percent confidence intervals.

balance and elect the newly empowered war-loser. Given such power shifts and electoral losses, I argue that the electoral benefits to demonstrating military strength on the civil war battlefield generate a perverse incentive to remilitarize. Because the correlational analyses do not lend themselves to testing this strategic logic, this section uses illustrative case studies (based upon secondary materials, archival records, and in-depth interviews with experts and policymakers) to trace the process by which the (in)stability of the postwar distribution of relative military power and the alignment of this power with electoral results translate into the decision to keep the peace or renew hostilities (see table 3). These cases vary on the key independent variables—power shifts and election results—but hold relatively constant other correlates of war recurrence (i.e., war outcomes, power sharing, election timing, and democracy scores).

LEVIATHAN PEACE IN EL SALVADOR

Civil war ravaged El Salvador from 1979 to 1992, pitting the leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) rebels against the Salvadoran armed

Figure 8. War Outcomes and Government Belligerent Vote Shares in Founding Elections



NOTE: Fitted line from an ordinary least squares regression; the gray shading denotes 95 percent confidence intervals.

forces, which were bolstered by militias and death squads.⁸⁵ The Chapultepec Agreement brought the civil war to a close, and founding elections were held two years after the negotiated settlement. In the electoral campaign, the government successor party, the Nationalist Republican Alliance, faced the successor to the guerrilla armies, the FMLN party.⁸⁶ Nearly 40 percent of the population and 48 percent of unaligned voters cited violence-related issues as the main problems facing the state ahead of the elections.⁸⁷

85. Cynthia McClintock, *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1998).

86. Daly, "Voting for Victors."

87. Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública [IUDOP], "La opinión de los salvadoreños sobre las elecciones: La última encuesta pre-electoral de 1994: Una encuesta de opinión pública del 1 al 15 de febrero de 1994" [Salvadorans' opinion on the elections: The last pre-election poll of 1994: A public opinion poll from February 1 to 15, 1994], serie de informes 39 [report series 39] (San Salvador, El Salvador: IUDOP, Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas, March 1994); IUDOP, "Los salvadoreños y la evaluación de 1993: Una encuesta de opinión pública del 4 al 12 de diciembre de 1993" [Salvadorans and the evaluation of 1993: A public opinion survey December 4–12, 1993], serie de informes 38 (San Salvador, El Salvador: IUDOP, Universidad Centroamericana

Table 3. Case Studies of War and Peace after Elections

		Postwar Balance of Power	
		stable power balance	upset power balance
Election Outcome	war-winner wins election/stalelated belligerents split vote	leviathan peace (El Salvador 1994)	revisionist war (Angola 1992)
	war-winner loses election/stalelated belligerents do not split vote	residual peace (Indonesia 2004; Kosovo 2001; Liberia 2005; Philippines 1998; UK 2001)	recalibrated peace (Nicaragua 1990)

NOTE: The years in parentheses refer to the timing of the postwar elections.

During the political period between the peace accord and elections, there was little shift in the relative balance of power⁸⁸ that had locked the FMLN in a stalemate with the Salvadoran military.⁸⁹ The FMLN disarmed and demobilized as of December 15, 1992.⁹⁰ At the same time, the accords reduced the Salvadoran military by 50 percent, purged 102 of the top officers, disbanded the National Guard and Treasury Police, and dissolved the paramilitary forces, civil defense units, intelligence agency, and National Police.⁹¹ A new intelligence organization under direct civilian control replaced these actors, and a new national civilian police force formed, made up of 20 percent former guerrilla fighters, 20 percent former National Police members, and 60 percent non-combatant personnel who had recently joined its ranks.⁹² To the extent that

José Simeón Cañas, January 1994); and "El Salvador 1995," LAPOP. See also Dinorah Azpuru, "The Salience of Ideology: Fifteen Years of Presidential Elections in El Salvador," *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Summer 2010), pp. 103–138, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2010.00083.x>.

88. Author interview with former United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Alvaro de Soto, New York, September 2018.

89. Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*; and Jeffrey Pugh, "The Structure of Negotiation: Lessons from El Salvador for Contemporary Conflict Resolution," *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 83–105, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1571-9979.2008.00209.x>.

90. See Erika Harding, "El Salvador: U.N. Observer Mission (ONUSAL) Announces Conclusion of FMLN Disarmament," *NotiSur*, August 20, 1993. Although the discovery of arms caches in Nicaragua in May 1993 threatened this balance of power, overall, the balance was preserved. See Joanna Spear, "The Disarmament and Demobilisation of Warring Factions in the Aftermath of Civil Wars: Key Implementation Issues," *Civil Wars*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1999), pp. 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249908402404>.

91. Spear, "The Disarmament and Demobilisation of Warring Factions."

92. Harding, "El Salvador: U.N. Observer Mission (ONUSAL)"; Knut Walter and Philip J. Williams, "The Military and Democratization in El Salvador," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Spring 1993), pp. 39–88, <https://doi.org/10.2307/166102>; Alberto Martín Álvarez, *From Revolutionary War to Democratic Revolution: The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador* (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2010); Terry Lynn Karl, "El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2

the demobilization process was asymmetrical, a rebalancing of power was achieved. For example, according to President Alfredo Cristiani, during delays in the purging of the officer corps, the government allowed the FMLN to maintain its air-to-surface missiles, and both sides remained cohesive with their remilitarization networks intact.⁹³ Both parties seemingly understood that the distribution of power was sustained.

As revealed in its internal party memos, the FMLN's plan was to remain a peaceful alternative political force even if it narrowly lost the elections, as such a result would be congruent with its military strength.⁹⁴ FMLN members saw the rebels' competitive participation in national elections as a "significant victory," even if they did not have a legislative majority.⁹⁵ "Whatever happens, we win," they declared.⁹⁶

With the power balance unaltered, the FMLN did not expect a better military outcome with correspondingly superior electoral prospects were it to engage in renewed fighting.⁹⁷ Despite losing the founding postwar election⁹⁸ and retaining the organizational capacity to return to war, the FMLN did not remilitarize. Similarly, the government remained convinced that were it to return to war, its military fate and its corresponding future electoral fate would also remain unchanged.⁹⁹ Both parties thus decided to consolidate peace.

REVISIONIST WAR IN ANGOLA

Angola followed a divergent trajectory in the aftermath of its nearly two-decade-long war between UNITA rebels and the Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government forces. During the Mavinga battle in early 1991, "the MPLA realized that it could not obtain a military vic-

(Spring 1992), pp. 147–164, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20045130>; and Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*.

93. Author interview with President Alfredo Cristiani, San Salvador, El Salvador, July 2018.

94. FMLN, Secretaría de Relaciones y Plan Electoral, "FMLN 92 Memo on Party Image Communication Strategy," September 28, 1992, Museo de la Palabra e Imagen Archivo Histórico, San Salvador, El Salvador.

95. Howard W. French, "Salvador's Ex-Rebels Trail in Polls but Look Ahead," *New York Times*, March 6, 1994, <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/06/world/salvador-s-ex-rebels-trail-in-polls-but-look-ahead.html>.

96. Steve Cagan, "El Salvador Tries to Vote; Election Diary," *Nation*, April 18, 1994, p. 523.

97. Author interview with FMLN leader Shafik Handal, San Salvador, El Salvador, July 2018; author interview with FMLN leader Facundo Guardado, San Salvador, July 2018; and author interview with FMLN presidential candidate Rubén Zamora, San Salvador, July 2018.

98. In the 1994 election, the FMLN earned 26 percent of the valid votes in the first round of the presidential race, 32 percent in the second round, and twenty-one of El Salvador's eighty-four legislative seats. Michael Krennerich, "El Salvador," in Dieter Nohlen, ed., *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook*, Vol. 1, *North America, Central America, and the Caribbean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

99. Author interview with President Alfredo Cristiani, San Salvador, El Salvador, July 2018; and author interview with government peace negotiator David Escobar Galindo, San Salvador, July 2018.

tory.”¹⁰⁰ UNITA had reached a similar conclusion, opening the door to negotiations, which bore fruit in the Bicesse Accords, signed on May 31, 1991: “After over 30 years of war—14 of anti-colonialist struggle and 16 of bitter conflict fueled by external backers—most Angolans [were] desperately weary of conflict and said they would vote for any party that will bring peace and stability.”¹⁰¹ The accords called for multiparty elections to be held in September the following year, in which the warring parties would compete as electoral parties.

In the interim, the demobilization process in Angola “upset the balance of power between the two militaries. . . . The cantonment process had worked decisively in UNITA’s favor; UNITA’s army maintained its discipline and remained a unified force that could be mobilized quickly for fighting purposes.”¹⁰² Compared with 50 percent of government troops, 94 percent of UNITA troops were quartered in cantonments.¹⁰³ Partially because of its relative geographic dispersion, “the government’s army . . . suffered from poor morale; desertion and drunkenness were rife.”¹⁰⁴ Many government fighters “self-demobilized,” or deserted, and as many as 12,000 soldiers became unaccounted for¹⁰⁵ as the Angolan government largely “neglected its regular armed forces.”¹⁰⁶ Additionally, “while UNITA was merely handing over its more out-of-date weapons, keeping its more modern armaments and best-trained men in reserve camps,”¹⁰⁷ the Angolan government “failed to maintain its existing military equipment.”¹⁰⁸ This generated an unforeseen demobilization-induced shock to the two main belligerent players’ power positions.¹⁰⁹ During this pe-

100. Anthony W. Pereira, “The Neglected Tragedy: The Return to War in Angola, 1992–3,” *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (March 1994), pp. 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X00012520>.

101. Andrew Meldrum, “Angola: Hungry to Vote,” *Africa Report*, Vol. 37, No. 6 (November 1992), pp. 26–30.

102. Stedman, “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,” pp. 37, 40. See also Human Rights Watch Arms Project and Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Angola: Arms Trade and Violations of the Laws of War since the 1992 Elections* (New York: Human Rights Watch, November 1994), <https://www.hrw.org/reports/ANGOLA94N.PDF> [hereafter Human Rights Watch, *Angola*]. On the demobilization-induced shock to the power positions of the two main belligerent players, see UN Secretary General, *Report to the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III)*, S/1995/588 (New York: UN Security Council, July 17, 1995).

103. João Gomes Porto and Imogen Parsons, *Sustaining the Peace in Angola: An Overview of Current Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration* (Bonn, Germany: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 2003).

104. Stedman, “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,” pp. 37, 40.

105. David Sogge, *Sustainable Peace: Angola’s Recovery* (Harare: Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, 1992).

106. Human Rights Watch, *Angola*.

107. James Ciment, ed., *Encyclopedia of Conflicts since World War II*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 284.

108. Human Rights Watch, *Angola*.

109. Author interview with Stephen Stedman, Palo Alto, California, October 2013.

riod between the ceasefire and the elections, “many observers expected the MPLA to collapse,” and there were many MPLA officials who therefore believed “their party would be defeated in the elections.”¹¹⁰

As a result of this power shock, “Savimbi’s generals informed him that Angola could be taken by a military surprise attack. . . . The peace process had greatly strengthened UNITA; Savimbi was confident that UNITA could win the [next] war.”¹¹¹ Given the illegibility of this DDR-induced shock, however, voters did not accurately update on the new power balance and instead used the war outcome as their heuristic for gauging competence on future security. As a result, the voters were split—the newly militarily empowered UNITA rebels narrowly lost the founding postwar elections with 40 percent of the first-round presidential vote and 34 percent of the National Assembly, earning seventy of the 220 seats. Accordingly, Savimbi judged the founding election results as incongruent with the new postwar power distribution and the likely outcome of a resumed round of fighting. Indeed, “fearing [the] consequences of this *discrepancy* between military power and electoral support, [U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Herman] Cohen admitted that it was not hard to wish for a UNITA [electoral] victory.”¹¹² UNITA perceived that it could return to the postwar ballot box as the military victor, a title that, through security voting, would significantly raise its prospects of an electoral landslide in future elections.¹¹³ “In a bid to consolidate control of its strongholds and to take over new areas before a [future electoral] run-off, UNITA launched a military offensive”¹¹⁴ and returned to full-scale revisionist war.

RESIDUAL PEACE AROUND THE WORLD

I turn from Angola to a collection of empirical cases in which the balance of power was sustained but the war-winner lost the postwar election. Several cases defied the trend of high security salience ahead of the founding elections. Wars in noncontiguous or satellite territories, which affected only certain regions and minority populations, exhibited such a dynamic. For example, most of the national populations of the Philippines, the United Kingdom,

110. Human Rights Watch, *Angola*.

111. Stedman, “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,” pp. 37, 40.

112. Spears, *Civil War in African States*, p. 201. Emphasis added.

113. UNITA’s plan ultimately proved ill-fated, as it “underestimated the resolve and capability of the MPLA to fight.” See Stedman, “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,” p. 40. UNITA lost the second war, and its electoral results in the second founding postwar elections of 2008 were far inferior to those of the first. It did not return to war in 2008 because the balance of power stuck and, therefore, its dismal electoral performance reflected its similarly dismal military one; a future war would be unlikely to yield an alternative outcome.

114. Human Rights Watch, *Angola*.

and Indonesia—those living in Luzon, Great Britain, or Java—likely did not acutely feel the civil war violence taking place in the island territories of Mindanao, Northern Ireland, or East Timor, or the relief when peace followed. Accordingly, security voting was not a powerful force in the postwar national elections in these three states, and the victor party did not gain a significant boost from the war outcomes; rather, other dimensions of voting dominated.¹¹⁵ A return to war would have been unlikely to improve the belligerent parties' performances on these other dimensions; thus, peace resulted.

In other cases, the successor parties ran poor campaigns and were punished electorally for doing so. They thus lost at the polls despite maintaining the military upper hand. For example, in Kosovo, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) carried the prestige “of having led [and won] the war of liberation against Serbia.” The power balance “did not change”¹¹⁶ after the war, but the KLA's successor party, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), nonetheless lost to the nonbelligerent Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) party in the founding elections because the PDK failed to moderate, reach out beyond its wartime constituency, or signal restraint.¹¹⁷ An improved future political campaign, not remilitarization, was the remedy to its electoral loss, and the KLA's commander, Hashim Thaçi, “[peacefully] conceded defeat.”¹¹⁸

In a final (rare) set of cases, the power balance held but the war-winner lost the election because voters chose nonbelligerents' offers of rule of law over belligerents' promises of iron-fist security. For example, in Liberia, despite military successes, neither the rebel groups (LURD and Movement for Democracy in Liberia) nor the belligerent government party (National Patriotic Party) emerged as significant forces in the 2005 election. Instead, two nonbelligerents—a female technocrat and a football star—competed for votes because the citizenry was disillusioned with short-lived episodes of past postwar leviathan peace and preferred civilian parties.¹¹⁹ Again, remilitar-

115. For example, in Indonesia, the Golkar ruling party had a relatively strong showing against the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in 2004, despite losing to the rebels in East Timor. See Robin McDowell, “Indonesia Gets Ready for Parliamentary Elections,” *Associated Press*, April 8, 2009. Similarly, after “losing” Bangladesh, the Pakistan People's Party experienced relatively little backlash and emerged victorious in the 1977 Pakistani election (although scholars debate whether Pakistan's election was free and fair).

116. Stephan Hensell and Felix Gerdes, “Exit from War: The Transformation of Rebels into Post-war Power Elites,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (April 2017), pp. 168–184, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0967010616677713>.

117. International Crisis Group [ICG], *Kosovo: Landmark Election*, Balkans Report No. 120 (Brussels: ICG, November 21, 2001).

118. Elena Pokalova, “From Separatism to Terrorism and Back: The Case of Kosovo and the KLA,” in Glen M. E. Duerr, ed., *Secessionism and Terrorism: Bombs, Blood, and Independence in Europe and Eurasia* (London: Routledge, 2018).

119. David Harris, “Liberia 2005: An Unusual African Post-conflict Election,” *Journal of Modern Af-*

ization would have been unlikely to alter these citizen preferences; residual peace consolidated.¹²⁰

RECALIBRATED PEACE IN NICARAGUA

The final case study travels back to Central America, this time to the Contra War in Nicaragua (1982–1990), which pitted the Sandinista revolutionary government (Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN)¹²¹ against the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries, the Contra rebels. This war, terminated with the Esquipulas Peace Process and the Tela Accords, ended asymmetrically with the “strategic defeat”¹²² and “military and political collapse of the counterrevolution.”¹²³ The population observed that it was the Contras, not the Sandinistas, who had agreed to disarm its 22,000 comrades in arms. Moreover, the United States had agreed to the peace accords, signaling that it did not believe that the Contras could win an outright victory. A consensus emerged that the Sandinistas were militarily winning at the end of the war. This was the dominant view at the start of the political campaign for the 1990 founding elections, which brought the incumbent Sandinistas into political contestation with the National Opposition Union (UNO), a conglomerate of opposition parties, backed by the United States, with arguable ties to the Contras.¹²⁴ In the words of Vanessa Castro and Gary Prevost, “The issue of war and peace was the most important during the campaign.”¹²⁵

rican Studies, Vol. 44, No. 3 (September 2006), pp. 375–395, <https://www.doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X06001819>.

120. Of course, it is possible to reverse the electoral loss short of war through either fraud or repression. See Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Susan D. Hyde, and Ryan S. Jablonski, “When Do Governments Resort to Election Violence?” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (January 2014), pp. 149–179, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000671>; and Mares and Young, “Buying, Expropriating, and Stealing Votes.” Myanmar constitutes such a case. When its military’s National Unity Party lost to the nonbelligerent National League for Democracy in the 1990 election, the ruling junta annulled the results, ended the democratic experiment, and jailed the electoral winner. “Burma: 20 Years After 1990 Elections, Democracy Still Denied,” *Human Rights Watch*, May 26, 2010, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/05/26/burma-20-years-after-1990-elections-democracy-still-denied>.

121. The Sandinistas came to power in 1979 in the successful mass insurrection that brought the fall of dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

122. William I. Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, *David and Goliath: The U.S. War against Nicaragua* (New York: Monthly Review, 1987), p. 253.

123. Luis Hector Serra, “The Grass-Roots Organizations,” in Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991), pp. 49–76.

124. UNO constituted an unwieldy, fractious conglomerate of opposition parties that spanned the entire political spectrum but tilted to the right. See David R. Dye et al., *Contesting Everything, Winning Nothing: The Search for Consensus in Nicaragua, 1990–1995* (Cambridge, Mass.: Hemisphere Initiatives, 1995). Historian Margarita Vaninni notes that “UNO was the political arm of the Contras,” but others saw a greater break with, if not full separation from, the rebels. Author interview, Margarita Vaninni, Managua, Nicaragua, April 22, 2019.

125. Paul Oquist, “Sociopolitical Dynamics of the 1990 Nicaraguan Elections,” in Vanessa Castro

Going into this campaign, decided security voters strongly favored the war-winning Sandinistas over UNO (42.5 to 18.6 percent). Moreover, they viewed the Sandinistas as most competent in building peace (41 to 26 percent). These preferences held not only for the Sandinistas' core supporters—public sector employees and the military—but also for traditional swing voters. The Sandinistas were thus “confident of success at the polls.”¹²⁶

Yet, approximately 30–50 percent of the electorate remained undecided at this point in the campaign; they were most concerned with “political stability,” but unsure about who was more credible on security issues.¹²⁷ These voters, I argue, updated their assessments of security competence as the power balance shifted after the war's end.

While USSR patronage for the Sandinistas was dissipating, the United States doubled down on its support for the Contras during the electoral campaign, engaging in aggressive public rhetoric and bellicose behavior. President George H. W. Bush issued clear statements that the war and embargo would end only if UNO won the election.¹²⁸ The United States further reduced its support for Contra disarmament and threatened to engage in a direct war against Nicaragua (following its invasion of Panama, a highly legible event for the citizenry). This generated the sense that “Washington could extend the conflict at will”¹²⁹ and thus that the balance of power was actually a “frustrated peace and stagnated war” between the United States and the Sandinistas, rather than a Sandinista victory over the defeated, and disarming, Contras.¹³⁰

Undecided voters updated their perceptions of this power balance. Of those who made up their minds during the campaign, 71.6 percent voted for UNO and 12.4 percent voted for FSLN; approximately 36 percent of the Nicaraguan

and Gary Prevost, eds., *The 1990 Elections in Nicaragua and Their Aftermath* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992), p. 27.

126. David Close, “Central American Elections 1989–90: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama,” *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 1991), p. 70, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794\(91\)90006-E](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794(91)90006-E).

127. At the start of the campaign, 55 percent of swing voters were undecided about who was more credible on security issues. By the end of the campaign, this number of undecided voters fell to 15 percent. See William Barnes, “Rereading the Nicaraguan Pre-Election Polls,” in Castro and Prevost, *The 1990 Elections in Nicaragua and Their Aftermath*, pp. 41–128; and Leslie E. Anderson and Lawrence C. Dodd, *Learning Democracy: Citizen Engagement and Electoral Choice in Nicaragua 1990–2001* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 82–83.

128. Salvador Martí i Puig, “The Adaptation of the FSLN: Daniel Ortega's Leadership and Democracy in Nicaragua,” *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter 2010), pp. 79–106, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2010.00099.x>.

129. Close, “Central American Elections 1989–90,” pp. 71–72.

130. Anderson and Dodd, *Learning Democracy*.

electorate decided to vote for UNO over the course of the campaign.¹³¹ This electoral “middle” gave up on the Sandinistas being able to solve the “U.S. problem,” and decided that voting for only the U.S.-allied party would bring about a sustainable end to war.¹³² Indeed, a large majority of all voters (76 percent) agreed in postelection polls that “if the Sandinistas had won, the war would never have ended.”¹³³ Of the voters, 90 percent believed that UNO’s “principal accomplishment” was terminating the conflict and securing peace. Winning the accurately updated security swing vote enabled UNO to amass 54 percent of the vote when the Nicaraguan electorate went to cast their ballots on February 25, 1990. The incumbent Sandinistas’ loss—at 41 percent of the vote—reflected an altered postwar power balance rather than the war outcome. This loss was variably described as a “stunning electoral defeat,” and a “stunning upset,” which “stunned many political analysts,” and produced “stunned Sandinistas.”¹³⁴

And yet, in the aftermath of this electoral loss, the Sandinistas did not remilitarize. Instead, they updated their calculations of the power balance and decided that, given the U.S. preponderance of force, a return to war would yield neither a superior war outcome nor a boosted future electoral result. Recalibrated peace was thus consolidated.

OVER TIME: POST-ELECTION POWER SHIFT IN NICARAGUA. This case offers valuable longitudinal variation in the power balance, which I use to explore the remilitarization dynamics over time. Peace in Nicaragua was short-lived because the United States again shocked the balance of power by using the 1990 election as its exit strategy, withdrawing support from the Contras in the election’s aftermath.¹³⁵ As a result, the Contra-backed UNO president, Violeta Chamorro, “chose against all expectations to govern not in alliance with those who elected her but rather in conjunction with the Sandinistas.”¹³⁶

131. Oquist, “Sociopolitical Dynamics of the 1990 Nicaraguan Elections.”

132. Castro and Prevost, *The 1990 Elections in Nicaragua and Their Aftermath*.

133. Oquist, “Sociopolitical Dynamics of the 1990 Nicaraguan Elections.”

134. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Vol. 4 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 151.

135. Moldova presents a counterfactual example. The Russian Army remained stationed in Transnistria indefinitely after the 1994 elections to guarantee the long-term balance of military power. In the words of Steven Roper, the “Moldovan side realized that it could not defeat the Transnistrians as long as they enjoyed the support of Russia’s 14th Army.” Steven D. Roper, “Regionalism in Moldova: The Case of Transnistria and Gagauzia,” *Regional & Federal Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2001), pp. 101–122, <https://doi.org/10.1080/714004699>. Renewed fighting was therefore unlikely to strengthen the prospects in future elections of the Moldovan electoral loser, the Christian Democratic Popular Front. The party stood by the ceasefire arrangement and remained at peace.

136. Timothy C. Brown, *The Real Contra War: Highlander Peasant Resistance in Nicaragua* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), p. 175.

Chamorro's pact permitted the Sandinistas to "continue to command the army without civilian supervision and let their intelligence apparatus keep its autonomy, authority and power."¹³⁷ The extraction of foreign patronage from the Contras combined with Chamorro's pact again shifted the balance of power; this time, it favored the 1990 electoral loser, the Sandinistas, who exploited this shift to launch an offensive against the Contras. In so doing, the Sandinistas sought to guarantee their electoral future. As Timothy Brown estimates, "Largely as a consequence of the Chamorro-Sandinista pact . . . armed violence [resumed] . . . [with] violent attacks against former [Contra] Comandos or their families. . . . The vast majority of the perpetrators of these acts were Sandinista army, police, or party activists."¹³⁸ In response, thousands of former Contras remilitarized. By 1992, an estimated 22,835 irregular troops had rearmed and reverted to military struggle as the "Re-Contras."¹³⁹

Conclusion

Why does fighting recur after some civil conflicts, whereas peace consolidates following others? This article informs an important theoretical and policy debate on the influence of elections on the durability of peace after wars. The debate centers on how to harness the benefits of democracy while constraining the electoral losers from "rejecting the election results and returning to war."¹⁴⁰ Yet, the existing literature has examined neither the relationship between election outcomes and remilitarization nor the behavior of electoral losers. Additionally, it tends to examine national-level indicators of war recurrence rather than capturing which belligerents reinitiate war. This article provides evidence against the conventional wisdom that, absent safeguards, postwar elections provide a "revolving door" back to war.

Using new data on postwar election results and remilitarization coded at the belligerent level, I have found that losing elections does not drive belligerents to remilitarize. Instead, my analyses suggest that citizens—engaging in security voting and using war outcomes as a heuristic to secure the future—tend to elect peace. Preserving the balance of power in the aftermath of such elections is, however, critical to cementing this peace. Electoral losers prove likely to

137. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

138. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

139. Rose J. Spalding, "From Low-Intensity War to Low-Intensity Peace: The Nicaraguan Peace Process," in Cynthia J. Arnson, ed., *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 43–44.

140. Brancati and Snyder, "Time to Kill," pp. 822–853.

sustainably demilitarize if the power balance remains stable and election outcomes reflect this military power balance, or if other factors determine the election results. In such cases, renewed fighting offers few prospects of modifying the losers' shares of future political power. If shocks alter the power distribution in the losers' favor, however, and citizens do not accurately update their understanding of the power distribution, electoral losers become incentivized to remilitarize because superior military war outcomes confer electoral benefits. Of course, belligerents do not always calculate accurately. In Liberia in 2000, for example, ULIMO decided to remilitarize (as LURD) to strengthen its political position in future elections. It miscalculated and performed poorly in the subsequent 2005 postwar election. In other cases, such as Croatia and Cambodia, the decision to remilitarize did generate the anticipated electoral rewards in postwar elections following second wars. Additionally, security voting may create perverse incentives even short of war. If belligerent parties succeed electorally when security remains salient over time, they become incentivized to endogenously sustain security's salience in voters' minds through not only espousing fear-mongering rhetoric but also (potentially) ensuring that security threats persist through low-level violence.¹⁴¹

These findings suggest that bargaining may fail not only because of commitment problems, information asymmetries, and issue indivisibility,¹⁴² but also because war creates benefits that cannot be exchanged *ex ante*. It follows that the international community should focus on preventing shifts in the balance of power after war by averting asymmetric demobilization processes that strengthen certain belligerents but weaken others. Problematically, foreign interveners often use elections as their exit strategy. This proves destabilizing because power tends to shift after their withdrawal, incentivizing belligerents to remilitarize in order to establish the new power balance that will underpin future elections. Delaying elections to bolster democratic institutions may be beneficial. Such a lapse in time can increase opportunities for power shifts, but it can also give voters time to register and accurately estimate those shifts. Finally, while power sharing may confer other benefits, it appears unlikely to be able to guard against electoral losers returning to war if they face a military

141. On election violence, see Sarah Birch, Ursula Daxecker, and Kristine Höglund, "Electoral Violence: An Introduction," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (January 2020), pp. 3–14, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022343319889657>; and Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov, "Which Elections Can Be Lost?" *Political Analysis*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Spring 2012), pp. 191–210, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpr040>.

142. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War."

power shock. Rendering power sharing endogenous to morphing power dynamics after war could make this tool more effective at averting the resumption of violence.

Stabilizing the power balance after war is critical. But where its inversion is unavoidable, the international community should seek to detect and communicate to voters the new power distribution. Doing so could facilitate voters' updating on which party is stronger, help ensure that they elect the stabilizing party, and thereby avert revisionist war. Overall, understanding in which post-conflict scenario a state falls, and its associated electoral incentives and disincentives for remilitarization, could ballast the state during the stormy seas of the transition from war to peace.