

# Political Institutions, Insurgencies and Electoral Violence

**Nadir Gergin, Ph.D.**

Turkish National Police

# Political Institutions, Insurgencies and Electoral Violence

Nadir Gergin, Ph.D.

## Abstract

Political institutions are “*weapons*” in the struggle for political power. Since the elections can provide insurgent political power and access resource, the insurgent has good reasons to engage in electoral politics. And this article is an attempt to explore the rationales of the insurgent/terrorist organizations to engage in electoral politics and electoral violence. The first section explores the importance of elections for the insurgent. The second section analyzes election violence from several aspects and identifies actors and rationales of it. The third section deals with pre-election violence and establishes a theoretical framework by introducing four main reasons of pre-election violence and five factors that could replace the government. And the final section focuses on the post-election and its main reason, electoral results.

**Keywords:** Electoral Violence, Insurgent’s Political Party, Pre-Election Violence, Post-Election Violence

## Introduction

Elections and political parties play an important role in democratic states. Political parties are indispensable components of a democratic political order and institutions serve as means to solve economic and social differences peacefully (Weinberg, 1991). Geddes (1996) referred to political institutions as “*weapons*” in the struggle for political power (as cited in Finn, 2000) because political institutions are vehicles to make trade-off among competing values and to establish the rules for obtaining power (Quandt, 1998). Elections allow for the “peaceful” transfer of this power (Höglund, 2009). Furthermore, they provide legitimacy through direct popular participation, and, in turn, legitimacy creates legitimate governments enjoying popular support for their policies (Elkit and Svensson 1997, as cited in Sisk, 2008) and capacity for effective governance (Brown 2003, as cited in Sisk, 2008).

From this perspective, electoral process is an alternative way to violence because of being a means for governance (Fischer, 2004). For instance, the Nicaraguan election in 1990 was the ‘first peaceful transfer of power from a revolutionary government to its opposition (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a).

There are four important functions in democracies (Finn, 2000): First, “*legitimizing*” function by coupling political obligation with consensual participation. Second, “*integrating*” function by binding citizens and political parties to the state. Third, “*socializing*” function by teaching and transmitting democratic values to the citizens. Finally, “*transferring political power*” by providing a certain and conventionalized means (p.52-53). However, at the same time, they are also

vulnerable to political violence, because elections are means of achieving or retaining political power and governance (Sisk, 2008); and violence can be used as a tactic in political competition (Fischer, 2004). This study focuses on this latest function and systematically explores how the insurgent organizations see elections, why they resort violence and how they can influence the election results.

The first section explores the importance of elections for the insurgent. The second section analyzes election violence from several aspects and identifies actors and rationales of it. The third section deals with pre-election violence and establishes a theoretical framework by introducing four main reasons of pre-election violence and five factors that could replace the government. And the final section focuses on the post-election and its main reason, electoral results.

## **Understanding the Importance of Elections for the Insurgent**

Since the elections can provide insurgent political power and access resource, the insurgent has good reasons to engage in electoral politics. Namely, when political parties won the power, they will be able to organize campaigns, mobilize masses, and oversee policies (Rapoport and Weinberg 2000a, p.28). In other words, the insurgent can intentionally use its political party to gain sympathy from not only its native or government's population but also from the international community. By this way, it can also make their armed struggle with the government legitimate.

In addition, when the insurgent's political party took office, it would expand the pools of its supporters through providing benefits to them thus strength their loyalty. Furthermore, it could also destabilize the political system and even achieve self-rule or independence from the government (Weinberg 1991). These reasons include increasing 'popular support for the insurgent'; 'gaining legitimacy' and 'respectability'; 'increasing the pool of its resources and the role of its military wing'.

### ***Increasing Popular Support***

The most scholars focusing on this issue points out the importance of participating elections in obtaining popular support for the insurgent thus broadening the movement and increasing the organizational resources to achieve insurgent's goals. The insurgent may emphasize the ethnic and cultures differences, and use political competition in calling for mobilization of large sections of the population, because conflicts are commonly used to gain popular support for its political party (Höglund, 2009, p.420).

Ginsberg and Weissberg (1978) purported that elections are not only means of popular control but also mechanisms for generating popular support for the government and its policies as well. Taber (2002) argued that "*political mobilization*" is the first task of the insurgent, and Richardson (2001) pointed out the importance of electoral politics as a means for political mobilization. According to Richardson, the issue is two-fold:

(a) First, electoral politics is used by the insurgent as a means of building popular support for the purpose of political mobilization, and

(b) second, electoral results are considered as an indication of the success or failure of that effort, because obtaining a seat in the national or local government is viewed as a success and reinforces the terrorist organization's influence over the population.

For instance, till the Westminster election in April 1981, the IRA's political wing the Sinn Fein used to follow an "*absenteeism policy*", which prevented their elected candidates from taking their seats in the parliament. However, the president of Sinn Fein Gerry Adams and others realized that by remaining isolated from the political negotiations, they cannot mobilize the population towards their political goals, therefore, they rescinded their absenteeism policy at 1986 Sinn Fein conference (McAllister, 2004, p.128).

Drake and Silva (1986) viewed votes as a "trade" to gain tangible benefits from the government. In order to get elected the insurgent could pledge the delivery of resources to its supporters and once elected, through providing "*domestic rewards*" such as distributing resources and key positions of the government to its supporters (as cited in Boyle, 2009, p.217), the insurgent would be able to win population on its own side, and consolidate its control over the population.

Similarly, Höglund (2009) explains such mechanism through '*patron-client relationship*' for political power, in which the 'protection, services or rewards to the clients are provided by the 'patron'. Due to this mutual benefit oriented relationship, 'clients', who are usually individuals of low status, become the patron's political followers. As a consequence of such relationship, since the political power is very important for the patron, and his/her followers, they can strive to keep the patron in power, even with violence (p.420).

### ***Legitimacy***

The insurgent may gain democratic legitimacy through elections (Weinberg, 1991; Höglund, 2009). The election outcomes may encourage the insurgent to demand secession and concessions (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a), thus would gain domestic and international legitimacy. On the other hand, when it happens, the loyalists of the government may oppose the insurgent group's demands and resort to violence against the insurgent and its supporters.

### ***Respectability***

A desire to gain respectability in domestic or international politics may lead the insurgent to end its violent activities and engage in electoral politics (Weinberg, 1991).

### ***Increasing the Resource Pool of the Insurgent***

Weinberg (1991) found that terrorist groups with linkages to political parties are more successful in persisting and waging their armed struggle more than those groups lacking these linkages. He suggests that terrorist groups with political party links have an easier time in recruiting new members and obtaining logistical aids from the population (p.434). Furthermore presence of military wing makes it easier for the insurgent to return violence if it does not satisfy the election outcomes (Höglund, 2009, p.420), therefore it would be wiser strategy for the insurgent not to demobilize all of its armed forces.



## *Increase the Role of the Insurgent's Military Wing*

Competition in elections may complement rather than replace the insurgent's military activities, and reduces the risk of major splits within the organization over tactics (Höglund, 2009). For instance, with 1981 election, the popular support encouraged the Sinn Fein, for the first time, to contest in 1982 Northern Ireland Assembly elections under the Sinn Fein. The Sinn Fein won 10.1% in 1982 election; this percentage increased to 13.4% in the Westminster election, (McAllister, 2004, p.127). The insurgent IRA interpreted this results that they could fight an armed struggle and win the elections at the same time (O'Brien, 1999, p. 126, as cited in McAllister, 2004). In 1986, the IRA adopted an electoral strategy combined with a military campaign and sought to transform its military success that generated popular support into electoral success, which could be used to legitimize the continued use of threat of force (McAllister, 2004, p.128).

Neumann (2005) describes seven reasons or advantages of the insurgent's participation in elections:

**First**, it can exploit the democratic process to strengthen the insurgent's military wing.

**Second**, insurgent's political wing may facilitate insurgent recruitment and radicalization by providing "vetting mechanism", or providing a possibility of "legalized fundraising" (p.946).

**Third** is to obtain official recognition and legitimacy.

**Forth** is to mobilize the mass and broaden the movement— that is, to tap into resources and mobilize sections of community that had not been available previously, which Resource Mobilization Theorists name isolated adherents and constituents.

**Fifth**, is to secure continuity both in terms ideology and personnel. Sixth is to neutralize the government's military superiority.

**Finally**, the insurgent can realistically assess consequences of the terrorism campaign and demonstrate its popular support with the election results.

For instance, as Neumann (2005) notes, when the IRA's political party Sinn Fein received a substantial vote share in 1981, Gerry Adams, the leader of the party, expanded its political wing, however giving importance to the political activities did not diminish the importance of military wing of the IRA and armed struggle, instead, it legitimized the armed struggle, demonstrated popular support for the IRA, advanced the movement.

As Gerry Adam, the president of the Sinn Fein, stated "*Elections have helped to develop the party, and experienced bunch of political workers*" (as cited in Neumann, 2005, p.967). Furthermore, electoral success also gave the political wing a kind of veto power which would make any constitutional accommodation between the main moderate parties in Northern Ireland (Neumann, 2005). By taking seat in the Irish parliament, they reached a political power to force a minority government to adopt a more intransigent manner vis-à-vis Britain and to refrain from introducing harsh counterterrorism measures in the IRA's most important areas (Moloney, 2002, as cited in Neumann, 2005).

## Election Violence

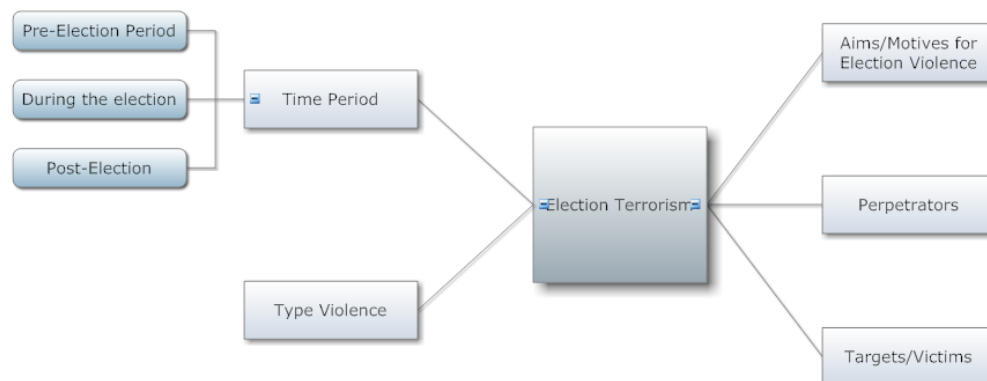
Election violence is as a special type of political violence. Dhanagare (1968) defines “election violence” as “*use of force in the struggle for scarce power positions and statuses between two or more individuals or political parties and their supporters (p.151)*”. Lewis (1964) focuses on the political rivals and defines the aim of election violence as to “*neutralize, injure or eliminate rival or rivals*” (as cited in Dhanagare, 1968, p.151). Unlike Lewis, Fischer (2004) focuses on the electoral process and the electorates rather than perpetrators. Fischer defines election violence as a means to *determine, delay or otherwise influence* the results of an election (p.6). Sisk (2002) stresses the “*election process*” and “*election outcomes*” and argues that election violence aims to *vitiating the elections* all together by undermining the integrity of the results, or to *influence voting behavior* through threat or intimidation (p.1).

Few studies on election violence has focused on the effects of terrorism on the election results and electoral process (Guelke and Smyth, 1992; Neumann, 2005; Kydd and Walter, 2002; Bali, 2007; Gassebner et al., 2007; Rose and Murphy, 2007). Although the past literature provides some insights about under what conditions recourse terrorism and how it affects election results, it offers little information how the election results affect terrorism in the post-election period.

Furthermore, the scant existent literature on post-election violence usually explains from a ‘relative deprivation approach’ and lacks a ‘resource mobilization approach’. Thus, it is important to ask not only how the terrorism influence elections, but also how the election results influence terrorism as well.

### *Dimensions of Election Violence*

Scholars (Dhanagare, 1968; Fischer, 2002; Sisk, 2008) addressed and described various dimensions of election violence. These dimensions can be categorized under five groups (Figure 1): 1) Perpetrators; 2) Victims or targets of electoral violence; 3) Types of election Violence; 4) Time Periods, and 5) Aims, or Motives of Election Violence. Aims, targets, type of violence and motives of the perpetrators are highly dependent on the time period of the election.



## ***Perpetrators***

Election violence can be committed by various actors. Dhanagare (1968) includes only individuals, political parties and their supporters into his definition of election. Fischer (2004) expands them and divides the perpetrators into five categories:

### **Voter Motivated Conflict**

This type election violence occurs when voters challenge the state and claim unfairness in the election process. Massive cheating or fraud – such as conspiracies to bribe voters, tampering with ballots, fallacious counting, or other measures (such as releasing large numbers of prisoners to vote) – can be the stimulus for a voters (Sisk, 2008). For instance, in Thailand elections on January the 6th of 2001, the voters believed that local officials were biased in their counting procedures therefore organized protests and burned police vehicles to disrupt vote counting.

### **State-Motivated Conflict**

It occurs when the State initiates conflicts with electorates who challenge the results of elections.

### **Rival-motivated Conflict**

Political rivals may conflict with each other for political gains. The Fischer (2002)'s study findings suggest that rival-motivated conflict is the most common election type but also most responsive to mediation among the others. Rival motivated election violence may stem from history of intense rivalry among political clans, stark competition for government posts that carry the potential for power and access to resources and state largesse (Sisk, 2008). Sri Lanka elections of 2001 set up an example of a pre-election violence performed by the governing political party. As deSilva (2002) pointed out, in 2001 Sri Lanka elections, in Hambantota district of the Southern Province, a senior cabinet minister and his close associates sought to terrorize the electorate by attacks through armed groups on opposition candidates and their supporters (deSilva, 2002).

### **Insurgent-Motivated Conflict**

The insurgent capitalizes on the visibility of an election to promote the insurgency. Fischer (2002) found that insurgent-motivated conflicts are growing and the most difficult to prevent because of being unresponsive to governance or other electoral objectives, and seeking only to *disrupt, delay and diminish the democratic process*.

### **A Combination of those Categories**

Scholars include different actors into their definitions, but most of them conclude that election violence is a collective, purposeful and instrumental action; so, if it is collective, and instrumental, then it requires an extensive organization, leadership, and resources (Sisk, 2008, p.13); because only with an effective leadership and organization, the rank-and-file can be bridged, logistical needs to carry out violent act can be created, and associational or population representation dimension can be generated. Thus, organizational resources allow the leaders and organizational structure to foment violence (Sisk, 2008, p.13).

Although election violence can be performed by various actors, the insurgent-motivated conflict is the primary interest of this study. This type of violence requires an organization, leadership and resources. Thus, both resource mobilization approach and relative deprivation approach can be useful to explain election violence.

### ***Victims or Targets of Election Violence***

Election violence includes various victims or targets. They can be people such as electorates, candidates, political party workers, places such as polling stations, offices party buildings, campaign materials, vehicles, vehicles or data such as ballot boxes; and victims can be resident in target ethnic, gender, geographical, or political “hot spot” communities (Fischer, 2002).

### ***Forms of Election Violence***

Election violence can be committed through various ways. It can be *random* or *organized act*, or *threat* to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse a political stakeholder or stakeholders (Fischer, 2002). Types of violence may also include riots, demonstrations, terrorist campaigns, military coups, civil wars (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a, and p.33), abductions, direct or targeting killings, terrorist attacks on rallies, destruction of property and vehicles, and the like (Sisk, 2008). Although there are various forms of election violence, for the sake of this study, we include only terrorist attacks as indicators of election violence.

### ***Aims and Motives of Election Violence***

Like other dimensions, aims and motives vary and highly depend on the time period of the election. In general, pre-election violence aims to influence *electoral process* and *election results* whereas the post-election violence generally stems from a relative deprivation caused by dissatisfaction with the election results.

Some scholars (Finn, 2000; Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a; Sisk, 2008) pointed out the influence of fair democratic process on election violence. Rapoport and Weinberg (2000a) argue that when the “*electoral process*” is fair, legitimate and works well, the ballots can silence the guns, as the Namibia election of 1989 did end a 30-year war. Furthermore if the parties accepted that winning possibility is too low and costs are too high, the elections can reduce the violence (p.18). Likewise Finn (2000) argues that the “*election structures*” and “*rules*” are among the possible sources of election violence. Similar to Finn’s argument, Hewitt (2000) argues that if certain groups or individuals feel that the political system is “*unresponsive*” to them, they become frustrated, thereby resort to violence (p.326).

To explain reasons for or motives of election violence, usually scholars focus on the benefits—political power, access to resources etc— that would be gained through the elections. In his analysis of election violence, Sisk (2008) emphasizes the *stakes* of political competition, *expectations* about winning and losing in election contests, and the *incentives* that the electoral process creates. He argues that election violence is most likely to occur: when the *stakes* of stakes of winning and losing valued political posts are very high and those political posts are scarce; when winning the elections is the key to livelihood for an entire clan, or ethnic group; depending upon



the expectations, when the winning the elections are highly uncertain about the ultimate outcome of the electoral process, especially when margins of victory very close, they may resort violence to affect uncertain outcomes; or when losing the elections are almost certain, they may use violence to affect voter turnout through discouraging the opponent's supporter electorates; or when the losing elections are almost certain, they may use violence to prevent the election's success.

### ***Time Periods***

Höglund (2009) divides election periods into three periods; 1) Pre-election; 2) during the election; and 3) Post-Election periods. Sisk (2008) includes even more time periods into the pre-and post-election periods. He divides election violence period into five time phases and defines most likely types and targets election violence: forms associated with the time phases. Phase I: The Long Run-Up to Electoral Events; Phase II: The Campaign's Final Lap; Phase III: Polling Day(s); Phase IV: Between Voting and Proclamation; and Phase V: Post-Election Outcomes and their Aftermath.

Scholars have used different time scales in analyzing the election violence ranging from two-week periods (Dhanagare, 1968) to four years (Berrebi and Klor, 2008). Dhanagare (1968) used biweekly periods and focused on only 60 days-period prior to release of the Fourth General Elections of 1967 in India. He divided the election period into four phases of 15 days. The fourth phase covers the election that started on February 15th and ends when most of the poll results were announced. His study mainly covers pre-election period and election days but excludes the post-election period. His study findings suggested that election violence increases as closing to the election day(s) and the violence varies across the constituencies. Sisk (2008) considered election violence time period as cycle, which often conceived of in terms of at least one year prior to an actual election event (Wall, et.al. 2006, as cited in Sisk, 2008, and p.13).

### **Analyzing Dimensions of Election Violence in the Pre-election Period**

Sisk (2008) divides pre-election periods into two periods: Phase I (long run-up to electoral events) and Phase II (the election campaign's final lap). According to Sisk, often objective of election violence in the Phase I of the pre-election period— is to *affect the electoral process*, and to *establish a dominant position within a particular district* by eliminating or threatening potential adversaries (p.14). Thus, it is highly selected rather than indiscriminate violence; the main targets are not innocent, or neutral civilians, instead *electoral process* and the *political rivals* are the most common targets. Therefore, common targets of violence in this period are incumbent state officials or emerging candidates from political parties (Sisk, 2008, p.14).

During the Phase II—the election campaign's final lap—the pattern of violence shifts from incumbent state official and emerging candidates from political parties to potentially adversary electorates and candidates. The main common aim of the election violence during this period is to *intimidate* or *influence voters* through creating insecurity against opponent's potential supporters (Sisk, 2008; Höglund, 2009). As the Election Day approaches, the violence intensifies. Common types of violence in final weeks of the election include clashes between rival groups of supporters;

attacks on election rallies, candidates, bomb scares; attacks or intimidation of election officials; and attacks on domestic/international observers (Sisk, 2008).

Empirical studies supports this argument (Gergin,2012; Newman, 2013; Aksoy, 2014). Gergin (2012) conducted a longitudinal research on general and elections of Turkey and PKK terrorism in Turkey. He concluded that PKK's terrorist attacks gradually increase as closing to Election Day. Newmann (2013) has reached the same conclusion. She conducted a cross-national research on electoral violence which includes 117 countries, and covers 5,537 terrorist events between 2000-2005 years. Her findings have suggested that terrorist violence increases relative to the election date and appears to be normally distributed around an election date. Aksoy (2014) conducted a cross-national research includes domestic terrorist attacks from Western Europe between 1950 and 2004. He found that approaching elections are associated with an increase in the democratic countries only with the least permissive electoral institutions.

### ***Analyzing Dimensions of Election Violence during the Election Days***

During the polling day(s), usually perpetrators cease their acts of violence when the voting begins (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a; Höglund, 2009; Sisk, 2001). However when election violence occurs on the Election Day, it commonly aims *to disrupt the polling* and *to limit turnout* and targets security forces, election administrators, observers; and materials such as destruction of ballot boxes (Sisk, 2008). For instance on the Election Day, January 30th of 2005 in Iraq, the insurgents carried out 260 attacks that resulted in at least 44 people, including 26 Iraqi civilians, eight Iraqi troops, ten British servicemen, and one American soldier. 100 of the attacks were carried out at or near the polling stations.

Furthermore, although there was a traffic ban on the Election Day, the insurgents sent at least eight suicide bombers on foot, wearing suicide vests, into voting stations (Can the voters build on success? 2005). Similarly, in Sri Lanka presidential election of 1988, at least 46 people were killed on the poll day (Sunday Times, January 1, 1989, as cited in Amerasinghe, 1989).

### ***Possible Consequences of Violence in the Pre-Election Period and During the Election Days***

There are four common consequences of the violence prior to the Election Day or during the election days: 1) Postponing or disrupting elections from taking place; 2) Effecting voter turnouts; 3) Forcing the candidates to leave from the electoral process; and 4) Influencing electorates' political preferences.

### ***Postponing or Disrupting Elections from Taking Place***

The insurgent may attempt to postpone or disrupt elections from taking place by resorting violence prior to or during the election days. This aim may stem from three main reasons: a fear of losing political power, opposing elections at all, and electoral system.

In some cases, a fear of losing power could lead the insurgent to undermine the integrity of elections (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a) and results in forcing the governments to abandon

elections (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a; Höglund, 2009). Or in other cases, elections or political system could be source of election violence. The insurgent may oppose to any sort of elections and view them as an “*illegitimate*” method to transfer political power, or oppose to the ruling system under which the elections are held, therefore it may try to prevent elections from taking place or postpone the elections (Höglund, 2009). For instance, the Peruvian insurgent group Sendero Luminoso opposes the elections and even targeted other left-wing groups that compete in the elections (Höglund, 2009).

Similarly, in order to disrupt the elections, insurgent groups in Iraq increased their violence prior to the Election Day. Within the first week of the new year which is just three weeks before the Iraqi elections of 2005, at least 90 people were killed across the country including Bagdad’s governor, Ali Al-Haidari was killed along with six of his bodyguards (Ever bloodier.2005). Upon increase of the violence prior to the election, Ghazi al-Yawer, the president, Iyad Allawi, the interim prime minister, and some other high level political officials gave voice to possibility of postponement of the election by the United Nations (UN).

Chechen’s pre-election violence in Russia is another example. The Chechen insurgents carried out bomb attacks just two days before the Election Day to disrupt the 2003 Duma elections in Russia. They exploded a bomb attack on a train resulted in more than 40 killings and over 150 wounded in Yessentuki station in Russia’s southern fringe (Oates, 2006). Although the insurgents often attempt to disrupt the electoral process, they rarely succeed in postponing or preventing the elections from taking place, however, their violent acts can be effective in influencing *election outcomes* through affecting voter turnouts, forcing the candidates to leave from the electoral process, and influencing electorates’ political preferences.

### ***Affecting Voter Turnouts***

In some cases the insurgent may intentionally employ violence against rivals’ potential supporters to get them refrained from casting their votes due to fear of violence (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a; Höglund, 2009; Sisk, 2008). The aim of voter intimidation is to produce a self-imposed loss of freedom on the victim. If intimidated, the victim will vote or behave in a certain fashion (Fisher, 2002). For instance, the insurgent LTTE and other extremist groups in Sri Lanka group usually resorts violence prior to the elections. Although Sri Lanka used to have high voter turnout rates in the last nationwide election in 1970 (85.2%), 1977 (86.7%) and 1982 (81.1%), due to high volume political violence that JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna or People’s Liberation Front—the Sinhalese nationalist extremist organization) and the DJV (Deshapremi Janatha Viyaparaya or Patriotic People’s Front) launched three months before the elections, only 55.32% of the electorates casted their votes in the Sri Lanka presidential elections of 1988 (Amerasinghe, 1989).

According to Amerasinghe (1989) the main of this pre-election violence was to create fear that would lead to a compulsory boycott of the election by the electorate (p.349). For instance, in Matara in Sri Lanka, on the morning of the poll people were intimidated by a set poster warning voter that “the penalty for voting was death”. Only and even after the security forces created suitable condition very small portion of electorates casted their votes (Matara 23.84%, Moneragala 17.1% and others (Amerasinghe,1989). Similarly, Maoist insurgents, the Communist Party of



Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) imposed violent nationwide protests that resulted in only 20 percent voter turnout across Nepal (Gobyn, 2009).

A similar strategy was implemented prior to Iraqi Elections of 2005. In order to intimidate the voters into not voting, the insurgent groups in Iraq launched a terrorism campaign before the election of 2005 that resulted in low turnout rate due to the fact that hundreds of thousands Sunni Arabs scared and did not cast their votes (Can the voters build on success? 2005). Chechen insurgent's terrorist attacks in a Russian constituency two days before the 2003 Duma elections in Russia succeeded too in discouraging the Russian voters and resulted in only 55.75% turnout rate. As seen in the literature, violence prior to the election affects turnout rates, in most cases it lowers the turnout whereas in few cases, it increases the turnouts as Madrid terrorist attacks did in Spaniard Elections of 2004.

### ***Forcing the Candidates to Leave from the Electoral Process***

In some cases, by use of violence, the insurgent can successfully force the rival political contenders to leave the electoral process (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a; Höglund, 2009), thus eliminate political rivals and win the elections. For instance, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) launched a violence campaign against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLS) that resulted in the OLF to leave the elections of 1992 (Pausewang, Trondvall and Aalen, 2004, as cited in Höglund, 2009). Likewise, the LTTE, which is linked to the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), attacked the political activists of other political parties and local election monitors to force its political rivals to leave the elections.

As a consequence of these attacks, several candidates from other political parties left elections (Höglund, 2009). Similarly, in the 2005 Iraq elections, due to fear of terrorist attack, many political parties have not announced their candidates, and some parties, including the country's most prominent Sunni group, the Iraqi Islamic Party, did not contest the election (Ever bloodier. 2005).

### ***Influencing Electorates' Political Preferences***

Winning votes through use of violence is neither a new technique nor only peculiar to insurgents. As Charles and Frary (1918) points out violence and intimidation were regarded as the most effective way of winning votes by 1715 and political parties carried on them for more than 150 years (as cited in Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a). Sisk (2008) acknowledge the existence of efforts of coercive methods on gaining votes however and consider them as "*a form of election fraud*" (p.6).

The insurgent may resort to violence to win electoral support for its political party. There are a few quantitative studies investigating the impact of violence on election results (Kibris, 2010; Unal, 2012; De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2014).

Kibris (2010) analyzed 1991 and 1995 Elections in Turkey and investigated how terrorist attacks effected government and other parties' vote shares. She found that Turkish electorate is highly sensitive to terrorism. The number of security force terror casualties has a significant negative



effect on the percentage of votes the governing party/coalition receives. The vote share of right-wing parties increases with the level of terrorism voters are exposed to.

Unal (2012) plotted number of terrorist attacks and electoral support for the PKK's political party between 1987 and 2007 years. He concludes that there is no clear relationship between the electoral support level for pro-PKK parties in national elections and the violence level. We argue that there are two reasons for not finding a clear relationship.

De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2013) investigated the relationship between ETA attacks and electoral support for its political party Batasuna. They found that ETA attacks have an effect on the size of its support community. When ETA kills members of the security forces, voters punish the Batasuna party electorally. In the case of civilians, it depends on the specifics of the various campaigns. Finally, they propose that when ETA kills informers and drug-dealers, the vote for Batasuna increases. ETA's killing of non-nationalist politicians, however, decreases Batasuna's vote share.

It is argued that in some cases terrorist attacks against civilians may suppress the mass mobilization whereas in other they may increase votes by that population (Sisk, 2008, p.6). Therefore, under what conditions and how violence can affect election results should be investigated.

### ***Discussion on Consequences of Violence in the Pre-election and during the Election Days***

The pre-election violence may serve for various purposes and produce different outcomes in pro-insurgent areas than pro-government areas. If the insurgent is not strong in some constituencies, as Sisk (2008) argued, it may use indiscriminate violence against government's civilians where the insurgent is most likely to lose the election in order to discourage electorates for voting; or target rival party candidates to force them to contest elections in pro-insurgent areas, or use selective terrorism against carefully selected government targets/combatants to increase its support among the insurgent's own population.

Although existent studies on election violence provide valuable insights in to election violence, there is still scant literature on this field and still many questions remain unanswered. Under *which conditions pre-election violence produce desired results is still not known clearly*; in some cases, it may backfire and be counterproductive at the ballot box. For instance, unlike presidential elections of 2005 in Sri Lanka, or 2005 Elections in Iraq, in East Timor, militia groups backed by the Indonesian army employed violence prior to the 1999 referendum in order to intimidate the electorates into not voting for the independence, however, contrary to their expectation, it generated a massive turnout (Rapoport and Weinberg, 2000a, and p.19).

Similarly, the 2004 Madrid Bombing just few days before the elections in Spain indicated that a successful terrorist attack can provoke a sharp change of mood in the electorate (A winning streak for zapatero.2007) and can increase the turnout rates against governing party (Bali, 2007). Furthermore, in some cases, as a response to pre-election violence, the electorates may punish the governing party and replace it whereas in others the governing party even increases its vote share even more than previous elections.

For instance, Madrid bombings of 2004 in Spain just three days prior to the Election Day replaced the governing PP party with a soft party, the socialist PSOE party, whereas the terrorist attacks just two days before the 2003 Duma Elections brought a hard-line party, the United Russia. Furthermore, similarly, Hamas terrorist campaign from April to February of 1996 before the Israeli elections of May 1996 damaged the incumbent government and replaced the incumbent Labor Party government of Shimon Peres with the more hard-line government of Benjamin Netanyahu of Likud. As seen in the literature, the question of when or why the electorates would punish the governing party and replace the government with the election is still not clear. Given the existent literature, I propose five important factors that could be useful to anticipate whether the governing party would be replaced or increase its vote share as a response to pre-election period. These factors are the followings: 1) Position of the Governing Party on Terrorism, 2) Fault Factor, 3) Proximity, 4) severity and 5) targets.

## **Position of the Governing Party on Terrorism**

Terrorism prior to the elections affects the electorates' preferences and usually brings a hard-line government. Terrorism can change public opinion and in general this change is likely to favor the most right-wing and militaristic forces in the electoral arena rather than the advocates of international law, peace and negotiations (Fishman and Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, 2005, p.13). Similarly, Hewitt (1990) suggests that usually majorities or pluralities in all countries favor hard line policies. If the people believe that governing political party does not have a harsh position on terrorism, they are more likely to vote for a more hard-line party and replace the current governing party. However, if the governing party is a hard-line party and has already harsh policies against terrorism, then other people who had not vote for it also would vote the governing party thus increase its vote share in the upcoming elections. Israeli elections of May 1996, February 2001, Spain elections of May 1996, and 2003 Duma elections in Russia, and provincial elections of 1988, and 2008 in Sri Lanka set good examples of it.

In Israel, Hamas launched a massive bloody pre-election terrorist campaign from February to April 1996 against Israel. On February the 25th of 1996, a suicide bomber carried out a suicide bomb attack on a travel bus that killed 26 and injured 48 people. Another suicide attack on a travel buss was carried out on March the 3rd of 1996 and killed 19 and wounded 7 people. Other pre-election terrorist attacks occurred in Ashkelon and Dizengoff Center which killed 59 people (Suicide bombings scar Peres' political ambitions CNN, May 28 1996). As the polls taken in mid-May indicated Peres was ahead by 4-6%, however due to these terrorist attacks, two days before the election Peres declined to 2%. (CNN, May 28, 1996).

As a consequence, Labor Party government of Shimon Peres lost the elections (49.5%) and was replaced with a hard line government of Benjamin Netanyahu of Likud (50.5%). Kydd and Walter (2002) examined the impact of Hamas's terrorist campaign and reached the same conclusion that these terrorist attacks damaged the incumbent government and replaced it with the more hard-line government of Benjamin Netanyahu of Likud in Israeli elections of May 1996 (p.280).

Likewise, Bloom (2004) concludes that these attacks were intended to influence the election outcomes and as a consequence they brought a hard-line, the right wing Netanyahu government

into power. The Hamas's next terrorism campaign against Israel began in December 2000, two months before the Israeli elections of February 2001. Again, the Hamas instinctively increased its terrorist attacks prior to the election. As a consequence, the terrorism campaign has again reached its goals and Barak lost the elections (Kydd and Walter, 2002).

The Berrebi and Klor's study (2008) findings are consistent with the Kydd and Walter study (2002). They analyzed five national electoral data from 1988 to 2003 and examined two-way relationship between terrorism and electoral preferences by employing differences-in differences (DID) methodology. They found that terrorism has a strong impact on the electorate's political preferences. A terrorist attack regardless of where it was perpetrated increases the support of the right bloc of political parties, which have strict policies against terrorism; additionally, its electoral impact increases as it occurs closer to the elections.

Likewise, the governing party, the PSOE, lost the elections and was replaced with a more hard-line political party, the Partido Popular (Popular Party, here after the PP) in the Spanish general election of 1996. Barros, Passos, and Gil-Alana (2006) attributed this electoral turnaround to ETA's pre-election terrorism campaign. They suggested that the ETA's failed terrorist attacks against the Prime Ministerial candidate Jose Maria Aznar, and King Juan Carlos in August 1995 brought a more hard line government, Popular Party. The PP presents itself as a party to control and eradicate the terrorism; according to Rigo (2005) 9/11 attacks in the U.S had provided the PP an opportunity to present itself a hard-line party through taking a strong position against the terrorism.

Chechen pre-election terrorism that killed more than 40 and injured more than 150 people in Russia brought a hard-line party too, the United Russia, pro-Vladimir Putin party with largest number of votes and seats. Oates (2006) found that indirectly, Putin's position on terrorism was relevant in voting behavior because many of the participants perceived Putin as a strong, decisive leader, a man would 'flush' the Chechen terrorists down the toilet (p.288).

In Sri Lanka, the bomb attack by the LTTE just one day before the provincial election of May 2008 election, which killed 11 and wounded 29 people, has brought a landline victory to the hard line governing party, United People's Freedom Alliance or the UPFA. According to the UPFA General Secretary Susil Premjayanth the electorates viewed the elections as the referendum on war against terrorism, and voted for their hard line governing party, which they favored their counter terrorism policies (Ferdinando, 2008).

As seen in these examples, usually pre-election terrorism brings a hard-line government. Thus, it is important to ask *why people vote for a more hard-line government*.

Most scholars (Höglund, 2009; Michavila, 2005; Indridason, 2008) explain calling a hard-line government through an increase in personal security concerns. Pratkanis and Aronson (1996) propose that recourse to fear as a propaganda tool is most effective when: "1) there is a serious shock; 2) a specific recommendation is offered to overcome the problem; 3) the proposed measures are perceived as effective to deal with the threat; and 4) the person who receives the message believes he or she can carry out the recommendation" (as cited in Michavila, 2005,p.16). To put



differently, a terrorist attack increases personal safety concerns, and people seek a political party that would effectively provide them the most secure environment.

Likewise, Gassebner et al. (2007) pointed out the impact of terrorism on increasing people's personal safety concerns thus affecting their political preferences. Their study examines the impact of terrorism on the replacement of incumbent governments by analyzing 800 elections in 115 countries and found that terrorist attacks increase the probability of government replacement after an election by revealing the government's incompetence of protecting its people from terrorism; furthermore, they suggested that this probability increases with the severity of the attack.

Höglund (2009)'s study stresses a relationship among pre-election violence, personal safety concerns and electorate's political preferences. Höglund suggests that electoral violence may polarize the electorate along conflict lines, thus lead to new outburst of violence, and replace the incumbent with a hardliner government, because when people feel they are insecure, they give more importance to law and order than the peace and reconciliation, thereby call alternative than call for reconciliation (p.412-413).

Michavila (2005) examines how and why people support government's harsh countermeasures. Michavila argues that people more concern their personal security than collective security, whether national or international, therefore to the extent that a citizen feels that the state guarantees his or her own security, he or she supports the measures it adopts (p.17). Similarly, through analyzing the polls, Huddy, Khatib, and Capelos (2002) found that 9/11 terrorist attacks increased concern about their personal security among the Americans that they or a family member would become a general victim of terrorism.

Furthermore, the attacks also increased their support for the government and its counter terrorism measures. Similarly, Indridason (2008) argues that terrorism may influence *electorate's concerns* about their safety, and such concerns influence the electorate's preferences. In other words, the electorates tend to cast their votes for the party that would provide more security, especially the ones who have been affected by the violence. Amerasinghe (1989) found pre-election violence carried out by extremist groups in Sri Lanka lowered turnout rates and those affected from violence voted against the opposition candidate, Bandaranaike, rather than governing party's candidate.

When the leftist insurgents increased their violence, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla took power in 1953 through a military coup in Colombia and number of killings under his tenure declined in the short run. And not surprisingly, the next year, in 1954, due to his initial success, the national assembly elected him as the president (Brauer, Gómez-Sorzano, and Sethuraman, 2004). By the same token, since providing security of its population is one of the primary responsibilities of government, the electorate may hold the government accountable for its failure in securing and protecting its population against the terrorism.

Thus, to Indridason (2008), depending upon their performance, it is reasonable expect that the electorate reward or punish the political parties at the ballot box. By the same token, on the other hand, it is also possible that fear of terrorism may work both in favor of the insurgent. If the local population feels that the government is not capable of protecting the population and preventing



terrorism, it may vote for the insurgent's political party, just to avoid from being a target of the insurgent terrorism, especially in the post election period.

Although pre-election violence is more likely to bring a hard-line government, sometimes it may not always work that way. In few cases, it may defeat a hard-line governing party, or lead the government to implement warm policies that the insurgent may favor. For instance, Madrid bombings, which occurred just three days before the Spanish General Election of 2004, replaced a hard-line government (PP) with a soft one, (PSOE). Or in others, pre-election violence may lead the new government to accommodate the insurgent's demands in return for a relative decline in political violence. For instance, in Colombia, when Liberal party candidate Cesar Augusto Gaviria Trujillo (1990-1994) won the elections and became president, he pushed the legislatures to replace the constitution of 1886, appointed a former guerrilla leader to his cabinet, pushed large scale budget increases in social expenditures and moves that could be viewed as accommodating insurgent demands (Brauer, Gómez-Sorzano, & Sethuraman, 2004).

As seen in the literature, only one dimension—*position of the governing party on terrorism*— does not explain the election outcome, therefore, there must be some additional dimensions in anticipating the consequences of pre-election violence and election outcomes.

## **Fault Factor**

If people reach a conclusion that government's policies or programs attracted the terrorists to launch their terrorist campaign or carry out a terrorist attack, then they are more likely to hold responsible the government for the terrorist attack(s), and as a consequence, will punish the government at the ballot box by replacing it with another one, even with a soft one. Spanish general election of 2004 is a good example of this. Many international analysts and news media argued that if the ETA had been responsible for the Madrid bombings the election outcomes would have been very different than the current results; because an ETA attack would benefit the incumbent party because of its clear accomplishment in combating terrorism. However, an attack by Al-Qaida would put the responsibility for the deaths on the governing party because of its support of the U.S in the war in Iraq, which most of the Spaniards clearly opposed (Michavila, 2005, p.4).

On March, 11st of 2004, just three days before the general elections ten bombs were exploded in three different trains in Madrid and killed 191 deaths and injured over 1500. Although polls indicated that the incumbent party, People's Party was supported by a majority of population in February 2004, the incumbent lost the 14 March election with 37.6% of the vote while the Socialist Party (PSOE) received 42.6% of the vote and won the election (Indridason, 2008). The winning party PSOE gained three million new votes compared to the previous elections and as a consequence, won a total of 164 of the 350 seats, while the incumbent a hard line PP party lost almost 7% of its votes from the previous election and 35 of the 183 seats gained in 2000 (Chari, 2004). Whether the Madrid bombings affected the unexpected election outcomes received a great attention from scholars (Chari, 2004; Van Biezen, 2005; Montalvo, 2007; Bali, 2007; Rose and Murphy, 2007; Tures, 2009). Almost all scholars agreed that the Madrid bombings affected electoral outcomes in various ways.

Bali (2007) examined the influence of Madrid bombings through individual level survey data and found that the Madrid train bombings of 2004 influenced the electorate's voting behavior not because of the population's weakness against terrorism, but because the terrorist attack increased the *turnout rate* in favor of other parties and issues regarding the incumbent government's policy on the Iraq war and mismanagement of the bombing investigation.

Chari (2004) views the Madrid bombings as a *catalyst* for change and as a reaction to governing party's foreign policy. He concluded that the terrorist attack coupled with the misinformation by the government and served as a catalyst to encourage the abstainers to vote against the governing party.

In addition to the government's support the war in Iraq, Rigo (2005) concluded that poor management of the terrorist investigation was perceived by the population as an attempt to manipulate the tragedy influenced the election (p.613).

Michavila (2005) analyzed published pre-and post-election polls and micro-data from the post-election poll by the CIS, based on 5,377 door to door interviews. He categorized the most proposed reasons for the election outcomes under the following four hypotheses and tested their influence: 1) a latent desire for a change of government; 2) the shock caused by the attacks; 3) a desire to punish the government for its position on the war in Iraq; and 4) a dual manipulation of information – by the government and against the government. The study findings suggest that the Madrid bombings had a decisive impact on the election results that is relatively small but a determining factor that changed the final result. Finally, he concludes that those four hypotheses are not exclusive, but rather complementary. The first three were necessary preconditions for the electoral turnaround and the last one reinforced the process. In other words, he argues that, without a latent desire for change, without the Spanish government's support for war in Iraq, and without the shock by the terrorist attack, the change would not have occurred (p.32).

### ***Proximity***

Scholars have argued that as terrorist attacks occur near to election time, its impact on the election results increases, whereas the farther away from the election, terrorist attacks lose impact (Dhanagare, 1968; Bali, 2007; Berrebi and Klor, 2008; Gassebner et al., 2008). For example, in their study on terrorism and electoral accountability, Gassebner et al. (2008) examined terror events that occurred two years before the elections and found that they do not influence the election outcome; therefore, the authors concluded that the electorate is short sighted with respect to its voting behavior. Similarly, Berrebi and Klor (2008) found that the electoral impact of terrorist acts decreases the farther away the terrorist act occurs from the elections. Bali (2007) acknowledged the importance of the electoral proximity and suggested that if the Madrid bombings had occurred three months before the elections, the electoral outcomes may have been different today. In other words, due to the political competition and media coverage, if a terrorist act occurs near to election times, the government's performance becomes questionable and vulnerable thereby changing government at the elections by the electorate.

The other two factors that can affect the election outcomes are the 4) *severity* and 5) *targets* of the terrorist campaign. The more severe and bloodier terrorist attacks may generate the greater

electoral impact on the elections; and indiscriminate terrorism usually generates greater concerns about the personal safety among the population.

To sum up, from the electorate's perspective, pre-election violence raises the concerns about the personal safety and these concerns dominates the voting behavior. In case of pre-election violence that is close to the election, if the governing party is a soft one, it is most likely that it will be punished at the ballot box because of being incapable of protecting its citizens against the terrorists, thus will be replaced with a hard-line political party in the upcoming elections. However, if the incumbent government is already a hard-line political party, then people would decide whether the government's policies or programs might have attracted the terrorists to carry out the attack. If the terrorist attack was carried out by a domestic terrorist group, then it is most likely that the incumbent government would benefit from the attack because of its already known position against the terrorist group and harsh policies.

However, if the attack(s) were conducted by an international terrorist organization, then the population would look at its policies or programs that might lead the terrorist organization to choose that country to attack. If the governing population is held responsible for the terrorist attacks due to its poor or faulty policies, then it would be replaced with another one. This mostly depends on the perception of the population. The media, political rivals and other actors may be able to undermine incumbent government's credibility and increase its concerns about the incumbent government thus replace the government with the upcoming elections; or depending upon the conditions; capabilities and skills of the government, its allied media and other factors, if the blame can be attributed to other factors and public can be convinced, the government may even benefit the terrorist attacks and increase its vote shares.

In conclusion, pre-election has at least five dimensions. Therefore, I argue that if the insurgent is rational, as many scholars acknowledge, then it should consider these dimensions; and carefully plan its terrorism campaign prior to the election. Otherwise, since the election is a zero-sum game, the insurgent would not only lose its popular support and fail at the ballot box thus deprive it from political and population's resources but also bring a hard-line government that would make everything harder. Thus, it is important to ask *if pre-election violence brings a hard-line government, why the insurgent would use violence prior to elections; who actually benefits from pre-election violence: the government or insurgent? What are the rationales behind of it? In order to get desired outcomes, under what conditions would the insurgent resort to pre-election violence?*

Under the light of existent literature, if the primary goal of the insurgent is to increase support and votes for its political party, it would not attack against its native population, especially in its constituencies. Rather, the terrorism campaign would focus on combatants and governmental targets in its constituencies. However, if insurgent's primary aim is to damage the government and electoral process rather than winning elections, then terrorism campaign would focus on government's civilian population in non-insurgent constituencies. By this way, the insurgent may be able to increase the government's population's concerns about their personal safety and to lead the government's population to hold responsible the government for the attacks. Thus, as a consequence, in order to decrease personal security concerns among its citizens and secure a



victory in the upcoming elections, incumbent government may sit the table and give concessions in favor of the insurgent. Because, in some cases, as Rose and Murphy (2007) points out, terrorist attacks on civilians may potentially lead to policy concessions if the government and citizens believe that the insurgent is motivated by limited policy objectives; so the government may prefer to make some policy changes in favor of the insurgent.

Additional benefit for and aim of the insurgent would be that even the elections usually brings a hard-line government, due to its possible harsh indiscriminate counter terrorism policies against the insurgent's native population, the insurgent's population may alienate itself from the government, thus, the insurgent still would be able to increase its popular support in the long run and secure the next elections. As an example of such strategy, in November 2001 the Maoist insurgents, the CPN-M, intentionally escalated the conflict to force the government to drop their "democratic mask" and reveal their "true fascist role" in front of the Nepalese people and international people (Gobyn, 2009).

## **Violence in the Post-Election Period**

Various factors can influence violence in the post-election violence. They include *fraud in elections* (Sisk, 2008; Fischer, 2005), which often occurs when disputes over election results or the inability of judicial mechanisms to resolve disputes in a fair, timely and transparent manner; *electoral system*—occurs especially when elections are seen as "zero-sum" events and "losers" are left out of participation in governance (Fischer, 2004) or in winner-take-all systems may cause violence in fragile states because of not letting ethnic minorities to represent in the government due to a threshold that must be met across the country (Sisk, 2008); and *election outcomes* (Amerasinghe, 1989; Rapoport and Weinberg 2001, Boyle, 2009; Finn, 2009; Höglund, 2009; Sisk, 2008).

Most of the studies focusing on the post-election violence (Amerasinghe, 1989; Rapoport and Weinberg 2001, Boyle, 2009; Finn, 2009; Höglund, 2009; Sisk, 2008) focus on election outcomes and explain it through a relative deprivation approach that is generated by dissatisfied election outcomes.

### ***Electoral Outcomes***

Most scholars have considered election outcomes as the main source of the post-election violence therefore conceived post election violent events as quick and short-lived events that starts right or soon after the results are announced and ends in a short period of time, such as a couple of weeks. According to Rapoport and Weinberg (2000a) usually, post election violence occurs after the results are announced, as it did in Sri Lanka Elections of 1988 (Amerasinghe, 1989). The election violence started as soon as results of 1988 Sri Lanka presidential elections of 1988 announced (Amerasinghe (1989). As the Sunday Times (January 1, 1989) reported, 94 bodies were found just on the day. Furthermore, at least 260 people were killed within the five days and 417 were killed within 13 days in the post-election violence (as cited in Amerasinghe, 1989, p.346).



Poor election outcomes have various negative meanings for the insurgent such as failure at mobilizing the mass (Weinberg and Eubank, 1991), deprive of political power and its benefits (Sisk, 2008; Finn, 2009), loss of legitimacy. Without a correct interpretation of election outcomes, post-election violence cannot be anticipated or analyzed accurately.

Weinberg and Eubank (1991) suggest that terrorist violence is the outcome of a small elite group of individuals who are frustrated by their inability to mobilize the masses; therefore, terrorism should be related to a frustrating decline in power, not an increasing parliamentary presence, because they may think their electoral appeals go “*unheeded*” (p.136). In other words, when the insurgent confronts the indifference of the population that it hopes to get its support and mobilize against the government, and its appeals for support are rejected by the electorate, it resorts to violence (Weinberg, 1991).

Likewise, the Hewitt (2000) study on violence perpetrated by the White racists during the South during the civil rights period and by the Black militants in the late 1960s and early 1970s, found that timing of each outbreak of terrorism coincided with the decline of popular mobilization, rather than its high points. To Hewitt, unexpectedly poor electoral support at the ballot box may lead the insurgent to conclude that the entire electoral politics is a fraud, and the population has been blinded to the insurgent’s real interests (p.433). Furthermore, he concludes that groups lose in the elections, particularly if they lose “*consistently*”, are likely view violence as tempting option (p.343).

Similarly, Sisk (2008) and Finn (2009) views undesired election results as the main source of the election violence because of the insurgent’s aims to retain political power or unwillingness to cede power. When the insurgent’s political party lost the elections, it may frustrate its supporters thus lead to political violence (Finn, 2009, p.53).

As Boyle (2009) pointed out dissatisfied groups have powerful incentives to use violence against target population (Boyle, 2009); thus, when the insurgent does not satisfy with the defeat at the ballot box, the insurgent may use violence against target population (Boyle, 2009), or try to overthrow or alter the election outcomes (Höglund, 2009, p.416). Depending upon the insurgent’s interpretation of election results, the perpetrator can punish the electorates for not voting for its political party, or target government and its citizens.

For instance when the results of 1999 referendum indicated that an overwhelming 78.5% of people voted for the independence of East Timor from the Indonesia, military- backed militias launched a violence campaign against the East Timorese population, foreign journalists, the UN staff and Catholic clergy (Schulze, 2001,p.77-78); as a consequence of this campaign 70-80% of the business district in Dili was destroyed, almost 50% of houses in the capital city were burnt, and over 271,545 East Timorese were forced to leave to the West Timor (Crouch,p.155 as cited in Boyle, 2009, p.225).

Scholars (Guelke and Smyth, 1992; Neumann, 2005; Berrebi and Klor, 2008) have reached different conclusions in their research on the influence on election outcomes on post-election violence. For instance Berrebi and Klor (2008) examined the influence of Israeli popular support for Israel’s right block parties on Palestinian terrorism during the post election period and found

no evidence indicating a relationship. Perhaps it would have generated greater insight for the proposed study if Berrebi and Klor had examined the Palestinian population's votes.

Guelke and Smyth (1992) examined this relationship between violence and relative decline in popular support for the IRA by using electoral data and concluded that relative decline in popular votes led the IRA to commit terrorist acts to increase its popular votes. They suggested that when its political party, the Sinn Fein, suffered a setback in the second direct election to the European Parliament and polled 10,000 fewer votes than the party had received in the Westminster election a year earlier, this failure led to dissatisfaction within the IRA regarding the priority given to the electoral contest.

Consequently, violence increased and most important was the attempt to assassinate the British prime minister at the Conservative Party Conference held in 1984 (Guelke and Smyth, 1992). They suggested that the IRA carried out this attack in order to increase its popularity among the Irish population. However, effectiveness of resorting violence to increase popular votes is open to discussion. Neumann (2005) found that the IRA violence did not manage to increase its popular support in the long run. He found that in the long run, as its popular support declined the IRA violence declined too in the following ten years and never has reached its death tolls.

Gergin (2012)'s study departs from the relative deprivation approach derived from dissatisfied election results and pointed out a new direction, which is a resource mobilization approach. He found that the vote share of the PKK's political party positively affects post-election terrorist attacks.

Weinberg (1991), McAllister (2004) and Neumann (2005) suggested that depending upon the conditions the insurgent may shift its strategy from violence to electoral politics or use both simultaneously. Neumann's (2005) study indicates that relative declines in vote share of the Sinn Fein started at 1984 European elections and lasted till 1989 local elections of Northern Ireland. In the following years after the 1989 elections, the number of IRA killings gradually declined. When the IRA declared a ceasefire in 1993, its political party Sin Fein received its highest vote share at 1993 local elections in Northern Ireland and European elections. Neumann attributes this electoral success to the IRA's ability to correctly read the changing dynamics of the movement and understand its electorates' opposition to violence.

Likewise McAllister (2004) suggested that Sinn Fein benefited from the ceasefire of 1994 and built itself a stronger personal base of support. In other words, Sin Fein's political constituents delegitimized the violence and this opposition put a pressure on the IRA and limited its violence. Therefore, in order to keep popular support with its own side, the insurgent did not increase its violence to meet its electorate's demands thus succeeded in regaining popular support. Similarly, Weinberg (1991) points out the mutability of political conditions and suggests that given the appropriate circumstances the insurgent can replace the electoral campaign with terrorism campaign, the opposite, or both simultaneously. If the insurgent desires to acquire respectability in domestic and international politics and its violent activities have been to be ineffective, then it may pursue its political goals through participating in democratic electoral politics (Weinberg, 1991).

The degree of attached importance to efficiency of violence to reach insurgent's political objectives varies with the time and may affect the insurgent's violence as well. Similarly, Funes's study findings indicate that in 1989, 80% of the Basque country people agreed that violence is unnecessary to obtain political goal. This percentage reached to 88% in 1991 and in 1997. Unfortunately, how the ETA responded to this decline in its popular support level was not explained in the study. The terrorist attacks of September 11 2001 in the U.S and March 11 2004 in Madrid have further reinforced strong opposition to any terrorist activity in Spain (Pallarés, Muñoz, and Retortillo, 2006), as consequence in order to not to alienate the population from itself and keep its popular support, the ETA decreased the number of its killings

### ***Discussion on Post-Election Violence***

Much of the past literature on election violence primarily has focused on the pre-election violence and its effects on either electoral process or election outcomes. However, post-election violence has different dynamics and stems from different reasons than the pre-election or election day(s) violence. As Amerasinghe (1989) points out pre-election violence aims to “*obstruct*” electorates whereas post-election violence aims to “*punish*” them (p.347).

Much of the past studied has explained violence in the post-election period with dissatisfaction with the election outcomes, in other words, through a relative deprivation approach. Basically, these studies suggest that when a political party lost elections, they deprive from political power and resources, thereby these political parties or their supporters resort to violence because they do not want to loss political power and resources.

Although this approach provides some insights about post-election period in cases where the insurgent's political party has lost elections or gained a poor success at the ballot box, it provides little information on post-election violence when the insurgent's political party has won the elections or increased its vote shares without gaining any seats. Because these studies mostly approach the elections only as a means of gaining political power and resources, therefore ignore the actual mean of the election results for the insurgent such as loss or increase of popular support and resources provided by the population.

### **Conclusion**

There is a scant but a growing literature on electoral violence. And this study brings these dispersed studies together in a systematic way and attempts to establish a theoretical framework. Now, extant literature acknowledges that political violence increases as approaching the Election Day and terrorist/insurgent organizations benefit from electoral violence in many ways. Among others, may be the most visible one election results. By use of electoral violence, it increases its political party's vote share while decreasing the ruling party's one. In other word, the insurgent/terrorist organizations hit two birds with two stones.

However, although there are few studies providing some insights into the relationship between election violence and election results, still how election violence affects electorate's preferences

should be investigated through empirical studies, because there might be many factors in different levels.

Therefore, future studies should consider individual, local, national and international level factors. By this way, governments and population can understand the rationale behind politically violent attacks and take some measures to minimize its negative effects. In order to do so, the government should increase terrorism awareness among its security forces and population and should implement some defensive policies to protect its forces, officials, facilities and the population especially during the pre-election and post-election periods. Defensive policies include increase of terrorism and security awareness in the security forces, officials and population; target hardening; strengthening possible security weaknesses.

#### **About the Author**

Dr.Nadir Gergin is a Counterterrorism and Intelligence Expert and serves as a Chief Superintendant at Turkish National Police. He has a PhD degree in Public Policy & Administration and a Master of Public Administration (M.P.A) degree from Virginia Commonwealth University.

#### **References**

- Aksoy, D. (2014). Elections and the timing of terrorist attacks. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(04), 899-913.
- Amerasinghe, V. (1989). Sri lankan presidential election: An analysis. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 24(7), 346-350.
- A winning streak for zapatero.(2007). *Economist*, 384(8540), 44-44.
- Bali, V. A. (2007). Terror and elections: Lessons from Spain. *Electoral Studies*, 26(3), 669-687.
- Barros, C. P., Passos, J., & Gil-Alana, L. A. (2006). The timing of ETA terrorist attacks. *Journal of Policy Modeling*, (28), 335-346.
- Berrebi, C., & Klor, E. F. (2008). *Are voters sensitive to terrorism?* RAND.
- Bloom, M. M. (2004). Palestinian suicide bombing: Public support, market share, and outbidding. *Political Science Quarterly*, 119(1), 61-88.
- Boyle, M. J. (2009). Explaining strategic violence after wars. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32(3), 209-236
- Brauer, J., Gómez-Sorzano, A., & Sethuraman, S. (2004). Decomposing violence: Political murder in Colombia, 1946–1999. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 20(2), 447-461.
- Can the voters build on success?(2005). *Economist*, 374(8412), 43-44.
- Chari, R. (2004). The 2004 Spanish election: Terrorism as a catalyst for change? *West European Politics*, 27(5), 954-963.



- deSilva, K. M. (2002). Elections and after: Opportunity to restore stability. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37(9), 838-843.
- Dhanagare, D. N. (1968). Violence in the fourth general elections: A study in political conflict. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 3(1/2), 151-156.
- Ever bloodier.(2005). *Economist*, 374(8708), 41-42.
- Ferdinando, S. (2008, 08/25/2008). War on terror vote won by MR. *The Island*, Retrieved from <http://www.island.lk/2008/08/25/news1.html>
- Finn, J. (2000). Electoral regimes and the proscription of anti-democratic parties. *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 12(3/4), 51-77.
- Fischer, J. (2002-02-05). *Electoral conflict and violence: A strategy for study and prevention*. No. IFES White Paper 2002-01)IFES.  
<http://www.ifes.org/publication/aa0b586a072d706b699c9cdeb346946f/EConflictPaper.pdf>
- Fischer, J. (2004). Electoral conflict and violence. *Elections Today*, 12(1), 6-7.
- Fishman, R. M., & Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies. (2005). *On the continuing relevance of the weberian methodological perspective (with applications to the Spanish case of elections in the aftermath of terrorism)* The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies.
- Gassebner, M., Jong-A-Pin, R., & Mierau, J. O. (2008). Terrorism and electoral accountability: One strike, you're out! *Economics Letters*, 100(1), 126-129. doi:10.1016/j.econlet.2007.12.011
- Gergin, N. (2012). *The Ballots and Bullets: Popular Support for the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) and Electoral Terrorism in Turkey* (p. 248). Lap Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Ginsberg, B., & Weissberg, R. (1978). Elections and the mobilization of popular support. *American Journal of Political Science*, 22(1), 31-55. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2110668>.
- Gobyn, W. (2009). From war to peace: The nepalese maoists's strategic and ideological thinking. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32(5), 420-438.
- Guelke, A., & Smyth, J. (1992). The ballot bomb: Terrorism and the electoral process in northern ireland. *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 4(2), 103-124.
- Hewitt, C. (2000). The political context of terrorism in america: Ignoring extremists or pandering to them? *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 12(3), 325.
- Höglund, K. (2009). Electoral violence in conflict-ridden societies: Concepts, causes, and consequences. *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 21(3), 412-427.
- Huddy, L., Khatib, N., & Capelos, T. (2002). The polls--trends. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 66(3), 418-450.

- Indridason, I. H. (2008). Does terrorism influence domestic politics? coalition formation and terrorist incidents. *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(2), 241-259.
- Kydd, A., & Walter, B. F. (2002). Sabotaging the peace: The politics of extremist violence. *International Organization*, 56(2), 263-296.
- McAllister, I. (2004). 'The armalite and the ballot box': Sinn Fein's electoral strategy in northern ireland. *Electoral Studies*, 23(1), 123-142.
- Michavila, N. (2005). War, terrorism, and elections: Electoral impact of the Islamism terror attacks on madrid. *Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid*, 6
- Montalvo, J. G. (2007). *Voting after the bombing: Can terrorist attacks change the outcome of democratic elections?* Unpublished manuscript. Retrieved 04/23/2009, from <http://www.econ.upf.edu/docs/papers/downloads/1000.pdf>
- Neumann, P. R. (2005). The bullet and the ballot box: The case of the IRA 1. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 28(6), 941-975.
- Newman, Lindsay Shorr. "Do Terrorist Attacks Increase Closer to Elections?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25, no. 1 (2013): 8-28.
- Oates, S. (2006). Framing fear: Findings from a study of election news and terrorist threat in russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58(2), 281-290.
- Quandt, W. B. (1998). *Between ballots & bullets: Algeria's transition from authoritarianism*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Pallarés, F., Muñoz, J., & Retortillo, A. (2006). Depolarization in the 2005 autonomous elections in the Basque country: Towards a new scenario for peace? *Regional & Federal Studies*, 16(4), 465-479.
- Rapoport, D. C., & Weinberg, L. (2000a). Elections and violence. *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 12(3), 15.
- Rigo, E. O. (2005). Aznar's political failure or punishment for supporting the Iraq war? hypothesis... *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 49(4), 610-615.
- Rose, W., & Murphy, R. (2007). Does terrorism ever work? the 2004 Madrid train bombings. *International Security*, 32(1), 185-189.
- Schulze, K. E. (2001). The East Timor referendum crisis and its impact on Indonesian politics. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, (24), 77-82.
- Sisk, T. D. (2008-03-26). Elections in fragile states: Between voice and violence. *The International Studies Association (ISA) 49. Annual Meeting, Bridging Multiple Divides*, Hilton San Francisco, California.

Taber, R. (2002). *War of the flea: The classic study of guerrilla warfare* (199 Trans.). Washington, DC: Potomac Books, NC.

Tures, J. A. (2009). Do terrorists "win" elections? *Homeland Security Affairs*, V(3)

Van Biezen, I. (2005). Terrorism and democratic legitimacy: Conflicting interpretations of the Spanish elections. *Mediterranean Politics*, 10(1), 99-108.

Weinberg, L. (1991). Turning to terror: The conditions under which political parties turn to terrorist activities. *Comparative Politics*, 23(4), 423-438

Weinberg, L., & Eubank, W. L. (1992). Terrorism and changes in political party systems. *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 4(2), 125.

