

Political Opportunity Structure Moderates the Legacy of Political Violence

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Abstract

Previous studies render contradictory evidence linking political repression before and political participation after democratization. This article suggests that the perceived political opportunity structure moderates the effect of political violence: victims, their predecessors, and neighbors will punish the authoritarian successor party only if their district is not dominated by it. If the authoritarian successor party is perceived to win, voters would instead vote for the party. This article examines the hypothesis through the unique political context in Taiwan, where the former authoritarian party KMT is still competitive after the democratization and keeps ruling in some districts. Analysis of a newly published White Terror Dataset including 13,206 victims during the martial law period (1949-1987) shows that, if one district has more White Terror victims, KMT receives even more votes in KMT-dominated districts and even fewer votes in districts where KMT did not dominate. The psychological mechanism of this moderation effect is then supported by a pre-registered survey experiment (n = 910) in Taiwan, showing that the White Terror priming increases KMT's vote share when KMT already leads in the poll. The result helps reconcile previous findings in the literature and explain the resilience of authoritarian successor parties in new democracies.

Keywords: Political Violence, Democratization, Authoritarian Successor Party, Political Opportunity Structure, Taiwan Politics, Survey Experiment

Word count: 8147

Introduction

What is the legacy of political violence? If the violent repression during the authoritarian regime motivated citizens to pursue and realize democratization, the experience of political violence might also play a vital role in the process of democratic consolidation. When a government chooses to transgress human rights or implement political repression, whether people are willing to collaborate and punish the government is the key to democratic consolidation (Weingast 1997). In the third wave of democratization, 72% of newly-established countries have at least one authoritarian successor party (Loxton and Mainwaring 2018). How do people respond to these authoritarian successor parties? Do voters hold them accountable for the brutal past? Or the memory of the violence enables the authoritarian successor party to threaten the voters?

Given its importance, empirical analysis linking political violence and its long-term consequence on political participation after democratization does not draw much attention to political scientists until recently. Interestingly, recent works render contradictory estimations regarding the long-term impact of political violence.

Some cases show that voters will punish the authoritarian successor parties or their related political groups. For example, Rozenas, Schutte, and Zhukov (2017) investigate USSR's deporting of 250,000 western Ukrainians to Siberia between 1943 and 1955. By mapping the declassified incident reports from numerous institutions to current district boundaries, the author shows that the WWII-era violence lowered the district-level support of Pro-Russian candidates in western Ukraine after 2004. Besides, intuitively, citizens and their family members who had ever suffered from political violence before would show less support toward the parties associated with the former authority.

Other studies suggest the opposite. Lupu and Peisakhin (2017) conducted surveys to 2,000 Crimean Tatars who were deported to Central Asia by USSR between 1944 and 1989. They interviewed the first, second, and third generations with at least one living survivor of the deportation. Even though the authors show that the third generation is less supportive of unifying with Russia, the young generation also had a higher turnout rate in the Russia-backed Crimean secession referendum in March 2014. The authors explain the finding that “...*this participation seems motivated by opposition to potential renewed persecution, not by posttraumatic growth.*”

Meanwhile, Osorio and others (2018) investigate the forced disappearance during the Mexico Dirty War in the 1970s and 1980s. The authors show that the 800 forced disappearances caused by PRI are associated with lower social welfare and security capacity in the municipality-level measured in 2012. “*Contrary to the expectation,*” the authors also found that forced disappearance positively correlates with municipal income derived from local taxes, an essential indicator of citizen compliance.

Besides, Wang (2021) examines how the death during the Chinese Cultural Revolution would influence Chinese citizens’ political participation. Wang found that the proportion of death in a province negatively correlates with institutional trust but also negatively correlates with protesting behavior such as protesting. In Madagascar, people who experienced the slaughter during the rebellion in 1947 were still less likely to freely express their opinion nowadays (Garcia and Wantchekon 2011).

How do we reconcile these seemingly contradicting results? Why do victims and their neighborhoods disapprove of the Pro-Russian candidate in western Ukraine while complying with the Russia-backed referendum, PRI, and the Chinese Communist Party?

The Theory of Political Opportunity and Legacy of Political Violence

I argue that the political opportunity structure moderates the legacy of political violence on citizens' political participation in the long run. People do remember their suffering experience and the nightmare told by their ancestors, which was passed down through the socialization process (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017, Wang 2021). After listening to the bedtime story, however, what kind of lesson did people learn? On the one hand, people may learn the importance of freedom and democracy and how much their ancestors had paid for it, and then defend their treasured democracy by voting against the former dictator and his successor party. Following this accountability mechanism, people would show up and punish the authoritarian successor party on Election Day, and the brutal past became the burden of those authoritarian successor parties (Loxton and Mainwaring 2018).

On the other hand, however, people may also perceive the importance of compliance – if there is no chance to win, at least short run, it would be better to comply with the authority for survival. In such a scenario, victims of political violence, their predecessors, and neighbors may undergo the mechanism of preference falsification (Kuran 1997). In the literature of revolution and democratization, whether people would punish the wrongdoing government is usually formalized as a Prisoners' Dilemma (Axelrod 1981, Weingast 1997, Acemoglu and Robinson 2001). Even though a citizen living under the democratic regime, if the former authoritarian party has still dominated in some of the districts and there is no chance of defeating it in the upcoming elections, such as PRI in Mexico or KMT in Taiwan, citizens may reasonably hoard her suffering experience but apparently support the former oppressor or the authoritarian successor party.

Among the four studies mentioned above, political opportunity structure theory reconciles these contradicting findings. For example, Western Ukraine has been dominated by the anti-

Russian party since its independence in 1994. Therefore, residents in west Ukraine were safe to share their stories and express a hostile attitude toward Russia. In contrast, the Crimea Tatar survey was conducted right after the 2014 referendum when the pro-Russian pressure reached its maximum. In such a scenario, it is useless and even dangerous to vote against the referendum to join the Russian Federation, so Crimea Tatars must pretend their loyalty through the referendum. In Mexico, the long-term dominant party PRI just returned to power again in 2012 when the authors started data collections. PRI also won the majority in many districts where forced disappearance happened, so the victims and their families must comply again. Furthermore, the Chinese Communist Party still dominates China before and after the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

One limitation across these four studies is that the dominance of one side prevents us from systematically investigating the interplay between political opportunity and political violence. The anti-Russian party already dominated western Ukraine, and the forced disappearances in Mexico were concentrated in a few districts. In the eye of KKV, the key independent variable – political opportunity structure – is usually held as a constant.

Recently, Rozenas and Zhulov (2019) tackled this conditional effect by extending the time horizon in Ukraine. They combined the archive of Stalin's Terror by Hunger in Ukraine with five sets of political outcomes after the famine from 1941 to 2017. By exploring the different political contexts in Ukraine across different periods, they can operationalize the variation of retribution threat from the USSR. Their results show that when the retribution threat was credible (during 1946-1958), there was a negative correlation between earlier famine death and anti-Soviet political behaviors. When the retribution threat disappears, the correlation reverses.

Rozenas and Zhulov's article makes an important contribution to studying the moderation effect. However, the case suffers from two limitations. First, the pro-Russia party in Ukraine, albeit

its closeness to the current Russian government, is not the USSR itself. Hence, people may or may not attribute the wrongdoings of the USSR in the past to the current pro-Russia party. Second, even though their analysis successfully captures the objective variation of the political opportunity structure, whether people subjectively perceived such a variation is an open question. Protesters can hardly compare the political opportunity structure across different timeframes. It is possible that the leading activists in different periods all believed that they were facing record-breaking pressure from Russia. Besides, since there were other political repressions and violence after the great famine, the causal relationship might be influenced by those later events.

In this article, we plan to study the moderation effect of political opportunity structure on the legacy of political violence through a special case – Taiwan – which may help address the methodological issues in the literature above. There are four major advantages to exploiting Taiwan as a unique but generalizable case. First, the former authoritarian party KMT, which conducted violent repression before democratization (see the White Terror section), still runs in elections in Taiwan after the democratization in 1987. KMT is still one of the major parties in Taiwan politics now; KMT won 1996, 2008, and 2012 Taiwanese presidential elections. KMT also honors the two former dictators frequently. Therefore, the legacy effect of political violence should be much stronger given its clear target of attribution.

Second, the political development in Taiwan enables researchers to compare the moderation effect of political repression across different districts at the same time frame. KMT has been dominating in some counties before and after the democratization. Meanwhile, KMT encountered immediate flip-overs in some other counties. Hence, the variance of perceived potential retribution from KMT can be captured through the party dominance and turnover since the democratization.

Third, Taiwan has enjoyed a relatively peaceful development after its democratization. There is no political violence after the democratization, and the discussion of transitional justice mainly focuses on the pre-democratization era. Also, there is no mass election manipulation in Taiwan. Taiwan's level of election integrity is ranked 24 globally between 2012 and 2016,¹ so election results in Taiwan are reliable. Hence, it would not suffer from the potential bias or misreports as in the cases of China and Crimea.

In the end, the scale of the political repression in Taiwan during the martial law period was far more extensive and widespread than the forced disappearance in Mexico. Thousands of victims in the White Terror (discussed in the next section) can be found in every county in Taiwan almost every year during the martial law period. Methodologically speaking, the relatively even distribution may prevent the result from being driven by selection bias or by the outlier.

White Terror in Taiwan, 1949 - 1987

The White Terror was a series of violent repressions after the KMT troops were defeated by the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War and then retreated to Taiwan after 1949. On May 19, 1949, the KMT government announced the martial law in Taiwan and passed the *Act for the Control and Punishment of Rebellion* one week later.

During the martial law period, political dissidents were accused of spying for the CCP and detained, interrogated, or executed. Since the apparent goal of the leader Chiang Kai-shek at that time was to counterattack and recover mainland China, any citizen in Taiwan who failed to express firm support toward the counterattack would be arrested or killed by the Taiwan Garrison Command, a secret police body who enforced the martial law. No meaningful opposition party

¹ <https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/the-year-in-elections-2017/>, Access: March 20, 2018

could exist, and all non-KMT assemblies and associations were outlawed. After several waves of protests led by local non-KMT activists and diplomat pressures from abroad, martial law was eventually lifted by President Chiang Ching-Kuo, son of Chiang Kai-shek, on 15 July 1987. (For the review of the punishments and judgments in the White Terror, see Liu (2021)).

The list of victims during the White Terror can be found in the Taiwan White Terror Dataset.² The dataset is coded and released by the New Taiwan Foundation. According to the volunteers who coded this dataset, the New Taiwan Foundation collected all available official records related to political victims and violence from all institutions in Taiwan. Some records are from the Compensation Foundation for Wrongful Trials on Charges of Sedition and Espionage during the Martial Law Period, while others were collected from the gradually declassified records in numerous police departments, military courts, and National Security Bureau.

Overall, the dataset includes 13,206 victim records, and each case includes the victim's name, gender, date of birth, birthplace, level of education, and age when being arrested, employment, the reason for being arrested, sentences, and other accomplices in the same case. The dataset was uploaded and became publicly available in January 2016.

Research Design and Hypothesis

This article studies the moderation effect of political violence through both aggregate-level and individual-level evidence.

At the aggregate-level, this article will exploit the newly-published Taiwan White Terror Dataset and the diverse political context in Taiwan mentioned above. Following Wang (2021) and Rozenas and Zhulov (2019), the number of victims in the district may increase the likelihood and

² <https://twjtdb.tjc.gov.tw/> Access: January 21, 2022

strength of the legacy of political violence: when there were more victims of the White Terror, there would be more friends, neighbors, or family members of the victims, so their sufferings were much likely to influence people's political participation afterward. The brutal experience was passed down through family education, museum, memorials, story-telling, and formal education. However, whether the experience will be transferred to the punishment to KMT may depend on the local political context surrounding the voters. If the voters perceived that KMT still dominates their district, it implies that KMT is still strong, and there could be many former collaborators of KMT. Therefore, one would choose not to vote against KMT.

In other words, at the aggregate level, we should observe a *bipolar distribution* in the districts with more White Terror victims. When a district had more victims, voters would be more sensitive to whether the authoritarian successor party dominates or not. If not, voters will overwhelmingly express their hate and discontent toward the authoritarian successor party and support other parties. If yes, voters would instead hide their true preference and show their loyalty to the authoritarian successor party – which the same strategy helped them or their ancestors survive before. As a result, the distribution of the vote share of the authoritarian successor party in the districts with more victims would be much more polarized compared with the district with fewer victims.

The major weakness of the aggregate-level analysis is the causal mechanism. There are several alternative explanations for the findings at the aggregate level. For example, one may argue that the ideology, type of industry, or the level of education indirectly causes both more victims in the past and the polarized distribution nowadays. After all, the authoritarian successor party may no longer implement the violent repression again after democratization, and people may find the threat in the past no longer credible.

To confirm the causal mechanism, a pre-registered survey experiment was designed and implemented in December 2021. Two treatments were manipulated in the survey experiment. The first treatment is a priming treatment to enhance the salience of the White Terror among half of the respondents' heads. The second treatment is a simulated election in which the respondents are randomly assigned to be informed about a pre-election poll in which either KMT is dominating or not.

In the experiment, the moderation effect would appear when the two treatments interact. Following the hypothesis of moderation effect, when people are primed to take the white terror into account, and when they perceive that KMT dominates in the district, they may instead support KMT more. Conversely, when the White terror cue is not salient, or when KMT does not dominate in the election, the voter may be less likely to vote for KMT. If we can find such a tendency at the individual level through the experimental setting designed above, this experiment may help explain the polarized distribution in the districts with more White Terror victims.

One assumption behind the White Terror case is that people and victims dislike KMT because of the repression. This assumption may not hold if, as was claimed by KMT, those victims really "collaborated with the communist party," "dismantled the authority," or "disrupted the social orders." If people buy KMT's claim, as was suggested as an indoctrination strategy by the authoritarian government (Neundorf and Pop-Eleches 2020), neighbors or family members of the victims would be thankful to the White Terror repression and therefore support KMT more since it brought back the social order.

Empirical evidence suggests the opposite, however. Chiou and Hong (2021) combined the survey data after 1980 and the records of 1424 victims in 1949, and then showed that the number of victims in the township significantly lowered the likelihood of the residents supporting KMT,

identifying as Chinese, or supporting unification after 50 years. Their result indicates that the White Terror would make KMT less attractive.

The design of this article extends Chou and Hong's results (2001) in two aspects. First, as will be shown in the next section and Figure 1, the White Terror is much longer than the February 28 incident in 1947. There were victims every year before 1987, and our archive includes 13206 cases. Second, the literature suggests an attitude-behavior distinction. Even though people may dislike the authoritarian successor party, they may still choose to vote for the party to fake their loyalty or to ensure their survival. The political opportunity structure theory suggests that whether people's vote will reflect their preference is conditional to the strength of the authoritarian successor party.

Study 1: Aggregate-level Evidence

To examine the long-term effect of political violence after democratization, a straightforward test is to calculate the number of victims in each county and see how much it correlates with the vote share of the authoritarian successor party. Moreover, the moderation hypothesis suggests that the distribution of the vote share will be polarized in the county with more victims in the past.

Independent Variable: % of victims in each county before 1987

. Following Wang (2021) and Rozenas and Zhulov (2019), the independent variable is coded by the overall number of victims in each county divided by the population in 1990 in each county. Given the diverse population and level of economic developments across counties, this measure makes the number comparable.

Unfortunately, coding the locations of the victims is tricky. The White Terror Dataset suffers from a certain level of missing data, and some cases have multiple locations in the record. Hence, we manually coded all 13,206 cases through the following procedure: (1) 6,554 in 13,206 (50.4%) victims were coded by their birthplace in Taiwan. Even though many victims were not arrested and killed in their birthplace, such as college students arrested on campus or journalists jailed in Taipei, it is reasonable to believe that their stories would mostly be told and passed down by their family members and neighborhoods, especially when these stories were not exposed on mainstream media before democratization. Therefore, by definition, all victims in this step were ethical Taiwanese, and all mainlanders (who retreated to Taiwan around 1949) were ruled out in this step. (2) If their birthplace is not in Taiwan, the victims would be assigned to where they lived before being arrested. (3) If both pieces of information were unavailable in the record, the victim would be coded to live in the place that most of his accomplices were from or were living. Most of the cases in the second and third steps were Mainlanders serving in the military when being arrested. The last two steps further categorized 1507 victims to a specific Taiwanese county. Overall, this article used 8161 in 13206 (61.8%) records for analysis. Figure 1 shows the distribution of victims across time and space.

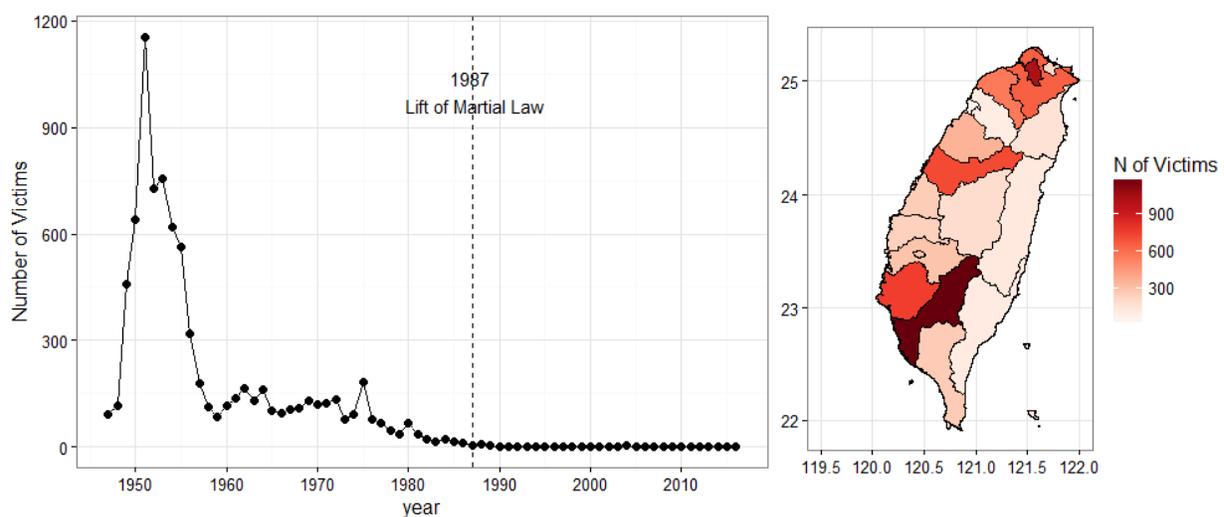


Figure 1. White Terror victims across years and counties in Taiwan, 1949-1987 (n=13206)

Most of the unidentifiable cases were owing to the missing data problem. Only the victim's name was listed in the archive, so there is no way to identify the impact or the bias. Some other unidentifiable cases were foreigners who were arrested for "helping the Chinese Communist Party." They were from Hong Kong, mainland China, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, France, and Panama. The remaining cases were mainland victims who were serving in the military. They did not participate in any association or have an accomplice. They were arrested and punished mostly because they complained or criticized Chiang's leadership. Since they were not allowed to marry until 1959, and their marriage was restricted until 1974, the long-term effect of these soldiers may be limited. Since the troops stayed and rotated around all counties in Taiwan, I did not see the reason if the missing data would cause bias geographically.

After data cleaning, the independent variable *Percentage of victims in the county* is the total number of victims in each county is divided by its population in 1990. The Taiwan government conducts a population census every ten years, so the 1990 data were closest to the lift of martial law in 1987. The distribution of the independent variable can be seen in Figure 2. small islands, including Kinmen, Matsu, and Penghu, were dropped; they had a different martial law period, and KMT put a considerable number of troops on them for security purposes.

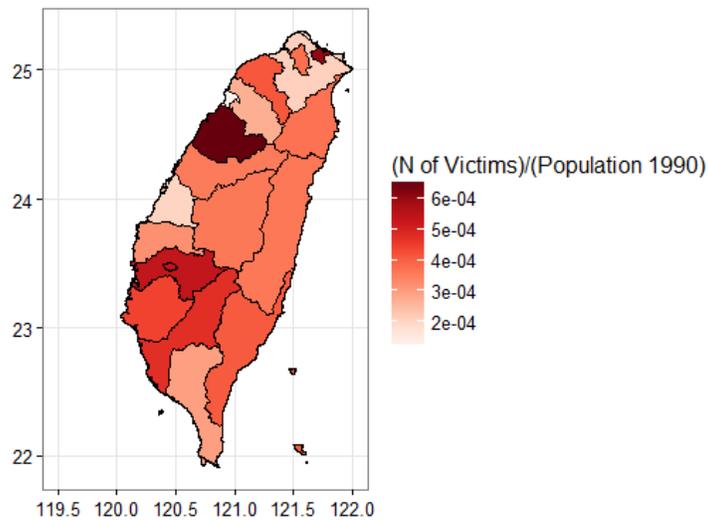


Figure 2. Independent Variable: Percentage of victims in each district before 1987

This transformation may capture the socialization mechanism behind the legacy of political violence. With a higher percentage of victims, citizens in the district were much more likely to pass down the story of violence and were much likely to decide their response based on the political opportunity structure of their district. In Figure 1, it is not surprising that most of the victims were from the major cities in Taiwan, including Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung.

However, after the transformation, Figure 2 reveals interesting results. The four counties with the highest percentage of the White Terror victims are Miaoli, Keelung, Kaohsiung, and Chiayi (0.065%, 0.060%, 0.059%, and 0.053%, respectively). Miaoli has been ruled by KMT since 1987, and DPP won for the first time in Keelung in 2018. Kaohsiung turned to DPP right after 1987, but KMT won Kaohsiung by a landslide (KMT 54%: DPP 44%) in 2018, which surprised

almost all experts of Taiwan politics.³ In the end, Chiayi has been dominated by DPP right after 1987.

Among the four cases above, they imply that the relationship linking the White Terror victims and party domination is far not linear. Instead, these counties seem to switch between pro-KMT and anti-KMT much more dramatically than other districts. We will test this hypothesis later.

Dependent Variables: Pro-KMT vote shares after 1987

Election results in county and city mayor elections after 1993 are publicly accessible on the Taiwan Central Election Commission website.⁴ In addition, the 1989 and 1993 county mayor election results were generously provided by the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University, Taipei. In each election, I calculated the KMT's vote share by the summation of KMT or KMT-endorsed candidates' vote share divided by the total number of votes.

Result: Vote Choice as the Legacy of Political Violence

Figure 3 illustrates the moderation effect of victims to election results after democratization. The x-axis is the percentage of the victims in districts, the y-axis is the KMT's vote shares, and the spot size is the number of voters in the districts. Spots are colored blue if KMT received more than 50% of votes in the election and green if not. Blue and green lines were the smooth line predicted by the ggplot function in R, shadowed with plus and minus 1.96 standard error.

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/24/world/asia/taiwan-election-results.html> Access: January 21, 2022

⁴ <http://db.cec.gov.tw/> Access: July 23, 2017

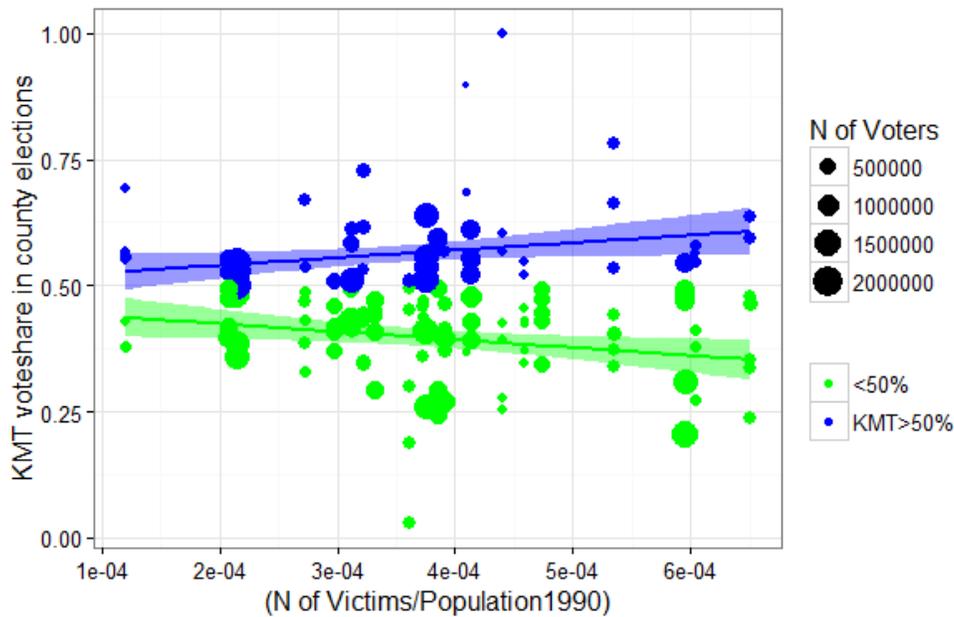


Figure 3. KMT vote shares in Mayor elections, 1989-2016, by the proportion of victims in 1990

Figure 3 reveals the full scope that previous studies can only partly explain. Among the counties where KMT did not dominate, a higher percentage of victims associated with *lower* KMT vote shares. Among the KMT-dominated counties, the correlation is reversed. No significant correlation between political violence and party support could be found if all counties were grouped together. Figure 3 provides preliminary evidence of the moderation effect of political opportunity structure on the legacy of political violence.

To further estimate the moderation effect, Table 1 presents the results of six OLS regression models. In all six models, the dependent variable is KMT's vote share in the mayor elections from 1989 to 2018. In models (1) and (2), voters' perceived political opportunity structure is a binary variable that whether KMT received 50% of the vote in that election ($KMT > 50\%$). Since the pre-election poll became popular in Taiwan since 1992, voters should foretell whether KMT would dominate in the upcoming election. In models (3) to (6), voters' perception is captured by the

binary variable that whether KMT got 50% last time or in the last two times. In the end, model (2), (4), and (6) includes the control variable of KMT's performance last time as well as a dummy variable for DPP president Chen Shiu-Bian period from 2000 to 2008.

Table 1. KMT vote shares in mayor election explained by the proportion of victims

<i>Dependent variable: KMT candidate's vote share in mayor elections</i>						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% of Victims	-143.4** (69.5)	-147.9** (64.3)	-195.3** (93.3)	-177.8* (88.1)	-298.9** (120.8)	-272.5** (112.7)
KMT>50%	0.072 (0.043)	0.054 (0.040)				
% of Victim X KMT>50%	262.2** (114.1)	244.6** (105.6)				
KMT>50% last time			0.015 (0.056)	0.046 (0.055)		
%Victim X last time			205.7 (145.1)	174.2 (140.5)		
KMT>50% last two times					-0.045 (0.079)	-0.085 (0.078)
%Victim X last two times					344.9* (192.0)	309.6* (177.7)
%KMT last time		0.177*** (0.051)				0.358*** (0.100)
Chen 2000-2008		0.045*** (0.014)		0.060*** (0.019)		0.063** (0.026)
Observations	128	126	126	126	86	86
R2	0.551	0.608	0.195	0.298	0.186	0.328
Adjusted R2	0.540	0.592	0.175	0.269	0.156	0.286

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Among the six models in Table 1, the proportion of victims during the martial law period all negatively correlates with KMT's vote share in the mayor elections after democratization. However, the estimated coefficients of the interaction term between % of victims and the perceived political opportunity structure are positively different from zero in the model (1), (2), (5), and (6), which are marked with gray shadow. If the coefficients of % of victims and the interaction term are summed up, it will still be positive in the model (1) and (2) and become zero in the model (3), (4), (5), and (6). In other words, Table 1 indicates the moderation effect of the political opportunity structure between the legacy of political violence and vote choice. If voters perceived that KMT

could win this time, or KMT has been dominated in this district for a long time, their previous experience of political violence will not lower their support toward KMT; model (1) and (2) even suggest that voters in these KMT-dominated districts would vote KMT more.

Study 2: Individual-level Evidence

The major weakness of the evidence in Study 1 is the causal mechanism. Even though there is a moderation effect of whether $KMT > 50\%$ on KMT's vote share, it does not mean that voters really perceived that KMT would dominate in the election. Besides, even though voters support KMT more when KMT dominates, it may be simply driven by the bandwagon effect or by the group pressure or group conformity (Asch 1961), instead of the White Terror conducted by KMT before 1987.

To address these issues, we designed and implemented a survey experiment in Taiwan in December 2021. Overall, 910 respondents were recruited and completed the experiment by Pollcracylab,⁵ an online survey firm run by the National Chengchi University between December 13 and 16, 2021. Pollcracylab compiles and maintains its sample pool through previous invitations in academic telephone and face-to-face surveys based on the house registration record from the Taiwan government. Hence, the diversity in Pollcracylab's sample pool would be higher than other opted-in surveys such as MTurk. Moreover, all Pollcracylab respondents in Taiwan had been verified as real people, which may mitigate the problem of bot infestation in other established platforms (e.g. Chmielewski and Kucker 2020). The survey experiment was implemented right before four referendums on December 18, 2021, which we believed that people would pay more attention to politics and are much more willing to participate in this study in general; in other words,

⁵ We requested 900 in the research design, but we received 910 responses because some respondents filled the survey at the same time.

the participants will not be limited to those with extremely high political interest. The survey experiment has been approved by the author's institution's IRB and pre-registered on a website before the implementation. The pre-analysis plan of this study was also registered before the implementation.

The socio-demographic background of the respondents is shown in Table 2. Compared with the Taiwanese population, Pollcracylab respondents have more males, younger, and highly educated citizens. Nevertheless, regarding the political relevant variables, including the national identity (Wang 2017) and partisanship, the distribution of the Pollcracylab respondents is similar to other representative telephone and face-to-face surveys conducted during the same period.⁶ Since the respondents will be randomly assigned into different groups during the experiment, we believe that the problem of sample bias can be mitigated. The robustness check section will examine the robustness of the results across different subgroups. In addition, it is worth mentioning that all socio-demographic variables, including party identification and national identity, were asked at the end of the whole survey experiment. The design avoids the priming or even framing from the group identity (Klar et al. 2020).

⁶ e.g. http://teds.nccu.edu.tw/teds_plan/item.php?cat_choose=69 Access: January 6 2021

Table 2. Background of Pollcracylab respondents in Study 2 (n=910)

<i>Gender</i>	Male	553 (60.8%)
	Female	357 (39.2%)
<i>Age</i>	20~29	158 (17.4%)
	30~39	280 (30.8%)
	40~49	247 (27.1%)
	50~59	171 (18.8%)
	60 up	54 (5.9%)
<i>Education</i>	Middle School	4 (0.4%)
	Senior High	52 (5.7%)
	Junior College	118 (13.0%)
	College	380 (41.8%)
	Graduate School	356 (39.1%)
<i>Taiwanese Identity</i>	Taiwanese	547 (60.1%)
	Both	348 (38.2%)
	Chinese	9 (1.0%)
	Others	6 (0.7%)
<i>Party Identification</i>	KMT	158 (17.4%)
	DPP	223 (24.5%)
	New Power Party	38 (4.2%)
	Taiwan People's Party	124 (13.6%)
	Taiwan Statebuilding Party	38 (4.2%)
	Other parties (< 4% each)	29 (3.2%)
	Non-Partisan	300 (33.0%)

Experiment Procedure

All respondents received an innovation email from Pollcracylab, indicating that they were invited to participate in a survey titled “How do people discuss politics in daily life.” They were informed that there are at most 40 items, the survey had passed IRB, and they can skip any item they want, but they must reach the last page so they can be compensated with a gift card (NTD \$50) distributed by Pollcracylab directly.

All respondents were firstly asked a series of questions about their information consumption across different information sources, and then they were asked their preferences toward the four upcoming referendums. They were further asked about their evaluation of the national economy, their feeling thermometer toward China and the United States, and their attitude toward the US-China-Taiwan military conflicts. Before the treatment, they were also asked a battery of political knowledge.

Half of the subjects (454 in 910, 49.9%) were then randomly assigned to read and answer two questions. The wording of the first question is below. Respondents who were assigned to read these two questions were in the treatment group called “White Terror” treatment. The other half of the respondents simply skipped these two questions and were called the control group.

“Q22. According to the 2005 “Reviewing all military court cases during the Martial Law Period Report” made by the Ministry of Defense, overall there were 16132 cases underwent by the military court. Did you happen to know any family members who were punished by the Martial Law? Yes, I know/No, I do not.”⁷

“Q23. Did you happen to know of any case punished by the Martial Law in the county where you registered as a voter? Yes, I know / No, I do not.”

We do not expect the respondents to answer these two questions sincerely. Nevertheless, to mitigate the potential harm or mental stress to the respondents, we mentioned the number of cases to the respondents. Because the number of cases is huge, the respondent may be relieved. Furthermore, if the mechanism of political violence still functions, we should expect that people do not answer sincerely. In fact, only 28 (6.2%) and 111 (24.4%) of respondents who were assigned to read these two questions gave a positive answer.

The purpose of this treatment is to prime people to take the White Terror into consideration when they are making a voting decision in the next question. Q22 illustrates the number of victims

⁷ The number of cases is 13206 when the author firstly downloaded and cleaned the archive in 2017, as was analyzed in Study 1. About 3000 more cases were released in Feb 25, 2021 (<https://www.readr.tw/post/2543> Access: January 22, 2022). Owing to time and resource limitation, the author is not able to categorize these additional cases. Nevertheless, since most of these cases were archived and protected by the National Security Bureau, it is possible that most of the cases are related to mainlanders. Hence, we believed that these additional cases will not influence the inference in Study 1.

and the historical background of the White Terror, and Q23 reiterates its influence. After people read the description and answer the two questions, their knowledge of the white terror will be activated and be more accessible to their working memory (Higgins 1996). As a result, they are much more likely to take the White Terror into account in the next couple of questions.

After the White Terror treatment, all subjects were then randomly assigned into one of the three experimental groups below:

Q24-1. The next county mayor election will be held in late 2022. Assuming in the county you live in, only KMT and DPP nominate a county mayor candidate. In such a scenario, which candidate would you tend you choose? KMT/DPP (Control group, n =298)

Q24-2. The next county mayor election will be held in late 2022. Assuming in the county you live in, only KMT and DPP nominate a county mayor candidate. And according to the most recent academic survey, the KMT candidate will defeat the DPP candidate by 55%: 45%. In such a scenario, which candidate would you tend you choose? KMT/DPP (KMT55 group, n =299)

Q24-3. The next county mayor election will be held in late 2022. Assuming in the county you live in, only KMT and DPP nominate a county mayor candidate. And according to the most recent academic survey, the DPP candidate will defeat the KMT candidate by 55%: 45%. In such a scenario, which candidate would you tend you choose? KMT/DPP (DPP55 group, n = 305)

In the control group, all respondents were only asked to choose between a DPP and a KMT candidate, with no information about the chance of winning. In the KMT55 group, respondents were informed that KMT enjoys a considerable margin of 10% against the DPP candidate, while the situation is reversed in the DPP55 group. The 10% gap is usually large enough to clinch the winning, so the two treatment groups are designed to manipulate the respondents' subjective perception that KMT will dominate or not in his or her district in the upcoming election. This design serves as the direct test of the political opportunity structure.

After the two treatments, all subjects were asked about their socio-demographic backgrounds. They were then debriefed and compensated at the end of the survey. They will then be compensated NTD\$50 directly by Pollcracylab.

Randomization Check

Randomization check shows that all experimental groups are randomly assigned and have a similar background. One-way ANOVA shows no significant difference for the two treatments in the respondents' gender ($p = 0.881$ for the White Terror treatment, and $p = 0.297$ for the political opportunity structure treatment), age ($p = 0.329$ and $p = 0.928$, respectively), the level of education ($p = 0.196$ and $p = 0.687$, respectively), and Taiwanese identity ($p = 0.351$ and $p = 0.259$, respectively). Two-way ANOVA also shows no significant difference between the 2 X 3 groups in their socio-demographic background.

Result: White Terror X Political Opportunity Structure

Since the random assignment successfully passes the randomization check, we can directly compare the mean values across groups. Among the three experimental groups receiving different pre-election poll numbers, KMT receives 54.8%, 49.2%, and 44.6% in KMT55, DPP55, and Control (no information), respectively. ANOVA analysis shows that the difference in the mean value is significant across the groups ($p = 0.044$). When Taiwanese people perceive that the authoritarian successor party will dominate in the upcoming election, they will likely vote for KMT.

Does the legacy of the White Terror cause this tendency? Figure 4 shows the percentage of choosing KMT as the mayor in the 2X3 experimental groups. The left three bars are the respondents who do not receive the White Terror treatment, while the right three bars are the

respondents who read and answered the two White Terror questions. The three colors are the respondents assigned to KMT55, DPP55, or the control group later. The error bars on each bar indicate the 95% confidence interval of the mean value in each group. The result of the one-way ANOVA test is also shown on the two experimental groups.

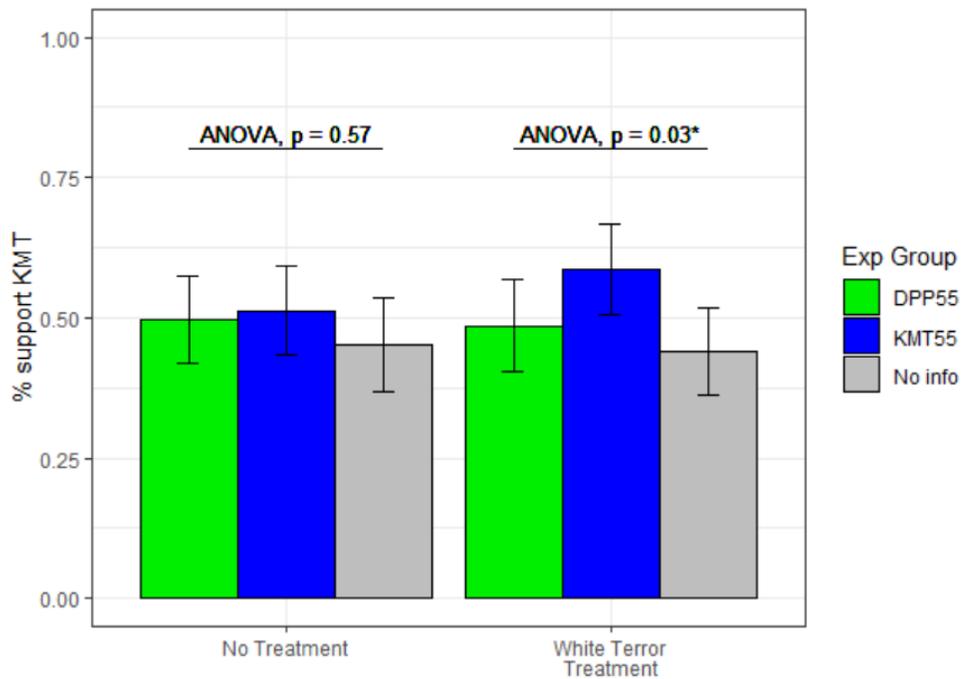


Figure 4. KMT's vote share by experimental groups (n=910)

Figure 4 indicates that the pro-KMT tendency in the perceived KMT-dominance scenario is related to the White Terror. Among the respondents who did not read the two White Terror questions, their vote choice was not influenced by the pre-election poll at all. One-way ANOVA shows no significant difference across the three groups on the left ($p = 0.57$. KMT received 49.7%, 51.3%, and 45.3%, respectively). Among the respondents who read the two White Terror questions and were primed to take the White Terror into the consideration, however, the KMT-dominance

in the pre-election poll treatment significantly increased the likelihood for Taiwanese respondents to support KMT ($p = 0.036$. KMT received 48.6%, 58.7%, and 44.1%, respectively). In other words, the bandwagon phenomenon we observed earlier is at least partly driven by the consideration of the White Terror.

To further control the covariates, Table 3 shows the results of four logit regression models explaining the vote choice in the experiment. The dependent variable is coded 1 if the respondent chooses KMT and 0 if DPP. DPP55 and KMT55 treatments are coded as the dummy variables, and Control is the baseline. Model (1) and (2) analyze the respondents who received the White Terror treatment, and Model (3) and (4) analyze the respondents who did not receive the White Terror treatment. Gender, Taiwanese identity, age, and the level of education are included in the model (2) and (4).

Table 3. Logit Regression explaining vote choice in Study 2

	<i>Dependent variable: Choosing KMT = 1, DPP = 0</i>			
	(1) White Terror Group	(2) White Terror Group	(3) No White Terror Group	(4) No White Terror Group
DPP55 treatment (0/1)	0.181 (0.231)	0.340 (0.289)	0.178 (0.232)	-0.048 (0.294)
KMT55 treatment (0/1)	0.585** (0.232)	0.522* (0.292)	0.242 (0.235)	0.162 (0.296)
Female (0/1)		0.209 (0.244)		0.235 (0.243)
Taiwanese Identity (0/1)		-2.957*** (0.266)		-3.030*** (0.271)
Age (1-5)		-0.053 (0.105)		-0.187* (0.108)
Education (1-7)		0.247* (0.145)		-0.116 (0.140)
Constant	-0.237 (0.159)	0.336 (0.853)	-0.190 (0.172)	2.881*** (0.883)
n	448	448	454	454
Log likelihood	-307.2	-220.8	-314.0	-222.7

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

The result in Table 3 is consistent with the ANOVA result in Figure 4. In both Model (1) and (2) KMT55 treatment significantly increases the likelihood of choosing KMT only after the respondents were primed of the White Terror, compared with the respondents in the Control group. The effect exists after controlling for other covariates in Model (2). However, the same effect disappears when there is no White Terror priming, as is shown in Model (3) and (4). In other words, the White Terror priming will make Taiwanese people support KMT more once they perceive that KMT will dominate in the upcoming election.

Meanwhile, the DPP55 treatment is not significantly different from the Control group. Among the control variables, it is not surprising that the Taiwanese identity negatively correlates with choosing KMT, but the KMT55 effect is still significant after controlling the Taiwanese identity in Model (2).

Conclusion

In this article, we aim at reconciling the previous studies linking political violence in the past and political participation after democratization. We suggest the political opportunity structure as the moderator in how people respond to the legacy of political violence. This structure can explain the seemingly contradictory findings in the literature. This moderation effect is also supported by both the aggregate-level evidence and the survey experiment in Taiwan, a unique case in which the authoritarian successor party KMT still serves as one of the majority parties.

The results render important implications to the study of political violence and democratization. First, it implies that fear can help explain the persistence of the authoritarian successor party. Loxton and Mainwaring (2018) show that the authoritarian successor parties exist in 72% of countries in the third wave of democratization, and 54% of them ever retake power after

democratization. Many cases suggested in that book show that the authoritarian successor party can exploit resources (party brand, clientelist network) left by the former authoritarian party to take advantage in democracies. Meanwhile, they argue that the history of political violence and human rights violations was sometimes denied or ignored by the authoritarian successor parties, but they were sometimes embraced. For example, National Democratic Party in Suriname highlights its dictator Dési Bouterse, and KMT in Taiwan still honors the Chiang family.

Why does National Democratic Party embrace its brutal past? The political opportunity structure model in this article suggests that the authoritarian successor parties may take advantage of the former dictator, especially when they have a certain chance to win in the upcoming election. The brutal past will be the last straw on the camel's back and help the authoritarian successor party dominate in the election. Indeed, National Democratic Party in Suriname won the majority in parliament in its 2015 election (46% of votes and 51% of seats). If the victims found that the authoritarian party was still strong and may even win back the power again, they would instead vote for it, as is shown in Study 2 of this article. In short, the result in this article suggests an alternative explanation for the resilience of these authoritarian successor parties.

Second, the result evidences the importance of signals and coordination. The victims and their predecessors may want to punish the authoritarian party, but they will do so only if others do so together. In the Crimea Tatars case in Lupu and Peisakhin (2017), 75.4% of the respondents said "*they are willing*" to join the protest, but only 6.7% have ever participated in any protest or demonstration. In the White Terror case, many citizens in Miaoli and Keelung clearly knew the history of political repression in the past, but KMT has never been defeated in their hometown since 1987. The results speak to the theory of preference falsification (Kuran 1997). Notably, a similar result was also found in the long-term impact of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (Wang

2021) – Chinese citizens who lived in the province with more victims distrust the government more but attend the protest less. Based on the opportunity structure model suggested in this article, these Chinese citizens may be much more likely to speak out and use their vote as revenge when the opposition party secures a majority - or, at least, the opposition party provides a stronger signal to make people believe so.

In the end, the results may help explain why the relationship between turnout rate and closeness in the district is not linear in many countries, especially for those who have ever suffered from political violence or political repression before. For instance, Kostadinova and Power (2007) show that election closeness is not predictive of turnout in Latin America and Eastern Europe. The same pattern is also found in Taiwan. (Shiao 2009) This article suggests that the victims of political violence may motivate to either punish or support the former authoritarian party in different scenarios. In both scenarios, the victims, their neighborhoods, and their predecessors are motivated to vote *because of the considerable margin*.

The major weakness of both the aggregate-level and individual-level evidence is the psychological mechanism behind the White Terror priming. Even though the experiment in Study 2 shows that priming White Terror makes Taiwanese voters support KMT more in the KMT-dominance scenario, the treatment cannot explain the reason behind it. This tendency may be driven by the fear that KMT will take revenge in the future, the trauma from the past, or a combination of both. For example, Daly (2019) shows that the many post-war belligerent leaders can win support from the voters because they still have a certain level of military power; voters would rationally expect how the military power will be exerted. Nevertheless, the experimental design in this article cannot disentangle the underlying mechanism behind the priming of the White

Terror. Future work may focus on how much the past experience may transfer to the consideration of the future outcomes in studying the legacy of political violence.

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