Violence, What is It Good for? A Cross-National Study of Protest Violence

Deren Onursal *University of California at Riverside*[*]
Adam Hobbs *University of California at Riverside*
Catherine Wright *University of California at Riverside*

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Abstract

The protest literature has largely found that riotous-violent protests are not effective. However, this research has largely relied on public support as a proxy for protest success. In contradistinction, we utilize government accommodation of protester demands as an alternative conceptualization of protest success. Prior research has also viewed each protest-government response dyad in isolation. However, this neglects the ways in which both governments and protesters learn from past protest-government response dyads. As such, we adjust the temporal structure of our measures to account for learning. We use data from the *Mass Mobilization Protest* to undertake a cross-national time-series analysis of 138 countries from 1991 to 2018. Contrary to the literature, our results indicate that under certain circumstances violence has a positive effect on the willingness of governments to accommodate protester demands. This empirical conclusion may support democratic theorists' assertions that riotous-violent behavior is essential to the claim-making process of under-resourced communities.

Word Count:

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Introduction

Protest is a form of political behavior meant to affect an outcome. That is, people engage in protest to influence the political process towards a desired end. This is particularly so when institutional pathways of political expression have failed, like voting. As an area of research, protest is not novel. Researchers from different disciplines have investigated numerous aspects of the social phenomenon. Much of the research is broken up into two broad categories: causes (Gurr, 1970; Lichbach and Gurr, 1981; Saxton, 2005) and efficacy (Poe and Tate, 1994; Davenport, 2007). Research within the former category tends to focus on questions regarding why people protest, while the latter seeks to understand why protests are or are not effective. Broadly speaking, our research will fit into the category of efficacy. The vast majority of the studies within this category focus on the question of why states use repression against dissent (Maher and Peterson, 2008; Carey, 2009, 2010). There is a general consensus that dissent provokes governments to repress (Chenoweth et al., 2017). Protest as a form of political dissent is not effective because governments are impelled to eliminate threats through repression.[1] However, this explanation fails to account for democratic states which should have normative commitments against the use of repression for protests.

Not all protests are met with repression and some are even successful. As such, a handful of researchers have shifted focus from the causes of state repression to the conditions that conduce governments to accept the demands of protesters. Specifically, researchers have sought to understand the effectiveness of violent versus peaceful protests. Early interest in violent protests focused largely on urban rioting as a form of political behavior (Lang and Lang, 1968; Paige, 1971). For example, Smith (1968) argued that "violence that is organized, controlled, and limited in the expression of protest against some concrete grievance may yield results without provoking repression, although it is

[1] This is what Davenport (2007) calls the "Law of Coercive Monopolization." He argued that "dissent sometimes responds to repression, but repression always responds to dissent" (312).

likely to kindle further white resentment." In a more recent study, Enos et al. (2019) found that violent protests may be efficacious insofar as they generate positive shifts in local policy support and political participation among people with the same identity as the rioters. Despite these findings, most subsequent research has asserted that violent dissent is not effective (Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008).

Our research is similarly interested in the efficacy of what we call *riotous-violent protests* (RVPs). To be specific, we seek to answer the following question: *are governments more likely to accommodate protesters' demands when protesters engage in violent behavior?* The goal of this research is not to provide a definitive answer to this question. Instead, we seek to offer an alternative framing and empirical approach to what currently predominates in the literature. Firstly, we broaden our research question and ask whether governments accommodate demands when protester violence is conditional on regime type? In other words, are democratic regimes more likely to accommodate RVPs? Second, we utilize a more recent data set (Clark and Regan, 2016) which enables us to undertake a cross-national time-series analysis of RVPs. Most research on RVPs has focused on specific events (Muñoz and Anduiza, 2019), regions (O'Keefe and Schumaker, 1983), or countries (Simpson et al., 2018). In contradistinction, our analysis includes 138 countries from 1991 to 2018. Third, we utilize a dependent variable different from much of the literature. Prior research has largely relied on public support as a proxy for protest success (Thomas and Louis, 2014). However, public support does not necessarily mean that protesters accomplished their goals. Even with broad public support, governments often do not accommodate the demands of protesters. We instead use government accommodation as a measure of state responses to violent protests as our dependent variable. We argue that this better captures the success or failure of violent protests.

Klein and Regan (2018) similarly used data from the *Mass Mobilization Protest* (MMP) to undertake a cross-national time-series analysis. They also used government response instead of public support as their main dependent variable. In line with the literature,

they found that RVPs are ineffective. We agree with their assumption that state responses are often a product of the costs associated with different protester strategies. However, we disagree with both their theoretical and empirical treatment of RVPs and government responses. The authors bundle RVP into a composite measure called concession costs clustered at the event level which measures how different protest strategies increase the cost of state accommodation of protester demands. While RVPs can make it more costly for governments to accommodate demands, it can also increase the probability of protest success. We argue that an alternative way of conceptualizing the effect of RVPs is that they reduce the ability of the state to ignore or repress protests. That is, RVPs increase the likelihood that the state responds with accommodation. Our findings support this conclusion.

Our research also has implications for democratic theory. The results indicate that violent protests are more often effective under democratic regimes. We contend that the empirical evidence may support claims that coercive and disruptive protests are integral to democratic processes (Medearis, 2020; El-Haj, 2020). If it is true that racial minorities and low-income populations are more likely to engage in RVP (Hooker, 2016; Gilens, 2012), it also suggests that democracies continue to be plagued by serious structural injustices that shut those citizens out of meaningful participation in electoral processes. Finally, our empirical claims are limited by the variables available in the dataset. As such, we call for further research that distinguishes measures of violence and meaningful accommodation. This will allow for a more nuanced understanding of violence and protest efficacy.

What is a Riotous-Violent Protest?

The literature has conceptualized what we call RVPs in many different ways. O'Keefe and Schumaker (1983) referred to RVPs as protests that involve property damage or personal

injury. Enos et al. (2019) referred to RVPs as riots. They defined them as "political acts in which participants engage in violence to express grievances and attempt to spur policy change" (p. 1). The types of violence associated with riots typically only include property destruction or other types of damage to infrastructure and buildings, and exclude any sort of armed resistance (Hooker, 2016; Klein and Regan, 2018; El-Haj, 2020). Stephan and Chenoweth (2008) made the distinction between nonviolent and violent resistance. To them, the difference lies in the method of coercion. Violent resistance attempts to coerce through the threat or enactment of physical violence, whereas nonviolent resistance entails social, psychological, economic, and political coercion. Their definition embodies a wider range of behaviors than the previous two, including acts like terrorism and other forms of armed resistance. Across the literature, similar concepts are operationalized to include vastly different political behaviors. This raises many important questions: *how do we demarcate the boundary between violent and nonviolent protest? Is a riot different from a violent protest? Is an armed protest still a protest, or is it something else?*

These questions are important and further research should address these distinctions. However, the operationalization used here is limited by the available data. The MMP (Clark and Regan, 2016) dataset codes violence as a binary variable. A protest is coded as violent if, "protesters engaged in violence against the state... The violence could include anything from riotous behavior that destroys property to shooting at the police or military." Violence, then, is anything from breaking windows to shooting at the police. "Riotous behavior" is left undefined except for property damage. We find this to be problematic given the racialized and contested use of the term riot.[2] What some see as riotous behavior, may be nonviolent to another observer. Therefore, to make the designation of both riotous behavior and violence clear, we opt to use the term "riotous-violent protest" to capture the wide range of behaviors included in the operationalization.

[2]See Hooker (2016) on dueling framing of the Baltimore Riots vs. the Baltimore Uprising after the killing of Freddie Gray.

The Efficacy of RVPs

Most research has found that RVPs are not effective. This conclusion is often defined in terms of the relationship between RVPs and public support for protesters (Simpson et al., 2018). Countries classified as democracies with militarized police forces sometimes claim that riotous behavior and violence de-legitimize protester aims. A narrative of efficacy based on public perception is often justified by stating that people will no longer support protests that appear violent (Cherry, 2018). However, it fails to account for the very real wins that protesters get when implementing disruptive tactics. Indeed, "violent" protests may reduce public support, but influencing public opinion is only important for protest efficacy insofar as it leads to changes in government behavior. If public support does not lead to protesters' desired political outcomes, then it does not measure the success of the protest. Hence, broad public support is not a necessary condition for reaching desired political outcomes.

Klein and Regan (2018) utilized government response as their measure of protest success. Using this measure, they similarly found that RVPs are ineffective. The authors viewed government response to protest as a function of the heterogeneous costs associated with various protest demands and strategies. They focused on two main types of costs – *concession* and *disruption costs*. The former refers to demands and strategies that make it more costly for governments to accommodate demands; the latter refers to those that make it more costly for governments to not accommodate protester demands. Government response is the product of the interplay between these two types of costs. Violence, along with the type and recurrence of demands, are the building blocks of their measure of concession costs. RVPs increase concession costs. When concession costs are high, regardless of disruption costs, governments are more likely to respond with repression.

The alternative framing we offer is based on three disagreements with Klein and Regan. We agree that protest strategies condition government responses by generating costs. We

further agree that RVPs can increase concession costs. However, we disagree that RVPs only contribute to concession costs. We argue that RVPs are an important part of both disruption and concession costs. As such, they can lead to either accommodation or repression. This supposition is supported by the work of Bishara (2015) who argued that ignoring protesters can have implications for future mobilization. By ignoring protesters, the government may "trigger emotional responses that encourage people to engage in protest, such as anger, indignation, and outrage" (p. 959). When these feelings are shared by others, ignoring protests can lead to the development of collective action[3] and identity frames.[4] These frames then serve to mobilize dissent. A more appropriate framing is that RVPs raise the costs of ignoring protests, and therefore reduce the probability that governments choose that response.

Another point of disagreement regards a key assumption of Klein and Regan. They contend that costs communicate commitment, resolve, and support to the government. We interpret this to mean that protester tactics and government responses are a part of a process of communication. Protesters, as first movers, begin the process of communication through the characteristics of their protest (e.g., size, type of demands, etc.). Governments interpret the information conveyed by protests to predict the potential outcomes of each response choice at their disposal. The literature recognizes three main response choices for governments: *ignoring, repression,* and *accommodation*.[5] Based on these predictions, governments choose a response. According to the authors, "because the possible escalation to armed conflict is costly for both the state and opposition, bargaining through the imposition of concession and disruption costs and government response tactics is a process

[3]Following Snow and Benford (1992), Bishara defined collective-action frames as "action-oriented sets of belief and meanings that inspire and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns" (p. 964).

[4]Identity frames refers to the development of in-groups and out-groups.

[5]This point was made by Cai (2008) who claimed that governments can respond with repression, tolerance, or concessions. "Ignoring" is a concept proposed by Bishara (2015) to capture instances when the government acts dismissive towards protesters either through inaction or contempt. We conflate ignoring with tolerance because Cai did not provide an explanation and we believe they are analytically similar.

of gauging the tenacity with which each actor will press their claims" (p. 491). They claim that both sides, the protesters and the government, fear escalation. While this may be so, it does not preclude the possibility of escalation. We argue that violent tactics can actually communicate the resolve of protesters and provide evidence of intent to escalate should they face repression. Fearing further escalation, governments may opt to accommodate.

Our last disagreement regards the temporal treatment of protests and government responses. Klein and Regan view each protest-government response dyad in isolation. However, we cannot assume the independence of each protest event and government response pair. Both governments and protesters learn about future intentions not only from their own communication dyad, but from other temporally proximate protest-government response dyads as well. Protests and government responses should be viewed as a continuous process of communication between past, present, and future protesters and governments. In light of this, RVPs can communicate a willingness on the part of protesters to escalate. Past research has shown that repression may lead to backlash (Khawaja, 1993; Francisco, 1995). For example, Aytaç et al. (2018) found that exposure to repression can incite people to join protests, especially those who oppose the government. Governments may still choose to repress, but they may also choose to accommodate to avoid escalation. As such, our first hypothesis is:

> ***Hypothesis 1:*** As the number of violent protests increases, governments become more likely to accommodate protester demands.

Moreover, we contend that violent protests are more often effective under democratic regimes. Whether this association is due to a recognition that riotous-violence is often used as a last resort, and therefore, signals the importance of the protest grievance, or that democracies should be less likely to use repression against their own people, and therefore, accommodate (Kowalewski and Schumaker, 1981; Davenport, 1995; Carey, 2006), is difficult to determine given the variables. States respond to protest depending in part on

regime type, "which shapes political leaders' calculations" (Cai, 2008, p. 412). Democratic regimes face electoral pressures. As such, they must be cautious when using repression. Authoritarian regimes do not face electoral pressures as intensely as democracies do, but are sensitive to protests because mobilized dissent signals problems with social control or regime weakness. If protests are more often successful in democracies, and if nondemocratic regimes are more sensitive to threats, then we are likely to see the effect of RVPs to be conditions by regime type. As such, our second hypothesis is:

> ***Hypothesis 2:*** Protester violence will increase the likelihood that governments accommodate protesters' demands in democracies but decrease it in autocracies.

Research Design

To test our hypotheses, we design a dataset on 138 countries from 1991 to 2018 using the MMP data (Clark and Regan, 2016). Similar datasets are available (EPCD, SCAD, ACLED),[6] but they either focus on protests in specific countries and specific regions or cover certain periods in history. MMP is the most appropriate dataset for this study because it has an extensive geographical and temporal coverage on protest. MMP defines protest as an event that involves fifty or more people targeting the government. States can respond to a protest with seven types of actions: accommodation of demands, arrests, beatings, crowd dispersal tactics, ignoring, killings, and shootings. In the first five models, the dependent variable is the accommodation of protester demands. Klein and Regan (2018) clustered their dependent variable at the event level. Such an operationalization implicitly assumes the independence of each protest-government response dyad. Our theory postulates that governments and protesters are in a constant state of

[6]European Protest and Coercion Dataset, Social Conflict Analysis Database, and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project are available online.

communication where other protest-government response dyads impact subsequent ones. As such, we measure our dependent variable as the total number of instances in which the government accommodates protesters' demands in a given year. The coding relies on news reports that the government either meets the demands or agrees to take demands up with protesters in a formal meeting. As shown in *Table 1*, the mean is .35 accommodating responses per country-year with a maximum of 16 accommodating responses.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Min	Max
Accommodation	1823	0.35	0.00	16.00
Riotous-violent protest	1823	1.57	0.00	41.00
Disruption Index (w/o size)	1823	1.77	0.00	31.00
Concession Index	1823	16.86	1.00	329.00
Multiday Protest	1823	0.85	0.00	16.00
Nationwide Protest	1823	0.66	0.00	14.00
Demand Severity	1823	1.87	1.00	3.00
Polity	1823	4.65	-10.00	10.00
Horizontal Accountability	1823	0.46	-1.83	2.31
Lagged Accommodation	1823	0.35	0.00	16.00
GDP/capita, PPP (ln)	1823	8.81	5.66	11.52
Trade (% of GDP)	1823	70.39	0.02	329.47
Armed Forces Personnel (ln)	1823	0.74	0.00	2.53
Youth Bulge	1823	35.44	17.84	50.86
Urban Population	1823	56.00	6.29	100.00
Media Censorship Effort	1823	2.59	0.00	4.00

Statistics based on observations from Model 1.

Although a count variable for accommodating state behavior suits our theory better, we make changes in our dependent variable in Model 6 through 8. In parallel with Klein and Regan, the dependent variable in these models, which we conduct to test the robustness of our results and compare it with the findings in Klein and Regan, is ordinally scaled state response to protests. We assign the values 0, 1, and 2 if the response is ignoring, accommodation, and repression, respectively. Ignoring is any instance in which

the state chooses not to react to a given protest event[7] and repression is an aggregate category of arrests, beatings, crowd dispersal mechanisms, killings, and shootings. We expect evidence obtained from all models to indicate that RVP can be an effective tool.

A coding issue that may arise from focusing on one type of government action is that governments can respond to a protest with a combination of different actions. For instance, they can first arrest protesters but then accommodate demands. Such combinations are originally available in MMP. Nevertheless, to avoid confusion, we code a state response as accommodation if accommodation was the only response throughout a protesting event. Furthermore, we convert the dependent variable to missing if a country has not experienced a protest in a year. A downside to this is that we lose observations. However, we believe that coding as such is necessary. Otherwise, we cannot differentiate the absence of protest from observations where a government refuses to accommodate protesters' demands. If a country in a given year did not have any protests, it can have no response to a protest that has not happened.[8]

In addition to the fact that our dependent variable is a count variable, our hypotheses make probabilistic statements. As such, Poisson and negative binomial distribution analyses are more appropriate techniques for modeling the data. Nonetheless, we discard Poisson and conduct the analysis solely with negative binomial distribution due to the assumptions of Poisson. Poisson assumes that events are independent. That is, the generation of past events has no influence on subsequent events (King, 1989). As mentioned, past protest-government response dyads likely influence subsequent ones and thus violate the independence assumption of Poisson. Hence, government accommodation of protester demands in past protest events should be positively correlated with accommodation today. Moreover, we predict that Y_i is overdispersed.

The main independent variables of our research are riotous-violent protest, regime

[7]The MMP states that the process might also be that the news outlets ignore the response by the state.

[8]We apply the same logic to our independent variables except for regime type.

type, and their interaction. Regime type is a country's annual Polity score (Marshall et al., 2019). We utilize *Polity IV* because the fundamental definition of democracy satisfies the needs of our research question. RVPs are any instance where participants' used physical force against state authorities (e.g., police and military) and property. RVP is a broad concept that includes dissent activity ranging from riotous behavior that leads to the destruction of property to shooting at law-enforcement officers. We generate this variable by calculating the sum of the events in which protesters engaged in RVP clustered by year. Again, we cluster by year because we argue that past protest-government response dyads are likely to influence subsequent. As shown in *Table 1*, the mean number of RVPs is 1.46 per country-year with a maximum of 41.

The literature recognizes a number of important variables that affect government responses to protest. Therefore, we introduce thirteen control variables, six of which we believe must be discussed in detail (*see Table 1*). The first one is multi-day protests. It is the total number of multi-day protests in a year and measures the duration of a protest event. If the start and end date of a protest event are the same, we count it as a one-day event. Thus, it takes the value of zero. If a protest continues on subsequent day(s), we code it as a multi-day event and calculate the sum of these events clustered by year to create the variable. The second important control variable is nationwide protest. It is also a count variable. We regard a protest event as nationwide if the reported location of the protest includes certain words that indicate protest activity is widespread in a country.[9] Third, we control for lagged accommodating state response. By including it in our models, we aim to discover whether accommodating state response at time t is contingent on accommodating state response at time *t-1*. If such a relationship exists, it constitutes additional evidence supporting both our theory and choice of negative binomial distribution instead of Poisson.

[9]We regard a protest as nationwide if the variable location in the MMP data includes the words national, nation wide, across, cities, around the country, nationwided, nationwide, national level, country wide, provinces etc.

Fourth and fifth, predicated on Klein and Regan, we create two indices named concession costs and disruption costs to check the robustness of our findings. The logic behind them is identical to Klein and Regan. The concession costs index is an additive function of three components of protests, namely the total numbers of protester violence, demand severity, and recurrent demands. Riotous-violent protest is one of two independent variables we analyze. For demand severity, we follow Klein and Regan's footsteps and generate an ordinal scale from 1 to 3 (low threat to high threat). We assign a value of 1 if the demand falls under the categories of labor or wage dispute, land tenure or farm issues, price increases or tax policy, and social restrictions; 2 if the demand is over police brutality and political behavior/process; and 3 if the demand is the removal of a corrupt or reviled political person. The last component is demand recurrence. It measures the number of instances in which protests occur due to the same demand against the government in the following protest action.

The disruption costs index is an additive function of protest length and location. We depart from Klein and Regan's formulation and operationalize location differently. Klein and Regan categorize location by non-urban settings, urban settings, the capital, and nationwide. Whereas we measure it with nationwide protest, which is based on the use of certain words regarding the location of protest. Furthermore, we exclude protest size. The exclusion is due to reliability issues. Datasets constructed based on media coverage like MMP can lead to bias if researchers are not careful. Some protests are not newsworthy and go unreported for various reasons (Earl et al., 2004), one of which is a small protest size (Oliver and Maney, 2000). The size of protest events is especially problematic for analyses of collective action because reports on protest size can often be either subjective or intentionally misreported. The data on protest size sometimes comes from reporters' own assessments, lacking objectivity and accuracy. Reporters often rely on the numbers that police announce (McPhail and McCarthy, 2004). This is an even greater threat to reliability in countries that are not fully democratic and where the media is not entirely

free. Even in fully democratic nations where the media enjoys complete freedom, when there are multiple conflicting estimates, newspapers may choose an estimate that best fits their editorial policies (Mann, 1974). As a result, we do not include protester size in the disruption costs index.

We also control for horizontal accountability, media censorship effort, logged GDP per capita PPP, trade (% of GDP), logged armed forces personnel (% of the total labor force), youth bulge (% of ages between 15 and 24), and urban population (% of the total population). Media censorship effort and horizontal accountability come from V-Dem (Pemstein et al., 2019; Coppedge et al., 2020). For the rest, we utilize the WorldBank (2020).

Results

Models in Table 2 and 3 demonstrate our empirical findings on accommodating state response to protesters. To test our hypotheses, we employ negative binomial distribution analysis and report robust standard errors clustered by country. As we suspected, the overdispersion parameter alpha shows that Y_i is overdispersed. Additionally, our analyses evince that accommodating state response at time t is contingent on accommodating state response at time *t-1*. To be specific, previous accommodating state response produces a significant positive relationship with accommodation. This contingency indicates that the assumption of independence is violated. Hence, the negative binomial model appears to be the more appropriate choice for our probabilistic hypotheses compared to Poisson.

The analyses begin with Model 1, which tests the effects of RVP and regime type without their interaction. Model 1 reveals a positive association between protester violence and accommodation. It is statistically significant beyond the conventional $\alpha = 5\%$ level. That is, it supports our first hypothesis that as countries experience RVPs more frequently,

Table 2: Protester Violence on Accommodating State Response

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Riotous-violent protest	0.053**	0.021	0.057**		
	(0.018)	(0.030)	(0.018)		
Polity	0.039*	0.030	0.038*	0.041*	0.040
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Riotous-violent protest × Polity		0.004			
		(0.004)			
Multiday Protest	0.187***	0.200***		0.153***	
	(0.025)	(0.028)		(0.030)	
Nationwide Protest	0.165**	0.165**		0.099*	
	(0.052)	(0.052)		(0.046)	
Demand Severity	-0.289*	-0.275*	-0.282*		
	(0.123)	(0.122)	(0.122)		
Horizontal Accountability	0.149	0.145	0.147	0.132	0.132
	(0.129)	(0.129)	(0.129)	(0.120)	(0.119)
Lagged Accommodation	0.167*	0.162*	0.161*	0.152*	0.147*
	(0.072)	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.063)	(0.064)
GDP/capita, PPP (ln)	0.467**	0.469**	0.468**	0.352**	0.359**
	(0.143)	(0.143)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.133)
Trade (% of GDP)	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Armed Forces Personnel (ln)	-0.090	-0.103	-0.091	-0.096	-0.105
	(0.233)	(0.238)	(0.235)	(0.218)	(0.219)
Youth Bulge	0.025	0.024	0.025	0.030	0.031*
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Urban Population	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.011	-0.012
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Media Censorship Effort	-0.200*	-0.197*	-0.195*	-0.199*	-0.198*
	(0.078)	(0.079)	(0.077)	(0.084)	(0.083)
Disruption Index (w/o size)			0.151***		0.112***
			(0.022)		(0.020)
Concession Index				0.016***	0.016***
				(0.003)	(0.003)
Constant	-5.000**	-4.944**	-5.045**	-5.152***	-5.221***
	(1.608)	(1.626)	(1.599)	(1.400)	(1.396)
alpha	1.244915	1.228215	1.223587	1.097402	1.07421
Country Clusters	cluster	cluster	cluster	cluster	cluster
Observations	1823	1823	1823	1823	1823

Standard errors in parentheses

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

the number of accommodating state responses is more likely to increase. This positive relationship is robust across all models where protester violence is tested.[10] Model 1 demonstrates that for every incremental increase in the number of RVPs, countries have a 5.3% increase in the number of accommodating responses from the government. Since protester violence is never the desired outcome of protest events for governments, we consider it to be a substantial increase. Regime type is also statistically significant. The number of instances in which states accommodated protester demands increased by 3.9% for every increment in Polity score. Since maximum and minimum values of Polity score are 10 and -10, chances of accommodation are considerably higher for full democracies than autocracies. 3.9% is thus a substantial increase. Besides protester violence, the model includes other protest intensity measures such as multi-day protest and nationwide protest. Similarly, they are statistically significant beyond the conventional level. For every incremental increase in the number of multi-day protests, countries have an 18.7% increase in the number of accommodating state responses. For nationwide protests, this increase is 16.5%.

Model 2 analyzes the second hypothesis: interaction between RVPs and regime type. It is the only model where RVPs fail to attain statistical significance. However, the lack of statistical significance does not carry much weight here inasmuch as RVPs and regime type are constitutive terms of our interaction variable, which we include to avoid biases and inconsistencies (Brambor et al., 2006). As such, our primary focus is the calculation of marginal effects of RVPs conditional on regime type. As illustrated in Figure 1, protester violence increases the probability of accommodation as the regime becomes more democratic. The effect is negative for most autocracies. Yet, the marginal effect of violence captures statistical significance for regime scores five and above. For regime scores four and below, the relationship is trivial. In other words, our analysis

[10]Except for Model 2.

provides evidence only for full democracies, democracies, and some open anocracies.[11]

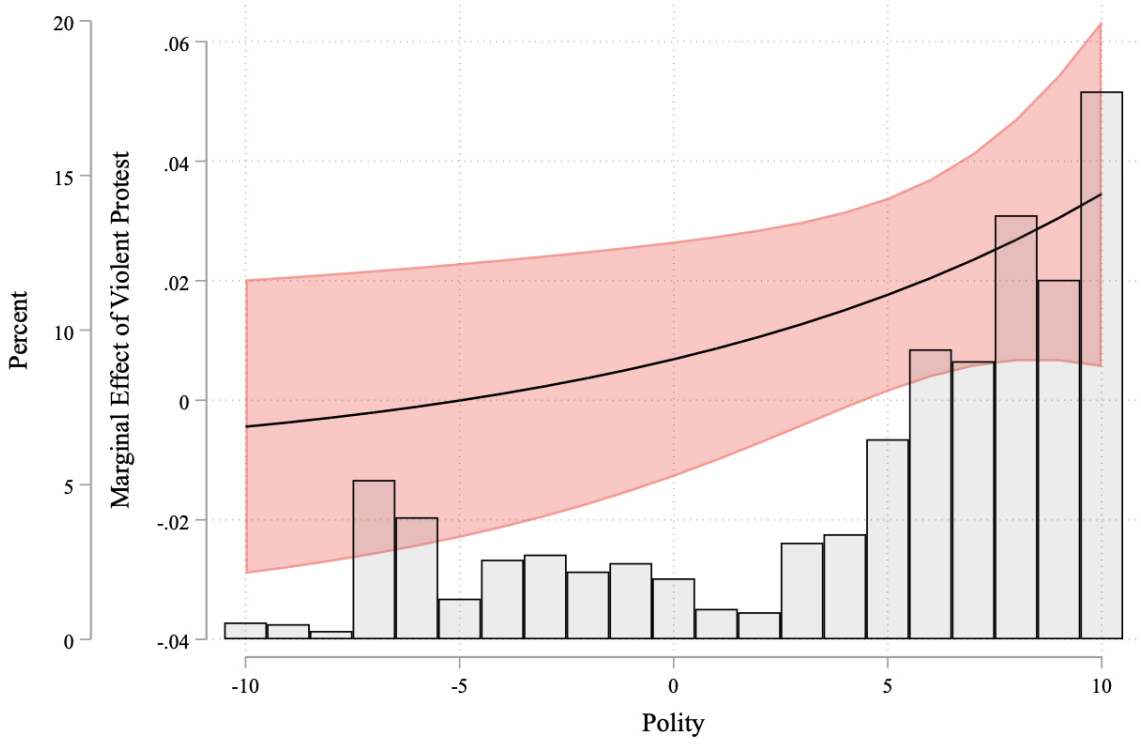

Figure 1: Marginal Effect of Riotous-Violent Protest Conditional on Regime Type

Models 3 to 5 control for disruption and concession costs indices formulated by Klein and Regan. They aim to check the robustness of our findings. In Model 3, unlike Klein and Regan, we exclude the size of protest as a component of the disruption cost index due to the numerous missing values in the variable.[12] Models testing the disruption cost index do not contain multi-day protest and nationwide protest to avoid multicollinearity.[13] We find that disruption costs are robust with the results of multi-day protest and nationwide protest in the first two models. That is, disruption costs have a positive effect on accommodation. For every incremental increase in disruption cost, countries have 15.1%

[11]Note that in Polity IV, open anocracies are from 1 to 5, democracies 6 to 9 and full democracies 10.

[12]See Table A1 in the Appendix for the results using disruption cost index with protester size.

[13]To create disruption cost index, we use Klein and Regan's coding for protest duration, which is slightly different from the variable multiday protest. However, we still exclude multiday protest in Model 3 and Model 5 to avoid multicollinearity with the disruption cost index because both measures of duration are highly correlated. See Table A1 in the Appendix for Klein and Regan's coding for duration.

increase in the number of accommodating state responses. This finding is in line with Klein and Regan. Nonetheless, our results on concession costs in Model 4 and Model 5 are in contradiction. We find that concession costs and accommodation are positively associated. Moreover, the effect is not substantial. The increase in accommodation is no more than 1.6% for every increment in the concession costs index. We interpret this positive effect, which conflicts with Klein and Regan, as evidence supporting H1 since protester violence is one of the components of the index.[14]

Discussion

Our models provide evidence to support the argument that RVPs can influence accommodation positively. That is, when protesters engage in violent behavior, governments are more likely to accommodate protesters' demands. We argue that repression may be the likely response when each protest-government response dyad is viewed in isolation. However, protests and government responses do not occur in a vacuum. That is, both protesters and governments learn from temporally proximate protest-government response dyads. Both protesters and governments fear escalation. However, we argue that RVPs communicate to governments a willingness to escalate. This is especially the case when a country experiences numerous RVPs. Fearing escalation, governments become more likely to accommodate protester demands.

Electoral components of democratic regimes account for regime type's substantial and significant effect. The minimum requirement to fulfill the definition of democracy is that elections are free, fair, and regular. Therefore, electoral pressures politicians face are fundamental components of their calculations. Facing electoral pressures, elected leaders of

[14]Like the disruption cost index, Model 4 and Model 5 do not include RVPs because it is a component of concession cost index. Its inclusion may lead to multicollinearity. The total number of demand severity is a component of the concession cost index and although the variable demand severity in Table 2 is a mean value, we exclude it for the same purposes.

democratic regimes calculate that upsetting voters may reduce their chances of remaining in power. Whereas, in autocracies, politicians do not fear electoral accountability and, consequently, have fewer incentives to keep the majority of the population happy. Perhaps more importantly, the accommodation of protesters' demands by autocracies may be seen as a weakness. Hence, instances in which the government accommodates demands increase as a country becomes more democratic. Because accommodation is a more likely response to protests in democracies than in autocracies and protester violence can be an effective strategy to persuade governments, we hypothesized that protester violence increases the probability of accommodation as countries move closer toward democracy. We conversely expected the likelihood of fewer accommodating state responses for autocracies. The analysis evinces that the effect of violent protester behavior on accommodation is indeed positive in full democracies, democracies, and even in open anocracies. This positive effect turns into negative in autocracies and some closed anocracies. Nonetheless, the results partially confirm this relationship. Only nations that score five and above – top-tier open anocracies, democracies, and full democracies – achieve statistical significance. For the rest, we cannot find statistical significance. Notwithstanding, findings on the interaction between protester violence and regime type remain vital to our understanding of how protester violence affects state accommodation under different regime types. After all, nations that score five and above constitute more than 65% of the observations in our model. In fact, we suspect that insufficient observations of non-democracies could be a major reason behind their lack of statistical significance. As the histogram of Polity in Figure 1 illustrates, the number of observations for nations with the lowest three Polity scores is low.

Overall, our findings on protester violence contradict the general agreement among scholars that violent protests are ineffective (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Simpson et al., 2018; Dahlum, 2019; Lupu and Wallace, 2019; Muñoz and Anduiza, 2019; Ketchley and El-Rayyes, 2021) and that violence begets violence (Moore, 1998, 2000; Klein and

Regan, 2018). For the former argument, we believe that the results of our analysis depart from the literature on protest efficacy due to the differences in measuring efficacy. In general, previous works use public support as a proxy for efficacy. Nonetheless, public support does not guarantee success, even in some advanced democracies (Gilens and Page, 2014). If public support does not ensure that protesters achieve the political outcome they aim for, then measuring protest efficacy with public support could be erroneous. We do not deny that RVPs may affect public perceptions of protests negatively. Yet, governments could still accommodate demands because the costs of ignoring or repressing could be more than accommodation when protests turn violent.

For the latter argument, we disagree that repression is the default response when protesters engage in RVP. When faced with violent activities, governments are not left without a choice. Repression is not the only element in the set of government responses. Governments can also choose to accommodate and, according to our results, they are indeed more likely to choose to accommodate. As a result, we conclude that protester violence is an effective tool for protesters. Nonetheless, it is striking that we use the same dataset with Klein and Regan and analyze similar variables, but we find opposite results. We claim no error in the rigorous work they conducted. But we do not think we are Don Quixote, either. Our empirical findings are not an old Spaniard nobleman's illusions. Both Klein and Regan and we must be correct. But how is this possible? Why are the findings contradicting? That is, why do they find a negative effect of protester violence while we find a positive effect? In pursuit of answers, we run additional tests and report the results in Table 3.

The major difference between our analysis and that of Klein and Regan is that their main unit of analysis is clustered at the event level. Ours, in contradistinction, is clustered by year. We suspect this difference is the key to the discrepancy in our results. Therefore, in Model 6, we convert the unit of analysis back to the event level from country-year and create a dependent variable for state response to protest that is parallel with Klein and

Table 3: Protester Violence on State Responses to Protests For Time Intervals

	Model 6: Btw 181&93 Days		Model 7: >180 Days		Model 8: <94 Days	
Base Category: Ignore						
Accommodation						
Riotous-violent protest	0.600*	(0.301)	0.389	(0.229)	-0.011	(0.310)
Polity	0.015	(0.033)	0.009	(0.024)	0.057	(0.035)
Multiday Protest	0.998**	(0.307)	1.263***	(0.146)	1.243***	(0.221)
Nationwide Protest	0.300	(0.407)	0.225	(0.194)	0.445	(0.231)
Demand Severity	-0.598*	(0.274)	-0.517***	(0.131)	-0.010	(0.383)
Horizontal Accountability	-0.222	(0.241)	0.189	(0.137)	-0.287	(0.262)
GDP/capita, PPP (ln)	0.452	(0.260)	0.023	(0.122)	-0.214	(0.358)
Trade (% of GDP)	-0.003	(0.004)	0.001	(0.002)	0.001	(0.004)
Armed Forces Personnel (ln)	0.172	(0.352)	-0.021	(0.203)	-0.515	(0.526)
Youth Bulge	0.029	(0.030)	0.024	(0.014)	0.037	(0.026)
Urban Population	-0.022*	(0.011)	-0.013*	(0.006)	0.003	(0.015)
Media Censorship Effort	0.097	(0.144)	-0.150	(0.110)	-0.099	(0.139)
Constant	-5.512*	(2.713)	-1.666	(1.334)	-1.389	(2.426)
Repression						
Riotous-violent protest	2.545***	(0.215)	2.959***	(0.132)	2.423***	(0.145)
Polity	-0.015	(0.024)	-0.059**	(0.018)	-0.009	(0.024)
Multiday Protest	0.255	(0.249)	0.161	(0.143)	0.111	(0.125)
Nationwide Protest	-0.182	(0.243)	-0.315	(0.168)	-0.481**	(0.152)
Demand Severity	0.176	(0.145)	0.122	(0.101)	0.187	(0.111)
Horizontal Accountability	-0.205	(0.183)	0.053	(0.135)	-0.257	(0.138)
GDP/capita, PPP (ln)	0.049	(0.216)	0.037	(0.121)	0.069	(0.135)
Trade (% of GDP)	-0.004	(0.003)	-0.002	(0.002)	-0.007*	(0.003)
Armed Forces Personnel (ln)	0.422*	(0.211)	0.222	(0.160)	-0.081	(0.157)
Youth Bulge	-0.020	(0.016)	0.012	(0.012)	0.017	(0.017)
Urban Population	-0.002	(0.010)	-0.003	(0.006)	0.002	(0.006)
Media Censorship Effort	-0.161	(0.113)	-0.125	(0.076)	-0.072	(0.108)
Constant	-0.866	(1.822)	-1.860	(1.085)	-2.088	(1.540)
Wald Chi2	236.2704		665.9121		1213.682	
Country Clusters	110		146		124	
Observations	1244		5095		4114	

Standard errors in parentheses

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

Regan. For this new dependent variable, 0 indicates ignoring, 1 indicates accommodation, and 2 indicates repression (crowd dispersal, arrests, beatings, killings, or shootings). Our argument is that the government may not yield for any single protest event. However, the costs associated with each event are factored into governments' decision calculus when responding to future events. Governments respond with accommodation because they fear further escalation as evinced by past RVPs. While RVPs may not lead to accommodation immediately, they have positive externalities for future protests.

We test this supposition by investigating the temporal proximity of accommodating state responses to previous RVPs. In Model 6, we run several multinominal logistic regression using our new measure of state responses to protest and present robust standard errors clustered by country. The results demonstrate that protester violence increases the likelihood that the state will respond to a protest with accommodation if there have been more than three months but less than six months since the last RVP. This positive relationship is statistically significant and demonstrates that the suggested positive externality may exist. Model 6 provides evidence of temporal variation. There is a period of time when protester violence affects the likelihood of accommodating state response positively. The evidence suggests that the effect does not exist prior to 94 days and then wears off after 180 days. Model 7 shows that RVP has a positive impact on accommodation for protest events that took place at least 180 days after the last RVP. However, this effect lacks statistical significance. In Model 8, the coefficient is negative for protests that occurred less than 94 days since the last RVP, and the effect is once again is not statistically significant. Therefore, we conclude that both our analysis and that of Klein and Regan are accurate. Our original results differ from theirs due to different units of analyses in models.

Conclusion

Past research has largely found that RVPs are ineffective. The goal of this research was to provide an alternative framing and empirical approach to the study of RVPs. What we discover is that, contrary to the literature, RVPs may be efficacious, particularly under democratic regimes. While we do not aim to justify the use of violence in protest, democratic theory has begun to embrace coercive protests and defend riotous behavior as a response to structural injustice and militarized policing. We argue that our findings captures strategic disruption that democratic theorists assert is an important political tactic, particularly for under-resourced communities.[15]

The RVP variable in the MMP dataset broadly includes "riotous behavior" and its operationalization may capture cases that legal theorist El Haj uses to demonstrate the necessity of coercive tactics in the new age of protest. She points out that the *Occupy movement* did not obtain lawful permission for their settlements in public space and that *Black Lives Matter* (BLM) protests have only turned violent in response to policing (p. 207, 209). El Haj argues that these disruptive tactics or events create a more tangible cost or disruption to daily life that draws attention from average Americans better than "traditional" peaceful protests. El Haj concludes by calling for a broader conception of what is considered nonviolent. We agree that there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of the difference between violent and non-violent protest tactics.

This point is particularly poignant in relation to the source of violence during RVPs. The data used for this investigation relied on news articles to create different measures of protest. However, past research has suggested that when their is a disconnect between what actually happened and what is reported to have happened, that disconnect tends to align with the narrative portrayed by police (Reiner, 2010; Lawrence, 2022). Historically, the police have occupied a privileged place in what Becker (1967) called the 'hierarchy of

[15]See Enos et al. (2019) and also El Haj.

credibility.'[16] While the rise of 'citizen journalists' may have slightly eroded the ability of police to set the narrative (Greer and McLaughlin, 2010), the police still play a key role in defining protest events via news media. Brown (2021) argued that the official narrative of law enforcement often becomes the dominant public narrative, particularly surrounding issues of race. Protester violence can often be a response to repressive police tactics. But because the police play a role in setting the narrative, RVPs are often framed in terms of protester-driven violence, when police may themselves be the instigators of violence. We cannot appropriately adjudicate between these two categories of violence when using data derived from news media reports.

Additionally, data on coercive, strategic tactics like strikes and sit-ins would allow us to develop a fuller picture of the types of contentious behaviors that are effective in social movements and protests. That "violence" was seen as effective must be contextualized by the literature's broad conception of what is considered protester violence. A more fine-grained approach to the measurement of protest violence is an important direction to clarify the effectiveness of certain tactics and behaviors.

[16]Becker argued that well-socialized members of the community have a moral obligation to accept definitions imposed on reality by more powerful groups in society. The police tend to be one such superordinate societal group.

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Appendix

Table A1: Protester Violence on Accommodating State Response

	Model 1	Model 2
Riotous-violent protest	0.023	0.058***
	(0.028)	(0.018)
Disruption Index (w/ size)	0.051***	
	(0.009)	
Protest Duration KR Total		0.141***
		(0.018)
Demand Severity	-0.415*	-0.284*
	(0.163)	(0.121)
Polity	0.038	0.038
	(0.029)	(0.019)
Horizontal Accountability	0.098	0.148
	(0.191)	(0.128)
Lagged Accommodation	0.107	0.162*
	(0.063)	(0.073)
GDP/capita, PPP (ln)	0.468*	0.470**
	(0.182)	(0.143)
Trade (% of GDP)	0.002	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Armed Forces Personnel (ln)	0.367	-0.096
	(0.295)	(0.232)
Youth Bulge	0.058**	0.026
	(0.020)	(0.017)
Urban Population	-0.016	-0.017**
	(0.008)	(0.006)
Media Censorship Effort	-0.164	-0.198*
	(0.122)	(0.078)
Nationwide Protest		0.165**
		(0.053)
Constant	-6.686***	-5.061**
	(1.821)	(1.598)
alpha	1.279638	1.226469
Country Clusters	cluster	cluster
Observations	1048	1823

Standard errors in parentheses

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