

World Culture, Uncoupling, Institutional Logics, and Recoupling: Practices and Self-Identification as Institutional Microfoundations of Political Violence¹

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This study proposes a micro-institutional theory of political violence, according to which citizens' participation in political violence is partially an outcome of tight coupling of persons' practices and self-identifications with institutional logics opposed to dominant logics associated with world culture, such as the nation-state and gender equality. The study focuses on two types of institutional carriers through which persons adopt institutional logics: routine practices and self-identifications associated with three institutional logics: the familial, the ethnic, and the religious logics. Using a 15-country survey data from early twenty-first-century sub-Saharan Africa, the study finds evidence in support of the theory. Reported participation in political violence is associated with practices and self-identifications uncoupled from dominant world-culture logics but tightly coupled with the patriarchal familial logic, with an oppositional ethnic logic, and with a politicized oppositional religious logic.

KEY WORDS: institutional logics; microfoundations; political violence; uncoupling and recoupling; world culture.

INTRODUCTION

Institutionalists increasingly recognize that persons are embedded in complex institutional environments involving multiple and competing logics operating at multiple levels and that institutional processes influence political behavior, including violence (Clemens and Cook 1999; Friedland and Alford 1991; Hironaka 2005; Lizardo 2006; Meyer et al. 1997; Olzak and Tsutsui 1998; Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012; Wimmer 2013). This study wedds several strands of institutional thinking (global institutionalism, the institutional logics perspective, work on boundary making, and institutional microfoundations approaches). The goal is to begin to understand the institutional microfoundations (cf. Hallett 2010; Zucker 1977) of political violence. The hypothesis is that adoption of routine practices and

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self-identifications (cf. Scott 2008) tightly coupled with institutional logics (Thornton et al. 2012) that compete with dominant institutional logics pertaining to world culture (Meyer et al. 1997) increases the likelihood of political conflict and thus the likelihood of participation in political violence (cf. Hallett 2010; Hironaka 2005; Lizardo 2006; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Olzak and Tsutsui 1998). Such institutional logics include the patriarchal-familial, the ethnic, and the politicized religious logics (cf. Thornton et al. 2012; Wimmer 2013).

CITIZENS' ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Political violence refers to the use of physical force against or in defense of a political or cultural authority transcending any individual. The nation-state, ethnic groups, and religions are some of the most common authorities in defense of or against which political violence takes place. As simultaneously a physical and social phenomenon, political violence is a product of complex processes involving the acquisition of two types of competences. First, the use of physical force to inflict damage on people (or property) is uncommon because people try to avoid associated tensions (Collins 2009; Martin 2009). Violence thus requires the acquisition of unique bodily competences consisting of desensitization to the tensions and of readiness to practice acquired violent behavioral templates in conflict situations. Violence is associated with “violence specialists” (Collins 2009; Tilly 2003). Militarized training (within state security agencies) is one path toward becoming a “violence specialist” (Collins 2009; Martin 2009). There are, however, other paths as well, such as participation in combat and contact sports (Kreager 2007; Tilly 2003), extensive experience of clashing with security forces during or as a response to protests (della Porta 1988; White 1993), and so forth. Once acquired, physical competences or behavioral templates are transposable across institutional domains (e.g., from sports to politics, etc.) (cf. Bourdieu 2000; Kreager 2007; Sewell 1992; Tilly 2003). Second, to be classified as political, violence must be committed in the name of a social entity involving a salient moral or institutional category defining the boundaries of a legitimate political or cultural authority, such as a notion of just violence, an ethnic group, or a religion worth fighting for, and so on (cf. Juergensmeyer 2003; Oberschall 2000; Wimmer 2013).

A recent census of violent conflicts around the world shows that at the turn of the century violence is primarily an intrastate affair increasingly involving nonstate actors as one or all sides of conflicts (Table I). The vast majority of this new form of political violence occurs in Africa. Given the changing nature of political violence and its geographical distribution, understanding citizens' violent participation, particularly on the African continent, warrants attention.³

MULTILEVEL INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES

Contemporary societies can be thought of as interinstitutional systems in which several major logics (family, community, religion, state, profession, market,

³ The continuous role of the state in perpetrating violence is beyond the scope of this article.

Table I. Geographical Distribution of Conflicts Resulting in at Least 25 Deaths per Year by Type, Counted Yearly for the Period 1999–2003

| Location | Armed conflicts ¹ / <i>proportion within type</i> | | Nonstate conflicts ² / <i>proportion within type</i> | | One-sided violence ³ / <i>proportion within type</i> | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------|--|------|--|------|
| Africa | 73 | 0.41 | 154 | 0.8 | 95 | 0.5 |
| Asia | 76 | 0.42 | 18 | 0.09 | 63 | 0.33 |
| Europe ⁴ | 8 | 0.04 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0.04 |
| Middle East ⁵ | 14 | 0.08 | 6 | 0.03 | 13 | 0.07 |
| North and South America ⁶ | 9 | 0.05 | 15 | 0.08 | 12 | 0.06 |
| Total | 180 | 1.00 | 193 | 1.00 | 190 | 1.00 |
| of these international | 9 | 0.05 | 2 | 0.01 | 21 | 0.11 |

¹Armed conflict is “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths” (UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Version 4—2014).

²Nonstate conflict is “the use of armed force between two organized armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year” (UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset Version 2.5—2014).

³“One-sided violence is the use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organized group against civilians which results in at least 25 deaths. Extrajudicial killings in custody are excluded” (UCDP One-Sided Violence Dataset Version 1.4 2014).

⁴Conflicts occurred in Macedonia, Russia, and Serbia.

⁵Conflicts occurred in Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

⁶Conflicts occurred in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, and the United States.

corporation) coexist and organize semiautonomous institutional orders (Thornton et al. 2012). In countries strongly tied to a global cultural framework referred to as *world culture*,⁴ this coexistence is increasingly characterized by rationalization driven by the state and the professional logics leading to structural isomorphism but also to decoupling (Meyer et al. 1997). In such contexts, the coexistence of logics tends to remain peaceful (cf. Meyer and Rowan 1977; Olzak and Tsutsui 1998). Global institutional processes may lead to conflict and violence too. Violence-inducing institutional conditions at the societal level include weaker ties to the world polity (Olzak and Tsutsui 1998), backlash against dominant cultural models (Lizardo 2006), and weakness of the state logic (Hironaka 2005). Boundary-making processes at the group level associated with the community logic are occasionally linked to violence as well (Wimmer 2013).

Still, the microlevel institutional mechanisms associated with political violence remain unspecified. Following Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) insight that loose coupling of institutional mandates and practices is a conflict-avoidance mechanism, I propose that (1) uncoupling of dominant world-culture logics (such as state) and subordinate logics (such as family, ethnicity, and religion) combined with (2) tight coupling of the subordinate institutional logics with practices and self-identifications at the level of the person would (3) act as a ceremonial challenge to the dominant logics and (4) create conflict likely to occasionally escalate into violence.

⁴ *World culture* is an analytical category referring to a historically developed global cultural framework that increasingly organizes thought and action through a set of dominant models.

SUBORDINATE INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS TURNED OPPOSITIONAL

Conflict studies identify a mixture of public and private motivations affecting engagement in political violence (della Porta 1988; Gould 1999; Kalyvas 2006; Reif 1986; White 1993). At first sight this mixture of sources of political violence may appear messy. The institutional logics perspective offers a useful approach to untangling these multiple effects. Persons are embedded in a relatively small set of institutions in their lifetime (Thornton et al. 2012) and we can disaggregate the separate effects of each. Institutional contexts represent the structural conditions for adoption of institutional logics through development of institutional carriers (such as routine practices and identifications) (Scott 2008), which can amount to the physical and social competences necessary for participation in political violence discussed above (cf. Fligstein 2001). The patriarchal family, ethnic groupings, and religious affiliations, I contend, are three of the most important subordinate institutions that can oppose dominant world-culture institutions and that therefore matter for understanding participation in political violence. While ethnicity and religion figure prominently in recent work on political violence (e.g., Appleby 1999; Juergensmeyer 2003; Oberschall 2000; Wimmer 2013), the family has been mostly ignored (but see della Porta 1988; Goodwin 1997; Gould 1999; Kalyvas 2006; Reif 1986; White 1993). This study is the first large-N evaluation of the role that these three institutions play in affecting the probability of persons to participate in political violence via microlevel institutional mechanisms of developing routine practices and self-identifications.

Family and Gender

The family is often the earliest and the primary institution in which people are socialized as members of society. Criminologists have long understood that families play important roles in socializing individuals into delinquent behavior (e.g., Pratt et al. 2010). When it comes to political violence, however, the role of the family is considered only rarely (exceptions include della Porta 1988; Goodwin 1997; Gould 1999; Kalyvas 2006; Reif 1986; Viterna 2006; White 1993). Only gender scholars have insisted on a systematic relationship between patriarchy and militarism (e.g., Enloe 2000; Goldstein 2001). According to these accounts, violent masculinities serve the war system by supplying fighters while docile femininities provide support personnel, mothers, wives, sex workers, and so on. Cross-national studies find support, at the aggregate level, for an association between women's subordinate position in society and various forms of political violence, including interstate hostilities, intrastate conflict, and human rights violations (Caprioli 2005; Hudson et al. 2009; Melander 2005). What is implied in such work is an assumed division of violent labor along gender lines. Women, however, also participate in collective violence (e.g., Reif 1986; Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Viterna 2006). A specification of microlevel institutional mechanisms, namely the adoption of carriers (practices and self-identifications) coupled with oppositional institutions, can explain both the aggregate findings and the deviations from the gender norms identified by theorists

interested in gender and militarism. Prevalence of patriarchal gender-role expectations as regard political violence at the societal level can explain the observed high levels of aggregate violence and low levels of women's engagement in violence. On the other hand, availability, at the microlevel, of behavioral templates and identifications conducive to violence regardless of gender can explain why some women end up participating in violent conflicts.

The family context facilitates institutional socialization conducive to political violence in two ways, through providing behavioral templates for responding to conflict situations and through politicizing gender norms and practices. First, exposure to and practice of violence in the family can desensitize people to violence and facilitate the development of relevant physical competences, or violent behavioral templates. Once developed in the family context, these embodied institutional competences can be enacted in conflict situations, regardless of the domain in which the conflict occurs (cf. Hudson et al. 2009). I expect, therefore,

Hypothesis 1: Experience of violence in the family will increase the likelihood of participating in political violence.

Second, militant politicization of gender can be a backlash against the spread of norms and laws promoting equal gender rights associated with world culture (Cockburn 1991; Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997). Opponents of equal gender rights view them as an infringement on established norms and culture and may be willing to occasionally take up arms against people or institutions associated with such transgressions (e.g., Juergensmeyer 2003). The institutional mechanism leading to violence in this case is complex and involves practical learning of what constitutes "tradition" in terms of embodied gendered social practices (cf. Mahmood 2001); normative and cognitive boundary making differentiating "tradition" from world culture experienced as a Western imposition (cf. Juergensmeyer 2003; Lizardo 2006; Wimmer 2013); and adoption of violent "repertoires" (della Porta 1988; Tilly 2003) available to defend "tradition," including violent behavioral templates, as discussed above. In democratizing contexts, where world-culture models supporting gender equality increasingly challenge local family and gender practices, heightened competition among institutional logics can lead to militant politicization of gender and result in occasional violence. I expect, therefore,

Hypothesis 2: Support for "traditional"/patriarchal gender norms and practices will increase the likelihood of participating in political violence.

Ethnicity

"Ethnic" divisions are a common explanatory factor in aggregate cross-national and cross-county (within the United States) studies of conflict (e.g., Dixon 2009; McVeigh 2006) despite the existence of work questioning this conventional wisdom (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Hironaka 2005). Ethnic dominance and ethnic heterogeneity are found to increase the likelihood of conflict, whereas ethnic fractionalization decreases it (Dixon 2009; McVeigh 2006). The effect of ethnicity, however, is not uniform. Politics based on "ethnicity" is only the default politics in

countries with weak political institutions (Hironaka 2005; but see McVeigh 2006). Furthermore, peripheral countries with strong ties to the world polity are less likely to experience violent ethnic conflict than peripheral countries without such ties (Olzak and Tsutsui 1998). While aggregate work has been important for demonstrating that ethnicity matters for conflict, it has not been able to show *how* it matters at the level of the person.

Qualitative work on ethnicity and political violence has focused on the inter- and intragroup processes of boundary making and identity construction that may underlie political violence (e.g., Oberschall 2000; Varshney 2001; Wimmer 2013). Political violence, according to this line of work, is associated with exaggerating group differences, devaluing members of the out-groups, and limiting intergroup ties. Ethnic competition has been proposed as a cause for ethnic conflict (Olzak 1992). However, to what extent these findings are generalizable and what explains individual differences in participation in political violence within the same group is not evident.

Personal experiences related to “ethnic” institutions differ contributing to various levels of ethnic microinstitutionalization (cf. Brubaker 2004), which I argue constitutes one of the factors influencing participation or nonparticipation in political violence. While ethnic boundary making may be a subtype of general boundary-making processes that include a range of possible groupings varying across place and time challenging primordialist conceptions of ethnicity and identity more broadly (Wimmer 2013), persons experience ethnicity as real. Ethnic belonging in the contemporary world is often counterposed to national belonging associated with nation-states (cf. Hironaka 2005; Olzak and Tsutsui 1998; Wimmer 2013). Ethnicity can thus act as an institutional logic competing with the nation-state logic, which is one of the most firmly established world-culture institutional developments (Meyer et al. 1997). “Ethnic” practices that challenge nation-state laws and norms, such as group favoritism and nepotism, are illegitimate according to the nation-state logic and can provoke conflict potentially leading to violence. Adoption of hostile ethnic self-identifications that are a direct affront to existing nation-states can also potentially lead to violence. I argue, therefore, that

Hypothesis 3: Experiences of ethnic group favoritism will increase the likelihood of participating in political violence.

Hypothesis 4: Adoption of ethnic self-identifications in opposition to national identities and boundaries will increase the likelihood of participating in political violence.

Religion

There is much less scholarly consensus on the role of religion as regard political violence. Theorists argue that religion can be a source of both violence and peace (e.g., Appleby 1999). All major religious traditions can be reinterpreted to justify violence (Juergensmeyer 2003). Yet, religion is often a primary source of solidarity and stability (Durkheim 2001; Weber 2001). Aggregate studies are similarly inconclusive. Religious heterogeneity is associated with more crime and more discontent

in U.S. counties (McVeigh 2006). Religious fractionalization, however, decreases the likelihood of civil war onset (Dixon 2009). The role of religion in political violence thus remains a puzzle.

I argue that distinguishing between community-building religious practices that signal peaceful coexistence with the state logic on one hand and politicized religious self-identifications challenging the state on the other can shed light on the ambiguous role of religion in political violence and in its avoidance. When religion is politicized and becomes a component of identity-based (sometimes added to ethnic) group boundaries in opposition to a nation-state, it is likely to facilitate violent conflict (cf. Fox 2004; Wimmer 2013). By contrast, when religion relates to mainstream religious practices serving as foundation of community solidarity and respecting the nation-state principles, it is likely to have a pacifying effect. Thus, I expect

Hypothesis 5: Active engagement in religious practices will decrease the likelihood of participating in political violence.

Hypothesis 6: Adoption of religious self-identifications in opposition to the nation-state logic will increase the likelihood of participating in political violence.

METHOD

Historical Context

An appropriate context for testing the microinstitutional theory of political violence I propose would be a region where the competition between the dominant and the oppositional institutional logics discussed above is salient at the societal level. This allows for observing institutional variation at the level of the person. At the same time, an appropriate context would also comprise a sizable portion of the population with experience of political violence where acknowledging such experience would not be a taboo. Because of its recent history of colonialism and postcolonial civil wars as well as because of significant efforts to build stable and peaceful democracies, sub-Saharan Africa is an unfortunate ideal context for this study.

Sub-Saharan Africa has been one of the most conflict-torn regions of the world. Thirty-four civil wars occurred there in the second half of the twentieth century (Fearon and Laitin 2003). At the turn of the century, most of the nonstate violence took place on the African continent as well (Table I). In the five-year period preceding the second round of the Afrobarometer, data from which is used in this study, the 15 countries surveyed experienced a total of 81 conflicts (counted yearly) resulting in at least 25 deaths per year; 8 of these involved a state; 57 involved nonstate dyads only; and 16 were one-sided violence involving a state or a nonstate armed force targeting civilians (UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset 2014; UCDP One-sided Violence Dataset 2014; UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset 2014).

At the same time, world-culture models of the state, human and gender rights, and so forth, appear to be well institutionalized in the region. Eight of the 15 countries included in the study were classified as free or consolidated democracies by the

Freedom House with a combined political rights and civil liberties scores under 3⁵ in 2003. The other seven countries were classified as partly free or semiconsolidated or transitional democracies with a score under 5.5. Furthermore, an average of 186 transnational social movement organizations had a local branch in each of the 15 Afrobarometer countries in 2000 (Smith and Wiest 2012). Of these, an average of 24 organizations per country were associated with the women's movement. As nation-states, international nongovernmental organizations, and social movements in particular, are some of the most important conduits of world culture (Boli and Thomas 1997; Meyer et al. 1997), the sub-Saharan African region appears to be well exposed to its influences despite its peripheral position in the world polity (cf. Beckfield 2003).

Data

The analysis is based on data from the second round of the Afrobarometer.⁶ The Afrobarometer is a large-scale cross-sectional survey representing the opinions of more than 20,000 respondents from 15⁷ democratizing countries in sub-Saharan Africa for the period 2003–2004. These include Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Sample sizes are of about 1,200 or 2,400 (for larger and more stratified countries) individuals for each country. Responses are collected in face-to-face interviews conducted by trained interviewers in the respondent's chosen language. The Afrobarometer's response rates (between 60% and 98%) meet or exceed international standards (Afrobarometer n.d.). Probability samples are reported to represent an accurate cross-section of the voting age population in each country (Afrobarometer n.d.). Samples are stratified to ensure that all important demographic segments of the population are represented (regional followed by urban/rural stratification). Random selection is used at every stage of sampling (PSU, household, individual) (Afrobarometer n.d.). Closed-ended survey questions are considered an appropriate approach for accessing the intuitive practical consciousness because they involve a quick and automatic response and thus approximate the practical tasks of dealing with real-life situations (Vaisey 2009).

Outcome Variable

The outcome variable is based on a question probing whether respondents have “*used force or violence for a political cause in the past year,*” which about 5% of respondents answered with “yes” and about 10% of respondents answered with “no, but would do [it] if I had the chance.” This question can refer to a number of actions in which individuals may have taken part, including but not limited to rioting, electoral violence, and potentially even terrorism or insurgencies. This variable

⁵ The Freedom House uses a reversed coding system, according to which a score of 1 is given to the most democratic regimes and a score of 7 to the most authoritarian regimes.

⁶ This particular round was selected because of the availability of data on the outcome variable.

⁷ Round II of the Afrobarometer was administered in 16 countries. Zimbabwe respondents were excluded because several of the questions of interest to this study were not asked there.

is categorical and takes the value of 1 if respondents report that “yes, [I have used force or violence for a political cause],” the value of 2 if the respondents answer with “no, but would do [it] if I had the chance,” and 0 otherwise. The first category refers to past violent behavior, while the second category refers to willingness or projected future violent behavior. The political violence literature occasionally treats such categories as analogous (e.g., Chapman 2008). This, however, may present a problem. According to scholars studying protest participation, willingness to participate and actual participation are different phenomena influenced by different factors (Klandermans 1997). I therefore consider both categories. The distinction between admitting participation in political violence and admitting willingness to participate can shed light on the potentially different processes underlying these two phenomena.⁸

Main Predictors

Descriptive statistics for all model variables are summarized in Table II. I include three dichotomous indicators pertaining to the microinstitutionalization of the patriarchal family logic. A predictor reflecting personal *experience with violence in the family* relates to Hypothesis 1 and is coded 1 to indicate violent family practices serving as foundations of violent behavioral templates and 0 otherwise. Two predictors relate to Hypothesis 2 and reflect self-identification with the patriarchal logic through support for patriarchal norms and practices. The variable *domestic violence justifiable* is coded 1 to indicate that the respondent believes a married man has the right to beat his wife and children if they misbehave and 0 otherwise. The indicator *women should be subject to traditional law* is coded 1 if the respondent agreed that women have always been subject to traditional laws and customs and should remain so as opposed to having equal rights and receiving the same treatment as men do and 0 otherwise.

Two dichotomous predictors relate to the microinstitutionalization of the oppositional ethnicity logic. The variable *expect favoritism toward group and family* is coded 1 if the respondent agreed that, once in office, leaders are obliged to help their own kin or ethnic group as opposed to treating everyone as equal under the law and 0 otherwise. This factor relates to Hypothesis 3 and captures routine practices related to the opposition between the nation and subnational groupings. The indicator *ethnicity more important than nation* is coded 1 if the respondent felt more strongly attached to her language/tribe/ethnic group than to the nation and 0 otherwise. It relates to Hypothesis 4 and reflects adoption of self-identifications grouped under the broad ethnicity category and associated with opposition to the nation-state.

The last two factors pertain to the microinstitutionalization of the religious logic. The binary variable *active religious practice* is coded 1 if the respondent reported being an active member or a leader of a religious group and 0 otherwise. It relates to Hypothesis 5. The dichotomous predictor *religion more important than*

⁸ Analyses are conducted with the statistical software Stata 12. A multinomial logistic regression (via the *mlogit* command) is used to estimate the effects of predictor variables for the categorical outcome variable, combined with survey data procedures (the *svy*-series of commands). Predicted probabilities are estimated via the *margins* postestimation command.

Table II. Descriptive Statistics for All Model Variables

| Variable | # Obs. | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min. | Max. |
|---|--------|-------|-----------|------|------|
| Political violence | 24,248 | .25 | .62 | 0 | 2 |
| Experience violence in the family | 24,248 | .21 | .41 | 0 | 1 |
| Domestic violence justifiable | 24,248 | .29 | .45 | 0 | 1 |
| Women should be subject to traditional law | 24,248 | .29 | .46 | 0 | 1 |
| Expect favoritism toward group and family | 24,248 | .23 | .42 | 0 | 1 |
| Ethnicity more important than nation | 24,248 | .09 | .29 | 0 | 1 |
| Active religious practice | 24,248 | .53 | .5 | 0 | 1 |
| Religion more important than nation | 24,248 | .08 | .28 | 0 | 1 |
| TV | 24,248 | .28 | .44 | 0 | 1 |
| Education | 24,214 | 3.27 | 1.98 | 0 | 9 |
| Active in a party | 24,248 | .29 | .46 | 0 | 1 |
| Active in a union | 24,248 | .13 | .34 | 0 | 1 |
| Discuss politics | 24,248 | .65 | .48 | 0 | 1 |
| Protest | 24,248 | .16 | .37 | 0 | 1 |
| Can't make elected officials listen | 24,248 | .14 | .34 | 0 | 1 |
| Trust government institutions | 21,959 | 1.46 | .77 | 0 | 3 |
| Relative deprivation (compared to a year ago) | 24,248 | .31 | .46 | 0 | 1 |
| Poverty | 23,816 | 1.22 | .86 | 0 | 4 |
| Unemployed looking for a job | 24,248 | .28 | .45 | 0 | 1 |
| Unemployed not looking for a job | 24,248 | .36 | .48 | 0 | 1 |
| Age | 24,248 | 35.57 | 14.53 | 18 | 105 |
| Student | 24,248 | .08 | .27 | 0 | 1 |
| Female | 24,248 | .46 | .5 | 0 | 1 |
| Botswana | 24,248 | .05 | .22 | 0 | 1 |
| Cape Verde | 24,248 | .06 | .23 | 0 | 1 |
| Ghana | 24,248 | .05 | .21 | 0 | 1 |
| Kenya | 24,248 | .11 | .31 | 0 | 1 |
| Lesotho | 24,248 | .05 | .22 | 0 | 1 |
| Malawi | 24,248 | .05 | .22 | 0 | 1 |
| Mali | 24,248 | .06 | .23 | 0 | 1 |
| Mozambique | 24,248 | .05 | .21 | 0 | 1 |
| Namibia | 24,248 | .06 | .23 | 0 | 1 |
| Nigeria | 24,248 | .12 | .32 | 0 | 1 |
| Senegal | 24,248 | .05 | .22 | 0 | 1 |
| South Africa | 24,248 | .1 | .3 | 0 | 1 |
| Tanzania | 24,248 | .05 | .22 | 0 | 1 |
| Uganda | 24,248 | .1 | .3 | 0 | 1 |
| Zambia | 24,248 | .06 | .23 | 0 | 1 |

nation is coded 1 if the respondent felt more strongly attached to her religion than to the nation and 0 otherwise. It relates to Hypothesis 6 and reflects adoption of politicized religious self-identifications in opposition to the nation-state.

Other Predictors

Political participation studies stress the importance of politically relevant knowledge for developing political capacity to engage in political action. I include two indicators of political knowledge: a binary indicator that equals 1 when the respondent reported watching *TV* on a daily basis and 0 otherwise, as the media has been shown to facilitate the diffusion of violence (Myers 2000); and an *educational attainment* scale (Sageman 2004), coded as follows: 1 = informal schooling,

2 = some primary schooling, 3 = primary school completed, 4 = some secondary school/high school, 5 = secondary school completed, 6 = postsecondary qualifications, not university, 7 = some university/college, 8 = university/college completed, 9 = postgraduate, 0 otherwise.

Political action is usually associated with political organizations. Organizations mobilize members, facilitate the development of political competences, and exercise social pressures on their members to act (della Porta 1988; Finkel and Muller 1998; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Klandermans 1997; Reif 1986; Viterna 2006). I include two dichotomous indicators of political affiliations. The first one equals 1 when the respondent reported being *active in a political party* and 0 otherwise. The second one is coded 1 if the respondent claimed being *active in a union* and 0 otherwise.

Action is often viewed as an effect of the social environment (Swidler 2001) or as a product of social interactions (Collins 2009). To adjust for environmental effects influencing participation in political violence, I include a binary variable coded 1 when the respondent reported *discussing politics* with friends and neighbors and 0 otherwise. This indicator reflects the presence of politicized personal network ties (della Porta 1988). To capture the effect of volatile interactions, I use a dichotomous predictor that equals 1 if the respondent reported participation in *protest* and 0 otherwise, because repressed protest sometimes escalates into violence (della Porta 1988; White 1993).

Political grievances are another set of factors that can lead to violence (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). I include two indicators of political grievances related to a lack of access to the political process and a lack of trust toward the government. A binary variable equals 1 if the respondent agreed with the statement “*I can't make elected officials listen*” and 0 otherwise. A lack of political efficacy, however, could also have the opposite effect and decrease the likelihood of engaging in political action, as such action may appear irrational (Finkel and Muller 1998). The index of *trust in government institutions* is a scale constructed on the basis of questions related to trust in the president, parliament/national assembly, army, police, and courts of law (Cronbach's alpha = 0.82) where 0 indicates the least trust and 3, the most trust.

The role of economic grievances in affecting political violence has been heavily debated. Some argue that economic grievances or relative deprivation can lead to violence (Gurr 1970; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Justino 2009). Others question this argument (Snyder and Tilly 1972). The Afrobarometer contains multiple questions that pertain to experiencing absolute *poverty*, such as insufficient food, water, medicines or medical treatment, fuel, and cash incomes. I adjust for current economic conditions by combining five questions into a fairly reliable scale (Cronbach's alpha = 0.73) for lived poverty, where 0 indicates never experiencing want and 4, always experiencing want. I also include a binary indicator coded 1 if the respondent reported experiencing *relative deprivation*, or decreased economic well-being compared to the previous year, and 0 otherwise, and a dichotomous variable that equals 1 when the respondent disclosed being *unemployed and looking for a job*, and 0 otherwise.

I use several predictors to adjust for biographical availability for collective action (della Porta 1988), including a binary variable that equals 1 when the respondent reported being *unemployed and not looking for a job* and 0 otherwise, respondent's *age* (younger people being more available because of a limited number of family responsibilities), and a dichotomous indicator coded 1 if the respondent was a *student* and 0 otherwise. I include gender as a predictor because traditional gender norms and practices discourage women from engaging in violent political actions (Goldstein 2001; but see Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Viterna 2006). It is coded 1 if the respondent was a *female* and 0 otherwise. Finally, I include *fixed effects for country* as additional predictors in the model to account for unmeasured country-level characteristics⁹ (Dixon 2009).

RESULTS

Family, Ethnic, and Religious Microinstitutionalization and Participation in Political Violence

Table III shows coefficient estimates from a multinomial logistic regression of the log-odds of each respondent falling into the three categories of participation in political violence: reported (a) participation and (b) willingness to participate compared to (as base category) nonparticipation and no willingness. Adjusting for the effect of the alternative explanatory factors discussed above, I find support for all six hypotheses. In support of Hypothesis 1, I find that persons who experience violence in the family are more likely to participate in political violence than persons without such experiences. In support of Hypothesis 2, the results indicate that persons who support patriarchal norms and practices have a higher chance of participating in political violence than persons who do not adopt such norms and practices. Persons who find domestic violence justifiable are also more likely to express willingness to engage in political violence than persons who do not accept domestic violence.

In support of Hypothesis 3, I find that persons who expect favoritism toward their group and kin from elected officials have a higher probability of engaging in political violence than persons without such expectations. Supporting Hypothesis 4, the results show that persons who consider their "ethnic" affiliation more important than the nation are more likely to use violence in pursuit of political goals than persons who have not adopted such ethnic self-identifications. Similarly, persons who adopt ethnicity-related self-identifications in opposition to the nation-state are more likely to also express willingness to use violence for political purposes.

Finally, in support of Hypothesis 5, I find that persons who are actively involved in religious practices are less likely to report participation in political

⁹ An alternative model including a variable measuring all country-year conflicts resulting in at least 25 deaths per year in the five years preceding the Afrobarometer survey instead of the country dummies was estimated as well to test for an alternative explanation for participation in political violence, namely country-level opportunity for participation presented through the occurrence of conflict. The variable had a negative effect challenging the political opportunity argument but suggesting a negative social desirability effect in conflict-torn countries. The rest of the findings did not differ significantly from the findings reported here.

Table III. Log-Odds Coefficients from a Multinomial Logistic Regression Estimating the Effects of Factors Influencing (a) Participation or (b) Willingness to Participate in Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2003–2004

| Predictor variables | (a) Used violence | (b) Hasn't used but would |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Experience violence in the family | 0.321*** (3.90) | -0.0211 (-0.33) |
| Domestic violence justifiable | 0.731*** (9.13) | 0.472*** (8.03) |
| Women should be subject to traditional law | 0.261** (3.16) | -0.0615 (-1.04) |
| Expect favoritism toward group and family | 0.454*** (5.46) | 0.0371 (0.59) |
| Ethnicity more important than nation | 1.078*** (10.86) | 0.327*** (4.01) |
| Active religious practice | -0.190* (-2.39) | -0.157** (-2.81) |
| Religion more important than nation | 0.465*** (3.46) | 0.854*** (11.00) |
| TV | 0.247** (2.85) | -0.0794 (-1.19) |
| Education | 0.0357 (1.54) | 0.0516** (3.11) |
| Active in a party | 0.273*** (3.46) | -0.105 (-1.75) |
| Active in a union | -0.00473 (-0.04) | 0.291*** (4.33) |
| Discuss politics | 1.220*** (10.49) | 0.229*** (4.02) |
| Protest | 2.287*** (29.68) | 0.725*** (11.25) |
| Can't make elected officials listen | 0.244* (2.37) | 0.355*** (5.16) |
| Trust government institutions | -0.126* (-2.27) | -0.370*** (-10.16) |
| Relative deprivation (compared to a year ago) | -0.146 (-1.82) | -0.234*** (-4.15) |
| Poverty | -0.144** (-3.02) | -0.00962 (-0.30) |
| Unemployed looking for a job | 0.200* (2.16) | 0.173** (2.67) |
| Unemployed not looking for a job | 0.314*** (3.35) | -0.0151 (-0.23) |
| Age | -0.00983** (-3.00) | -0.00705** (-3.25) |
| Student | -1.066*** (-5.65) | 0.202* (2.19) |
| Female | -0.0195 (-0.25) | -0.0853 (-1.61) |
| Botswana | -0.877*** (-3.48) | 0.351** (2.65) |
| Cape Verde | -1.447*** (-4.89) | -1.016*** (-4.93) |
| Ghana | -0.684* (-2.55) | -0.480** (-2.93) |
| Kenya | 0.0725 (0.42) | -0.423** (-3.12) |
| Lesotho | -0.387 (-1.65) | -1.503*** (-6.41) |

Table III. (Continued)

| Predictor variables | (a) Used violence | (b) Hasn't used but would |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Malawi | -0.0170 (-0.08) | 0.746*** (5.32) |
| Mali | -0.928*** (-4.25) | 0.350* (2.43) |
| Mozambique | 0.658*** (3.48) | 1.032*** (6.87) |
| Namibia | -0.498* (-2.50) | -0.725*** (-4.46) |
| Nigeria | -0.400* (-2.27) | -0.200 (-1.64) |
| Senegal | -1.006*** (-4.07) | 0.512*** (3.69) |
| South Africa | -0.237 (-1.22) | 0.623*** (4.82) |
| Tanzania | 0.249 (1.31) | -0.215 (-1.33) |
| Uganda | -1.256*** (-5.57) | -0.0635 (-0.50) |
| _constant | -4.439*** (-15.69) | -1.967*** (-11.14) |
| F | 34.98*** | |
| N | 21,609 | |

Note: *p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, *t*-statistics in parentheses.

violence than persons who do not report active involvement in religious practices. Active religious practices also decrease the likelihood of expressing willingness to use political violence. By contrast, in support of Hypothesis 6, the results indicate that persons who consider their religious affiliation more important than the nation have higher odds of engaging in violence for political purposes than persons who have not adopted such politicized religious self-identifications. Adoption of religious self-identifications in opposition to the nation-state increases the likelihood of expressing willingness to participate in political violence as well.

Figure 1 shows changes in the predicted probability of participating in political violence for each of the main predictors while all other factors are held constant (at their average levels). Persons who experience violence in the family, persons who believe that women should be subject to traditional law rather than have equal rights with men, persons who hold expectations of group favoritism from elected officials, and persons who adopt religious self-identifications in opposition to the nation-state are one and a half times more likely (3% versus 2%) to participate in political violence than persons who do not have the same experiences or self-identifications. Persons who support domestic violence are twice as likely (4% versus 2%) to have participated in political violence than persons who do not support domestic violence. Persons who adopt ethnic self-identifications in opposition to the nation-state are three times more likely (6% versus 2%) to have participated in political violence than persons who do not have the same ethnic self-identifications. Overall, the evidence is in favor of the argument that the microinstitutionalization of the patriarchal family logic, of the oppositional ethnic logic, and of the politicized and

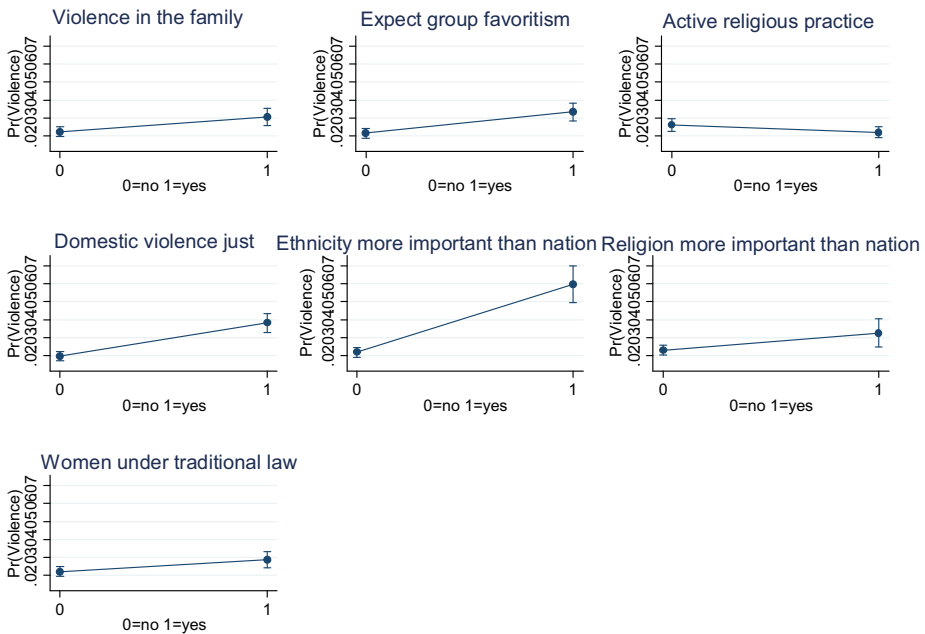


Fig. 1. Predicted probabilities for participation in political violence in relation to seven theoretical variables, with 95% confidence intervals.

oppositional religious logic are significant factors putting individuals at a higher risk of engaging in political violence.

Support for Alternative Explanations for Participation in Political Violence

The findings reported in Table III also provide evidence supporting established alternative theoretical approaches, thus giving face validity to the main theoretical argument in the present study. Replicating Myers's (2000) findings at a different level of analysis, the evidence confirms that the media, specifically TV, has a role in diffusing violent repertoires in the sub-Saharan context as well. Persons who watch TV on a daily basis are more likely to participate in political violence than persons who do not watch TV as regularly. Political organizations occasionally mobilize constituents to participate in violent actions, as a number of previous studies contend (e.g., della Porta 1988; Finkel and Muller 1998; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Viterna 2006). In the sub-Saharan context, such mobilizing organizations are the political parties: persons who are close to political parties have a higher probability of engaging in violent events than persons who are not. The social environment, in the form of politicized personal networks (della Porta 1988) and the volatile interactional contexts of protests (cf. Collins 2009; White 1993), also plays an important role in creating conditions for political violence in sub-Saharan Africa. Persons who discuss politics with their friends and neighbors on a regular basis and persons who have participated in protest have higher odds of engaging in

political violence than persons without such experiences. Political grievances similarly increase the likelihood of participating in political violence. Contrary to rational choice expectations (Finkel and Muller 1998) and in agreement with the grievance thesis, a perception of a lack of political efficacy because of unresponsiveness of elected officials can lead individuals to engage in violence rather than immobilize action (cf. Einwohner 2003; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008). People who trust the government institutions, by contrast, are less likely to participate in violence than people who do not trust them.

The findings regarding economic grievances are mixed. Among the three factors considered in the analysis, only an unemployed status increases the likelihood of participating in violence. Experiencing absolute poverty, by contrast, decreases the likelihood of engaging in political violence, a finding consistent with the resource mobilization thesis, which insists that some amount of resources is necessary for collective action (Jenkins 1983). The biographical availability thesis also receives support with one caveat. Younger people and people who are unemployed and not looking for a job are more available for participating in political violence. Students, on the other hand, are less likely to participate in violence, which suggests that schooling can be a deterrent to political violence, by keeping young people, particularly young males, occupied with their education (cf. Dixon 2009). Women do not appear to be significantly less likely than men to participate in political violence when adjusting for other factors (cf. Reif 1986; Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Viterna 2006). This finding contradicts arguments for innate differences between men and women that purport to explain why fewer women than men engage in political violence (cf. Goldstein 2001). Women engage in violence less often than men do because of lower levels of microinstitutionalization of the logics leading to participation in political violence, among other social factors.

DISCUSSION

Contribution to the Sociology of Conflict

I identify previously unexamined factors that are associated with citizens' participation in political violence, namely the institutionalization of three institutional logics at the level of the person, and propose an institutional theory to account for the findings. I combine insights from several strands of institutional thinking, global institutionalism, the institutional logics perspectives, work on boundary making, and institutional microfoundations approaches, to argue that adoption of the patriarchal familial logic, of the oppositional ethnic logic, and of the oppositional religious logic increases the probability of participation in political violence. The patriarchal familial logic facilitates political violence (cf. Enloe 2000; Goldstein 2001) in three ways. Violent family practices serve as the foundation of violent behavioral templates, which once developed can be applied to other contexts (cf. Pratt et al. 2010), including politics. Expressed support for violence in the family has a similar effect on participation in political violence. Adoption of politicized gender norms opposed to the spread of global models of gender equality (cf. Cockburn 1991; Ramirez et al. 1997) is also associated with increased probability of

participating in political violence. The oppositional ethnic logic facilitates political violence by leading persons into adopting ethnic identities opposed to the nation-state and by encouraging practices of group favoritism, which contradict the laws and norms of the nation-state and are thus potential sources of intergroup conflict (cf. Meyer et al. 1997; Olzak and Tsutsui 1998). Adoption of the politicized oppositional religious logic can have similar effects. Politicized religious identities opposed to the nation-state principle can also lead persons to engage in political violence (cf. Fox 2004; Juergensmeyer 2003). Active religious practice, however, which presumably is not politicized but is accommodating to the nation-state principle, can have a pacifying effect (cf. Durkheim 2001; Weber 2001). Religion thus appears to have a complex relationship with political violence at the microlevel as it does at other levels (cf. Appleby 1999). I explain these findings with an institutional theory of conflict and violence, according to which adoption of routine practices and self-identifications (cf. Scott 2008) tightly coupled with institutional logics (Thornton et al. 2012) that compete with dominant institutional logics pertaining to world culture (Meyer et al. 1997) increases the likelihood of political conflict and thus the likelihood of ordinary persons to participate in political violence (cf. Hallett 2010; Hironaka 2005; Lizardo 2006; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Olzak and Tsutsui 1998). Overall, this study provides evidence for the fruitfulness of considering a variety of institutional factors in microanalyses of citizens' participation in political violence. Institutional theories, in addition to the already-established political, economic, and interactional approaches, can improve our understanding of the dynamics of participation in political violence.

Furthermore, I identify a systematic difference between the factors associated with participation in political violence and the factors associated with expressing willingness to participate in political violence (cf. Klandermans 1997). While participation is related to both practices and self-identifications, expressing willingness to participate is related to self-identifications but not to practices, as comparing Figs. 1 and 2 shows. The fact that practice-based institutional carriers systematically influence the reported participation in political violence but not the expression of willingness to participate in political violence suggests that the effect of practices is produced by a cognitive mechanism associated with the practical consciousness but not with the declarative consciousness (cf. Bourdieu 2000; Srivastava and Banaji 2011; Vaisey 2009). Consequently, I advocate caution with regard to the type of outcome variable used in microlevel analyses of violent behavior.

Contribution to Institutionalism

This study demonstrates the fruitfulness of combining various strands of institutional thinking to address concrete research problems such as understanding citizens' political violence. The institutional logics perspective offers a useful theoretical framework for understanding institutions as connecting action with diverse "structures," as being material and symbolic, as being historically contingent, and as operating at multiple levels (Friedland and Alford 1991; Thornton et al. 2012). This makes the perspective inclusive of microfoundations approaches,

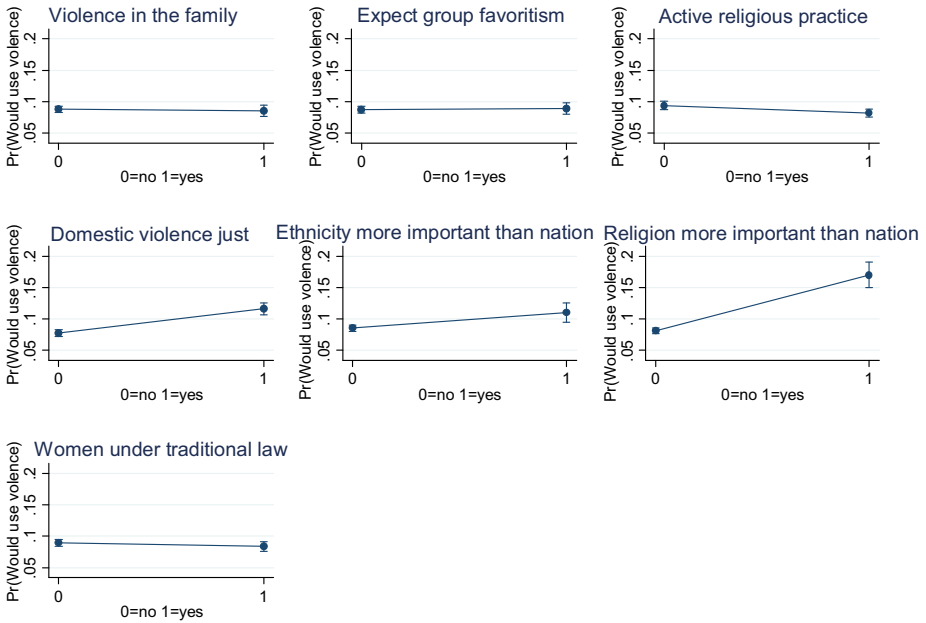


Fig. 2. Predicted probabilities for indicating willingness to use political violence in the future in relation to seven theoretical variables, with 95% confidence intervals.

which stress the necessity to “inhabit” institutions with real people and pay attention to the cognitive and embodied processes involved in institutional behavior (Hallett 2010; Srivastava and Banaji 2011; Zucker 1977). The present study identifies two types of institutional carriers (Scott 2008), namely practices and self-identifications, associated with three institutional logics, the patriarchal familial, the oppositional ethnic, and the politicized religious logics, as microfoundations of political violence. The practices carrier appears to operate through the practical consciousness but not through the declarative consciousness (cf. Bourdieu 2000; Srivastava and Banaji 2011; Vaisey 2009).

Incorporating the boundary-making approach (Wimmer 2013) in the institutional logics perspective emphasizes the conflict dynamics involved in institutional processes and specifies a number of strategies and means involved in maintaining boundaries between logics. One means of boundary making involves violence (Wimmer 2013) and the present study identifies several microinstitutional conditions for its use. The strategies include topographical shifts to the subnational (contraction) and the supranational (expansion) levels among others (Wimmer 2013). Contraction strategies explain the qualitative importance of logics related to subnational groupings such as the “family” and “ethnicity”; whereas expansion strategies explain the importance of the politicized religious logic based on cross-national religion-based groupings.

Extending the institutional logics perspective to the global level helps qualify the world-culture approach (Meyer et al. 1997; Ramirez et al. 1997) and further improve our understanding of the institutional dynamics of conflict (cf. Hironaka

2005; Lizardo 2006; Olzak and Tsutsui 1998). World-culture logics such as the nation-state and gender equality principles may have become the dominant logics in the world; however, they are not the only ones. Alternative institutional logics, such as the patriarchal familial, the oppositional ethnic, and the politicized religious logics compete with the world-culture logics. This competition may breed violence, as the findings in this study demonstrate. Adoption of the institutional carriers discussed above—practices and self-identifications tightly coupled with the oppositional logics and uncoupled from the dominant world-cultural logics—appears to be a microfoundation for such violence.

Contribution to the Sociology of Gender

This research contributes to the sociology of gender by specifying a mechanism—microinstitutionalization through coupling of practices and self-identifications with the patriarchal familial logic—that links the person with gendered social “structures”—the various gendered outcomes observable at aggregate levels of analysis—associated with violence. First, the unequal gender distribution of participation in political violence (Goldstein 2001) can partially be explained by differential adoption of oppositional practices and self-identifications. When adjusting for adoption of the patriarchal familial, the oppositional ethnic, and the politicized religious logics, and a number of other social factors including group membership, there is no significant difference in participation and in willingness to participate in political violence between women and men. Second, the association between gender inequality or patriarchal masculinities and militarism at the aggregate societal level (Caprioli 2005; Enloe 2000; Goldstein 2001; Hudson et al. 2009; Melander 2005) can be accounted for by the prevalence of adoption of the patriarchal familial logic at the level of the person. At the same time, the prevalence of adoption of this institutional logic does not preclude women’s engagement in violence (cf. Reif 1986; Sjöberg and Gentry 2007; Viterna 2006). The study also offers theoretical and empirical support for a link between the so-called “private” and “public” spheres and urges political sociology to pay attention to institutions outside the realm of politics which can affect political behavior indirectly, through institutional spillover.

Potential Limitations

Despite the new insights gained through this research, it has potential methodological limitations. While microinstitutionalization is a process that unfolds over time, this study relies on an observational data snapshot at one point in time combined with an assumption regarding the sequencing of institutionalization and participation in political violence. The assumption that adoption of the patriarchal familial, the oppositional ethnic, and the politicized religious logics occurs early in life and thus precedes engagement in political violence, limited to one year prior to administering the survey, is highly plausible but not foolproof. This issue is particularly salient to the gender and violence argument. Prior research in this area, usually

conducted following conflicts, has demonstrated the spillover of conflict violence into the family (e.g., Pankhurst 2007). Rare studies, however, also find that domestic violence is high prior to the onset of political violence (Maguire 1998). While a circular effect is consistent with my argument that violence requires physical competences that can be learned in many domains and then applied in any other domain, to assure reliability I conducted additional analyses with a subsample of only female respondents. Institutional carriers associated with the patriarchal familial logic have effects on female participation in political violence analogous to their effects for the entire sample; by inference, therefore, the directionality of my argument holds. Future research may also use longitudinal panel designs to address this limitation but such designs are likely practically unfeasible. Second, given the sensitive nature of the question probing for engagement in an illegal activity behind the outcome variable, social desirability effects may introduce unknown biases into the analysis. Several factors alleviate some of these effects. In particular, an additional analysis finds a negative female interviewer effect, which suggests that fear of possible retaliation for admitting participation in violence is not an issue. Also, pairing the violence question with other questions concerning participation in several types of political actions “citizens” may take signals to respondents the acceptability of any response (Cerulo 1998). Last, the low nonresponse rate indicates little hesitation in answering the question. Still, caution demands that the findings in the study are interpreted as for reported engagement and reported willingness to participate in political violence, which are only proxies for actual participation and actual willingness to participate in such activity. Given ethical problems that make using potentially better research techniques for understanding microinstitutional processes (e.g., Srivastava and Banaji 2011) related to violence undesirable, making the best use of available observational data is a step in the right direction.

CONCLUSION

Is participation in political violence at least partially an outcome of institutional processes? I combine several strands of institutional thinking to propose a microinstitutional theory of political violence, according to which citizens’ participation in political violence is partially an outcome of persons adopting institutional logics uncoupled from and opposed to dominant logics associated with world culture, such as the nation-state and gender equality. I test the theory in the context of early twenty-first-century sub-Saharan Africa. An analysis based on Afrobarometer survey data from 15 countries finds that practices and self-identifications tightly coupled with three institutional logics—the patriarchal familial, the oppositional ethnic, and the politicized religious logics—are associated with reported use of physical force when pursuing political causes.

Recognizing the institutional foundations of violent behavior has wider implications for how we think about such behavior and how we devise policies and other types of interventions to prevent it. The study offers theoretical and empirical support for a link between the so-called “private” and “public” spheres. Political sociology, therefore, needs to pay attention to institutions outside the realm of politics

which can affect political behavior indirectly, through microlevel institutionalization of practices and self-identifications. Practical efforts to curtail political violence in turn cannot be restricted to just “political” recipes but ought to involve a wider societal undertaking to limit violence-inducing institutional practices in other domains, such as the family. At the same time, adoption of oppositional institutional logics must be understood, from a global perspective, as a response to what is likely experienced as a hegemonic cultural domination or a form of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu 2000; Lizardo 2006). Peace-building efforts must therefore take these experiences into consideration as well.

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