

Power Parity, Democracy, and the Severity of Internal Violence

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This study applies insights from the power parity and the democratic peace perspectives to the issue of internal political violence. These two international relations perspectives translate well to the domain of domestic politics. Relative parity of resources between the government and the opposition are shown to lead to higher levels of violence. Democratic countries with highly competitive and participatory institutions are able to mitigate violent conflict within their borders. Efficient governments preserve domestic peace regardless of institutional format. Results of the study suggest that violence is generated by similar changes in both domestic and world politics.

With domestic politics, as with international politics, the escalation of conflict to violent conflict is rare (Singer and Small 1972; Organski and Kugler 1980; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1986; Houweling and Siccama 1988). Why do some conflicts escalate to the point of widespread violence, whereas others fizzle out?

The literature on political violence has already dealt with the impact of power distributions and institutions on the severity of internal violence (Arendt 1963; Goldstone, Gurr, and Moshirie 1991; Gurr and Lichbach 1979, 1986; Lichbach and Gurr 1981; Jenkins 1985; McAdam 1982; Morris 1984; Skocpol 1979; Tarrow 1994; Tilly 1978). Within this context, we posit that the severity of internal violence is largely determined by shifts in the power relationships between the government and the opposition. Based on work in world politics, we argue that violence will occur when relative power parity between the government and the opposition is present (Kugler and Lemke 1996; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992). This extension of the parity perspective to domestic politics anticipates that stability occurs when there is a relative disparity of power between the competing domestic actors. As in international politics,

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violence also may be mitigated by democracy (Maoz and Russett 1993; Ray 1995; Russett 1993). Moreover, efficient governments are expected to reduce violence (Kugler et al. 1997). Highly democratic and efficient governments should, in our view, experience lower levels.

This article first discusses the theoretical foundations and then the model of domestic violence. Subsequently, we report the estimation technique and results before concluding the study.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Precedents to our propositions on the severity of internal violence are found in literature from both comparative and world politics. Arendt (1963), in her seminal book *On Revolution*, asserts that a group is able to light the spark for revolution if it possesses the power that "comes into being only if and when men join themselves together for the purpose of action, and it will disappear when, for whatever reason, they disperse and desert one another" (p. 175). A powerful opposition group is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the existence of violent revolution. A revolutionary movement requires a government in power to overthrow. Again, Arendt states, "No revolution is even possible where the authority of the body politic is truly intact" (pp. 115-16). In sum, violent political interactions will break out only where there is a manifest lack of authority and when a sufficient opposition exists to threaten the government in power.

Tilly (1978), not unlike Skocpol (1979) and Goldstone, Gurr, and Moshiric (1991), also proposes that the causes of a revolutionary situation include "the appearance of contenders," "commitment to these claims by a significant segment of the population," and "incapacity or unwillingness of the agents of the government to suppress the alternative coalition and/or commitment to its claims (Tilly 1978, p. 200)." Gurr (1970) also isolates parity as a major precondition when he argues, "The likelihood of internal war increases as the ratio of dissident to regime coercive control approaches equality" (p. 235). Timasheff (1965) similarly argues, "Revolution commonly breaks out when both parties have, or seem to have, a fair chance of victory" (pp. 156-58). Parity, in sum, frequently has been identified as a precondition for internal violence.

Within the international relations literature, a well-developed set of empirical studies found a strong relationship between two actors moving toward parity and severe conflict (Organski and Kugler 1980; Houweling and Siccama 1988; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; Kugler and Lemke 1996). Testing power parity propositions at the national level is a logical step in linking international and domestic propositions on violent conflict.

An important complement to parity propositions are studies suggesting that countries with more democratic regimes are less likely to respond with violence either at the international level or to domestic dissent (Gurr and Lichbach 1979, 1986; Lichbach and Gurr 1981). These findings are based on the assumption that the prevailing norms

of the political regime influence the tactics that elites used to quench dissent.¹ We explore to what degree democratic institutions have a significant impact on violence. This argument suggests that only efficient, well-developed democracies will limit violent conflict within their borders. Gurr (1970) and Gurr and Moore (1997) also suggest that the relationship between coercion and political violence tends to be curvilinear where the extreme levels of coercion correspond to the lower level of internal violence. We incorporate these insights in the specification of our model.

MODEL SPECIFICATION AND DATA

To capture the essence of the preceding arguments, we propose the following model:

$$\text{VIOLENCE}_{it} = \alpha + \beta\text{RPE}_{it} + \beta\text{RPEO}_{it} + \beta\text{TIME}_{it} \\ + \beta\text{DEMOC}_{it} + \beta\text{DEMOC}^2_{it} + \beta\text{DEMOC}*\text{RPE}_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where

- VIOLENCE = severity of violence within a nation i at time t ;
- RPE = relative political extraction;
- RPEO = relative political extraction of the opposition;
- TIME = time index ranging from 1 = 1985 to 5 = 1989;
- DEMOC = level of democracy;
- DEMOC² = high level of democracy (i.e., "super democracy"); and
- DEMOC*RPE = joint effect of relative political extraction and democracy.

Following the arguments developed in the preceding section, we hypothesize that political violence is more likely in the presence of power parity between the government and its opposition.² The effectiveness of a government is not related to parity because the latter can occur when both the government and the opposition are effective or ineffective. However, the resulting conflicts differ. When the domestic contenders are effective, conflict should be severe, and when they are ineffective, conflict should be limited. We agree with Huntington (1968) that "the most important political distinction among countries concerns not their *form* of government but their *degree* of

1. Speaking of intensity of conflict, Lichbach and Gurr (1981) suggest that "most Western democracies have evolved non-violent styles of responding to challenges, which means that intensity is likely to be consistently low in these countries," whereas "autocracies and non-democratic new nations, on the other hand, typically follow policies of deadly response to both protest and rebellion" (p. 10).

2. From this vantage point, a weak authoritarian regime may be replaced by a democratic system (e.g., Argentina after the Falkland War, Peru after the reformist military regime) or a weak democratic system may fall to a military challenge (e.g., Brazil after Goulart, Chile after Allende) that then reimposes political stability. Recent changes in the countries of the former Eastern bloc propose even more diverse illustrations of this point. Weak authoritarian governments in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were replaced by strong authoritarian governments, whereas the incapable Soviet government of Latvia gave in to a democratic government of exceptional strength. Indeed, changes in Eastern Europe may be attributed not to a move from centralized, noncompetitive regimes to open, competitive regimes but rather to a move from politically ineffective regimes in search of effectiveness.

government" (p. 1, emphases added). Domestic conflict, therefore, should vary given the ability of the government to govern.

The political capacity of a government to extract resources from the society (RPE) and the relative capacity of the opposition to do likewise (RPEO) are essential, therefore, to understand the severity and not the initiation of conflict. Violence is posited to be a byproduct of the incapacity of governments to achieve their goals. At parity, a government's opponents are expected to choose violence as a means to obtain their goals. Under such preconditions, ineffective governments face violent challenges when support for their policies evaporates, making it possible for opponents to capture the resources necessary for a successful challenge. Weak governments procrastinate, allowing disputes to fester and consequently allowing domestic instability to arise. Severity is low because an ineffective government faced with a challenge seldom is able to act decisively to resolve policy disputes.³ On the other hand, under parity, effective governments face violent challenges only when the opposition is equally well organized and advances competing goals supported by the population. A strong government may diffuse opposition by imposing policy reforms or may attempt to crush the opposition. Thus, strong governments seldom face low levels of internal violence as they persuade or coerce the opposition to accept government policies. Internal violence emerges only when the government is unable to impose or advance its goals in the face of an organized opposition.

In addition to parity and effectiveness, we control for the effects of democratic institutions (DEMOC and DEMOC²). Given the preceding review, violence is less likely in highly democratic societies because regular elections ensure the replacement of ineffective governments in the next electoral cycle. Also, democratic opponents may decide against employing violence because multiple venues for voicing political protest are present. We anticipate that there is a further link between democracy and effectiveness. Countries that are concurrently effective and democratic (DEMOC*RPE) should be immune to violence because effective democracies not only provide institutional guarantees of expression to their populations but also can effectively implement the rules agreed on by the majority.

Additional controls are introduced to account for the effects of increasingly destructive technology. A temporal control (TIME) is added because the ability to kill increases with the sophistication and spread of weapons, allowing for higher casualties.

To examine the propositions described, we focus on countries representing the gamut of political violence, political extraction, and democratic liberalization. A sample of 26 countries was selected encompassing Central America, South America, the Caribbean, the former Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe (see appendix). We also selected a 5-year time period (1985-1989) to capture the general profile of each nation while safeguarding against anomalous occurrences and allowing general inferences that apply to developing nations.

3. Our model expresses an ineffective government as a government with low relative political extraction. For more information on this assumption, see Kugler and Arbetman (1989).

CONCEPTS

Internal Political Violence (VIOLENCE)

Internal political violence is defined as the level of open conflictual dissension over policy choices. One way in which to approach political violence measures is to use existing collections of event data available for the period under analysis. Such aggregations provide counts of the incidence of protests, riots, strikes, and political demonstrations. We chose not to use existing aggregations because the event counts do not consistently code the separate actors involved in violent activity and do not distinguish the size and intensity of protests, strikes, or demonstrations. From such events, a domestic scale of political violence can be created only by arbitrary links between recorded incidents and their aggregate severity. Experiments with weighting procedures adopted in previous research produced seemingly useful cross-sectional evaluations but proved to be very unstable over time (Taylor and Jodice 1983; Taylor 1985; for discussions of index aggregation, see Jackman and Boyd 1979; Hazlewood 1973; Hibbs 1973). Our dilemma is not new. Weede and Muller (1996), in a very informative evaluation of indexes of domestic violence, stress the very serious deficiencies of measures of internal violence and called for the development of a systematic measure of internal violence. We concur with their assessment in this matter and are gratified to note that new collections promise in the future the equivalent of international measures developed by the Correlates for War project at the University of Michigan.

The scale of violence used here is based on the coding of summaries of published chronologies. To maintain continuity, short summaries were made of all reported incidents of political confrontations for the period from 1950 to 1989 from *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (1950-1993), *Current History* (1950-1993, vols. 18-84), and *RFE/RL Daily Report* (1990-1993).⁴ A single event, such as a strike, was counted as an incident regardless of its duration. Then each event was associated with its specific level of political violence. The coding was designed to separate political dissension over governmental policy choices from random violence and criminal activity. To reach this goal, events were collected on a monthly basis and summarized. These summaries were, in turn, coded using the preceding criteria and then aggregated into a yearly score. The integration of both the political events and their level of violence ensures that the actions by the opposition directed against the government are coded in the same manner as are government actions against the opposition.

Incidents of political violence initially were coded at the Center of Political Studies at the University of Michigan by a team of analysts. These incidents were then recoded and updated by Andy Hira (for Latin America) and Dmitry Panasevich (for Russia and Eastern Europe), who constructed detailed chronologies and detailed summary descriptions of events and their codes. These two separate series of codings were performed to ensure reliability.⁵ The coders used the following scale to associate levels of violence with the incidence of political action:

4. RFE/RL was formerly known as Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

5. These two parallel measurements of the violence scale were correlated to test for reliability. The correlation between the two codings was at .931, suggesting that coder measurement reliability was high (Carmines and Zeller 1979).

1. *None*: absence of reported opposition activities
2. *Low*: sporadic opposition actions with little or no violence; attempted invasion or coup
3. *Moderate*: sustained opposition activities with two or more related incidents resulting in injuries and/or deaths perpetrated by organized groups such as unions or guerrilla organizations; nonviolent coups and invasions
4. *Severe*: high level of sustained opposition activity with violence by organized groups involving at least .01% of the urban population; violent changes of government
5. *Very severe*: virtual or actual civil war

This violence scale, as Gurr and Moore (1997) anticipated, has a definite curvilinear pattern. To achieve linearity and isolate the most severe conflicts that are of central interest, the scale was squared to create a 25-point scale. As in international politics, where the understanding of major, severe conflict is well at hand but the anticipation of low-level confrontation still is in infancy, we anticipate that this adjustment will allow us to isolate the most severe events accurately.

The Political Extraction of Governments (RPE)

Political capacity is the government's ability to extract human and material resources from the available pool to implement the policy chosen by the political elite and to respond to pressures of the international and domestic environments (Organski and Kugler 1980; Organski et al. 1984; Arbetman and Kugler 1997). The government's presence and effectiveness can be monitored by fiscal transactions. As Ardant (1975) notes, the "fiscal system is the transformer of the economic infrastructure into the political structure" (p. 22). Taxation, as broadly defined, directly and continuously affects the lives of individuals in a society. Few political acts depend so heavily on popular support or fear of punishment. No governmental activity is more critical for the health of a political regime because the resources available to the government determine whether political elites can implement chosen policies. In sum, fiscal extraction determines whether governments can govern.

The connection between fiscal resources and politics is complex. Several works argue that no direct relationship exists between the political capacity of a government and the level of general government revenue. The reason political elements are masked within the total of government revenues is that great differences exist in the economic endowment of societies as well as prior commitments that governments have made to the public and private sectors (Organski and Kugler 1980; Kugler 1983; Organski et al. 1984; Kugler and Domke 1986; see also Snider, 1988; Rouyer 1987; Minor 1987; Arbetman and Kugler 1988, 1997). Thus, political capacity can be measured only after one considers the resources governments can extract versus the resources the current political leaders are willing to extract and only after the economic constraints that enhance or diminish the political effort required to raise revenues are taken into account.

The political capacity embedded in fiscal extraction is approximated by the ratio of actual revenues obtained by the government over the predicted revenues obtained from an econometric model:⁶

6. For more information on the calculation of relative political extraction, see Kugler and Arbetman (1989). See also Arbetman and Kugler (1997).

$$\text{Relative Political Capacity} = \frac{\text{Actual Revenue Extraction}}{\text{Predicted Revenue Extraction}} .$$

Actual revenues are the resources governments collect directly or indirectly from individuals, corporations, and public enterprises in each country. Predicted revenues are estimated from cross-temporal and cross-sectional comparisons of the countries in our sample. Political factors are credited for the unspecified differences in the ability of governments to extract resources from their societies given the performance of other governments with similar economic characteristics. When this ratio exceeds 1, the government is considered strong; when it falls below 1, the government is deemed weak and ineffective; and when it achieves unity, the government performance is considered to be average. (Variants of this measure are found in Organski and Kugler 1980; Organski et al. 1984; Kugler and Domke 1986; Kugler 1983; Rouyer 1987; Snider 1988). The data used to estimate political capacity for Latin America are obtained by combining estimates from several collections.⁷ It is expected that the higher the level of relative political extraction, the lower the severity of violence.

Relative Political Extraction of the Opposition (RPEO)

The political extraction of the opposition is defined as the contender's ability to extract human and material resources from the available pool relative to that of the government. Here we are attempting to capture not the strength of the opposition but rather the relative parity between the government and its opponents. The political extraction of the opposition is used to gauge the competitive environment in each country. The political effort that opponents make cannot be measured directly because no public record is kept of resources gathered by the opposition that attempts to challenge the government in power. To create the relative measure of capability, we again rely on expert judgments to assess the ratio between the government extraction and the extraction of its main opposition. An approximation is obtained by setting the government's extraction at 100 and then evaluating the relative extraction of the opposition in relation to that of the government in the interval between 1 and 100. Thus,

$$\text{Relative Political Extraction of the Opposition} = \frac{\text{Political Extraction of the Opposition}}{\text{Political Extraction of the Government}} .$$

When the relative extraction of the opposition approaches 100, both sides are evenly matched approaching parity. This is the condition we anticipate would lead to serious confrontations based on work in world politics. The political weakness of the opposition is measured as this ratio falls below 100. Although they are logically possible, instances in which the political extraction of the government falls below that of the

7. For the purposes of this study, the region of Eastern Europe includes 9 countries from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the Latin American region is considered to include 16 countries from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

opposition are nonexistent because such a government no longer should be in power. For our sample, the mean extraction of the opposition was 62.5 with a minimum value of 10 and a maximum value of 95. Governments, as one would expect, have the upper hand in most cases.

This one-sided indicator of political opposition is appropriate to measure relative parity. Research on war suggests that international violence emerges when competitors control equivalent amounts of resources. With domestic politics, the importance of a balance of coercive forces postulated by Gurr (1970) asserts that the degree of political violence “varies strongly and directly with the ratio of dissident coercive control to regime coercive control to the point of equality and inversely beyond it” (p. 234). We posit that in domestic political competition, when “power parity” is approached, one expects that each side will anticipate marginal gains from a political confrontation. In such a case, disputes over policy should materialize. When such disputes are not resolved by a mutually accepted bargaining process, severe conflict ensues.

As before, Hira and Panasevich recoded and extended a previous collection for Central American, South American, and Caribbean countries as well as the former Soviet and Eastern European countries during the period from 1985 to 1989. To avoid the possibility of contaminating estimates by an indirect connection between political violence and instability, we collected the data on opposition strength independently and before the collection of violence took place.⁸

Level of Democracy (DEMOC)

The level of democracy indicator was obtained from the Polity III data set. This measure is based on “codings of the competitiveness of political participation, the openness of executive recruitment, and constraints on the chief executive” (Gurr, Jagers, and Moore 1990) (p. 83). This variable captures the institutional attributes of nations and is a measure of how participatory and competitive a regime may be. The democracy variable is an additive 11-point scale that incorporates a number of traits conceptually associated with democracy. The coding of the scale is based on the following weights:

Competitiveness of political participation:	Competitive = 3 Transitional = 2 Factional = 1 Other = 0
Competitiveness of executive recruitment:	Election = 2 Transitional = 1 Other = 0
Openness of executive recruitment:	Dual election = 1 Open = 1 Other = 0

8. As with the political violence measure, the two parallel codings of the relative political extraction of the opposition (RPEO) were correlated to determine reliability. The correlation between the two separate collections was .929, once again suggesting that the coder reliability was high (Carmines and Zeller 1979).

Constraints on chief executive:	Executive parity or subordination = 4
	Intermediate category = 3
	Substantial limitation = 2
	Intermediate category = 1

Following the insights of Gurr and Moore (1997), we square the democracy indicator to isolate the “super democracies” because it is expected that at this high level of democracy, political violence will be minimized as populations have alternative ways of reflecting their displeasure with the leading elite. Indeed, institutionalized replacement that ensures safety for the losers might eliminate the need for violent activity to ensure political goals.

ESTIMATION AND RESULTS

The study focuses on 26 countries from Central America, South America, the Caribbean, the former Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe from 1985 to 1989 (see appendix). The Parks estimation procedure is employed to analyze this pooled cross-sectional time series model. We chose this technique because it effectively corrects for autocorrelation present in our data and provides consistent and asymptotically, normally distributed estimators.⁹ We are aware that Beck and Katz (1995) show that the standard errors may be optimistic, yet the Parks method ensures that our estimators will be consistent.¹⁰ Our interpretation of results takes these limitations into consideration.¹¹ The standard measure of goodness of fit (R^2) is inappropriate given the Parks estimation procedure; however, we provide the uncorrected (OLS) adjusted R^2 statistics to establish a lower bound for the goodness of fit. Consequently, we focus on the standard error of the regression (MSE), which reflects how far the average dependent variable departs from the forecasted value (Achen 1982).¹²

As seen in model 1 (Table 1), all results are statistically significant, and estimators are consistent and asymptotically normal. Given that VIOLENCE ranges from 1 to 25, the MSE at .404 is very low, indicating that our coefficients account for much of the variance. Indeed, as the R^2 from the uncorrected OLS estimation shows, almost 46% (adjusted $R^2 = .456$) of variance is accounted for even with the crude OLS model, setting the lower bound for our estimates.

As anticipated, the severity of violence decreases as the level of political efficiency of the government (RPE) rises.¹³ A capable government is far more difficult to dislodge

9. No evidence of heteroskedasticity was found.

10. Alternate methods such as those of Fuller-Battese or Da Silva could be used to estimate this pooled cross section, but they fail to correct for autocorrelation that is present in our data.

11. We thank one of the reviewers for bringing this point to our attention.

12. Because the estimators from the OLS analyses are not best linear unbiased estimators, the goodness-of-fit statistic also might be affected. Consequently, the R^2 provides the lower bound for the fit of our model. The standard error may be considered to be superior to the R^2 because the variance in the independent variables does not affect the goodness of fit and is reported in the units of the dependent variable. Nonetheless, we report both the MSE and the adjusted R^2 for the uncorrected regression.

13. Indeed, a cursory look at the data also supports the parity hypothesis. Of the 11 cases that reach the highest level of violence, 9 are when the opposition's extraction is 80% of the government's. All 11 cases

TABLE 1
Pooled Time Series Estimation: 26 Countries, 1985-1989 ($N = 130$)

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>
Intercept	-10.023* (0.872)	-0.388 (6.22)
RPE	-3.747* (0.361)	-13.62** (6.33)
RPEO	0.230* (0.006)	0.215* (0.013)
TIME	0.263* (0.026)	0.239* (0.036)
DEMOC		-0.295 (0.532)
RPE*DEMOC		1.329*** (0.712)
DEMOC ²		-0.110*** (0.065)
Root <i>MSE</i>	0.404	0.380
OLS adjusted R^2	.456	.467

NOTE: Dependent variable is level of internal violence. Figures in parentheses are standard errors. RPE = relative political extraction; RPEO = relative extraction of the opposition; TIME = time index; DEMOC = level of democracy; RPE*DEMOC = joint effect of relative political extraction and democracy; DEMOC² = high level of democracy. *Parameters are significant at the .01 error level for a two-tailed *t* test. **Parameters are significant at the .05 error level for a two-tailed *t* test. ***Parameters are significant at the .10 error level for a two-tailed *t* test.

than is one unable to extract resources from its population. Thus, faced with violent opposition, an effective government responds in kind and effectively squelches internal revolt. Moreover, because the coefficient for the effective opposition also is strong and positive, as the capabilities of potential rebels increase compared to those of the government, the severity of violence increases. These results are consistent with the power parity perspective showing that the severe conflicts of World Wars I and II are directly associated with parity and the high levels of political extraction achieved by the combatants (Kugler and Domke 1986).

TIME, a simple index, is positive and significant, showing that the severity of violence has risen slightly over the period of analysis. This is consistent with the technological advancement in weaponry (Singer and Small 1972).

One important implication of this analysis is that by increasing political extraction, governments can stabilize their political environment, particularly when they face low levels of violence. The policy implication is that to maintain stability, early intervention is desirable. In practice, however, only governments with relatively high levels of political extraction can act, whereas those with low levels of extraction cannot. Ironically, it is precisely the latter that could, with early intervention, avert violence. The implication is that external aid is most useful in societies with weak political

are accounted for when the opposition's extraction is 75% of the government's. This is very consistent with results obtained in world politics (Kugler and Lemke 1996).

systems (e.g., Haiti), where limited interventions are successful, but that it will have little effect in conflicts within organized societies (e.g., Vietnam, Afghanistan), where the combatants are fully mobilized. These results also are consistent with the Tianamen Square crisis that stabilized the Chinese government and suggest that external intervention on the side of the students would have been counterproductive and resulted simply in a bloody escalation.

Let us now turn to model 2 in Table 1, which responds to the recent arguments that associate democracy with the lack of violence. Despite our correction for collinearity, note that the levels of significance for most coefficients are much reduced, yet the *MSE* decreases slightly, suggesting a better fit. Clearly, the interaction between extraction and democracy is not fully captured.

First, when controlling for democratic countries, the coefficient for political effectiveness is far stronger than in model 1. Thus, controlling for type of government adds clarity to the specification of the model, indicating that democracies and authoritarian governments have very different levels of potential control. Second, democracy by itself is, unexpectedly, not significant. Thus, knowledge of the type of government by itself is not useful to understand the level of violence in society. Third, the interaction between democracy and political extraction ($DEMOC * RPE$) and the depth of democratic structures ($DEMOC^2$) shows weak but intriguing effects. Based on $DEMOC^2$, super democracies can reduce the levels of domestic violence in their societies. However, democracies that are not fully institutionalized fare no better than do autocratic regimes. Efficient democracies ($DEMOC * RPE$), likewise, are able to reduce the threat of domestic violence above and beyond that achieved by authoritarian governments with similar levels of political extraction. When democratic leaders reach out to their populations, the response is stronger than when authoritarian rulers do the same. We caution that these results are preliminary and must be confirmed by further replication.

Our overall findings are important because they could reconcile seemingly contradictory arguments. Lichbach and Gurr (1981) argue, on one hand, that democracy is the prime deterrent of domestic violence, whereas Kugler et al. (1997) propose that political effectiveness is responsible for stability. Here we show that both are consistent and contribute to each other. The interaction between democracy and political effectiveness, although weak, is substantive.¹⁴ Thus, the effectiveness of governments might be linked to the consolidation of democratic institutions as each seemingly reinforces the other. Moreover, super democracies, consistent with the record of advanced democracies since 1945, by themselves reduce the prospects of internal violence. Strong and efficient democracies, therefore, deter domestic violence.

CONCLUSION

Politically efficient governments are much more likely to avert internal challenges. If serious challenges occur, then they can be waged only by a very well-organized

14. Separately, the addition of super democracy ($DEMOC^2$) or the interaction between democracy and effectiveness ($RPE * DEMOC$) does not produce significant results. Moreover, a model that leaves out $RPE * DEMOC$ produces nonsignificant results ($DEMOC$ *t* statistic = .64, $DEMOC^2$ *t* = .33), as does one when super democracy is omitted ($DEMOC$ *t* = .43, $RPE * DEMOC$ *t* = .39).

opposition that approaches parity with the government. The frequency of such crises should be low, for parity between government and opposition, as with parity among nations, is infrequently achieved. When parity is present, however, the necessary but not sufficient conditions for serious domestic instability seemingly emerge.

From a policy perspective, our results are telling. Early, effective intervention is an effective means to avoid internal violence. This option is, however, not available to ineffective governments that can most easily be challenged even by inefficient opponents. Presumably, in such cases, conflict lingers at low levels. Super democracies and democracies that have high levels of extraction reduce the levels of internal instability. Ineffective democracies struggling with reform are only as likely as authoritarian governments of equivalent levels of efficiency to repulse challenges by opponents.

Our research also shows that, consistent with the outcome in Haiti, interventions in support of inefficient democratic systems might be a very viable option. However, interventions to alter political structures that are already efficient, as in Tienamen Square, might be counterproductive.

APPENDIX

List of Countries

<i>Central American, South American, and Caribbean Countries</i>	<i>East European and Former Soviet Countries</i>
Argentina	Azerbaijan
Brazil	Bulgaria
Bolivia	Czechoslovakia
Chile	Estonia
Costa Rica	Hungary
Dominican Republic	Latvia
Ecuador	Lithuania
El Salvador	Moldova
Guatemala	Poland
Honduras	
Jamaica	
Mexico	
Panama	
Paraguay	
Peru	
Uruguay	
Venezuela	

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