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Silver or Lead? Why Violence and Corruption Limit Women's Representation

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Silver or lead?

Why violence and corruption limit women's representation

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Synopsis:

Monitors report that many elections around the world are flawed by problems of corruption and violence – sometimes both. These malpractices are deeply troubling for electoral integrity and liberal democracy. Do they also serve as critical barriers to women's representation in elected office and thus the achievement of gender equality in parliaments around the world? *Part I* in this paper sets out the theoretical arguments and reviews what is known from qualitative studies. *Part II* then considers sources of quantitative evidence, selecting systematic cross-national and time-series indices from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project. *Part III* analyzes the impact of corruption and violence on the proportion of women in elected office worldwide, controlling for factors such as levels of democracy and development, electoral laws and gender quotas. *Part IV* confirms that both legislative corruption and political killings serve as significant constraints on women's election, with important implications for achieving the twin goals of electoral integrity and gender equality in parliamentary representation.

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International monitors, human rights organizations, and the news media report that elections in many parts of the world are commonly flawed by problems of corruption and violence at the polls (Bjornlund 2004; Hogland 2009; Straus and Taylor 2012; Birch 2011; Hyde 2011; Kelley 2012; Donno 2013). Worst-case scenarios are exemplified by the 2007 Kenyan election, which led to thousands injured, reports of widespread rape, an estimated 1,200 deaths, about 42,000 houses and many businesses looted or destroyed, and more than 300,000 people displaced, costing the country more than one billion dollars and deterring potential investors (UNHCR 2008). The extent of the conflict was exceptional. But it was not an isolated occurrence. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, estimates from the Hyde and Marinov (2012) NELDA dataset suggest that around 12% of all elections worldwide saw opposition boycotts, 17% experienced post-election riots or protests, and 18% had electoral violence involving at least one civilian fatality. Contentious elections can trigger lengthy court challenges, opposition boycotts, public protest, or, at worst, deadly riots (Norris, Frank and Martinez 2015).

Observers also document how elections have also been damaged in many countries by corrupt practices of graft, vote-buying, kickbacks, embezzlement, bribery, cronyism, and rent-seeking behavior by government executives and elected officials (Rose-Ackerman and Palifka 2016; Mungiu-Pippidi 2015). Financial scandals in politics commonly revolve around issue of party donors and campaign fund-raising and spending, a pattern found in countries as diverse as India and Japan, the US and Brazil, Russia and South Africa (Norris and Abel van Es 2016). Experts in the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity survey, assessing elections in countries worldwide, suggest that campaign finance is the weakest stage in the electoral cycle (Norris, Wynter and Cameron 2017). Major corruption scandals are exemplified by the “Recruit” scandal in Japan, the misuse of “Westminster expenses” in Britain, the Petrobras scandal in Brazil, and both “Watergate” and the Muller indictments in America. Electoral malpractices violate human rights, as well as weakening public trust, undermining democratic governance, and destabilizing fragile states (Norris 2014, 2015).

In addition to all these concerns, there are several reasons to expect that the consequences of these types of problems are far from gender-neutral (Krook 2017). Instead, both political violence and legislative corruption are believed to deter women from seeking nomination and election – and thus serve as important barriers to achieving women’s empowerment and gender equality in elected office. To consider these issues, *Part I* in this paper sets out the theoretical arguments and the qualitative research underlying these concerns. *Part II* then considers the pros and cons of alternative sources of evidence, selecting systematic cross-national and time-

series global indices based on expert estimates of political killings and legislative corruption in countries worldwide derived from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem 8.0) project. *Part III* analyzes the impact of these indicators on the proportion of women in elected office worldwide, in cross-national time-series models with panel corrected standard errors, controlling for several other variables, such as the type of regime and electoral rules. *Part IV* concludes that these malpractices are indeed associated with fewer women in parliament, as expected, with corruption having the stronger linkage. Further exploration at micro-level is needed, however, to unravel the underlying processes of women and men's perceptions and experiences of political corruption and violence, and to consider what policy interventions could mitigate these problems.

I: Theoretical framework and literature review

The U.N. Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 5 commits the world's governments to the empowerment of women and girls, aiming for gender equality by 2030.¹ Sustained progress towards this goal can be observed around the globe; the Inter-Parliamentary Union reports that the average proportion of women parliamentarians doubled worldwide during the last two decades.² Yet there is still a long way to go before achieving SDG-5: although the majority of the world's population, on average today only one quarter of all parliamentary seats are held by women.³ Even fewer serve in ministerial office or as elected heads of state or government (Krook and O'Brien 2012).

Politicians pursuing elected office face a series of barriers and opportunities (for reviews see, for example, Henderson and Jeydel 2013; Paxton and Hughes 2016). These can be conventionally understood and classified using a simple supply-and-demand market model (Norris and Lovenduski 1995).

Aspirants on the 'supply-side' of the process are usually thought to be disadvantaged in pursuing elected office if they lack the sorts of resources which typically facilitate nomination and election, such as social and political support networks, prior experience and skills, and access to campaign funds, as well as lack of motivational ambition and interest.

Hurdles recognized on the demand-side, influencing selectors like party activists, campaign donors, and leadership elites, include the prevalence of social stereotypes about what constitutes 'suitable' or 'electable' candidates, and a thicket of informal selection rules and tacit procedures which are familiar to insiders but largely impenetrable to novices.

Formal constitutional rules, party rules and societal norms can also prove critical for the nomination process and electoral outcome, influencing both supply and demand, notably the role of gender quota laws or reserved seats, mean district magnitude, campaign

finance laws, sluggish rates of incumbency turnover leading to a paucity of winnable open seats, the type of regime and party system, and the use of plurality/ majoritarian, mixed, or proportional electoral systems (Reynolds 1999; Siaroff 2000; Ruedin 2012).

There are several arguments why common problems of electoral integrity may not be gender neutral. In particular, both political corruption and violence may be expected to reinforce male political predominance in elected office, discouraging women from running, or disadvantaging their candidacies, especially in the most conflict-ridden and corrupt societies.

The impact of political violence

The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women became the first international instrument explicitly addressing violence against women, providing a general human rights framework for national and international action. It defines violence against women broadly as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.⁴ International concern helped to stimulate a growing scholarly literature researching the causes of gendered violence, seeking to document its magnitude, impact and policy remedies. An extensive body of research in sociology, psychology, legal studies, social work, public health, and criminology has uncovered abusive patterns of violence against women, such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and physical assaults (for a review, see Kilpatrick 2004). The gendered nature of violence is exemplified by the way that men consistently predominate in acts of violent behavior, according to official crime statistics, including as both perpetrators and victims of homicide (Fox and Friedel 2017). Studies have compared the public policies used by governments to address domestic violence, following growing legal recognition of the problem (Htun and Weldon 2012).

The extensive literature on violence against women is well-established, as well as many studies of the role of women in the military and in post-conflict peace-processes. Until recently, however, scholarly and applied policy research on gender equality in public life has not focused extensive attention upon the potential consequences of the political violence for women's participation and representation. Violence against women in politics can be understood as 'any act or threat of gender-based violence, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, that prevents them from exercising and realizing their political rights, whether in public or private spaces, including the right to vote and hold public office, to vote in secret and to freely campaign, to associate and assemble, and to enjoy freedom of opinion and

expression.’ (UN Women/UNDP 2017). During the last decade, a growing number of leading multilateral organizations have published a series of reports highlighting concern about physical attacks, harassment, and abuse directed against women in politics, including as activists, voters, parliamentary candidates and elected representatives (Bardall 2011; iKnowPolitics 2014; National Democratic Institute 2014; IPU 2016; Ballington 2017; UN Women/UNDP 2017; UN Women 2018). These reports have documented political violence mainly through conducting qualitative interviews with women parliamentarians in several countries, including powerful personal testimonies describing women’s experiences of harassment, intimidation, and even threats of killings. The reports suggest endemic problems of political violence: for example, the Interparliamentary Union (IPU 2016) conducted interviews with 55 women parliamentarians and found that four out of ten reported that they had been subject to threats of death, rape, beatings or abduction. These studies have drawn international attention to these issues, and started to identify policy interventions which could mitigate the risks, but they have been unable to determine whether boys and men share similar experience of political violence, especially in contentious elections and conflict-ridden societies. Moreover, gendered patterns may be expected to vary according to the type of violence; for example, a study comparing several developing countries such as Bangladesh, Guyana and Timor Leste, based on incidents of election-related violence collated by IFES, concluded that women were more likely to be involved in acts involving psychological abuse and sexual assault, while men were more at risk from acts of physical harm (Ballington 2017).

Generalizations about this problem are also difficult since challenges seem likely to differ by region and type of society. Elections triggering violent protests, intimidation by state security forces, and intercommunal conflict have attracted growing attention (Mansfield and Snyder 2007; Bekoe 2012; Collier and Vincente 2011; Beaulieu 2014; Norris, Frank and Martinez 2015). Women probably face the gravest dangers when running as candidates in elections held in traditional cultures and in transitional states with a recent history of armed conflict, festering inter-communal rivalries, and weak rule of law, such as contests held in Afghanistan, Zimbabwe⁵, Syria, and DRC. In Afghanistan, for example, news media report that several women candidates were killed in election campaigns and these practices restricted the freedom of many others to campaign in public rallies.⁶ A UN Women study of India, Pakistan and Nepal reported that female candidates, their families, and women voters routinely face threats of violence, due to insufficient implementation of laws, lack of support from police and judiciary, the socio-economic divide, and current power structures.⁷ The problem of violence against women in elections (VAWE), and

policy interventions, has received growing attention in Latin America, including in Mexico, Bolivia, Honduras, and Brazil (Krook and Sanin 2016; Sanin 2018; Biroli 2018). Armed conflict and civil unrest persists in several states in the region, such as Venezuela, but other widespread risks arise from problems of narco-related cartels and human trafficking, blamed for 130 deaths among male and female politicians and party workers in the July 2018 Mexican elections.⁸ When seeking to influence public officials, drug cartels in Colombia routinely offer '*Plato o Plomo*' (Bo et al 2006).

Long-established democracies are also far from immune; in several Anglo-American parliaments, women MPs report that they face sexism, harassment, and threats, including in Canada, New Zealand, and the UK (Collier and Raney 2018; Every-Palmer et al 2015). Extreme acts of violence can touch the lives of politicians everywhere, as exemplified by the murder of the MP Jo Cox in 2016, and the non-lethal shooting of two members of Congress, Steve Scalise in 2016 and Gabby Giffords in 2011. Women MPs at Westminster describe how they have been subjected to violence ranging from direct physical threats, intimidation, damage to their property, and notes slipped under their doors, to bullying and harassment by journalists, and abusive, threatening and violent comments online. For some, the abuse started when they were candidates, whilst some only experienced it after being elected (Jewell 2016; Krook 2018b). A growing body of work based on official policy complaints has documented how the use of social media has exacerbated a climate of harassment and threats (Bardall 2013). In the UK parliament, policy complaints records show that online attacks and abuse are disproportionately directed towards women and minorities (James et al 2016). Amnesty International also documented high volumes of abusive tweets during the 2017 UK election, including death threats, directed towards women and ethnic minority MPs.⁹ Similarly, a broader comparison by 86 countries by the UN Broadband Commission (2015) called violence against women online a "problem of pandemic proportion", reporting that three quarters of women online had been exposed to cyberviolence, online harassment, stalking threats, and other abuse.

Reports from multiple international agencies and from national case-studies during the last decade therefore suggest many legitimate grounds for concern about the gendered impact of violence against politicians, in all parts of the world, which deserving further investigation. In-depth interviews with women parliamentarians highlight their risk perceptions and experiences. Without equivalent evidence from a wider range of politicians, however it is not possible to establish whether women and men share similar perceptions about the personal risks of holding elected office. Extrapolating from what is well-known about official crime statistics in general, it is also possible that men may be more likely

to be both the perpetrators but also the victims of political violence (Fox and Friedel 2017). What has also not yet been established from systematic evidence, moreover, is whether women are generally deterred from running for office in societies where they face widespread risks of threats or acts of political violence, as widely assumed.

The impact of corruption and clientelism

In addition, pervasive corruption in public life and the use of illicit funds in elections can also be expected to provide barriers limiting the entry of women into elected office. The concept of corruption reflects dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, especially but not exclusively the abuse of public funds for private gain (Rose-Ackerman and Palifa 2016). Studies about the problem focus especially, but far from exclusively, on acts like bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, tax fraud, self-enrichment, nepotism, and patronage by officials violating trust in the public sector. Several types may also be particularly important for political representation, including clientelism, defined as the practice of citizens exchanging ballots for particularistic material benefits, such as money, gifts, jobs, land, or favors (Stokes 2009; Stokes, Dunning, Bazareno and Brusco 2013). Most simply, this is known as payment-for-votes. It can tar politicians, citizens, and intermediary brokers. Corruption is always immoral and often illegal – but not always. It can involve grand corruption on a massive scale - or petty malfeasance like illicit payments for public services, queue jumping, or licenses. It can entangle multiple actors – notably politicians, political parties, public sector officials, lobbyists, and government officials -- but also ordinary citizens. Corruption is widely acknowledged as one of the central challenges of good governance facing rich and poor states, with consequences for development, security and peace (Rose-Ackermann and Palifka 2016; Mungiu-Pippidi 2015). In the words of the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (2018): “*Corruption corrodes the social fabric of society, weakens the rule of law, undermines trust in the government, erodes people’s quality of life and creates a conducive environment for organized crime, terrorism and violent extremism to flourish.*”

Several studies have observed that more women are usually elected to the national parliament in countries with less corruption (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 1999; Bjarnegard 2013; Stockemer 2011). Similar patterns have been observed for women in local councils (Sundstrom and Wangnerud 2016), and cabinets (Stockemer and Sundstrom 2017). Interpreting the underlying reasons for the correlation, and the controls required for well-specified models, remains a matter for debate (Sung 2003, 2012). One potential explanation is that nomination processes for elected office, and subsequent parliamentary and ministerial careers, are facilitated by assets like personal income and wealth, and access to informal

political, social, and business networks, where women continue to be disadvantaged by ‘old boys’ networks’ (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Bjarnegard 2013; Stockemer and Sundsrrom 2018). Parliamentary privileges also serve to reinforce the status quo, benefiting incumbents and disadvantaging challengers, since legislators often have access to state resources useful for clientelism, such as campaign funds and patronage (Stokes 2009; Gouglas, Maddens and Brans 2018). As a result, in any contest where clientelism is widespread, challengers lacking access to comparable state resources face an uneven playing field. These practices disadvantage any outsiders challenging incumbents, including women. Finally, the observed correlation between corruption and gender may also prove to be spurious, in under-specified models, if liberal democracy both reduces levels of public sector corruption and also provides more opportunities for women gaining elected office (Sung 2003, 2004, 2012).

II: Evidence

In short, in any election, it can be hypothesized that political violence/intimidation by the authorities, and clientelism/corrupt practices by legislators, are both malpractices likely to provide barriers which deter women from running and being successfully elected -- and therefore which hinder achieving gender equality in parliament. While problems of election-related corruption and acts of political violence are widely acknowledged and condemned, it remains difficult to establish reliable data to generalize about the extent and severity of these types of malpractices and their potential effects on political representation in different societies (Bjarnegard 2018; Ballington 2018). In particular, like many other types of illicit and covert electoral malpractices, systematic evidence documenting the extent of corruption and political violence around the world remains patchy and under-reporting is likely to be common. The extent these multidimensional phenomena are also complex to estimate, since a diverse range of perpetrators and victims can be involved, including movement activists, journalists and human rights monitors, voters, party members, campaign workers, parliamentary candidates, elected politicians, and leaders.

Reports of violations can be compiled from international observer election missions, such as the OAS and OSCE, which draw attention to observed problems and legal complaints about the abuse of money and coercion in electoral politics, condemning cases of vote-buying and violence.¹⁰ News media reports of financial scandals and incidents of electoral conflict, such as violent protests and political assassinations, can also be tapped. Several datasets on incidents of electoral violence have used these resources, for example, the NELDA cross-national and time-series dataset compiled data from these sources to estimate the frequency of acts of intimidation by state-actors and security forces, and the number

of opposition riots, boycotts, and violent protests occurring during or after contentious elections (Hyde and Marinov 2012). Unfortunately, the data is not disaggregated to record the gender of victims of violence. This approach is also unlikely to capture the use of more subtle forms of psychological intimidation, such as threats against women activists experienced in patriarchal societies.

Content analysis of the news media has also been widely used by scholars of international relations and inter-state conflict for event count datasets. Standard armed conflict datasets, like the Correlates of War and the Peace Research Institute Oslo, estimate the severity and number of incidents, and sometimes the type of state or not-state perpetrators, but not the gender of victims. The Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict Dataset (SVEC) includes information on actors reported to have perpetrated sexual violence (Cohen and Nordas 2014), but this focuses again on cases of armed conflict. Transnational human rights indicators monitor the ratification/adoption of legal instruments, their implementation, and outcomes. These datasets are primarily designed to monitor violence against women within the family and community, like rape, human trafficking and domestic violence, not violence and intimidation directed against candidates and elected officials.

Representative national and multi-country surveys of the public are another resource available to document the reported prevalence of electoral malpractices among the electorate, such as the World Values Survey, the Afro-Barometer and LAPOP in Latin America. For example, Afro-Barometer surveys have asked whether ordinary people have been offered a bribe in return for their vote, or whether citizens have experienced threats or coercion (Bratton 2008). Similar issues have been explored through surveys in Latin America (Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes 2004). It remains unclear, however, whether surveys can capture reliable estimates of illegal and covert acts. In the most repressive states, freedom of speech is restricted, and women may be reluctant to report threats in survey interviews. In corrupt cultures, citizens, rather than machines or brokers, may also instigate these interactions, and ordinary people may thereby seek to disguise acts such as vote-buying for fear of being punished (Nichter and Peress 2017). Official statistics and administrative data, such as from crime and health statistics, are potential sources of information, such as policy complaints about online abuse. Comparative elite-level surveys of nominated candidates and members of parliament are other avenues for potential research but, to date, these have not yet gathered perceptions and experience of threats of electoral-related violence and attitudes towards clientelist practices by women and men running for office.¹¹

Therefore, a series of qualitative case-studies provide good reasons to suspect that the extent of political violence and corruption in any society is likely to have a potential impact on gender equality in

elected office, by deterring women from running, yet attempts to establish systematic support for these claims encounters substantial challenges. To address this issue, this study draws upon cross-national and time-series data derived from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project (Release 8.0).¹² This project has generated an extensive series of political indices covering 201 states worldwide over an extended period of time, with annual observations extending from 1789 to 2017. V-Dem contains several measures relevant for this study. In particular, this data can be used to estimate whether the proportion of women candidates elected to the lower house of national parliaments around the world is generally observed to be lower in societies characterized by widespread political violence, intimidation, and threats (lead), and by the malpractices of pervasive corruption, patronage, and clientalism (silver), controlling for other societal and institutional conditions commonly associated with the proportion of women in parliament.

Political violence

The V-Dem dataset measures ‘**political killings**’ defined as *killings by the state or its agents without due process of law for the purpose of eliminating political opponents*. These acts are monitored if they are the result of deliberate use of lethal force by the police, security forces, prison officials, or other agents of the state (including paramilitary groups). Political killings are those practiced systematically which are typically incited and approved by top leaders of government. V-Dem country experts code their annual estimates of the frequency of such acts on a 0-5 scale, where a higher number is coded as more positive i.e. freedom from killing.

The measure has two main advantages over alternative indicators, such as those monitoring post-electoral violence against protestors, levels of civilian deaths from intercommunal riots, or interstate armed conflict. Firstly, the V-Dem measure focuses on political assassinations and thus taps into one of the most extreme forms of state repression against opponents involving highly-visible acts which violate basic human rights. Secondly, the measure is also clearly monitoring acts directed against opposition politicians at elite level, unlike more general measures of conflict which estimate general societal or inter-communal acts of violence. At the same time, this data provides a conservative estimate, however, since it reflects only one possible form of political violence. A variety of non-state actors may instigate politically-motivated killings and assassinations of women leaders, whether opposition parties, local warlords, drug cartels, dissident factions, individual gunmen, terrorists, or family members and marital spouses. Moreover, the V-Dem data does not disaggregate the characteristics and type of victims from violent acts, including their gender. The measure is

therefore a proxy indicator which may underestimate women's perceptions and experience of threats and violence.

Clientalism and corruption

V-Dem includes several measures of corruption. Many standard measures are fairly abstract, concerning general perceptions of corruption in the public sector, but these include many sorts of malfeasance, such as paying bribes to law enforcement officials or licensing bodies. The dataset includes a more specific measure of **legislative corruption**, which is more appropriate for the study, by asking “*Do members of the legislature abuse their position for financial gain?*” This includes any of the following: (a) accepting bribes, (b) helping to obtain government contracts for firms that the legislator (or his/her family/friends/political supporters) own, (c) doing favors for firms in exchange for the opportunity of employment after leaving the legislature, (d) stealing money from the state or from campaign donations for personal use. The expert evaluations are measured on a 5-point scale from 0 (Commonly) to 4 (Never).

Women's representation

To measure women's representation, this study uses the standard indicator reflecting the proportion of women elected to the lower (or only) house of the national legislature, monitored by the InterParliamentary Union and official parliamentary records.¹³ This provides the most reliable comparative data available on gender equality in elected office, although it does not monitor the percentage of men and women *candidates* (still less the pool of aspirants or activists), or women's representation in lower levels of elected or appointed offices.

The multivariate model controls for several standard factors most commonly used in the previous literature to explain the proportion of women in parliament (Paxton and Hughes 2016). This includes the major type of electoral system (coded as majoritarian (1), mixed (2), or proportional (3)), with more proportional systems expanding opportunities for women to gain elected office (Norris 2004). The models also include the use of gender quota laws (measured using a 4 point scale from none (0), weakly enforced (1), strongly enforced, (2) and reserved seats (4)), since this has also been found to matter for women's success in gaining office (Krook 2009). Given the steadily growing proportion of women in elected office over time, the models also include the year.

The analysis also controls for the effects of potentially confounding mediating variables associated with political violence and corruption. In particular, the distribution of political killing is likely to be heavily skewed towards certain types of regimes. The most extreme acts of repression by state actors against their political opponents are expected to be most common in many of the world's

autocracies while, by contrast, problems are expected to be far more infrequent, or non-existent, in liberal democracies. Other studies have included measures of Liberal Democracy in their models (Sung 2004, 2012), on the grounds that the correlation between corruption and women's representation is spurious, once models control for democracy. This can be problematic, however, since the standard measures of Liberal Democracy by V-Dem and by Freedom House also includes women's rights as part of their construction. According, instead, this study incorporated the V-Dem measure of Additive Polyarchy, providing a more minimalist notion of electoral democracy which does not include women's rights, as a further control.

Given the nature of the panel data (with the same countries over successive years), the multivariate models use OLS regressions of country-year, with estimates based on panel-corrected standard errors. This approach has been widely used when analyzing panel data (Beck and Katz 1995; Beck, Katz and Tucker 1998). All models were tested and confirmed to be free of problems of multicollinearity. Appendix A lists the core variables and coding practices.

III: Results and analysis

What is the link between non-gendered political killings, legislative corruption, and women's representation? Figures 1 and 2 illustrates the descriptive relationships. Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics for the selected indicators. Table 2 summarizes the results of the regression models, where all the selected variables proved significant.

[Table 1 and Table 2 about here]

Thus, most importantly, after including the controls, the results of the analysis in Table 2 confirms the first proposition, *more women are usually elected to parliament in countries with less political violence*. Overall, as Figure 1 shows, on average women are around 6.3 percent of members of parliament in countries with systematic political killings, but they are 10.6 per cent of parliamentarians in countries without any political killings, a substantial contrast. In addition, *the results of the analysis in Table 2 also confirms that more women are usually elected to parliament in countries with less legislative corruption*. As Figure 2 illustrates, women constitute around 3.9 percent of legislatures where corruption is common, but there are more than three times as many women (13.6 percent) in parliaments without any political corruption. This suggests that both of the core factors are significant predictors of women's representation, as the case-study evidence in previous reports has argued. Of these factors, if the descriptive means the standardized betas are compared, legislative corruption is more strongly

associated with the proportion of women in elected office rather than political killings.

[Figures 1 and 2 about here]

These correlations also remain significant, and in the predicted direction, after controlling for several other factors associated with gender equality in elected office. As many previous studies have found, more women are usually elected in more proportional rather than majoritarian electoral systems, and more succeed in contests with gender quota laws or reserved seats. The year is also important, not surprisingly with increasing numbers of women gaining office over time. Both the additive polyarchy score and the level of per capita GDP were also positively related to women's representation, as expected.

Robustness tests

To see whether the main relationships proved robust, the models were re-tested using the alternative indicators. This included using V-Dem's composite measure of the Corruption Index which includes measures of six distinct types of corruption that cover both different areas and levels of the polity realm, distinguishing between executive, legislative and judicial corruption. Within the executive realm, the measures also distinguish between corruption mostly pertaining to bribery and corruption due to embezzlement. V-Dem differentiate between corruption in the highest echelons of the executive (at the level of the rulers/cabinet) on the one hand, and in the public sector at large on the other. The measures thus tap into several distinguished types of corruption: both 'petty' and 'grand'; both bribery and theft; as well as corruption aimed at influencing law-making and that affecting implementation. To replicate the results for electoral violence, the models were also re-tested using V-Dem indicators measuring whether the election saw intimidation by the government. The model shown in Table 3 confirms that the key findings were replicated, suggesting that these were robust and not the product of the selected indices.

[Table 3 about here]

IV: Conclusions and discussion

In conclusion, the barriers to elected office which women face have been subject to extensive research over the years. Many factors, such as the type of electoral system and the use of gender quotas, have been widely confirmed in the comparative literature (Paxton and Hughes 2016). The challenges of electoral integrity open a relatively new research agenda which has been rapidly expanding in recent years (Norris 2013). Several international organizations report that both political violence and corruption are common malpractices which are important problems for human rights and standards of electoral integrity, as well as hurdles which have gendered effects

by deterring women from pursuing or gaining elected office. These arguments receive plausible support from personal testimony with women parliamentarians and studies of electoral violence in particular countries.

Drawing upon V-Dem data, with annual estimates covering all countries worldwide over time, this study analyzed systematic evidence to examine these arguments. The measures of political killings and legislative corruption which were selected for analysis have the advantage of being more tightly focused on the core concepts than general indicators, such as perceptions of corruption in society or data on incidents of civil or inter-state conflict. The results of the analysis in this study demonstrate that fewer women are usually elected to parliament in societies with greater political violence and political corruption, as theorized, even after controlling for several other long factors associated with the proportion of women in elected office, including the type of electoral system, the use of gender quotas, levels of polyarchy and economic development. The robustness tests, with alternative indicators, confirm the key findings.

The direction of causation in the cross-national time-series correlations remains open to interpretation, however, as there can be endogeneity in the relationship.

Thus, one potential social psychological explanation, as suggested by Dollar, Fisman and Gatti (2001), is that women tend to be more trustworthy and honest than men, and more risk averse, whether due to their learnt values or their prior predisposition. As a result, more women in parliament is likely to reduce incidents of political corruption and thereby benefit society more generally, as well as being an important goal for human rights and gender equality. Similarly, the 'women and peace' thesis in international relations, drawing upon evolutionary biology and social psychology, suggests that women and men in many Western societies differ in their attitudes towards international conflict, the deployment of armed force, and war (Gizelis 2018). From this perspective, women in office are likely to be more peace-oriented than men. In this argument, the inclusion of more women in parliament, as well as in peace-building transitional assemblies and negotiated settlements, is thought likely to reduce violent conflict and promote peace.

Alternatively, however, social psychological claims about women's integrity and pacifism may reflect long-standing sex stereotypes, more than solid evidence. The literature on political recruitment, elections and party politics suggests that the direction of causation in this complex relationship is likely to be reversed, so that women are disadvantaged or deterred in running for legislative office in societies where electoral politics is entangled with problems of corruption and violence. It is well established that women usually

have less access to resources of personal income and wealth, both important assets to sustain candidates in pursuit of legislative careers. Where clientelistic practices prevail, informal access to social and business networks is an important asset in gaining patronage appointments, including nominations for elected office (Stokes 2009). As Bjarngard (2013) argues, informal norms and old boy networks, common in cultures characterized by patronage politics, serve to reinforce male predominance in elected office as the status quo, thereby excluding outsiders, including women unless they are admitted to the patronage network, such as through family connections.

At the same time, although reflecting long-standing historical problems, the research agenda on the links connecting violence and corruption to political recruitment has only started to include a gendered perspective within the last decade. Much further exploration is therefore needed to understand more fully the underlying processes involved in these relationships. In particular, statistics measuring both experience and perceptions of political corruption and political violence in each society ideally need to be disaggregated by gender, among ordinary citizens, political activists, party workers, journalists, legislative candidates, and elected officials (Ballington 2018). It is important to gather gender-sensitive data which would help us to advance our knowledge about women and men's experiences and perceptions of political violence and corruption (Bjarngard 2018). Understanding electoral malpractices serves to expand the conventional research agenda concerning the multiple barriers which limit women's empowerment, as well as throwing light on important issues of major concern for multiple policymakers and stakeholders. Understanding these issues is important both for protecting electoral integrity and democratic governance, and also for furthering women's rights and gender equality in elected office.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Name	Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
v2lgfemleg	Lower chamber female legislators	12,273	0	63.8	7.5678	9.83091
v2elparlel	Lower chamber electoral system	2,751	0	3	0.6452	0.75214
v2lgquge	Lower chamber gender quota	17,391	0	4	0.1636	0.71506
v2clkill_osp	Freedom from political killings	17,402	0.03	3.98	2.2294	1.17776
v2lgerpt_osp	Legislature corrupt activities	12,746	0.13	3.89	2.0806	0.91787
year	Year	29,415	1789	2017	1928.48	61.882
v2x_api	Additive polyarchy index	16,857	0.02	0.98	0.4651	0.30676
Valid N (listwise)		2,255				

Source: Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Release 8.0

Table 2: Predictors of women's representation worldwide

Var name	Variable	B	PCSE	Beta	Sig.
Key indices					
v2clkill_osp	Political killings	-0.56	0.23	-0.06	0.017
v2lgcrrpt_osp	Legislative corruption	-3.04	0.20	-0.29	0.000
Controls					
v2elparlel	Lower chamber electoral system	1.43	0.18	0.13	0.000
v2lgquge	Lower chamber gender quota	2.64	0.19	0.22	0.000
year	Year	0.19	0.01	0.57	0.000
v2x_api	Additive polyarchy index	6.89	1.09	0.16	0.000
e-migdppcin	GDP per capita (logged)	1.06	0.20	0.11	0.000
	(Constant)	-377.68	11.57		0.000
	Adjusted R ²	0.51			
	N. observations (country-years)	2,241			

Note: OLS Regression models with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE). Dependent Variable: v2lgfemleg (% of female legislators in the lower (or only) chamber of the national parliament).

Source: Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Release 8.0

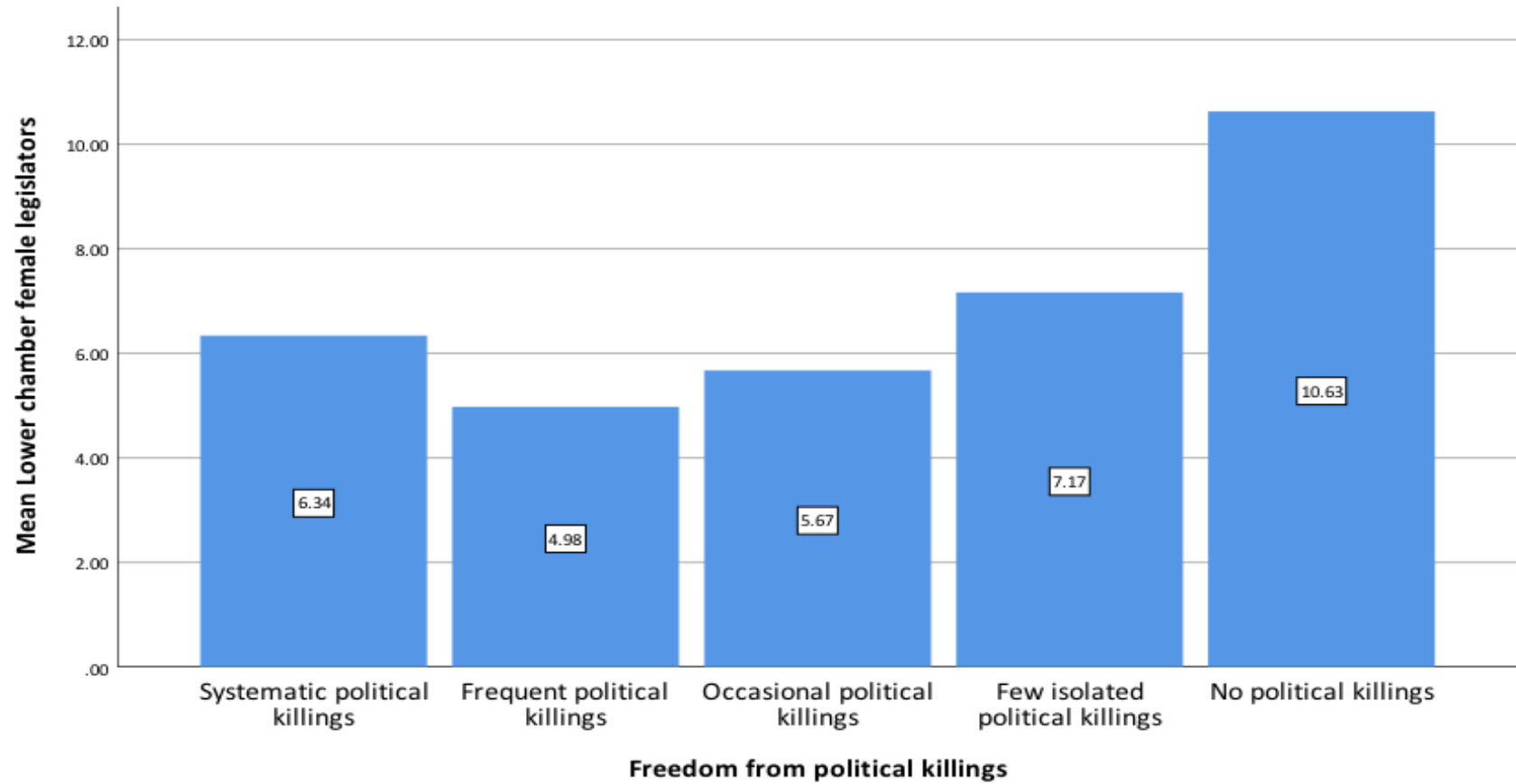
Table 3: Predictors of women's representation worldwide

Var name	Variable	B	PCSE	Beta	Sig.
Key indices					
V2elintim_osp	State electoral intimidation	-2.82	.269	-.281	0.000
V2x_corr	Political corruption index	-11.659	.765	-.345	0.000
Controls					
v2elparlel	Lower chamber electoral system	1.57	0.18	0.14	0.000
v2lgquge	Lower chamber gender quota	2.63	0.19	0.22	0.000
year	Year	0.20	0.01	0.62	0.000
v2x_api	Additive polyarchy index	1.64	1.22	0.39	N/s
e-migdppcin	GDP per capita (logged)	.976	.209	0.10	0.000
	(Constant)	-371.60	11.93		0.000
	Adjusted R ²	0.52			
	N. observations (country-years)	2,242			

Note: OLS Regression models with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE). Dependent Variable: v2lgfemleg (% of female legislators in the lower (or only) chamber of the national parliament).

Source: Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Release 8.0

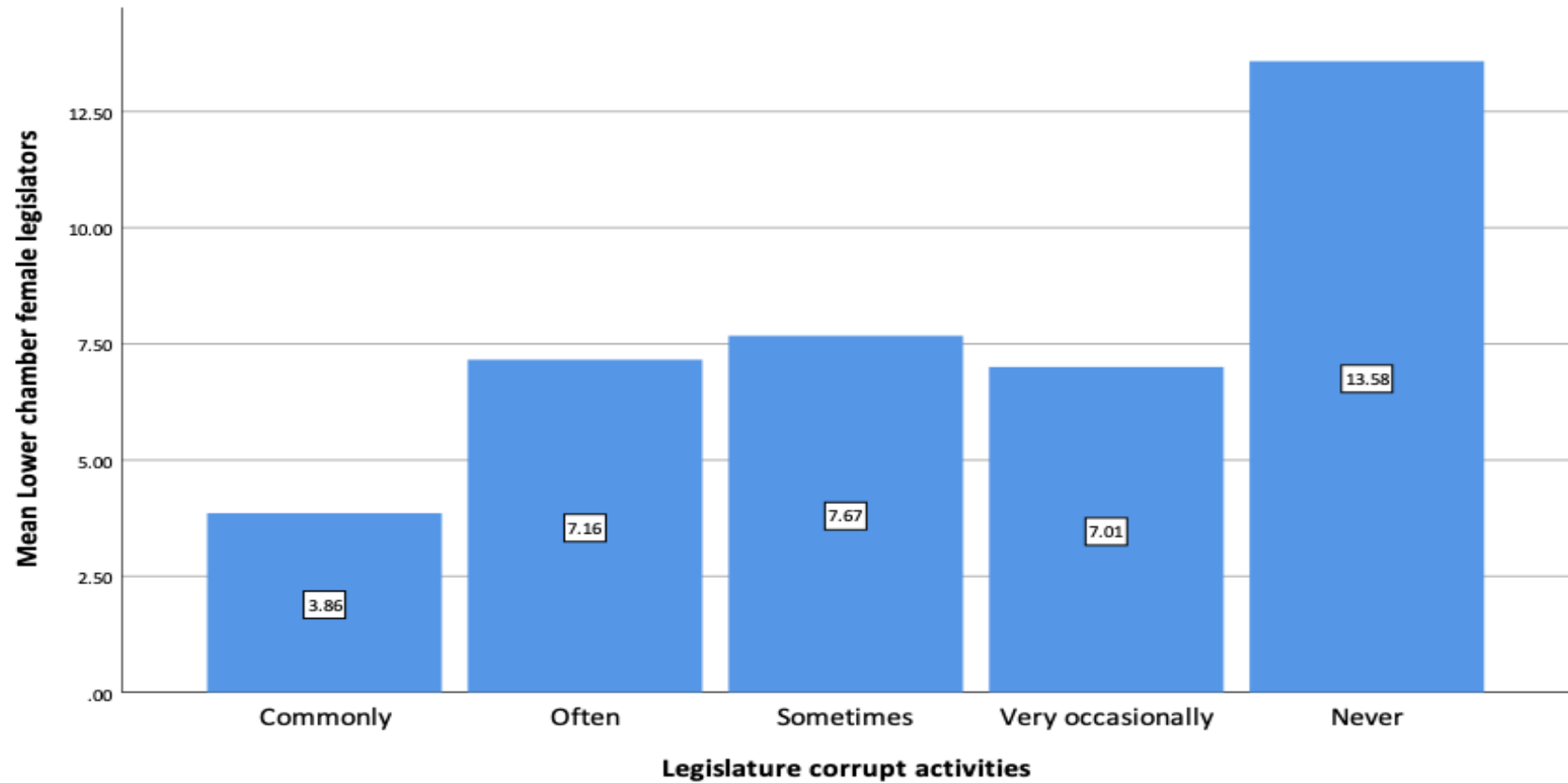
Figure 1: Political killings and women’s representation



Note: Political killings are measured as acts by the state or its agents without due process of law for the purpose of eliminating political opponents. (v2ckill) See Appendix A.

Source: Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Release 8.0

Figure 2: Legislative corruption and women’s representation



Note: Legislative corruption is measured by annual estimates: “How often do members of the legislature abuse their position for financial gain?”. See Appendix A.

Source: Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Release 8.0

Appendix A: Variables and their coding

Variable	Description	Coding
v2clkill_osp	Political killings. Political killings are killings by the state or its agents without due process of law for the purpose of eliminating political opponents. These killings are the result of deliberate use of lethal force by the police, security forces, prison officials, or other agents of the state (including paramilitary groups).	Recoded to a 0-4 scale. 4: Political killings are practiced systematically, and they are typically incited and approved by top leaders of government. 3: Political killings are practiced frequently and top leaders of government are not actively working to prevent them. 2: Political killings are practiced occasionally but they are typically not incited and approved by top leaders of government. 1: Political killings are practiced in a few isolated cases, but they are not incited or approved by top leaders of government. 0: Political killings are non-existent.
v2lgcrrpt_osp	Legislative corruption. “Do members of the legislature abuse their position for financial gain?” This includes any of the following: (a) accepting bribes, (b) helping to obtain government contracts for firms that the legislator (or his/her family/friends/political supporters) own, (c) doing favors for firms in exchange for the opportunity of employment after leaving the legislature, (d) stealing money from the state or from campaign donations for personal use.	The expert evaluations are measured on a 5-point scale from 0 (Never) to 4 (Commonly).
V2elintim_osp	Election government intimidation. “In this national election, were opposition candidates/ parties/ campaign workers subjected to repression, intimidation, violence, or harassment by the government, the ruling party, or their agents?”	Recoded scale from 0 (None) to 4 (Yes)
V2x_corr	Political corruption index “How pervasive is political corruption?”	The Index measures six distinct types of corruption that cover both different areas and levels of the polity realm, distinguishing between executive, legislative and judicial corruption. It ranges from 0 (low) to 1 (high) corruption
Additive polyarchy index (v2x_api)	To what extent is the electoral principle of democracy achieved? The electoral principle of democracy seeks to achieve responsiveness and accountability between leaders and citizens through the mechanism of competitive elections. This is presumed to be achieved when suffrage is extensive; political and civil society organizations can operate freely; elections are clean and not marred by fraud or systematic irregularities; and the chief	The index is operationalized by taking the weighted average of the indices measuring freedom of association (thick) (v2x_frassoc_thick), clean elections (v2xel_frefair), freedom of expression (v2x_freexp_thick), elected executive (v2x_elecoeff), and suffrage (v2x_suffr). The weights are constructed so as to sum to 1 and weigh elected executive and suffrage half as much as the other three, respectively. A higher score reflects greater polyarchy.

	executive of a country is selected (directly or indirectly) through elections.	
v2lgefemleg	% of female legislators in the Lower chamber of the national parliament.	%
v2elpar1el	Electoral system for the lower house of the national parliament	1 Majoritarian, 2 Mixed, 3 Proportional representation
v2lgquge	Gender quota law	0 None, 1 Strongly enforced, 2 Weakly enforced, 3 Reserved seats
year	Year	Year
e-migdppcln	GDP per capita, logged base 10 (The Maddison Project Database)	US\$

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⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-44671462>

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