Anticipating Dissent: The Repression of Politicians in Pinochet's Chile

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Dictators can choose not only whether to repress but also how to repress. This paper demonstrates that autocrats select their repressive methods based on the anticipated likelihood of responsive dissent. While dictators would prefer to use violence against their most prominent opposition, the more visible the opponent, the more likely their death or detention will provoke backlash. Instead, dictators can target these enemies with alternative methods of repression like exile. To test this theory, I draw on original data on the fates of candidates in the last elections before Chile's coup. While elected politicians experienced more repression when accounting for exile, results—including those of a regression discontinuity—demonstrate that election decreased the likelihood of suffering violence. Evidence suggests that this is due to the increased prominence associated with winning office. My findings offer new insight into how autocrats avoid backlash, as well as when they adopt different repressive tools.

Dictators use repression to eliminate challenges to the state, making opposition leaders among their most important targets (Bhasin and Gandhi 2013; Davenport 2007). Repression has been found to be most effective against individuals who actively work against the regime (Blaydes 2018; Kalyvas 2006). Puzzlingly, however, even brutal dictators do not always kill or imprison their most powerful opponents: autocrats from Joseph Stalin to Idi Amin have spared the lives of some, instead turning to tools like exile or relegation. Indeed, often overlooked in the study of state terror is that dictators have a choice not only whether to use repression but also how to repress (Shen-Bayh 2018).

This article develops and tests a theory that when targeting opponents, dictators select their methods of repression based on the anticipated likelihood of backlash. In particular, I argue that autocrats are constrained from using violence against their most prominent opponents, because their visibility makes responsive dissent more likely. A growing literature demonstrates that, under certain conditions, state terror inflames dissent (Garfias and Magaloni 2018; Opp and Roehl 1990; Pierskalla 2010; Rozenas and Zhukov 2013; Sullivan 2016; Young 2020). Importantly, however, dictators may anticipate the downstream consequences of repression and avoid using violence if it is likely to lead to collective action (Christensen 2018; Christensen and Garfias 2018; Ritter and Conrad 2016; Sullivan and Davenport 2018).

Building on this work, I theorize that autocrats target opposition with different repressive tactics depending on their prominence in an effort to avoid potential backlash. To eliminate dissent, dictators should target individuals with the will and capacity to mobilize against the government. Without constraints, regimes should apply physical coercion—death or detention—against opponents to remove their ability to organize entirely. However, the more prominent the opposition figure, the more likely physical coercion will provoke dissent (Opp and Roehl 1990; Siegel 2011). To avoid backlash, I hypothesize that regimes can substitute violence with tools that show some respect for physical integrity rights, like exile. Such methods come with the cost of permitting activists space to operate, but they reduce the likelihood of responsive dissent by signaling some respect for physical integrity rights. Though we often assume that vulnerability to violence increases with

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the threat an individual presents to the state, this theory suggests that prominent opposition figures experience less physical coercion. Instead, less overtly violent tools serve as substitutes.

I test this theory with an original data set on the fates of candidates for national political office in Chile's last elections before the coup, drawing on truth commission reports and governmental exile lists. Though successful candidates were more threatening to the regime based on their capacity to organize, winning office increased their prominence. Results show that vote share was correlated with overall repression, when accounting for exile, but elected politicians experienced less physical coercion. Though the limited sample size means results warrant caution, a regression discontinuity design (RDD) provides causal evidence that election decreased the likelihood of violence. Exile served as a substitute instead. These findings provide evidence that dictators' choice of methods is sensitive to the increased prominence associated with election. I confirm that my results hold more broadly using lists of targeted activists, which marked certain opponents as particularly influential.

To test the mechanism that election raises candidate visibility, I demonstrate that holding office increases dictatorship-era press coverage unrelated to repression. Qualitative evidence shows that dictator Augusto Pinochet viewed exile as an alternative strategy to weaken opposition when political constraints prevented using physical coercion. I additionally test for whether findings result from elected politicians' ability to flee the country, through political connections or the expectation of violence. While I find some support for politicians expecting violence, results overall hold. I additionally present qualitative evidence that international pressure was unlikely to drive findings, and explore cases outside Chile.

This research makes three primary contributions to literature on repression and authoritarian survival. First, rather than look at the dynamic—and possibly censored—relationship between mobilization and repression, by exploring the fates of opposition elites this research shows how autocrats use preventive repression to minimize risk (Arriola 2014; Dragu and Przeworski 2019; Truex 2019). Second, this article builds on work on how different forms of state terror and cooptation can serve as substitutes, by showing how regime choices are affected by opponent characteristics (Shen-Bayh 2018; Sullivan 2016). Focusing only on one form of repression would lead to considerably different conclusions. Finally, this paper demonstrates that dictators have incentives to avoid using violence against their most important enemies. Rather than respond only to the relative potential for dissent, dictators may weight threat by the likelihood of backlash (Davenport 2007). This explains why even violent dictatorships frequently send their opponents into exile: prominent opponents may be more dangerous to allow to operate, but they are also more dangerous to kill.

REPRESSION AND BACKLASH

Repression serves as one means for dictators to eliminate political challenges (Davenport 2007; Gurr and Lichbach 1986; Svolik 2012; Wintrobe 2000). However, the effectiveness of repression at suppressing dissent is unclear. Some research has found that state terror increases the costs of mobilization, reducing dissent and signaling government strength (Garfias and Magaloni 2018; Gupta, Singh, and Sprague 1993; Lichbach 1987; Pierskalla 2010; Young 2019). Others find that repression increases dissent by causing backlash, in which citizens respond to state terror through responsive mobilization (Francisco 1996; Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Rasler 1996; Rozenas and Zhukov 2013; Sullivan and Davenport 2018; Sullivan, Loyle, and Davenport 2012).

Why might repression provoke backlash? Literature on dissent and repression highlights two primary mechanisms. First, repression provides a focal point around which opposition can organize in "systemic alienation" (Opp and Roehl 1990, 524). While state terror provokes both anger and fear, particularly brutal, visible, or widespread acts lead anger to dominate, driving opponents to unite against the regime. This mechanism emphasizes that repression may reduce coordination problems among the opposition and their sympathizers. Second, repression may provoke backlash among those who support the regime, by providing information about the government's true type. Khawaja (1993, 67) shows that opposition used state violence to "ease their task of constructing a bad profile of the authorities." Under this mechanism an act of repression provides new information about government behavior that alienates and causes restiveness among regime supporters (Opp and Roehl 1990).

One explanation for the mixed empirical findings on backlash is that, if dictators anticipate that violence will lead to responsive dissent, they may choose restraint (Christensen 2018; Christensen and Garfias 2018; Ritter and Conrad 2016). While this literature focuses on the relationship between mass protest and repression broadly, however, visible dissent may signal that the government has already overstepped or failed to use repression widely enough (DeNardo 1985; Dragu and Przeworski 2019). For example, governments use mass arrests before important events to minimize protest potential (Arriola 2014; Truex 2019). The repression of opposition leaders is particularly key in this regard, since they are best able to organize dissent against the regime (Wintrobe 2000).

Often overlooked, however, is that dictators have a variety of repressive tools available, from extreme responses like

political killings to others, like exile, that partially respect physical integrity rights. Autocrats may thus use substitution to maximize the political returns to repression. Cross-national analysis has shown important variation in the use of different methods across contexts (DeMeritt and Conrad 2019; Frantz and Kendall-Taylor 2014). A growing literature extends this work subnationally, identifying how dictators' choices of repressive methods and opponents' strategies vary together (Guriev and Treisman 2015; Moore 2000; Sullivan 2016). Shen-Bayh (2018), for example, demonstrates that autocrats use extrajudicial methods of repression against external threats but judicial tools against the ruling elite to legitimize punishment.

Anticipating dissent

This paper develops and tests a theory that the anticipation of dissent shapes decisions about methods of repression. To limit the potential for dissent, dictators should be most concerned with individuals with the will and capacity to organize against the regime (Blaydes 2018: Kalyvas 2006). Some citizens, even those sympathetic to the opposition, may be too afraid to challenge the state (Young 2020). Even among those with the will, individuals differ in their capacity to mobilize due to experience, charisma, and social networks (Dewan, Humphreys, and Rubenson 2014; Siegel 2011). Regime opponents also vary in prominence, with some being widely known and others operating behind the scenes. This does not necessarily mean that less prominent opposition figures are also less dangerous to the state: for example, capable but anonymous opponents may produce pamphlets organizing protests, an act of resistance as threatening as a well-known opposition leader giving speeches.

Absent the fear of backlash, dictators should prefer to use physical coercion against their opponents. Physical coercion—defined here as killings or illegal detention—removes the organizing ability of opposition figures entirely. Murder clearly ends opponents' ability to work against the government. Illegal detention reduces activism both directly and indirectly: while victims are captive, perhaps for years, they are prevented from mobilizing, and even after release they may fear for themselves and their families. Indeed, detention has been found to reduce political activism (Bautista 2014). Dictators should thus ideally use violence against opposition leaders with the will and capacity to mobilize against the regime.

However, I argue that using physical coercion against more prominent opposition figures is more likely to provoke backlash. Past literature identifies two mechanisms through which violence causes dissent: by providing a focal point around which dictators' opposition can organize and by alienating regime supporters. High-profile targets provide a clearer focal point around which opponents can organize. Physical coercion against individuals embedded in opposition networks will be more likely to provoke a response from other prominent community members, with ripple effects for the likelihood of coordinated pressure against the regime. Information about prominent victims' repression is also more likely to disseminate, and "anger has little aggregate effect when network structure doesn't allow it to spread" (Siegel 2011, 1005). In this way, physical coercion against prominent opponents should be more likely to incite mobilization by the opposition.

Additionally, physical coercion against prominent opponents may be more likely to alienate those who support the regime. Because violence against prominent opponents should be reported on more widely, it will also be more visible to regime supporters. When victims are known for nonviolent activism, this should be particularly impactful in revealing a government's true "type." If an act of repression is believed "immoral," "individuals who are exposed to repression or who know about it may feel a moral obligation to support a movement's cause" (Opp and Roehl 1990, 524). However, not every act of repression is viewed as immoral by regime supporters. Dictators often claim that victims are subversives or terrorists, reducing culpability. This government narrative—that violence was a proportionate response to victims' crimes—is less believable when opponents are well known for nonviolence. Indeed, violence against nonviolent groups is more likely to provoke backlash (DeNardo 1985; Gurr 1970; Lichbach 1987). Because supporters are more likely to learn of and reject the repression of prominent opponents, physical coercion against high-profile targets may lead to calls for reform and restiveness from a dictator's backing coalition.

Backlash can thus come from either provoking opposition or alienating supporters. Killings of prominent opponents have a clear path to provoking dissent: their deaths will be more widely reported, responsive anger motivates protest, and the degree of violence signals the government as a "bad type." While Pinochet's regime may have initially viewed disappearances as a means to cover involvement in killings, even they "spark[ed] a backlash" when families of the disappeared, desperate to know their fates, began organizing (Policzer 2009, 86). Illegal detention can also inflame dissent. Prisoners often suffer torture and can be disappeared later, making the need to mobilize on their behalf urgent. This activates networks of family, friends, and political connections. Indefinite detention can alienate regime supporters by demonstrating lack of rule of law.

Together this suggests that regimes should be less likely to use physical coercion against their most prominent opponents. However, governments have a variety of less overtly violent repressive tools at their disposal, including exile,

"relegation" to remote areas, home searches, and intimidation. Because these methods display some respect for physical integrity rights, I argue that they are less likely to provoke backlash. In addition to being less widely reported, such tools are less likely to create a focal point around which opposition can organize, as they provoke neither the anger associated with killings nor the urgency linked to detention. Opponents may in fact view such repressive outcomes as relatively desirable. For supporters, meanwhile, these methods may be viewed as a proportionate response to political activism.

Here I focus on exile, among the most common forms of repression in the Chilean case (Wright and Oñate Zúñiga 2007). When in exile victims are not actively in danger, reducing the urgency of addressing this form of human rights violation. Regimes can claim exile as a benevolent response: the opposition may view it as a relatively desirable outcome compared to killing or detention, and supporters may view it as an appropriate reaction to dissent. Even targets may be less likely to advocate for themselves, since they are often safer abroad. In Chile in 1979, 769 habeas corpus requests were filed on behalf of political prisoners, versus 43 for the exiled.[1] Exile thus neither provides a focal point for active opposition nor clearly signals the regime as a "bad type" to supporters.

While these less overt methods do reduce the mobilizing capacity of opposition, they are less effective than physical coercion. Exile, relegation, and methods of intimidation separate opposition networks and may create fear that reduces participation. However, these less overt methods all permit enemies to continue to operate. As Wright and Oñate Zúñiga (2007, 39) note: "Exile turned out to be a double-edged sword, for while it removed a major part of the left from the country it also gave regime opponents the means to disseminate their message." Exile did not stifle opposition as effectively as physical coercion. This theory suggests that the regime was constrained from using physical coercion against its most prominent enemies, with exile serving as a substitute.

The case of Chile

I test this theory using original data on the fates of candidates for national political office in Chile's last elections before the coup. Under Augusto Pinochet (1973–89), nearly 3,000 people were killed and 30,000 illegally detained. Though Pinochet justified rule by pointing to communist-subversive threats, in fact his regime faced little violent opposition (Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliacin 1993; Constable and Valenzuela 1991). Instead, the regime was concerned with two populations. First, Pinochet relied on the support of conservatives and the upper classes to prevent restiveness and reduce pressure for reform (CIA 1984). Though by 1975 the CIA stated that "the government's rationale was no longer valid" (CIA 1974), Pinochet painted repression to supporters as a just, necessary response to subversion. The regime paradoxically claimed legitimacy on the grounds of its fight against subversion and its commitment to the rule of law (Huneeus 2003).

Second, the dictator faced political challenges from prodemocracy activism, notably from the Catholic Church. To stifle criticism Pinochet expelled human rights activists and limited association for political parties (Constable and Valenzuela 1991). He rebuffed complaints by pointing to the necessity of beating back communism, saying, "human rights are a very tricky invention of Marxists" (Clinic Online 2013). Pressure from mass protests, opposition figures, prominent moderates, and the Catholic Church was instrumental in forcing Pinochet to hold a plebiscite on his rule, which ultimately led to democratization.

To test the theory outlined above, I focus on candidates for national political office in the last election before the coup. All these individuals were politically active, making them potential challengers to the regime, and party affiliation is known. Vote share provides a proxy for mobilizing capacity: those candidates who did well, even if they fell short of election, should be of more concern to the regime than those who did poorly. Election to national office raises prominence by increasing press coverage and name recognition.

I focus on two outcomes, overall repression and physical coercion, for both theoretical and empirical reasons. Theoretically, we are interested not in the rate of exile itself, but in how targeting changes with capacity and prominence. Empirically, using exile as a dependent variable would mean comparing expelled individuals to those who suffered violence and those who experienced no repression. This makes a strong assumption that detained or killed individuals would not have otherwise been exiled.

My theory thus suggests two central testable hypotheses. First, more popular candidates for national office should experience higher rates of repression overall, when accounting for both physical coercion and exile. This can be proxied with vote share: more popular candidates are better able to mobilize against the state and therefore are of greater concern to the regime than those with low vote share, who may not register as significant opposition.

H1. Candidate vote share will be positively correlated with overall repression.

1. Though the number of Chilean exiles is unclear, even using the most conservative figure of 7,000, these figures mean just over half a percent of exiles submitted habeas corpus requests, versus about 2% of detainees. From Informes Mensuales, archive of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, December 1979.

Second, I expect that election to national office decreases the likelihood of physical coercion, by raising the risk of backlash. For elected politicians, exile should thus substitute for physical coercion. Here we should expect a causal relationship: the increase in name recognition associated with election should trigger the regime to rely less on physical coercion.

H2. Election to national office decreases the likelihood of experiencing physical coercion.

My theory additionally suggests that election reduces violence due to the increased visibility associated with winning a seat. I thus additionally test whether elected politicians were covered more by Chile's domestic press, for reasons unrelated to repression.

H2a. Election increases candidate press coverage during the dictatorship.

Past literature suggests two central scope conditions for the theory. First, it should apply more to nonviolent opposition. Where enemies employ violence, physical coercion will be less likely to unite opposition, and supporters may view state terror as appropriate. Still, nonviolent activists may be most threatening to regimes (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). Second, the theory will be more likely to hold where dictators rely on some popular support to survive. Dictators with the political, institutional, or financial ability to indiscriminately repress can apply enough violence that "anger gives way to fear," meaning they do not need to be concerned with backlash (Carey 2006; Lichbach 1987). The degree to which dictators rely on popular support depends on a variety of factors, including media freedom, state strength, and the degree of actual violent threat. That most dictators use intermediate levels of repression suggests that this dynamic may be widely observable. In the conclusion and discussion, I provide suggestive evidence that these patterns hold in other regimes.

EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

To test the hypotheses outlined above, I draw on an original individual-level data set that includes all candidates for the position of deputy in Chile's March 1973 parliamentary elections ($N = 322$). I analyze the effect of electoral performance on physical coercion—defined here as killing, disappearances, or illegal detention—and overall repression, which encompasses physical coercion and exile. Correlations are first tested through difference-in-means and logistic regression. To isolate the causal effect of election, a regression discontinuity design (RDD) is used to determine the effect of winning a seat on repression. While RD models are underpowered, and thus results unstable to some specifications, they provide greater confidence in findings. Block bootstrapped clustered robust confidence intervals are used given the small number of parliamentary districts ($D = 29$) (Sherman and Cessie 1997).

Dependent variables

Physical Coercion is a binary variable taking one if a candidate is killed, disappeared, or illegally detained during Pinochet's regime. I collapse these repressive methods both for theoretical reasons—all involve physical integrity rights violations—and because just five candidates were killed or disappeared. Information on killings comes from Chile's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, noteworthy for its thoroughness: victims' families were given reparations, and the commission drew on autopsy reports, grave exhumations, and court filings. Illegal detention was coded from a list of 38,000 victims by the Valech Commission. The thoroughness and length of these processes, since reports were updated over 20 years following the dictatorship, mean that bias is unlikely. It is particularly unlikely in the direction of results, since if anything elected politicians' repression should be more visible and more likely to be reported. Fourteen percent of candidates (45) were detained, killed, or disappeared during the dictatorship.

Overall Repression is coded one if a candidate experienced either physical coercion or exile. Expulsion from the country took a variety of forms: some activists were taken at gunpoint to airports, others released into exile following detention, and still others were harassed or intimidated into fleeing. Data on exile draws from lists published in newspapers between 1983 and 1984. The 1983 documents list former exiles permitted safe return. While originally published in newspapers, lists were compiled in the archives of Paul Schäfer, leader of the Colonia Dignidad cult and a Pinochet collaborator who ran a torture center for the regime. Extremely paranoid, he kept note cards with public and private information about politically active individuals. In 1984, the dictatorship provided airports with a list of the 4,942 individuals not permitted entry, reprinted in the newspaper *La Segunda* (*La Segunda* 1984). In total 29.2% of candidates (94) suffered either physical coercion or exile.

Though these lists represent the best available source of data on expulsion, they are not complete. They can be best understood as representing cases of forced exile for political reasons: these lists do not include the family members of those forced out, those who fled for economic reasons, and those who simply did not feel safe enough under the dictatorship to stay. In part because of the difficulty of defining exile, there are no reliable estimates for the number of individuals who fled Chile, though it is considerably higher than the approximately

7,000 names on these lists. Still, this represents our best available source of data about expulsion in Chile, and—most importantly for analysis—there is reason to believe the lists are not biased in the reporting of elected and unelected candidates' names.

There are several concerns for inference related to bias. First, unelected candidates may have been allowed into the country at higher rates prior to 1983, making them less likely to appear on these lists for administrative reasons. However, exiles' return began in earnest following a concession to human rights groups in late 1982. Relatively few people forced into exile were allowed to return until this point: "The dictatorship prevented any exiled person it considered even minimally dangerous from returning for 11 years" (Wright and Oñate Zúñiga 2007, 32). Since politically active candidates would likely have met the threshold for "minimally dangerous," it is unlikely that we are systematically missing unelected candidates.

Second, lists may be more likely to report the names of better-performing candidates. This is unlikely in part because the exile lists include far more than just politicians and should thus bias toward restricting access to the politically active—including candidates for national office. Still, secret or informal lists may have also been kept. If the regime withheld names for political reasons, we should see significant variation in publishing elected politicians' names across the two lists: the document provided to the airlines is more punitive, while the list of permitted returnees showed the regime loosening. In fact, 24.7% of elected politicians appear on the airline lists versus 24% on the returnee lists.

Still, exile lists are not complete, making it difficult to rule out bias completely. In part, bias is unlikely because it would run counter to past literature on repression: it would mean the regime's most prominent enemies were less likely to be repressed through any of the most common and forceful methods of state terror used during the Chilean dictatorship. We can provide suggestive empirical support for this by looking at the regime's intent to repress. Drawing on lists of individuals that Chile's former security chief claimed were targeted by the state, 24% of elected and 9.9% of unelected candidates ($p < .1$) were pursued. Appendix A.4 (apps. A–C are available online) shows that this is correlated with popularity. This provides greater confidence that results are not due to bias: more successful candidates appear to have been in fact targeted for repression at a higher rate. Among those targeted, equally high proportions of elected and unelected candidates suffered repression (76.5% to 77.8%, $p = .92$), which further suggests that seated politicians were not systematically repressed in ways not covered by available data. While these data have their own potential biases, discussed in appendix A.4, they provide some evidence that targeting was indeed correlated with political popularity.

The exile and physical coercion data offer a unique opportunity to explore variation in repression across a population of interest. There are, however, several limitations. First, we lack reliable data on other methods of repression, such as relegation or intimidation, which might similarly allow the regime to stifle opposition. While exile is just one method of less overt repression, however, evidence suggests that it is the most common (Wright and Oñate Zúñiga 2007). Second, the data do not allow us to explore the temporal dynamics of repression, meaning we do not know when the regime targeted candidates and whether it adopted different methods over time. Nevertheless, these lists offer a unique opportunity to understand how dictators adapt their methods of repression to likely citizen responses.

The 1973 parliamentary elections

Parliamentary elections took place every four years, for all 150 deputy seats and half of 50 senate seats. Given the small number of senators, I focus on deputy races. The final elections before the coup were in March 1973, with new deputies taking their seats on May 15. The timing of elections makes them particularly well suited for analysis, since they were close enough to the coup (September 11) that all candidates were recently politically active but distant enough that leaders had some months to serve. A total of 322 candidates ran for 150 seats on one of three party lists: 141 ran with the Popular Unity (UP), a coalition of leftist parties; 149 with the Confederation of Democracy (CODE), which united moderate Christian Democrats (PDC) and right-wing parties; and 32 with the leftist but unaligned Popular Socialist Union (USOPO). Descriptive analyses include specifications dropping USOPO, which won less than .5% of the vote, and including only the UP or PDC, the major left-leaning parties. Deputy seats available in a district were predetermined by population, ranging from two to 18. Results were collected from Chile's Electoral Service.

RDD running variable. RDD requires a running variable, a continuous measure determining treatment status. While typically this is margin of victory, Chile used a proportional representation system that allocated seats based on the performance of both candidates and party lists (the D'Hondt method). Candidates lose if either the list fails to gain enough votes to win another seat, or the candidate fails to gain enough votes compared to other list members. To reflect seat allocation I develop a running variable, Quotient Difference, described in detail in appendix A.2. To summarize, in the D'Hondt system candidates are assigned a quotient based on how they

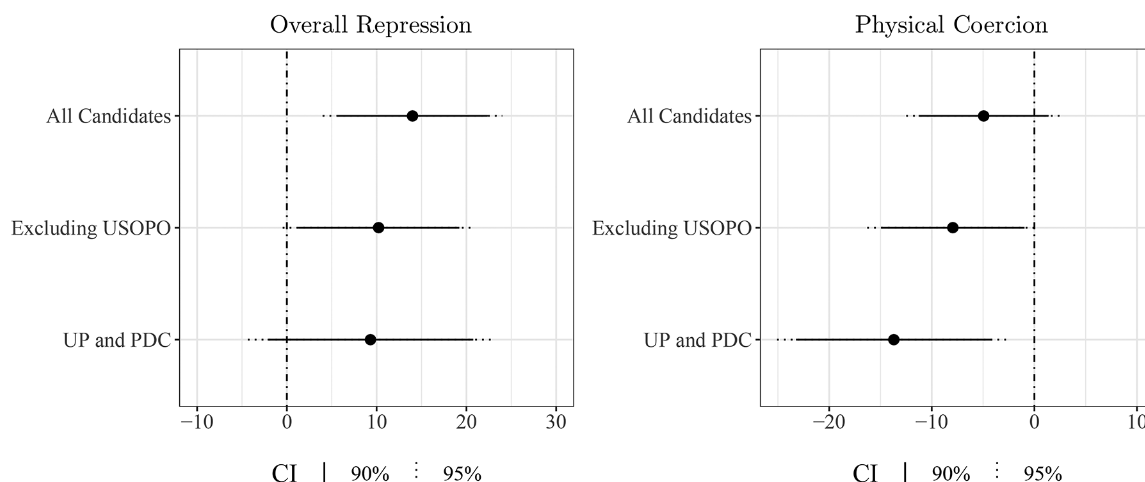

Figure 1. Repression of elected and unelected candidates. Percentage point difference between elected and unelected candidates in rates of repression, with confidence intervals (CIs) through *t*-tests. All candidates: $N = 322$, Excluding Popular Socialist Union (USOPO): $N = 290$, Popular Unity (UP) and Christian Democrats (PDC): $N = 207$. Elected candidates were more likely to experience repression when accounting for exile but less likely to suffer physical coercion.

performed relative to other party list members, vote share for the party list, and available seats. Using a modified version of the method in Altindag and Mocan (2015), since quotients vary by district population, I transform candidates' quotients into a percentage of the district total quotient for a measure analagous to vote share. For each winning (losing) candidate I subtract from the quotient percentage the best (worst) performing losing (winning) candidate's quotient share, then divide by 2 to create a zero-cutoff running variable measuring the distance from losing (winning). Quotient difference is tightly correlated with vote share: losing (winning) an election by a quotient difference of 3% is equivalent to losing (winning) by 2.85%. Given how many candidates ran in just 29 districts, deputy elections were generally close, helpful for this analysis given the small number of observations.

Other covariates. Since biographies of all deputy candidates are not available, the data are supplemented with covariates that can be collected for all candidates. Since victims were more likely to be male, I code gender.[2] I use a binary indicator for whether candidates previously held a national-level position in case incumbents are more likely to be targeted or can better escape repression. Wealthier candidates may also be better able to avoid repression. Since non-Spanish European surnames are correlated with income and status in Chile (Clark 2014), I code whether a candidate has a maternal or paternal surname that is not indigenous or Spanish in origin. As a proxy for political connections, which may allow individuals to avoid state terror, a candidate is coded as belonging to a political dynasty based on paternal surname (Esberg and Fresh 2018).[3] Appendix A.3 reports summary statistics for both the full and RD estimating sample.

RESULTS

Confirming my hypotheses, vote share is correlated with overall repression when accounting for exile, while election is associated with less physical coercion. This suggests that the anticipation of dissent restrained Pinochet from using violence against seated politicians, substituting it with exile. I first compare rates of repression for elected and unelected candidates using *t*-tests. While not a direct test of hypothesis 1, since election is closely tied to vote share this provides initial evidence. I compare the elected and unelected among all candidates; excluding USOPO list members; and including only the major left-leaning parties (UP and PDC). Figure 1 confirms that elected politicians experienced more overall repression but less physical coercion, offering suggestive evidence that the government substituted exile for violence when managing prominent opponents. Appendix B.1 reports supporting tables and plots the correlation between vote share and overall repression.

Regression analysis

To partial out the effects of other predictors, I use logistic regression. To test hypothesis 1, I regress overall repression on vote share; to test hypothesis 2, I regress physical coercion on a binary indicator for election. Figure 2 shows the marginal effects (using first differences) of these models, controlling for incumbency, surname origin, and membership in a political dynasty, as well as party list and senatorial district fixed

2. So few candidates were women (17) that this variable is used only to check balance.

3. The 100 most common Chilean last names are excluded.

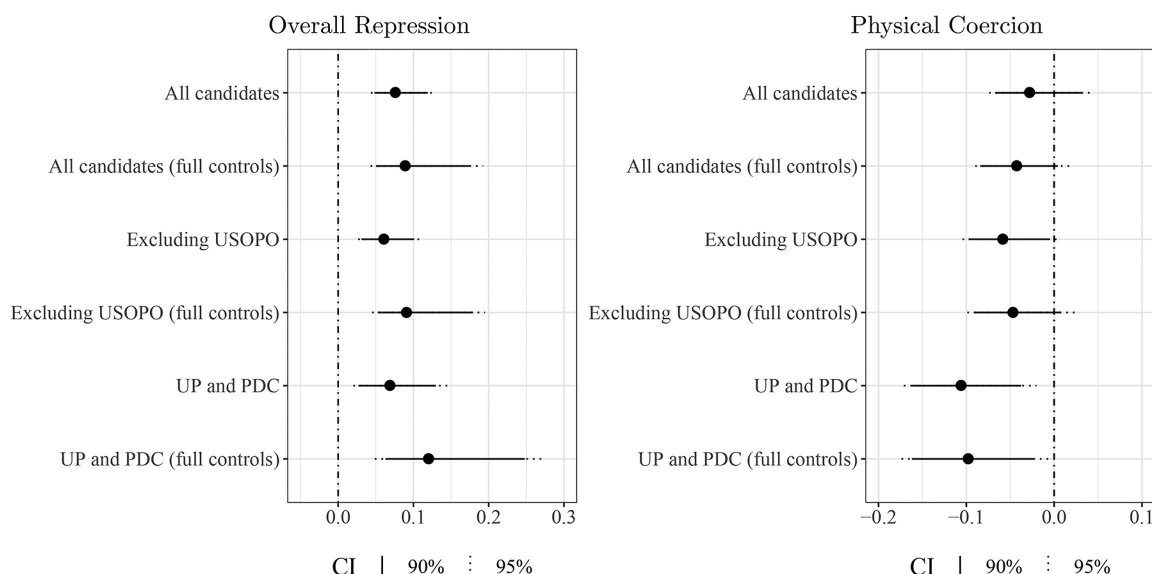

Figure 2. Repression and election. Marginal effects using first differences of (*left*) a 5% increase in vote share on overall repression and (*right*) election on physical coercion. Logit models with block bootstrapped (5,000 iterations) confidence intervals (CIs). Surname origin, dynasty, and incumbency controls in regular models; party list and senatorial district fixed effects in full controls models. All candidates: $N = 322$. Excluding Popular Socialist Union (USOPO): $N = 290$, Popular Unity (UP) and Christian Democrats (PDC): $N = 207$. These results provide evidence that popularity is correlated with overall repression, but elected politicians are less likely to suffer physical coercion.

effects in the "full controls" models.[4] Results confirm that vote share is correlated with overall repression but that elected politicians were less likely to suffer physical coercion. The latter results are noisy, likely due to the lower percentage of candidates who experienced physical coercion, but are consistently negative. Findings confirm that elected politicians were repressed at higher rates, but this was entirely driven by exile: unelected candidates suffered more violence, in line with the theory presented here.

Appendix B.2 reports tables and coefficients, as well as several robustness checks. Results hold when using election or logged total votes as a proxy for popularity. I additionally report results using ordinary least squares (OLS), where I show that findings broadly hold controlling for party (rather than party list) and district (rather than senatorial district) fixed effects.

Close elections analysis

To identify the causal effect of election, I use a regression discontinuity design comparing candidates at the margin of election. The model's key identification assumption is that expected potential outcomes are continuous around the threshold of election. If there is a discontinuity at this cutoff, it can be said to be the result of election itself (Cuesta and Imai 2016). I use difference-in-means and local linear regression to identify effects, though, as shown later, power issues mean results should be interpreted with some caution.

I first compare mean victimization rates for unelected candidates who performed above the median for losing candidates and elected politicians who performed below the median for winning candidates. This effectively compares the second and third quartiles, but accounts for the median quotient difference being slightly above zero (.12). Figure 3 groups candidates by quotient difference. Overall repression is similar for elected politicians (groups 3 and 4) and high-performing unelected candidates (2), while poor-performing unelected candidates (1) experienced considerably less repression. In line with hypothesis 1, this provides evidence that target selection was based on capacity to mobilize, proxied here with popularity. Poor-performing candidates were likely of less concern to the regime, since they lacked the capacity to perform well in elections. Confirming hypothesis 2, high-performing unelected candidates (2) were significantly more likely to be detained or killed. Candidates who barely won were 12.4% less likely to suffer physical coercion than those who barely lost, even starker among left-leaning politicians (22.1%). Supporting tables are in appendix B.3. Results suggest that exile served as a substitute for physical coercion against more politically prominent figures.

Local linear regression. To more formally confirm results I use local linear regression, which weights values nearer the running variable cutoff higher than those farther away. That

4. Party list (rather than party) and senatorial district (rather than deputy district) are used to avoid issues of quasi- or complete separation in logistic regression.

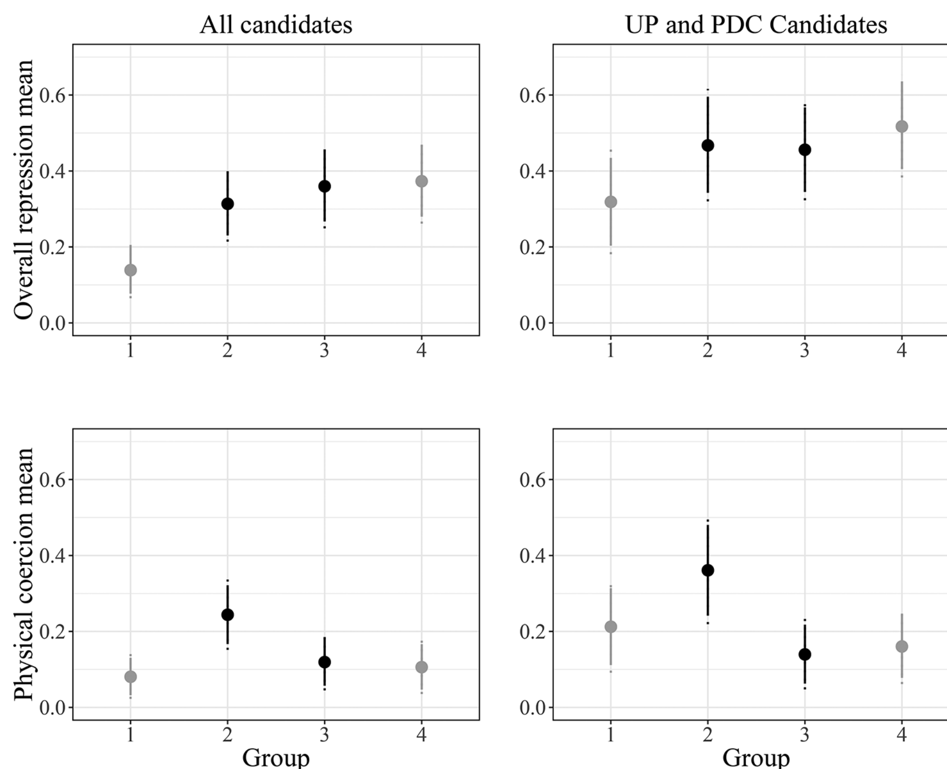

Figure 3. Overall repression and physical coercion by grouped quotient share. Group 1 = below median for unelected candidates; 2 = above median for unelected candidates; 3 = below median for elected candidates; 4 = above median for elected candidates. All candidates: $N = 322$, Popular Unity (UP) and Christian Democrats (PDC) candidates: $N = 207$. High-performing unelected candidates (2) experience roughly equal levels of overall repression to elected politicians. Poor-performing unelected candidates (1) are much less likely to experience overall repression, suggesting that popularity determined rates. However, high-performing unelected candidates (2) are still much more likely to experience physical coercion, demonstrating that exile serves as a substitute for the elected.

candidates ran for seats in a small number of districts means that many elections were close, helpful for estimation. Still, this is the most stringent test of the theory, and caution is warranted because of the small sample size. Results presented here use the Imbens-Kalyanaraman optimal bandwidth (Imbens and Kalyanaraman 2012), with confidence intervals calculated through block bootstrap at the district level. Though RDD should account for this, I additionally control for party to validate results, given the wide variation in the probability of repression.

Table 1 confirms a flat relationship between election and overall repression at the threshold, showing that rates of targeting were similar for high-performing unelected candidates and elected candidates. It additionally shows a negative relationship between election and physical coercion, equivalent to about a 14% reduction (fig. 4). This provides some evidence for a causal relationship between election and physical coercion, supporting the interpretation that increased prominence constrained the regime's ability to use violence.

Appendix B reports several robustness checks. There is no evidence of discontinuity at the threshold for available covariates (Cuesta and Imai 2016). The McCrary (2008) test shows some evidence of sorting around the threshold of victory. However, evidence from other cases suggests that sorting is unlikely in elections (Eggers et al. 2015). I confirm that results hold when excluding candidates nearest the cut point, to reduce the influence of potential sorters (Eggers et al. 2010). I plot placebo tests with false cut points—such that election is determined at different levels of the running variable—in figure B3 (figs. B1–B4, C1–C4 are available online). This provides greater confidence that there is not a fundamentally discontinuous relationship between violence and quotient difference.[5] Figure B2 reports results across a variety of bandwidths, since the Imbens and Kalyanaraman bandwidth estimation can introduce bias, particularly in small sample sizes. Bandwidths of 2.5 and greater are stable and statistically significant. Coefficients are smaller in tighter bandwidths, however, largely due to sparsity of victims within the .25 margin

5. For some cut points around the median quotient difference for unelected candidates there is a significant increase in repression. This corresponds to the leap in physical coercion we see in the difference-in-means analysis, making it less likely to represent a fundamentally discontinuous relationship.

Table 1. Overall Repression and Election in Close Races (LLR)

	$\pm h$	$\pm h/2$	$\pm 2h$
	Overall Repression		
Electoral victory:	−.07	0	0
95% CI	[−.4, .15]	[−.57, .33]	[−.19, .17]
90% CI	[−.35, .12]	[−.44, .28]	[−.16, .14]
Electoral victory, party controls:	.04	.06	.03
95% CI	[−.11, .17]	[−.14, .23]	[−.09, .15]
90% CI	[−.08, .15]	[−.09, .2]	[−.06, .13]
Bandwidth	2.28	1.14	4.55
Observations	191	120	244
	Physical Coercion		
Electoral victory:	−.14**	−.03	−.12**
95% CI	[−.33, −.01]	[−.37, .17]	[−.24, 0]
90% CI	[−.3, −.03]	[−.29, .13]	[−.22, −.02]
Electoral victory, party controls:	−.14*	−.01	−.15**
95% CI	[−.27, .01]	[−.19, .16]	[−.26, −.02]
90% CI	[−.24, −.02]	[−.14, .13]	[−.23, −.05]
Bandwidth	2.81	1.4	5.61
Observations	218	137	251

Note. Block bootstrapped (5,000 iterations) confidence intervals (CI) clustered at the district level are in brackets. Imbens-Kalyanaraman optimal bandwidth. Poor-performing elected candidates do not experience significantly more overall repression than high-performing unelected candidates, suggesting that the rates of repression are influenced by political popularity. By contrast, election decreases the probability of suffering physical coercion by approximately 14%. LLR = local linear regression.
* $p < .1$.
** $p < .05$.

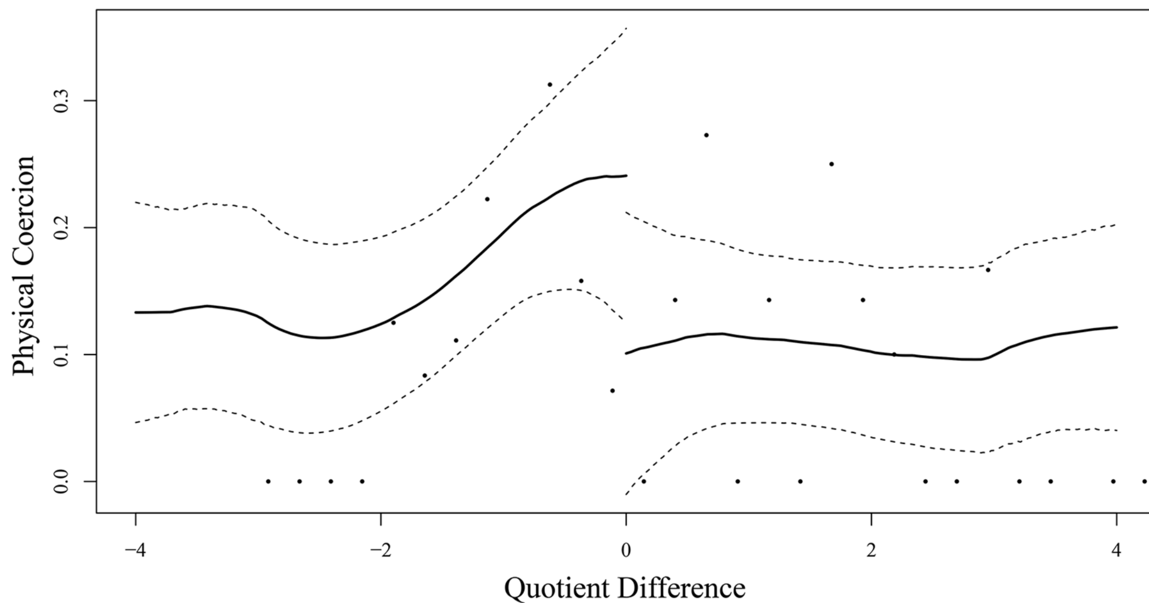

Figure 4. Physical coercion and election in close races. Observations are grouped into 100 bins total by quotient share, with each point reflecting the unconditional mean of physical coercion. The solid black line shows predicted values of a local linear smoother on each side of the threshold, with 95% confidence intervals. Imbens-Kalyanaraman optimal bandwidth. High-performing unelected candidates are significantly more likely to experience physical coercion, suggesting that election restrains the regime.

nearest the cut point. I additionally show findings using naive linear regression, to help ensure that results are not due to modeling decisions alone.

Appendix B.9 reports results using bias-corrected conventional and robust standard errors from Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014). However, a power analysis of the data suggests that models are significantly underpowered (Cattaneo, Titiunik, and Vazquez-Bare 2019): for example, at .8 power the minimum detectable effect for bias-corrected, clustered models is −.19, 71% larger than the estimated coefficient. Though results are noisy, substantive significance is generally stable, with the exception of when higher-order polynomials are included. These diagnostics mean that caution is warranted when interpreting the causal results, though the power analyses reported in the appendix suggest that this is due to sample size. Despite these concerns, taken with other evidence results strengthen confidence in the theory.

Press coverage of candidates. Hypothesis 2a argues that the central mechanism behind these results should be the increased press coverage associated with election, which raises the prominence of elected candidates. If true, politicians who barely gained a seat should receive more press attention than those who barely lost, unrelated to their experiences of repression. I test for this using the Colonia Dignidad archives, which includes dictatorship-era press coverage of politically active individuals. While ideally we could use newspapers directly and test for an increase prior to the coup as well, Chilean newspapers are not digitized and the Colonia Dignidad archives do not systematically cover the predictatorship period. Still, elected politicians should be more politically relevant, and using the dictatorship period reduces concerns that the relationship is due to legislative coverage. Figure 5 shows coverage grouped by quotient shares (left) and a plot of RDD results (right), both confirming a sharp increase in press appearances at the threshold of election. Appendix B.10 shows tables and additional results.

Targeted victims. One concern is that these findings deal only with a narrow subset of Pinochet's nonviolent opposition. To address this, I confirm my results using a list of Communist and Socialist party members allegedly pursued by the regime, produced by Pinochet's former head of security (Contreras 2000). While these lists may not be genuine—they may have been motivated by a desire to demonstrate victims' subversion after democratization—some evidence suggests that they are, and they offer a means to explore results for a wider array of politically active individuals (Amat 2019).

The list of socialists and communists pursued by the regime bolds the names of particularly important political figures, such as former cabinet members, ambassadors, or activists. Of the 3,045 names, 133 were bolded. Those party members identified as prominent by the regime itself experienced similar overall rates of repression as other targeted individuals when accounting for exile (61.65%–68.17%, $p = .13$). However, those with bolded names suffered physical coercion at a rate of 24.06%, compared to 57.66% for the rest of the list ($p < .001$). This provides evidence that the theory outlined here extends beyond politicians, reflecting regime behavior toward opposition more broadly.

Qualitative evidence

My theory suggests that political constraints prevented Pinochet from using physical coercion against prominent opponents, instead relying on exile. Central to this is that the regime viewed exile as a means to limit the potential for

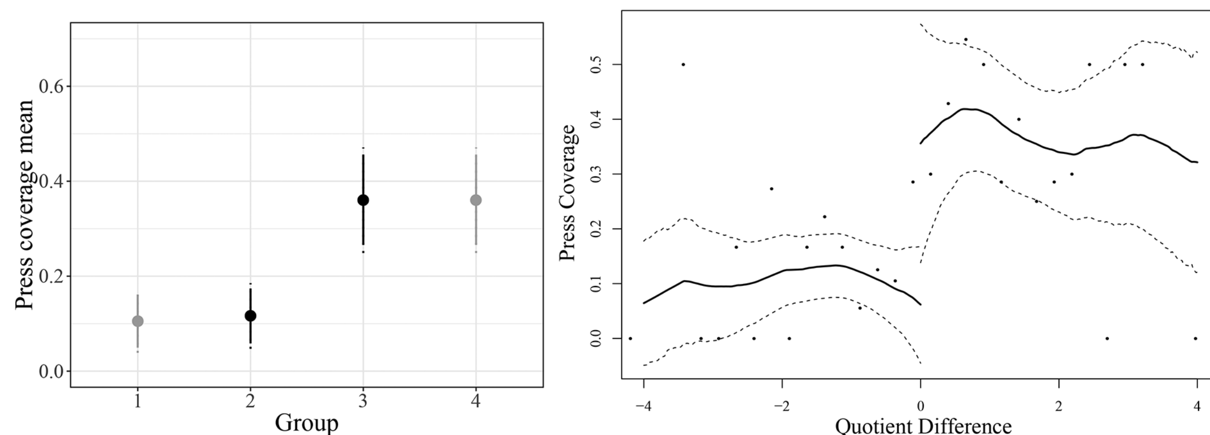

Figure 5. Press coverage in close elections. *Left*, *t*-test differences in press coverage between groups (group 1 = below median for unelected candidates; 2 = above median for unelected candidates; 3 = below median for elected candidates; 4 = above median for elected candidates). *Right*, Results of an RDD analysis using local linear regression. Election increases press coverage during the dictatorship.

backlash when dealing with prominent opponents. Ensalaco (1999) describes exactly this about political activists: "Pinochet never abandoned the idea that people such as these ought to be put on a plane with only the clothes on their backs. He must have thought it a special indignity for individuals whom the security forces could not simply liquidate" (25). A high-profile activist was similarly considered "perhaps too prominent to assassinate" (64).

Tape recordings from the coup illustrate this logic more directly. Pinochet offered Allende and his inner circle safe passage into exile, despite widespread killings during the coup: "His life and his physical integrity, and right away he's going to be sent elsewhere!" (Ensalaco 1999, 24). After discovering Allende dead of apparent suicide, Pinochet contemplated sending the body to Cuba or "burying it secretly," precisely because he "feared the consequences of an Allende funeral" (Anderson 1998): "Put him in a coffin and send it on an airplane, man, along with the family. Then do the burial somewhere else, in Cuba. . . . Here there'd be a big fuss over a funeral. Even dying this guy caused problems!" (Verdugo 1998, 171). This provides more direct evidence that Pinochet feared the consequences of killing a prominent opponent, precisely because doing so would create a focal point for opposition action.

How Pinochet deployed and spoke about exile provides further evidence that it was used to diffuse tensions with opponents and avoid alienating supporters. Exile was often treated as a concession to opposition, an alternative to physical coercion, such as when the regime freed some detained women and children into exile in 1976 (Bamat 2013). In at least two cases the arrest of an elected politician caused such outcry that the regime substituted detention for exile.[6] As the CIA noted, this "mix of force and limited compromise . . . [kept] opponents off balance" (CIA 1984). Once they were overseas, the regime attempted to discredit exiles by painting them as a "jet set" enjoying "golden exile," which it contrasted with economic hardship under Allende (Wright 2007). That the language of exile was not punitive provides evidence that prominent politicians were not more likely to be expelled only for deterrence.

To regime supporters, the government treated exile as a benevolent response to dissent. Pinochet maintained throughout the dictatorship that violent repression targeted violent Marxism: "We do not seek to persecute anybody for his ideas. . . . . Our goal is to be inflexible to sanction whoever seeks or has tried to use violence" (Pinochet Ugarte 1980, 164). Exile permitted the government to portray itself as "humane": the press called exile "a clear demonstration of the humanitarian sentiment of the present administration" and a step toward "complete liberty in Chile." For regime supporters, then, exile was a "better fate than [leftists] deserved" (Wright and Oñate Zúñiga 2007, 35).

Exile could be painted as benevolent because activists abroad enjoyed the appearance of freedom of movement, allowing the regime to at least appear to support the rule of law (Huneeus 2003). The actual path to expulsion varied considerably for those pushed out of the country for political reasons. In some cases, as with Allende's cabinet, victims were brought to the airport at gunpoint. In others, exile followed a period of detention, after which captives were given the option of serving a long prison sentence or being expelled. Accounts suggest that they nearly always chose the latter (IACHR 1977). Even "voluntary" exiles—those who left "on scheduled flights with papers in order"—were often harassed into leaving, "as the regime intended" (Wright and Oñate Zúñiga 2007).

Since exiles could operate abroad, they continued to represent a political threat to the regime. While their organizing capacity was reduced, many continued to pressure the regime while overseas, by producing prodemocracy materials, lobbying foreign governments, and organizing protests. Where the regime felt intense threat, it turned to secretive physical coercion. O'Shaughnessy (2000) writes that only three exiles were realistically capable of leading a shadow government, and all of them were killed or severely injured in assassination attempts overseas. Pinochet attempted to avoid direct culpability by collaborating with domestic right-wing terrorist groups, with mixed success.

The regime did sometimes use physical coercion against prominent enemies. In these cases, however, it actively sought to avoid culpability, to limit the possibility of responsive dissent. Famed poet and communist Pablo Neruda died shortly after the coup, allegedly from cancer, but recent reports suggest poisoning (Stack 2015). Former president Eduardo Frei Montalva died following routine surgery, but evidence suggests that he was also poisoned (Barrionuevo 2009). This article's theory further suggests that the regime should be better able to justify violent repression against less prominent opponents. Victim narratives from the Rettig Report show that, in the handful of cases where the dictatorship killed candidates for national political office, it denied involvement in the death of elected figures but pinned the responsibility for unelected candidates' killings on their own subversion: the regime claimed one was executed following trial and the other was shot resisting arrest.

When violence against prominent opposition was attributed to the regime, it sparked some of the most significant prodemocracy activities by both opposition and supporters. A

6. Colonia Dignidad archive, index card on Pedro Araya.

union leader's arrest instigated the first unsanctioned protests (Diehl 1983). The car bombing of opposition leader Orlando Letelier in Washington, DC, caused such criticism that the regime reorganized the security services and reduced violent repression (Constable and Valenzuela 1991; Policzer 2009). The 1985 murder of three prominent communists led the archbishop of Santiago to organize a meeting between opposition and proregime political figures, an important step in pressuring Pinochet to hold a plebiscite (Huneeus 2009). Mobilization also followed exile but tended to be more limited in scope, such as the circulation of a petition or generalized protests against the policy. The expulsion of two politicians in June 1975 did lead to court appeals, though this occurred because it bore "not on some unknown left-winger living in a slum but on two acknowledged leaders of society" (O'Shaughnessy 2000, 110). This again highlights the centrality of prominence in determining the likelihood of backlash.

Escaping repression

Results support that the dictatorship chose its repressive methods based on anticipated dissent. However, they are also consistent with elected politicians being better able to escape physical coercion by fleeing into exile. This could be due to political connections permitting their escape or because they expected the regime to target politicians. Qualitative evidence suggests that the regime did not automatically grant asylum. For example, the regime attempted to force the Italian Embassy to expel fleeing Chileans by throwing a battered corpse into its compound, claiming that the woman died in an orgy among refugees (Ensalaco 1999). Nor did asylum always mean preemptively seeking exile. The regime used a variety of methods, including harassment and blacklisting, to force citizens into exile (Wright and Oñate Zúñiga 2007). That elections occurred so near the coup offers further reassurance that results are not driven by differential political connections or the anticipation of repression.

If connections explain results, they should show a broader negative correlation with physical coercion. Appendix C shows that non-Spanish European surnames, membership in a political dynasty, and incumbency status—proxies for wealth, class, and political connections—do not significantly affect physical coercion. To identify whether results reflect elected politicians expecting repression, I draw on news reports of asylum seeking in the Colonia Dignidad archives.[7] My results largely hold rerunning this paper's analyses excluding asylum seekers, although unsurprisingly they become noisier. While this provides some evidence that elected politicians better predicted repression, the substantive stability of the effects increases confidence in the paper's theory. To further explore alternative explanations and increase confidence in the article's findings, I turn to past elections.

The repression of 1969 deputy candidates. While the timing of the 1973 elections is particularly well suited to analysis, in 1969 we should see lower rates of overall repression: elected candidates are less relevant since many no longer serve, and unelected candidates may not have had a political presence since losing. This drop should thus be particularly pronounced for unelected candidates. Appendix C.3 confirms that rates of repression are lower, particularly for the unelected. Unelected candidates were still more likely to experience physical coercion, though this difference is smaller and not statistically significant. Vote share was still positively correlated with overall repression, however. Relevant to the alternative explanations, politicians elected in 1969 were less likely to experience repression than those elected in 1973 ($p < .001$), largely due to exile. Though they have similar rates of physical coercion, 17.1% of politicians elected in 1969 and 30.7% of politicians elected in 1973 were exiled ($p < .001$). This runs counter to the political connections hypothesis: if anything, deputies elected in 1969 likely developed more connections than those elected in 1973.

The repression of local politicians. Chile's 335 *comunas* were governed by municipal councils. While some councilors went on to run for national office, local candidates were less prominent. Though we do not have the full results of the election, appendix C.4 describes available data and findings. Results show that elected council members experienced more repression (40.15% to 27.06%, $p < .05$), but this is almost entirely driven by physical coercion. Just 3% of candidates were exiled. These results provide additional evidence that the visibility of national politicians constrained the dictatorship from physical coercion: because these offices were local, election was not associated with the same rise in prominence. They additionally provide suggestive evidence that the expectation of physical coercion did not drive results, as this would suggest that local politicians were systematically worse at predicting dangers.

International pressure

Another explanation for results is that Pinochet sought to appease international rather than domestic audiences. However, for many years the United States tacitly permitted human rights violations, and even when Pinochet faced direct pressure he avoided concessions. Even after congressional pressure grew, Kissinger reassured Pinochet: "Your greatest

7. Given that elected politicians were more likely to be covered in the news, reports are biased against results, serving as a hard test.

sin was that you overthrew a government which was going communist" (Kornbluh 2005, 241). Carter's administration "responded with . . . relative inaction" (Kornbluh 2005, 412). After the garroting of a prominent opposition figure whose funeral became a large protest, a Reagan official assured Pinochet that "human rights . . . was not our immediate concern" (Kornbluh 2005, 419). Even after direct pressure Pinochet avoided capitulating, with one official calling him "the toughest nut I've ever seen" (Christian 1986). He refused to extradite Letelier's assassins, even at the cost of military transfers (Kornbluh 2005). The international community did apply pressure to end human rights violations, reducing aid and passing UN condemnations. While this may have forced the regime to adopt legalistic rhetoric (Barros 2002), Pinochet dismissed international pressure: "My library is filled with UN condemnations" (*La Nacíon* 2006). Even optimistic accounts of the impact of international pressure focus on how it paved the way for domestic opposition (Hawkins 2002).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This paper offers evidence that authoritarian methods of repression are shaped by citizens' anticipated responses. While dictators would prefer to detain or kill prominent political opponents, doing so increases the risk of backlash by creating a focal point around which opposition can organize and revealing the regime as a "bad type" to supporters. Less overtly violent forms of repression, such as exile, minimize the risk of dissent, though it allows opposition to continue to organize. I draw on individual-level data on the repression of political candidates in Chile to demonstrate two central empirical findings consistent with this theory. First, vote share is correlated with overall repression, suggesting that more popular and capable politicians were more likely to be targeted. Second, election decreases the likelihood of physical coercion. This is confirmed with an RDD, although power issues introduce some caution about results. Along with qualitative evidence, this suggests that exile serves as a substitute for physical coercion for political figures who were too prominent to detain or kill. Lists of individuals allegedly targeted by the regime confirm these patterns.

Qualitative evidence suggests that dynamics hold across other regimes as well. Myanmar's military regime killed and detained many opposition members but were "reluctant to jail" Aung San Suu Kyi because of her family name and associated prominence. Instead, she was exiled until she chose to return to the country and then held under house arrest (Martin 2014). In Egypt, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi was "wary of Ahmed Shafiq, Morsi's opponent, a retired Air Force general . . . believ[ing] that the Brotherhood could be easily controlled, whereas Shafiq might resurrect a party with real power. Even after the defeat of the Brotherhood, the authorities have made sure that Shafiq remains in exile" (Hessler 2016). Uganda's Idi Amin, Panama's Manuel Noriega, and Haiti's "Papa Doc" Duvalier have all exiled prominent opposition members rather than killing or imprisoning them.

This theory does not apply only to exile: expulsion is just one in a set of less overtly violent tools that dictators may use to manage opponents without physical coercion. Italy's fascist government practiced internal exile, and Zaire's highly repressive dictator Mobutu Sese Seko sentenced two of his most prominent opponents to relegation (Greenhouse 1988). The Stasi used covert psychological warfare techniques (called "decomposition") to reduce opponents' ability and willingness to engage in dissent. Where regimes do use physical coercion against prominent opponents, it is often followed by mass protests. In the Philippines, Ninoy Aquino was assassinated after exile, leading to a funeral procession that attracted 7 million and contributed to the erosion of support for Ferdinand Marcos. This evidence suggests that political figures are often protected from violence by their visibility.

Did this strategy actually contribute to Pinochet's survival? Still today many regime supporters point to the dictatorship's use of physical coercion as necessary to defeat communist subversion (Anderson 1998). This would have been far less believable if Pinochet systematically murdered his nonviolent opponents, suggesting that exile as a substitute worked to maintain support. Opposition figures, meanwhile, were kept "off balance" by Pinochet's mix of limited concessions and force, suggesting that showing some respect for physical integrity may have minimized backlash. However, considering repression and dissent more broadly in Chile highlights the dynamic relationship between the dictator and his opponents. Discontent with the regime grew significantly following the 1982 financial crisis, prompting Pinochet to loosen restrictions on political activity. After a series of national protests, however, fear of violence grew among the upper classes. Pinochet once again cracked down on dissent. Activists learned from this: rather than protest, they decided to "pursue their opposition according to the regime's own rules" (Foweraker and Landman 2000, xxiii). Ultimately this led to the plebiscite that ended Pinochet's rule. This paper shows that Pinochet selected his methods in part based on the anticipated responses of the public; however, the relationship between dissent and repression is dynamic, as each side learns from and reacts to the other.

These findings contribute to a recent literature noting that dictators may strategically deploy repression to minimize the anticipated potential for dissent (Christensen 2018; Ritter and Conrad 2016). While much of this work focuses on the relationship between state terror and protest, visible

dissent may already demonstrate the regime's failure to act appropriately. Focusing on opposition leaders, who are in particularly good standing to mobilize against the regime, can thus build on this literature by showing how the anticipation of backlash impacts state violence more broadly.

My research additionally builds on a growing literature showing how different methods of repression can serve as complements or substitutes (DeMeritt and Conrad 2019; Shen-Bayh 2018). Dictators can choose not only between repression and co-optation, or repression and restraint, but among different methods of suppressing opponents. Each tool comes with its own costs and benefits, and dictators can use substitution as a means to maximize the political returns to repression. Analyzing only physical coercion or exile would lead to significantly different conclusions about targeting.

Finally, this paper shows that dictators may have incentives to avoid using physical coercion against their most prominent enemies. The probability of experiencing violence does not uniformly increase with danger to the regime, in contrast with repression as a response to credible threats (Davenport 2007). Physical coercion, when applied against prominent figures, may have the inadvertent effect of creating a focal point for opposition action and highlighting regime illegitimacy to supporters (Opp and Roehl 1990). Counterintuitively, then, some dictators' worst enemies may be spared their most brutal violence.

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