

# Political Participation and Political Violence in Advanced Democracies

By

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**Political Participation and Political Violence  
in Advanced Democracies**

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### **Abstract**

I take a cross-national analysis of advanced democracies to examine the cause of political violence in advanced democracies in order to understand representation. I mainly look at the effect of political participation on political violence. I test a preliminary and the main hypothesis. The preliminary hypothesis confirms an institutional argument that inclusive institutions—that facilitate impartial political participation for the public provide proper avenues for political participation, therefore, mitigating political violence. I expect to see a negative relationship between political violence and regulation of participation. In the second part of the paper, I develop an argument consistent with the existing literature contesting that high voter turnout shows satisfaction with institutions, nonetheless by employing the median voter theorem I take the argument further and demonstrate that higher voter turnout will have a positive relationship with political violence—dissatisfied extremist groups in the margins rejecting the ballot box and opting for political violence. That is, as the majority gives legitimacy to the institutions through voting, extremists, who identify as the political minority, will try to make themselves relevant through political violence. They believe they are being squeezed out of the political space and react by resorting to political violence. I present two cases studies of Germany and Nigeria to develop my main argument. I confirm that inclusive institutions have a negative relationship with political violence and voter turnout do really increase political violence.

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## Introduction

In a *Vice* interview a renown Marxist Slovenian scholar set comfortably on a couch and utters the following words, “Every violent acting out is a sign that there is something you are not able to put into words...most brutal violence is the enacting of a certain symbolic deadlock.”

Preceding this answer to an interview question he briefly mentions the fear that currently dominates European countries; immigration. Can this deadlock or the lack of political platforms that gives voices to certain groups under a state be associated with Marxist theories that connect violence to socio-economic factors? Marxist theories led violent movements throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Jeffries 2012), but one will be hard pressed to find Marxist elements that motivate most of the rise of extremism in Europe, which has led to political violence. Most of the political violence happening in Europe is predominantly ideological and not economic. According to Beauchamp,

“The current crop of radical...isn't like old-school European fascists; their ideology isn't about toppling democracy. Nor is it primarily focused on the economy. Instead, it's about xenophobia: about marking Europe as a place for (mostly white) Europeans and keeping out the (mostly Muslim) foreign threats. And the past year — marked by a refugee crisis, a spate of terrorist attacks in Europe, and a failure of the traditional European elite to solve the country's persistent economic problems — created ‘perfect storm’ for the radical right's rise (2016).”

Hence, in this case one has to deviate from the Marxist's view of political violence and search for other mechanisms to provide an understanding of the rise of political violence in advance democracies. What are the main causes of political violence in advanced democracies? This reaches to the very core of a democratic system—looking at advance democracies the institutional question is almost answered by the nature of advance democratic institutions—if

advanced democratic systems epitomize representation then the assumption is public grievances are accommodated. In the case of a developing democracy the answer is almost clear-cut—weak or less-inclusive institutions. But the same claim cannot be made for advanced democracies. Hence, further exploration into aspects of democracy should be undertaken.

In the 1960s, there were waves of protests in advanced industrialized nations (Mayer 2004). Since the end of WWII, there has been a threat posed by right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe. Existing research shows that right-wing terrorism and violence comes in waves, and scholars have tracked the most recent wave from the late 1980s to early 2000s in most countries (Bjorgo 1997; Koopmans 1996; Merkl 1995). After a relatively peaceful period there is evidence of a new outbreak of right-wing terrorism in Western Europe and this have caused concerns about democracy (Bartlett and Birdwell 2011; Fekete 2016; Ramalingam 2014). Waves of political violence have risen in recent years and most of it has been linked to economic and social factors. Terrorist organizations are likely to capitalize on the grievances of losers during economic crisis. Therefore, terrorism and political violence is most probable to emerge during the period of low economic growth and development. Moser and Clark (2001) argue that political violence occurs in the public domain where it is mixed with economic and social violence. However, even though economic and social factors might lead to political violence, one has to investigate political factor that might create grounds for political violence. Millington (2016) demonstrates that violence remained a political phenomenon in democratic regimes of Western Europe, thus even though some countries are well advance there is still a presence of political violence. He examines left-wing and right-wing ideas and uses of violence in countries such as Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, as well as Italy and Germany to demonstrate that democracy does not necessarily provide an antidote to political violence. This is



usually a result of political competition or search for political relevance by certain groups in society. Political violence might also be a way to discredit the goals of electoral and democratic processes—representation of minorities or marginalized groups (Theophilus, Kingsley, and Aondowase 2013). Thus, it is important to examine this competition and the dissatisfied groups in advanced democracies—especially minorities at the extreme end of the political spectrum. Do these groups feel like they participate equally in the political process? Political violence may be an important measure of political participation and representation. Studies have shown that the level democracy can mitigate political violence (Hegre 2002) but due to condensed nature of democracy variables such as polity, polyarchy, and freedom house, to name a few variables, we cannot know which aspects of democracy reflect representation in the context of discontented groups, over other aspects. Therefore, can political violence help us understand the aspect of democracy that characterizes representation in a list of others?

This paper seeks to show that political violence can improve our understanding of political representation. There are assumptions that mature democracy means equal representation: providing platforms for expressing grievances and that they are not prone to political violence. However, political violence can also occur in advance democracies. Hence, if this is the case, we have to find out if full representation is a given or perceived phenomenon of an advanced democracy, or if the institutions that facilitate representation are inclusive. It goes beyond just looking at the level of democracy to looking at what political violence can tell us about political participation—what aspect of political participation lead to political violence. Can these factors tell us why we see political violence in some advance democracies more than the others? To put it simply, indices such as the polity score create a black box that sometimes makes the phenomena that they try to measure difficult or unclear because they blur the

significance of other important aspects that are constitutive of the variable. Hence, instead of taking for granted that democracy is synonymous to representation I select one aspect of advanced democratic institutions—regulations of participation<sup>1</sup>, to avoid the assumption that advanced democratic institutions with all their aspects are synonymous representation. Once I have shown that democratic institutions indeed mitigate political violence—my preliminary investigation—I then proceed to undertake the task that this paper seek address. I give a counter intuitive institutional explanation, based on the median voter theorem of why we see political violence in advanced democracies. By showing the fundamental relationship between the quality of institutions (that facilitate participation) and political violence, I explain why legitimacy matters. In short, as the mainstream political parties vie for the median voter, the extremist may resort to political violence rather than voting to get their message heard. The voting reflects the legitimacy of an advanced democracy especially for those who believe they are represented and have a voice in the system. Thus, it is possible that as voter turnout increases, those on the extremist left and right ends of the spectrum become more violent. However, as the extremists become more mainstream and larger traditional parties take on some of the extremist platforms, observed political violence may decrease because the extreme voices are getting their message across through the ballot box.

I take a cross-national analysis of advanced democracies and look at the effect of political participation on political violence. As stated above, I test a preliminary and a main hypothesis. I expect to see a negative relationship between political violence and regulation of participation, in preliminary hypothesis. I develop an argument consistent with the existing literature, that high

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of political participation could be conflated regulation of participation because they are similar in the wording. However, regulation of participation is part of political participation—these are institutions that facilitate political participation.

voter turnout show satisfaction with institutions, nonetheless, I go beyond the existing literature and employ the median voter theorem to demonstrate that higher voter turnout will have a positive relation with political violence—dissatisfied extremist groups in the margins rejecting the ballot box and opting for political violence. That is, as the majority gives legitimacy to the institutions through voting, extremists, who identify as the political minority, will try to make themselves relevant through political violence. They believe they are being squeezed out of the political space and react by resorting to political violence. I present two cases studies of Germany and Nigeria to develop argument.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Political Violence***

A broad body of literature has shown that political violence is mostly associated with weak democracies. Since weak democratic institutions would mean weak representation. Mansfield and Snyder (2002) argue that the early stages of democratization results onto a highly competitive environment in a number social groups and interests collide. There is a lack of competent state institutions that are strong enough to absorb or regulate intense political competitions. This is comparable to Samuel Huntington's gap between high levels of political participation and weak political institutions. According to Staniland (2014) the developing world is confronted with a combination of violence. Voting can create an environment of political violence. This has been witnessed in the Philippines, Pakistan, or Russia where electoral competition is marred with violence: “pro-state militias target the supporters of opposition parties; states use security forces to repress dissidents and intimidate the electorate; political parties build armed wings; insurgents attack voters and candidates; and local elites use elections as a front for pursuing feuds and rivalries” (99).

Hence, it follows that in countries where certain groups are not given enough opportunity to express themselves in the political process there is a high likelihood that there will be high political violence. Countries that have showed the high level of political violence like Libya, Lebanon, Sudan, India, South Sudan, Kenya, Pakistan, Central Africa Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo are developing democracies or dictatorships. In Europe's late twentieth century political violence occurred in Ireland, Belgium and the Balkans where there were due ethnic and religious conflicts under authoritarian and developing democratic regimes. Theophilus, Kingsley, Aondowase (2013) demonstrate that societies that have less political development are more prone to political violence. Some of these societies are akin to Huntingtonian (1993) "The Third Wave" where societies are fractionalized. This is the case in multi-ethnic states where there is a dispersion of heterogeneous ethnic groups throughout the country, which live in specific geographic regions' (2006).

Nigeria is an example. According to Human Right Watch, Political violence was a serious threat to the legitimacy of the state and electoral institutions in 2003. The party primary elections for local government candidates began in mid-2002 and hundreds of people have been killed as a result of political violence in Nigeria and thousands have been displaced. This violence can be linked to heightened tension created by competition for public office. Ethnic and religious divisions often play a part in defining the lines of conflict and are manipulated by politicians for their own ends. This violence has been denounced by politicians, police and public commentators and have encouraged the prosecution of those responsible and have tried to discourage citizens to being part of the political violence. But all these actions have not resolved the existing problem—since it is at odds with ambitious politicians. Even political parties have tried in vain to contain their own members. "In addition, parties and candidates have sometimes

accused their opponents of participating in political violence with little apparent basis, which exacerbates tensions that could lead to violence between their supporters (Human Rights Watch 2003).”

One of the main factors leading to political violence is weak institutions because it is difficult for weak institutions to gain legitimacy. In the Nigeria case study, a vicious cycle—weak institutions affecting political legitimacy and lack of legitimacy weakening institutions. These institutions are not competent enough to provide representation; hence people feel the need to engage in political violence. According, Reilly (2006) new democracies have been damaged by pressures of social cleavages—there has been more effort put into preventing parties from forming along ethnic lines. After independence, Nigeria did not have strong institutions to contain existing social cleavages (Mbaku 2013). The Nigerian government has tried to prevent such political violence through electoral systems. Currently, Nigeria requires parties to show representation of different regions by including members from two-thirds of all states on their executive council and by being inclusive in their party mottos (Reilly 2006). Nonetheless, such measures have not brought solutions to political violence in Nigeria.

In the 1990s democratic institutions became the means to settle disputes. Warring parties in different countries settled their differences through election that would determine who would lead the new government. This means to end war was characterized by the peace accords in Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia and Tajikistan (Lyons 2004). There were means in which solutions for issues like internal and external legitimacy came. An electoral process became an alternative to violence as it is a means of achieving governance. When the electoral process was perceived as unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt, then political legitimacy was compromised and stakeholders were motivated to go

outside the established norms to achieve their objectives (Fischer 2002). Democracy is seen as a mechanism for inclusivity, therefore it can be means to ease existing grievances and political tension among groups in a society and it follows that countries with strong democratic institutions are more able contain political tension by accommodating grievances of certain groups in the societies. For that reason, one would not commonly associate political violence with advance industrial democracies. But, is this really the case? Germany is a good case to address this question.

Recent reports have shown that there has been a surge in extremist violence in Germany, which has arisen in the midst of nationalist backlash to the country's admission of more than a million refugees since 2015. This has also led to an electoral boost of the far-right party, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). Far right violence total to 1,408 in Germany in 2015, up from around 990 in previous year, according to a government report. In addition, there were 75 recorded far-right arson attacks targeting asylum centers in 2015 and 918 attacks that were due political dissatisfactions. These were records from 2001. The major cause of this political violence is anti-immigrant, anti-Islam sentiments spread by the Free Democratic Party (FDP). This party has capitalized on the nationalist sentiments that fueling much of the violence. This surge of political violence is due to part of the population that feels that they are not represent in the democratic process. Although, this political violence in Germany is not as serious as the one we see in Nigeria, there is political violence (Kremer 2012; Steinau, Reuter and Miriello 2016; Dearden 2017).

What is the cause of this political violence? Unlike developing counties, it is not due to weak democratic institutions. Reilly (2006) suggests that the lack of representation can lead to violence and can result in the collapse of the state. Reilly (2006) assumes advanced democracies

provide inclusive<sup>2</sup> representation, but is an advanced democracy with a polity score of 10 synonymous to inclusive representation across the country? If that is the case does inclusive representation mean satisfaction of all citizens or do some still feel marginalized? What can political violence tell us about the lack of representation in developed democracies? What is the connection between participation, voting and violence?

### ***Political participation and violence***

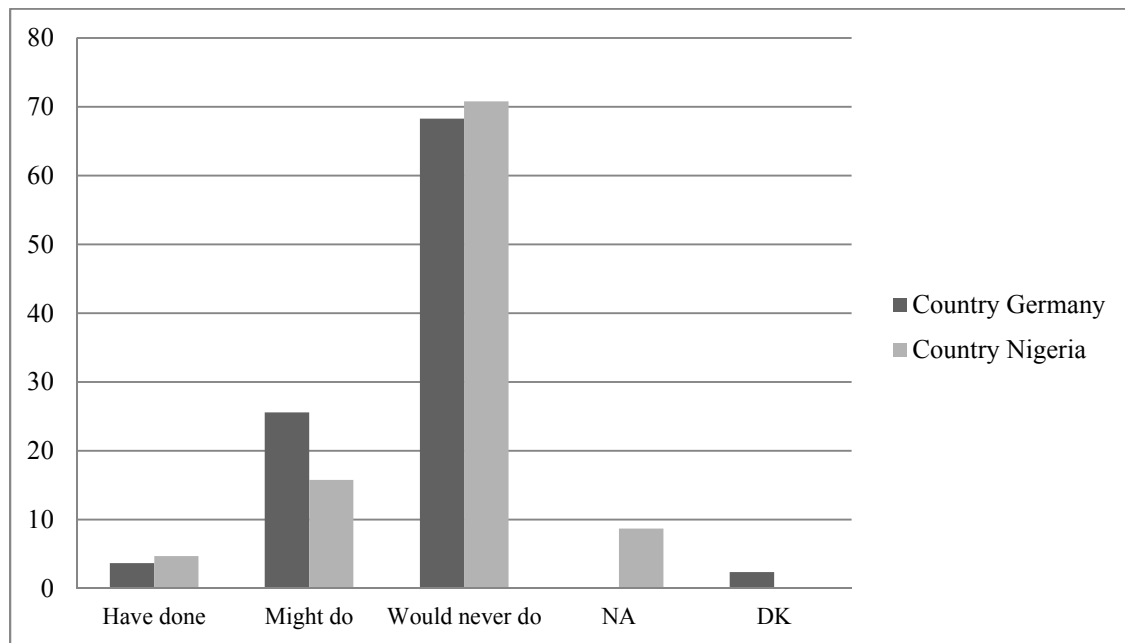
Political participation is “actions that are operated by citizens aiming at influencing collective decisions on some level of the political system (Barnes et al 1979).” Political violence is not traditionally associated as the means of political participation. Kaase (2002) differentiates between conventional and non-conventional political participation. “Conventional participation includes activities such as voting or writing letters to the editor,” while “unconventional political participation includes activities such as signing petitions, demonstrations, boycotts, sit-ins, rent and tax strikes, traffic blockades and wild strikes” (Renn et al 19). Thus, activities associated with social unrest are frequently linked to unconventional political participation.

The graph below (**Figure 1**) from the World Value Survey demonstrates to what extent citizens in an advanced democracy are more likely to engage in unofficial strikes to give one an idea of unconventional political participation methods in advanced democracies. I compare the graph against a developing democracy to show that variations that are mostly institutional. The graph shows no much difference between Germany and Nigeria when examining the number of people who have engaged in unofficial strikes. But Germany has a greater percentage when examine how probable citizens are more likely to engage in unofficial strikes. There is no much difference in the percentage of citizens who might not engage in unofficial strikes.

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<sup>2</sup> Meaning they provide a level plain field for political participation for all groups willing to participate in the political arena. Their institutions are impartial and accommodating.

Figure 1. Political Participation: Joining unofficial strikes (1995-1999) (%)



**Source:** World Values Survey

Hence, why are citizens in advanced industrial democracies likely to engage in non-conventional political participation—activities associated with social unrest? While unofficial strikes are not necessarily political violence, news reports from both countries demonstrate a level of political violence exists in both countries. Is political violence the result of weak politically representative institutions? Unconventional forms of political participation may be means to express grievances if the corresponding system in which the conventional means of participation work is in urgent need of a radical reform. According to this assertion, political violence “is not necessarily dysfunctional but it is a manifestation, which appears as unexpected, unplanned, often spontaneous as well as unconstrained or uncontrollable within the functional system in which they occur (Renn et al 2011, 19).”



Koopmans (1993) asserts “those social movements are characterized by low degree of institutionalization, high heterogeneity, a lack of clearly defined boundaries and decision-making structures and volatility matched by few other social phenomena (637).” The increase in violent actions against foreigners, refugees and other target groups in Germany are a characteristic of a lack of clearly defined boundaries and decision-making structures (Koopmans 1996). He studies Germany, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Switzerland and three Sweden, Denmark and Norway and differentiates the two forms of violence: racist violence that does not include an extreme right background and violence by extreme right groups that does not target ethnic minorities instead, it targets left-wing groups. Nonetheless, the presence of ethnic minorities in Western European countries had become the most important mobilizing issue for the right-wing extremist. Other factors have been ongoing migration crisis, prolonged financial crisis, rising Islamist terrorism, and growing support for radical right parties (Ravndal 2017). Ravndal (2017) looks at three causal conditions to political violence “the combination of high immigration, low electoral support for anti-immigration (radical right) parties, and extensive public repression of radical right actors and opinions; socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, and extensive left-wing terrorism and militancy” ...these...” contain elements of grievances and opportunities (133).”

Villiger (2013) states that between 1968 and 1995 there were many violent acts committed in Switzerland due to political contestation. People got injured, some died, and there was serious damage to property. Explosives were used in most attacks. These attacks were signed and accompanied by political statements or demands. In all cases, the target was obvious enough to leave no doubt as to the intentions of those who did the bombing. In violent attacks initiated by left extremist, they were due to political and (or) economic interests. The causal

mechanism that Ravndal (2017), Villiger (2013) and Koopmans present are characteristics of the limits of conventional political participation. The dissatisfied groups feel underrepresented or disadvantaged in the political structure in which they participate and they resort to non-conventional means against the political system (Sanchezem 2006: 718). From an institutional perspective, I argue that introducing accommodating policies in participation (i.e. extremists using the ballot box and becoming closer to the mainstream) may lead to decreasing violence. Hence, the way in which political participation is regulated might determine the occurrence of political violence in democracies. In this case, if regulations restrict or prefer some groups over others, the likelihood of political violence might increase (if there is violence it means that participation is restricted). In this way, I look at political violence as one aspect of representation and democracy. Looking at official and unofficial forms of participation allows us to test one aspect of democracy (polity) and examine why political violence occurs in some democracies and not in others. Therefore, the link between the level of political violence and regulation of participation can tell us more about equal participation than democracy. I argue that the intensity of political violence may increase as voting becomes a more legitimate method of participation for the majority. However, the literature suggests the opposite. That is, as the political institutions become more inclusive, such as expanded voting rights to all citizens, political violence should decrease. Thus, the hypothesis is:

*Hypothesis 1: The more inclusive is the regulation of participation the lowers the level of political violence.*

**Regulation of participation** is defined as the regulation of participation to the extent that there are binding rules on when, whether, and how political preferences are expressed. Thus, direct rule by citizens is preferred, wherever practicable (Coppedge et al 2017).

**Political violence** is defined as political expression events, politically motivated attacks, disruptive state acts, or some other manifestation of discontent - can vary enormously in their intensity (Speed Database 2014).

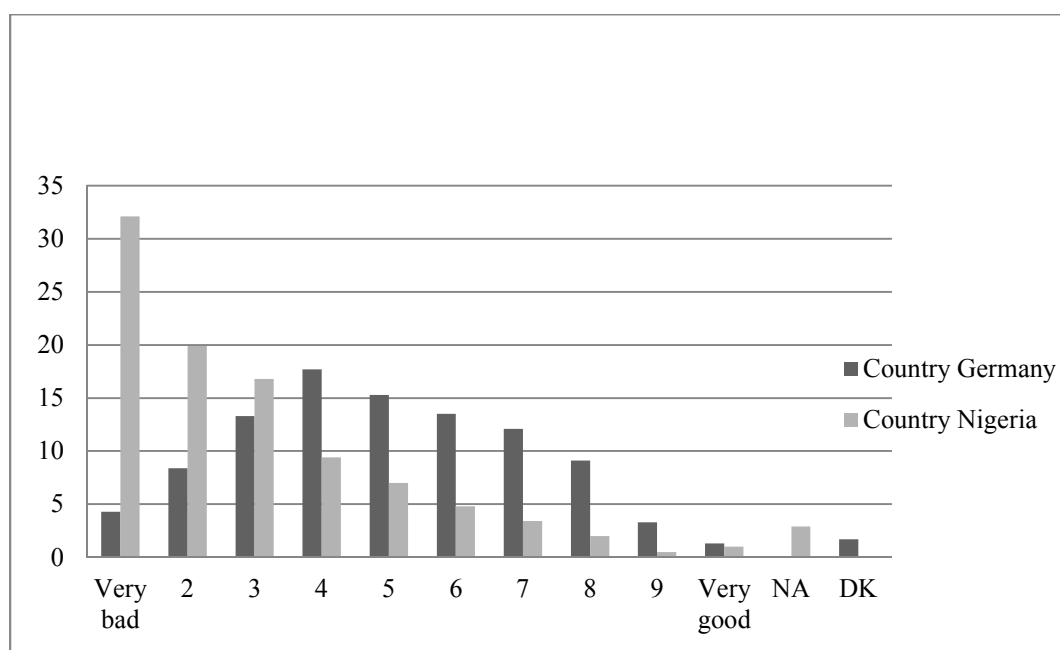
Once, institutions are inclusive for political participation and we expect them to mitigate political violence, although mitigating does not completely mean the absence of political violence. An easy answer can be political violence cannot be completely eliminated you can find it in any society, but that claim does not answer why it happens. If weak institutions have a relationship with political violence and there is connection between political violence and weak institutions, still, it does not answer why political violence happens in strong institutions. If the preliminary hypothesis is correct then citizen acceptance of the system (legitimacy) is reflected in voter turnout, and this should reduce political violence because “all” social groups have a chance to cast a vote.

### ***Legitimacy and violence***

Lipset (1959), Easton (1975, 1965), and Almond and Verba (1965) argue that political support for regimes is not a short-term process, it is a long-term process that develops on a record through the recognition of regime performance or the output of the system or support that has developed over time. In order to create the “system support,” the regime has to have the capacity to maintain order, to maintain the rule of law, and to otherwise respect human rights and the democratic rules of the game (Linde and Ekman 2003). On the other hand, democratic legitimacy (support for the principles of democracy) derives to a great extent from the long-term performance of the democratic regime (Linde and Ekman 2003). “Pharr and Putnam (2000) highlight widely decreasing confidence in political parties, parliaments, and politicians in Europe, the US, and Japan (Wagner et al 2008, 1).” Figure 2 from the world value survey that

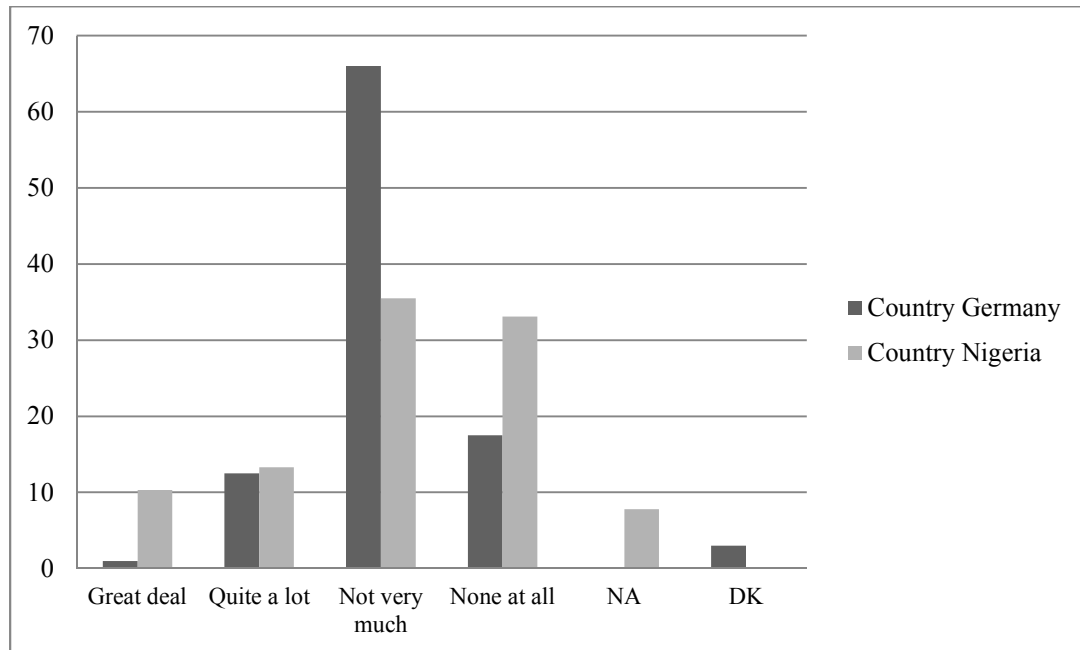
shows confidence in the political system and parties reflects one way how citizens in an advance democracy legitimize their democratic institutions. Again, I compare an advance democracy with a developing democracy to show the institutional variations. I observe a concentration of sentiments that are moderately good and moderately bad for Germany; hence there seem to be a significance trust for political trust in the political system in Germany than in Nigeria. However, there is less trust in political parties in both Germany and Nigeria. With regards to Germany we could say that although there is less trust in political parties, there is still relative trust in the political system. This could mean that the majority of citizens still participate in the democratic process without any clear political leaning to a party or voters' choices are fluid. I add that **Figure 1** one still supports that there is a support for the political system in Germany, since there are more citizens who are unwilling to engage in unofficial strikes. Hence, the question this paper is exploring—if there seem to be trust in the political system by the majority why do we still see political violence in Germany?

Figure 2. Where on this scale would you put the political system as it is today (1995-1999) (%)



Source: World Values Survey.

Figure 3. Confidence in Political Parties (1995-1999) (%)



Source: World Values Survey

Anderson and Tverdova (2001) argue that established parties seem to have become less relevant and they have less utility to their constituencies, while, not surprisingly, they are privileged niche parties when it comes to their linkage to the state. These phenomena might be the reason for anti-party sentiments, emergence of new and protest parties and far-right political violence in western matured democracies. Studies have shown that party system performance and electoral institutions have an effect on democracy satisfaction. Hence, how institution performs is considered a better indicator of the extent to which citizens are supportive of democratic governance (Anderson and Tverdova 2001). Anderson (1997) demonstrates that losers are more likely to be satisfied with the resulting democracy despite their minority status provided there are mechanisms for “procedural justice in the democratic process or opportunities for input into the decisions made by the government (575).” If there are reforms in the institutions that give political minority more access to decisions making, at the same time

maintaining that winning is still meaningful, and giving the majority more power—allowing the implementation of policies preferred by the majority, the citizens satisfaction with democracy will increase and this will have an effect on the longevity of the democratic system. According to Anderson and Mendes (2006) elections should be conceived primarily as mechanisms for the generation of popular support for the government and its policies and if elections do not achieve this goal the support for the government might be less.

Pappas and O'Malley (2014) argue that social unrest is an expression of dissatisfaction with the political system, which influences the intensity of violence in protest activities that is a result of legitimation crisis. It is usually a result of social and ideological factors, closely related to political parties, interest groups, and dynamic of party systems and political competition. When states deliver public goods to citizens, they will not question the legitimacy of the state or threaten their integrity. However, when the state can no longer provide the public goods and the utility it represents for its citizens get diminished, citizens question its legitimacy. The uncivil disobedient in the United States complain about the inefficiency, inadequacy, and corruption in the political-legal institutions (Kirkpatrick 2008). It is noticeable that these phenomena are not solely restricted to non-democracies but they are very salient in advanced industrial democracies such as Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway.

It might also be hard for losers to perceive their government as legitimate even if the elections were free and fair, conversely, losers can ignore the fraudulent result since they benefit them (Moehler, 2009). Elections may be deemed free and fair by experts, but not by dissatisfied citizens, and vice versa. Hence, the viability of electoral democracy depends on how much it accommodates a substantial proportion of the public displeased with the outcomes of the elections (Anderson and Mendes, 2005).

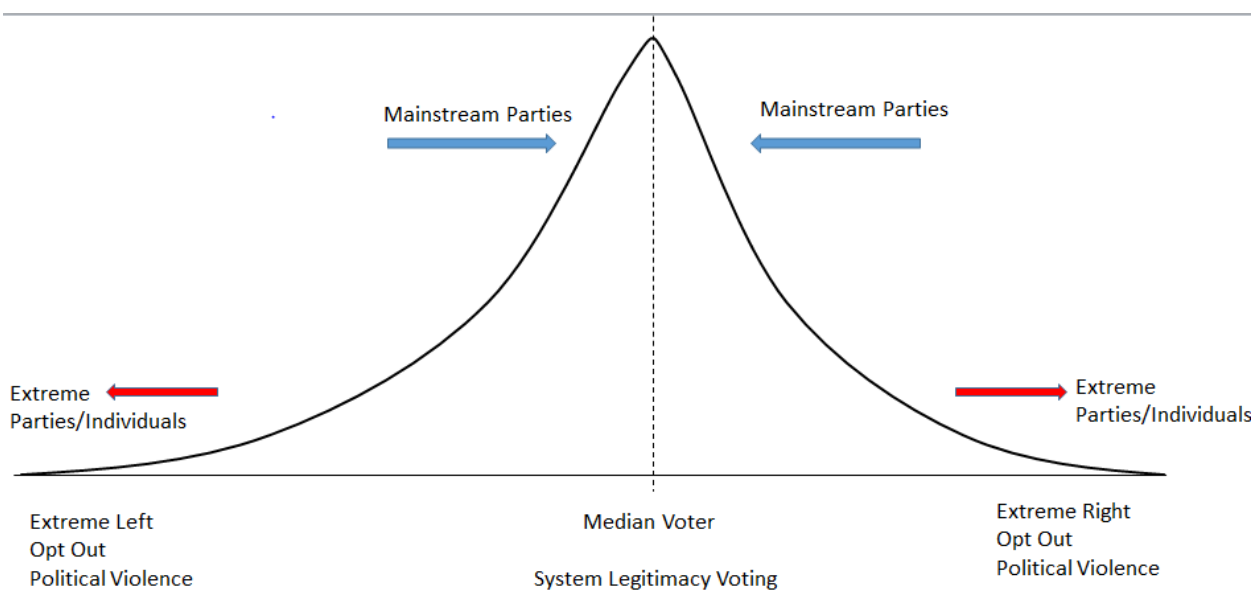
Ezrow and Xezonakis (2004) and Powell (1986) shows that high level of voter turnout in elections is an indication of satisfaction with democracy. Hence, the level of turnouts at elections is often seen as an indication of the health of a democracy and legitimacy, therefore it should be expected to have an effect on political violence more than other kinds of participation because it is a sign of direct inclusive participation. In western democracies, there is a pattern of declining rates of electoral participation. This has brought about concerns over the decline in the legitimacy of democracy and raised questions whether elections can act as institutional connection between citizens and the state (Stud 2012). For that reason, if one were to make the argument for institution legitimacy, voter turnout is the major indicator for such a phenomenon. However, few studies examine voter turnout in relation to electoral institutions and representation that might lead to political violence.

Thus, I argue that, although it is an indication of legitimacy, voter turnout does not, in itself, guarantee a decrease in political violence, especially in countries where there are minorities at the extreme end of the political spectrum. It does not measure individual legitimacy or acceptance of the system, but it only looks at political legitimacy from the majority of the population and generalizes to the whole of the population. This approach may disregard the perception of dissatisfied minority groups at margins. However, I believe it is important to consider these perceptions to understand political violence in advanced democracies. Political violence in Europe comes from both left and right extremes (Koopmans 1996). This political minority groups are not relevant with regards to voter turnout; therefore, they might opt to convey their grievance in unconventional means of political participation—political violence. When minorities feel irrelevant in advanced democracy because their interests are given less attention in the political arena, voter turnout might exacerbate their irrelevance. They may feel

that their interests are made insignificant by a higher voter turnout and see the only way to make themselves visible in the political arena is through political violence. Higher voter turnout is an indication of the public majority's satisfaction with institutions, however, I attempt to demonstrate that it is an indication of the dominant political majority overpowering of the minority (at least the minority perception), as a result they are pushed to respond violently and increasingly engage in political violence to gain salience. This is my point of departure. I adopt the Downsian (1957) median voter theory.

According to Downs, high voter turnout may reflect mainstream parties' success in attracting the median voter and does not account for the voter in the margins. Hence, the percentage of the voter turnout might be indicative of the median voter but since the median is the measure of where most voters are positioned in a polity the level of voter satisfaction in the margins is unknown.

Figure 4. Downs Model of Median Voters and additional explanation of extremists



Hence, despite the fact that the literature asserts that high voter turnout is an indication of public satisfaction with the system, it is possible to observe political violence from the



dissatisfied groups in the margins outlined by the red left and right arrow in **Figure 5**. This means that the issue that attracts the median voter, where the right and left blue arrows converge in **Figure 5**, does not represent the interests of the voters in the margins and the fact that high voter turnout might legitimize institutions gives them more impetus to try to delegitimize institutions—to draw attention to their issue space—they are already minorities in the political arena and they feel like they are being squeezed out of the political platform when they realize that their interests are disregarded by politicians at the same time feeling that their voices will never be heard because a high voter turnout that does not benefit them indicates the endorsement of the electoral process that does represent them, thus they resort to political violence. Because, they feel like they are isolated in the midst of the majority, for example, the right-wing extremist political violence in Germany. Since, the decrease in their relevance is negatively proportional to voter turnout with ballots concentrated away from their interests, they will try to offset the political loss by engaging in political violence.

Following from my previous argument, I can say that democratic institutions that are supposed to be inclusive in their nature, however they present an inevitable contradiction in advanced democracies—when one pays attention to minorities in the margins. Even in most liberal democracies some people are going to feel left out and the occurrence of political violence will continue even when voter turnout is high. The case studies I provided earlier in this paper support this claim. Hence, my hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2: Higher voter turnout will increase political violence due to increase in minority dissatisfaction.*

However, this is making an assumption about the nature of the minorities at the margins—how they respond when they realize they are losing their relevance—and might argue

that political violence is not the only way to display dissatisfaction. However, the literature shows that, in Europe, dissatisfied extremists have shown their dissatisfaction through political violence even in advanced democracies. This pattern is observed in the German case.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

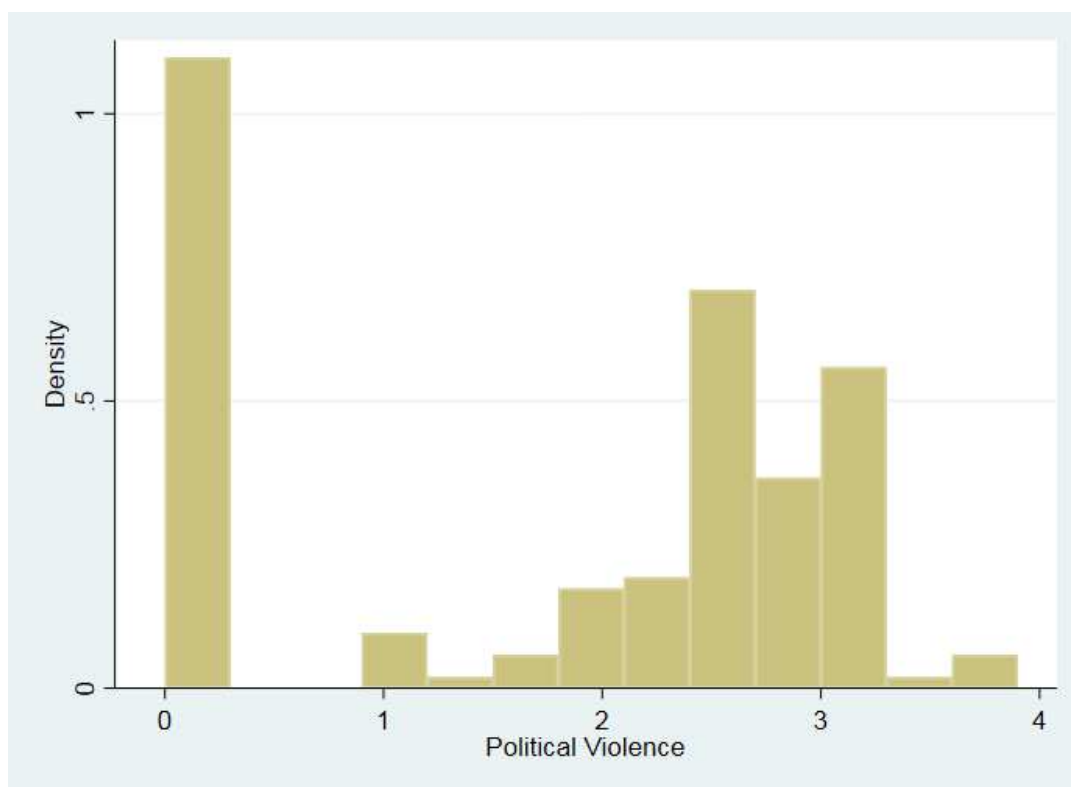
### ***Variables***

My paper uses the V-Dem 7.1 and the SPEED dataset. These two datasets are merged. Before merging, I select relevant variables and then select advanced democracies using the polity score of 10. However, I find that some countries that currently have a polity score of 10 did not have the polity of 10 in the past. To account for time variation in the polity, I had to come up with a cut-off year—looking at period from 1991(the end of the cold war) to the present. Countries that were advanced democracies from that time to the present continued to be democracies until the present. Hence, only countries that had a polity score of 10 from 1991 to the present were considered for testing the hypothesis in this paper. This led to the loss of many observations but it was the most plausible way to measure the relationship between regulation of participation and political violence, because for a country to be considered an advanced democracy one has to account for how many years the country has been a democracy. One has to almost expect that a country should have a polity of 10 for the longest time period to the present. It would be reasonable to consider the Federal Republic of Germany as an advanced democracy year after the Cold War because one would assume that it would have taken a long time for Germany to have a uniform culture of democracy after the unification of West and East Germany.

I experienced data problem when I was merging the V-Dem 7.1 and the SPEED dataset. The SPEED dataset recorded multiple political violence (dependent variable) incidents for one

year, for that reason, I calculated the average variables for every year. Political violence is operationalized as a continuous variable measuring the level of political violence from 1 to 20 after calculating the average of the number that represented those multiple incidents the maximum of the variable was reduced from 1 to 4. This allowed me to have equal amounts of observation per year between the two datasets, hence made the data possible and compatible for merging.

Figure 5. Political Violence



Source: SPEED Data

**Figure 6** is a distribution political violence. There is a high concentration of low levels of violence close to 0 but most of it is concentrated between 1 and 4. What the distribution shows is that there can be a significant amount of low levels of political violence and high-level relative to advance industrial democracies. Bear in mind that minimum being 0 and maximum being 4 is a

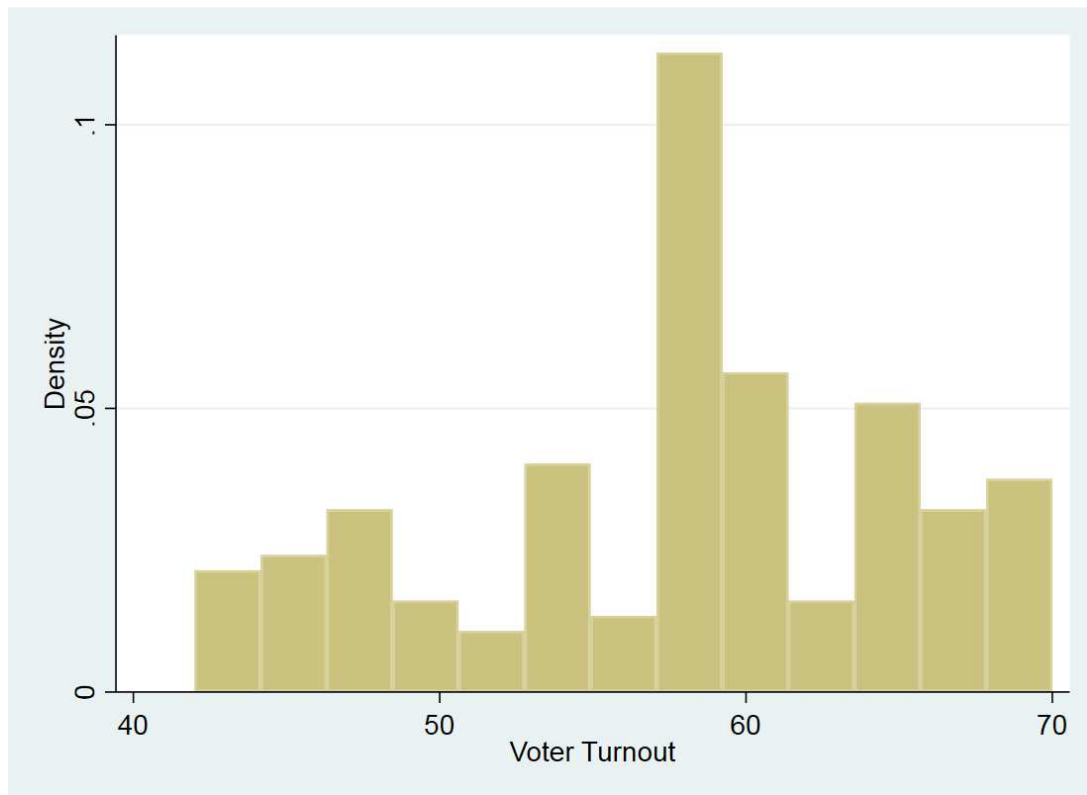
characteristic of a polity 10 democracy if the distribution includes non-democratic and less democratic countries the maximum would be higher than it is. The mean is show in Figure 5.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Political Violence	173	1.756808	1.3148	0	3.9
Voter Turnout	173	57.76936	7.397213	42	70

The voting turnout variable shows the voter turnout in each legislative election, and it is calculated as the percentage of the total population who actually voted in the election. In incident indirect elections, votes that are considered are the ones that are cast in the final election. “If electors have not been elected by citizens, only the number of actual electors is taken into account, which means that the degree of participation drops to the value 0. If an election to choose electors has been held, the participation variable is calculated from the number and distribution of votes in that election. National referendums raise the variable value by five percent and state (regional) referendums by one percent for the year they are held. Referendums can add the degree of participation at maximum by 30 percent a year. The value of the combined degree of participation cannot be higher than 70 percent, even in cases where the sum of participation and referendums would be higher than 70 (V-Dem 7.1).”

Figure 6. Voter Turnout



I use voter turnout and regulation of participation as my main independent variables. The distribution show that voter turnout is near evenly distributed with concertation 59% which explain the 57% percent mean in the Table 1.

Regulation of participation is defined as participation is regulated to the extent that there are binding rules on participation when, whether, and how political preferences are expressed. This variable is drawn from the question: Is political participation regulated? The answers are ordered from 1 to 5. 1: Unregulated: Political participation is fluid; there are no enduring national political organizations and no systematic regime controls on political activity; 2: Multiple Identity: There are relatively stable and enduring political groups which compete for political influence at the national level (parties, regional groups, or ethnic groups, not necessarily elected), but there are few, recognized overlapping (common) interests; 3: Sectarian: Political demands

are characterized by incompatible interests and intransigent posturing among multiple social groups and oscillate more or less regularly between intense factionalism and government favoritism; 4: Restricted: Some organized political participation is permitted without intense factionalism but significant groups, issues, and/or types of conventional participation are regularly excluded from the political process; 5: Regulated: Relatively stable and enduring political groups regularly compete for political influence and positions with little use of coercion. No significant groups, issues, or types of conventional political action are regularly excluded from the political process (V-Dem 7.1). The regulation of participation distribution seems to have few variations as one would expect when dealing with advanced democracies of a polity score of 10. More countries will have a score of five than less. One would expect the institutions of an advanced democracy with a polity score of 10 to be inclusive—which I mentioned in the earlier section. But I expect the minimal variation to be enough to show that inclusive institutions of participation have a negative relationship with political violence as the preliminary hypothesis propose. Although one would comment that the lack of variation in the observation might not give me an accurate measure of the relationship between democratic institutions and political—hence, representation. I would argue that it is a valid point but my main focus is on the second hypothesis not the first one. The first hypothesis just lay grounds for the first one.

Free and fair election, boycott, lower changer chamber system and civil liberties are my control variables. Free and fair election was coded in percentage of how many voters' turnout for an elections and boycotts. Free and fair election connotes an absence of registration fraud, systematic irregularities, government intimidation of the opposition, vote buying, and election violence. This an index variable formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for EMB autonomy (V-Dem 7.1).

The lower chamber electoral system is operationalized on the bases of the question, “what was the electoral system used in this election for the lower or unicameral chamber of the legislature?” The categories are as follows: 0: Majoritarian. 1: Mixed. 2: Proportional (V-Dem 7.1). For this variable data was missing in some years and I had to impute data on the bases of the previous electoral system. For example, if the majoritarian electoral system (0) was the electoral system before the missing data and the one that follows after the missing data was a mixed electoral system, then the missing data, for the years, will be treated as majoritarian until we get to the year that has a mixed electoral system. These imputations were made on the assumption that in the subsequent year after an identified electoral system the electoral system of the missing data did not change until there was an identified electoral system. In the cases where there was no change in electoral system before and after the missing data, in some years, the imputation maintained the same electoral system.

The Civil liberties variable is from freedom house. It looks at freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state. The more specific list of rights considered vary over the years. Countries are graded between 1 (most free) and 7 (least free).

A boycott is a deliberate and public refusal to participate in an election by a candidate or party who is eligible to participate. It is an individual ordinal variable that is recorded on the basis of the question: In this national election, did any registered opposition candidates or parties boycott? Answers range from: 0: Total. All opposition parties and candidates boycotted the election; 1: Significant. Some but not all opposition parties or candidates boycotted but they constituted a major opposition force; 2: Ambiguous. Some but not all opposition parties or candidates boycotted but it is unclear whether they would have constituted a major electoral

force; 3: Minor. A few opposition parties or candidates boycotted and they were relatively insignificant ones; 4: Nonexistent. No parties or candidates boycotted the elections (V-Dem 7.1).

### *Descriptive Statistics*

To test my hypothesis, before I run regression, I present further descriptive statistics to predict if there will be relationships that we will observe in the in the dependent and independent variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Participation	Summary of Political Violence		
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Freq.
3	2.9625357	.41807	7
5	1.705964	1.3158292	166
Total	1.756808	1.3148002	173

The decreasing mean difference suggest that I am likely to see a negative relationship between participation and political violence.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficient

Variables	Political Violence	Voter Turnout
Political Violence	1.0000	
Voter Turnout	0.1867	1.0000

The correlation coefficient suggests a positive relationship between voter turnout and political violence, although it is not a strong correlation. Therefore, as the theory predict increase



in voter turnout will lead to increase in political violence. Figure 7 is a graphic display of this relationship.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Electoral System	Summary of Political Violence		
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Freq.
0	2.041547	1.1091766	47
1	1.4539837	1.2421141	41
2	1.7454322	1.4286544	85
Total	1.756808	1.3148002	173

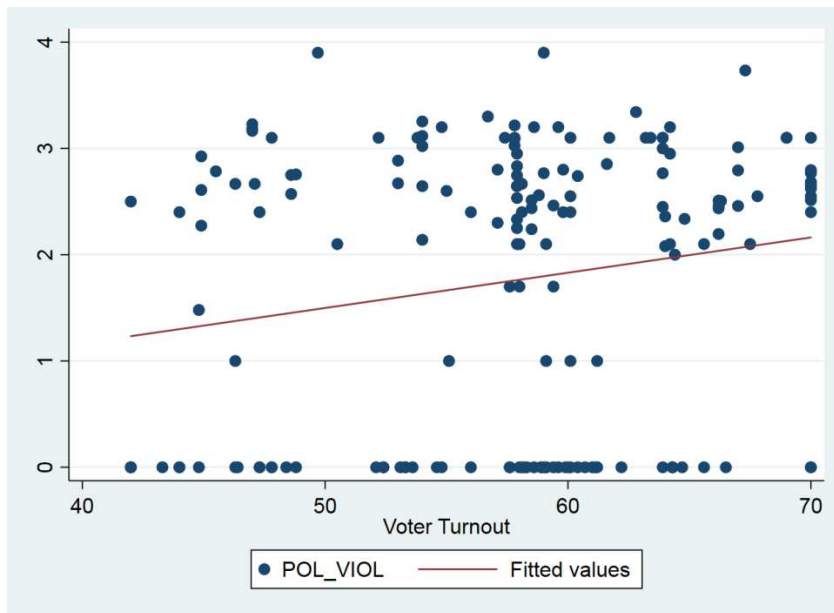
When looking at mean differences electoral system also seem to have a negative relationship with political violence. However, I do not expect it to be significant because electoral systems may be shaped by social and political environment. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) demonstrate that electoral systems are shaped by socio-political and economic factors, which might vary from one country to another. Therefore, their relationship with public satisfaction might be relative to the environment—whether a majoritarian or a proportional system of representation is better might be more a subjective question than a significant empirical question—the relationship is there but I do not expect it to be significant. That means electoral institutions can have an effect but their subjectivity seems outweigh their effect. Hence, I do not expect electoral system to have a significant relationship with political violence.

Table 5. Summary of Political Violence

Civil Liberties	Mean	Std. Dev.	Freq.
1	1.69139	1.3347058	94
2	1.8183333	1.2617695	68
3	1.9354962	1.5486566	11
Total	1.756808	1.3148002	173

Civil liberties also show a negative relationship with political violence. Hence, we should expect it to have a negative relationship with political when we run the regression model although there is an observed relationship I would not consider it to be significant. Because they are a given in an advance democracy.

Figure 7. Scatter of Political Violence and Voter Turnout



After observing the descriptive statistics, I find the same patterns they show in the regression model below. However, some variables are significant while others are not. The significant ones are the ones this paper is focusing on.

Table 6. Factors collated with political violence

Variables	Political Violence
Inclusiveness of Participation	-0.885** (0.275)
Free Fair Elections	0.533 (3.881)
Voter Turnout	0.0436** (0.0139)
Boycotts	0.237 (0.181)
Electoral Systems	-0.209 (0.129)
Civil Liberties	-0.0270 (0.172)
_cons	3.300 (3.995)
N	173
R-sq	0.114
Standard errors in parentheses	

\* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

I run a multivariate regression model of all the independent variables on political violence. This measures hypothesis one:

*Hypothesis 1: The more inclusive is the regulation of participation the lowers the level of political violence.*

I find that the preliminary hypothesis is supported, the coefficient of regulation of participation  $-0.885$  shows that there is a negative relationship between regulation of participation and political violence it is significant. This suggests that institutions have an effect on political violence and their inclusivity matters. But if most of the advance democracies are inclusive in their nature of representation why do we still see political violence in advance democracies.

*Hypothesis 2: Higher voter turnout will increase political violence due to increase in minority dissatisfaction.*

Voter turnout with a coefficient of  $0.0436$  is statistically insignificant. It suggests that the increase in voter turnout will lead to an increase political violence. For that reason, this finding supports the main argument of this paper. This relationship can be seen also in descriptive statistics. Therefore, I can conclude that, indeed, higher voter turnout has a positive relationship with political violence because when there is an increase in voter turnout minority groups at the margins feel like the majority are giving legitimacy to the institutions that does not give representation. Therefore, they resort to political violence to make themselves noticeable and relevant in the political arena. Hence, democratic institutions might be strong but the extent to which they mitigate political violence is depends on to how they are given legitimacy by the minority to in the extreme ends of the political spectrum.

One limitation of this study is the lack of data regarding individual attitudes and system support of the extremists and those who are participate in unofficial protests and political violence. I can only infer regarding who resorts to political violence by few surveys asking if the respondents were involved in illegal violent protests. Even if a survey asked a political violence question, the most likely response is “no” or “do not know.” Nevertheless, the empirical results

are suggestive and counterintuitive regarding inclusive democratic institutions and political violence.

One implication is that by virtue of being an advanced democracy does mean that the public has full representation and lack of representation for some groups in a democracy. This is a paradox that democratic societies have yet to resolve, hence political violence will continue to exist in advanced democracy. The rate of political violence might vary but it will continue being a form of participation and an outcome of the democratic process even in advanced democracies. Hence, we should look at the rise of political violence by the far-right and left extremists as reaction to their shrinking political space.

Another implication is that these extremist activists learn to work within the system and start to gain greater representation through legitimate political parties and voting. Instead of broad anti-system platforms, extremists especially the far right may use single issue platforms to influence the mainstream parties and the public (i.e. median voter). If these extreme right parties are able to gain greater support then the mainstream parties may move to the right and they are no longer in the margins. It is also possible that this move away from the middle may erode some democratic values, but at the same time reduce political violence at least from the right extremists.

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