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Violence, Politics, and Gender

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Summary and Keywords

This article presents a conceptual orientation to the intersection of gender, politics, and violence. The first part of the article will introduce the subject by reviewing the primary conceptual framework and empirical knowledge on the topic to date and discussing the theoretical heritage of the concept. Establishing a key distinction between gender-motivated and gender differentiated violence, this article will discuss the gender dimensions of political violence and the political dimensions of gender-based violence. The latter half of the article reviews a number of the key questions driving research and dialogue in the field in the 21st century.

Keywords: violence, women, politics, gender-based violence, electoral violence

A bus full of female election workers is bombed in Afghanistan, killing three and injuring twelve. A Canadian parliamentary staffer attempts suicide and suffers PTSD for years after being sexually harassed and assaulted by her boss. A Congolese candidate is torn from her children, stoned, and then burned by her family and pastor in condemnation of her participation in the election. Female British MPs reported receiving thousands of rape and death threats on social media in the space of just a few hours or days.

These are some of the faces of the harms that exist at the intersection of gender, politics, and violence. Straddling the political and the personal, these acts possess traits of both gender-based and politically motivated violence. Were these victims attacked to disrupt or influence the outcome of an election, or to punish the victims for venturing into the public realm? Was the nature of the act affected by the gender of the victim? Are these attacks becoming more or less frequent as women and other non-dominant genders increase their public visibility?

Until recently, each of these three dynamics had been the object of individual and binomial analysis. The interconnected relationship between the three has only emerged as a field of distinct analysis within the past decade. The resulting literature has burgeoned, driven in part by an explosive response from the practice community and the

victims themselves, who increasingly come forward to speak about their experiences and drive policy responses. The rapid development of the field has also given rise to various conceptual and methodological conflicts and a growing number of questions setting a forward research agenda.

This article presents a conceptual orientation to the intersection of gender, politics, and violence. Focusing on violence that affects political processes in democracies and democratizing states, the first part of the article introduces the subject by reviewing the primary conceptual framework and empirical knowledge on the topic to date and by discussing the theoretical heritage of the concept. Establishing a key distinction between gender-motivated and gender differentiated violence, this article discusses the gender dimensions of political violence, as well as the political dimensions of gender-based violence. The latter half of the article reviews a number of the key questions driving research and dialogue in the field in the 21st century.

What is it? Key Concepts in Understanding Gender, Violence, and Politics

Political violence is “aimed at achieving or resisting regime change in established power hierarchies and orders; asserting or resisting supremacy of one form of national identity over another or others; seizing and controlling economic, political or other resources in the form of mineral, key routes; or resistance to any of these forms of violence” (Breen-Smyth, 2016, p. 569). The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines VAW 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” (Article 1). Although frequently assembled together under a variety of shorthand or umbrella terms, there are two distinct concepts at the intersection of violence, politics, and gender: gender-motivated and gender-differentiated political violence (Bardall, 2016; Bardall, Bjarnegård, & Piscopo, 2017).

Gender-motivated political violence (GMPV)¹ is harm that violates an individual’s or groups’ political rights on the basis of their gender identity. This distinct form of violence is motivated by a desire to repress, deter, control, or otherwise coerce the political rights of the victims because of the victim’s gender. Acts of GMPV generally target victims because of their non-hegemonic² gender identities. They may occur, for example, where a perpetrator believes they have the right to coercively impose their political beliefs on female or non-hegemonic male family or community members because of their own hegemonic gender identity. They may also take place to prevent or punish the political participation of a non-hegemonic male individual or group in order to maintain traditional patriarchal control of state institutions.

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The second key concept is gender differentiation in the manifestations of politically motivated violence (gender-differentiated political violence, GDPV). Gender difference in the manifestation of civil war, terrorism, and genocide has been documented (Åhäll & Shepherd, 2012; Alison, 2004; Clark, 2014; Crawford, 2013; Gottschall, 2004; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007) where women and men frequently experience distinct forms and frequencies of violence. These differences extend to the violence that exists in the exercise of political competition and governance in (at least nominally) democratic states and during democratization processes.³ Disaggregating acts of political violence in any given country by sex almost invariably reveals highly distinct patterns in the forms, locations, and frequencies of violence according to the gender identity of the victim—in other words, disaggregating reveals GDPV. Further differences are revealed through qualitative investigation. The most notable differences are in the types of political violence that women experience more frequently than men (e.g., sexual, psychological, economic, symbolic), the locations where political violence occurs (including in domestic and cyber spheres) and the perpetrators involved (including community, family, and intimate partners). Although none of these aspects are exclusive to women or non-hegemonic men, they are overwhelmingly more common among victims from these groups. Because they are not associated with the majority of dominant actors in politics, they are generally overlooked or omitted from formal definitions of political violence and their empirical applications. For this reason, awareness of GDPV compels us to revisit these classic definitions and research methods by adapting them to the reality of violence as it occurs beyond male-dominated institutions and elite. Reflecting these distinctions, one such definition asserts that “political violence is a means of controlling and/or oppressing an individual or group’s right to participation in political processes and institutions through the use of emotional, social or economic force, coercion or pressure, as well as physical and sexual harm. It may take place in public or in private, including in the family, the general community, online and via media, or be perpetrated or condoned by the state” (Bardall, 2016).

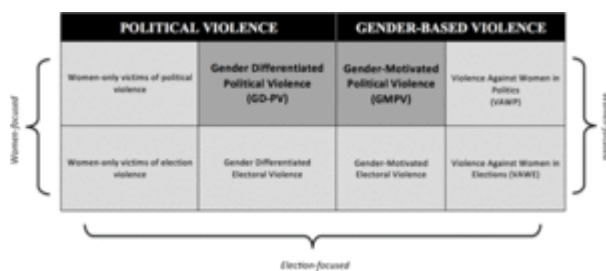
GDPV and GMPV are the framing concepts of the field. Subfields of study have developed around two primary clusters within these core concepts. One subfield focuses on the timing of violence within the political cycle, specifically on election-related violence. Widespread and diffuse, political violence is general measured by the rough gauge of body counts, which is neither sufficient nor accurate in measuring the scope of gender-related violence (Ellsberg, Pena, Agurto, & Winkvist, 2001; Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Studying the subfield of election violence offers greater precision and nuance in measurement by confining research in time and space. It also speaks to a distinct literature within comparative politics that is concerned with democratic transitions, as opposed to the broader political violence scholarship that is more closely tied with war and conflict studies. Being so situated facilitates analysis of how gender dynamics interact with traditionally patriarchal political processes and institutions, sometimes more explicitly and distinctly than in conflict-oriented studies. Like any other, this approach has both benefits and drawbacks in capturing the scope of the subject matter,

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as discussed in the second half of this article. Like its parent category, election violence is always gender differentiated and sometimes gender motivated.

The second major cluster of research in this area focuses solely on women victims of political violence. This cluster has received the greatest scholarly attention in recent years. There is agreement across the literature that some acts of political violence occur specifically because the perpetrator or perpetrators aim to prevent women from participating in political life *because they are women*. Where GMPV specifically targets women in order to enforce patriarchal control of democratic institutions, it may be described as *violence against women in politics* (VAWIP) (Bardall, 2016). This subgenre of study is deeply connected to gender theory and adopts the language and concepts of gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women (VAW). VAWIP is a hate- or bias-motivated crime or act. The political dimension of VAWIP is expressed in two ways, regarding objects and outcome of violence. VAWIP targets women’s participation in public, political processes, and can be identified by the nature of the victims (i.e., voters, candidates, MPs, poll workers, political journalists, parliamentary and campaign staffers, political activists, civic and labor leaders, etc.). Beyond this, VAWIP has a structural impact in preserving or deepening patriarchal control of the institutions of state (“outcome”). This is significant because it adds a formal dimension to the DEVAW presentation of VAW.⁴ VAWIP is not only a manifestation of inequality but also, significantly, a mechanism that formally institutionalizes women’s subordinate position in society by coercively excluding them from state governance.

These are the core concepts framing the field of gender, violence, and politics. Figure 1 presents a matrix of the primary and secondary concepts, as well as their derivative associations that arise variously across the literature (presented here for conceptual mapping purposes but not discussed at further length). Next, this article will discuss the empirics of this field, before returning in the final section to delve into some of the many conceptual challenges and gaps scholars grapple with as the area of study moves forward.



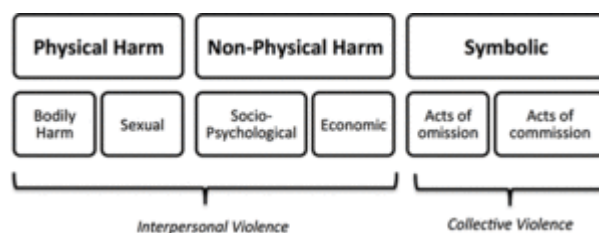
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Figure 1. Matrix of Concepts and Terms.

What Forms Does It Take?

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Both gender-differentiated and gender-motivated political violence share a typology of forms of aggression. Reflecting the international normative framework for gender-based violence⁵ and evolving Latin American legislation (see Archenti & Albaine, 2013), the typology of gendered political violence includes physical and non-physical forms, specifically bodily harm, sexual, socio-psychological, and economic ones (Bardall, 2011, 2013, 2016; Archenti & Albaine, 2013; Albaine, 2014; IFES, 2016; Hubbard & DeSoi, 2016; IPU, 2016; UN Women & UNDP, 2017. See also South Asia Conference, 2008, for an early list of examples).⁶ An additional, collective, and non-physical form of gender-motivated violence, symbolic violence against women, is also recognized by a number of authors as acting on women's political participation (Machicao, 2004, 2011; Cerva Cerna, 2014; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2014, 2016; OAS/MESCVI, 2015; Krook, 2017).⁷ This typology is presented in Figure 2.



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Figure 2. Typology of Political Violence.

Physical violence occurs as either bodily harm or sexual assault or rape. Direct bodily harm affects a person in connection with their involvement in a political process and could cause bodily harm to a proxy (child, family

member, etc.). Forms include beating and assault, assassination, murder/attempted murder, kidnapping/attempted kidnapping, grenade attacks, shooting, stabbing, armed or unarmed battery and assault, violent dispersion of protests and public gatherings, excessive use of force, torture and mistreatment of prisoners by police and intelligence agencies, domestic violence, and child abuse—plus all other action resulting in bodily injury (Bardall, 2011; IFES, 2016; Hubbard & DeSoi, 2016; IPU, 2016; UN Women & UNDP, 2017; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2016; Krook, 2017).

Sexual violence in political contexts includes politically motivated rape as a tool of terror and intimidation, marital rape as a tool of repression, assault and sexual abuse with the objective of controlling, intimidating, humiliating and disenfranchising the victim (including poll workers sexually assaulting voters, male MPs sexually assaulting women MPs, etc.), virginity tests, and sexual exploitation of female political prisoners and detainees.

Non-physical forms of political violence are of particular importance in gendered studies in this area because of their exceptionally high prevalence among non-hegemonic male victims (see below “HOW WIDESPREAD IS GDPV AND GMPV?”), and because acts of psychological aggression have effects that are as deleterious as those of all but the most extreme forms of physical violence—indeed, acts of physical violence are often preceded by psychological aggression (O’Leary, 1999).

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Social-psychological violence causes harm by inflicting fear on its subject as punishment for their behavior or to coerce their behavior. It can include targeted threats and acts of intimidation, social sanctions and punishment, family pressure, and character assassination. It may be sexual in nature, including harassment (unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal harassment of a sexual nature) (Bardall, 2011; IFES, 2016; Hubbard & DeSoi, 2016; IPU, 2016; UN Women & UNDP, 2017; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2016; Krook, 2017).

Economic violence is also recognized among forms of non-physical violence. This type of violence includes being denied funds that an individual is entitled to during their term of office or political campaign; being denied other resources an individual is entitled to in connection with their political office or campaign (offices, computers, staff, salary); harm or threats to harm a business, termination, or threat of termination of employment; or other threats or theft related to one's livelihood (Bardall, 2011; IPU, 2016; OAS/MESCVI, 2015; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2016; Krook, 2017; IFES, 2016). In families or between spouses, it may include situations where one member or spouse partner intentionally denies access to financial resources to another to enforce dependency and coerce her or his electoral decisions or participation. It may include theft, preventing a spouse from acquiring resources, forcibly limiting spouse's expenditure on essential goods, creating debts or spending a spouse's resources without her or his consent, or preventing a spouse from seeking employment/education/assets, etc. (Bardall, 2011; IPU, 2016; OAS/MESCVI, 2015; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2016; Krook, 2017; IFES, 2016).

A third form of non-physical violence has been put forward in typologies of violence against women in politics: symbolic violence (Machicao, 2004, 2011; Cerva Cerna, 2014; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2014, 2016; OAS/MESCVI, 2015; Krook, 2017). Taking its roots in Bourdieu's sociological theory, symbolic violence comprises acts that "delegitimize female politicians through gendered tropes denying them competence in the political sphere." Symbolic violence "operates at the level of portrayal and representation, seeking to erase or nullify women's presence in political office" (Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2014, p. 144). According to Krook and Restrepo Sanín (2014, 2016), manifestations of symbolic violence against women in politics include acts of commission, such as harassment, sexual objectification in media and social representations, and acts of omission, such as "invisibilization," diminishing or "fundamental disrespect for human dignity" that erases or nullifies women's presence (Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2016, p. 145) of women in politics. Although it is not a physical form of violence, symbolic violence is distinct from socio-psychological and economic violence because it acts at a societal or cultural level, rather than interpersonal. Symbolic violence differs from other physical and non-physical acts of violence because it expressly includes acts of omission and the absence of action that maintains a patriarchal status quo or perhaps further oppresses women's political participation. Also setting it apart from the other forms of violence, symbolic violence is violence wielded with "tacit *complicity* between its victims and its agents, insofar as both

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remain *unconscious* of submitting to or wielding it” (Bourdieu, 2001; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, emphasis added).

Further to the typology, a number of additional attributes comprise a full taxonomy of GDPV and GMPV, summarized in Figure 3. Although GMPV and GDPV have distinct objectives, they both have similar outcomes of violating the victim’s civil and political rights to participate in political processes and institutionalizing their victims’ subordinate roles in society by excluding them from state governance. In general political violence, this exclusion is ideological and partisan. Where the violence is directed specifically at non-hegemonic genders (as in much of GMPV), the latter outcome formalizes patriarchal control of the state.

Each form of violence has multiple possible victims, defined in four categories (Bardall, 2016; also see IFES, 2016):

- 1) Political:** candidates, elected officials, political aspirants (i.e., seeking nomination), party members and supporters, staffers.
- 2) Institutional:** electoral management body (EMB) permanent staff and poll workers, police and security forces, state administrators and civil servants.
- 3) Professional non-state/non-political:** journalists, civic educators, civil and labor activists, community leaders.
- 4) Private non-state/non-political:** private citizens and voters.

Perpetrators are likewise diverse and may be identified in three groups (Bardall, 2016; also see IFES, 2016):

- 1) Institutional actors** (state security, police, armed forces), government institutions (executive, judicial, and legislative actors), electoral agents (poll workers, EMB staff, electoral security agents), and state proxies (militia, gangs, insurgents, mercenaries, private security);
- 2) Non-state political actors** (candidates, party leaders, interparty and intraparty members, paramilitary, party militia, non-state armed actors); and
- 3) Societal actors** (journalists/media, voters, community members or groups, religious leaders, traditional leaders, employers, criminal actors, intimate partners/spouses, family members, electoral observers, youth groups).

Finally, political and gender-motivated violence occurs across the categories in distinct locations. Violence may occur in public spaces (streets, political party headquarters, churches, etc.) and in private space (private homes, offices, etc.). In addition, political violence also occurs in domestic locations (i.e., between intimate partners and family) and virtual spaces (IFES, 2016; Hubbard & DeSoi, 2016; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2014, 2016; Krook, 2017). Non-material virtual spaces comprising public online spaces such as television, blogs, Internet media, chatrooms, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc. They also consist of private virtual spaces, such as personal e-mail, Short Message Service

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(SMS) texting, cellular, and landline telephone connections, among others (Bardall, 2013, 2017B).

| POLITICAL VIOLENCE | GENDER-MOTIVATED POLITICAL VIOLENCE |
|---|--|
| Objective To impact a political process or outcome through the use of coercive force | Objective To impede a person's political participation on the basis of his/her gender identity |
| <i>Political violence is gender-differentiated in nature</i> | <i>Gender-motivated political violence is gender-specific in its intent</i> |
| Impact | |
| Violates victim's civil and political rights to participate in political processes | |
| Institutionalizes victim's subordinate position in society by coercively excluding them from state governance | |
| Types | |
| Physical (bodily harm & sexual) | |
| Non Physical (socio-psychological & economic) | |
| + Symbolic (acts of omission and commission) | |
| Locations | |
| Public | |
| Private | |
| Virtual | |
| Domestic | |
| Perpetrators | |
| Institutional actors | |
| Non-state political actors | |
| Societal actors | |
| Victims | |
| Political | |
| Institutional | |
| Professional non-state/non-political | |
| Private non-state/non-political | |

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Figure 3. Overview of Political Violence and Gender-Motivated Political Violence. Adapted from Bardall (2016).

How Widespread is GDPV and GMPV?

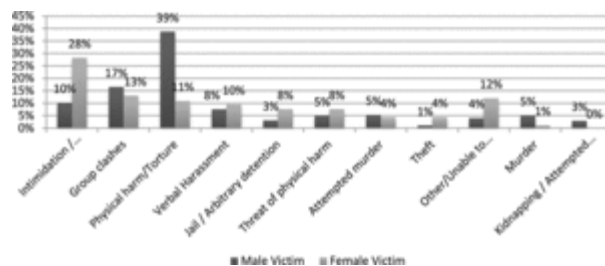
Worldwide, all forms of violence against women are largely underreported for a multitude of reasons (Ellsberg et al., 2001; Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Jaquier, Johnson, & Fisher, 2001; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; Smith, 1994; Hagemann-White, 2001). Where they are reported, systemic sampling is often absent, and various forms of data bias may exist, making empirical information largely imbalanced and incomplete. Thus, statistical prevalence measures of GDPV are severely limited and, for reasons explained below, no empirical measures of GMPV currently exist. In light of these profound data limitations, what do we know about the prevalence of GDPV and GMPV?

In the current research, statistical measure of the prevalence of GDPV is primarily obtained by disaggregating data on unique acts of political violence or collecting data on one specific sex (Bardall, 2011; IPU, 2016). Emerging models incorporate qualitative measures with traditional quantitative tracking (IFES, 2016; Hubbard & DeSoi, 2016); however, this is the exception, not the norm. Political violence studies entrenched in the traditions of conflict research almost exclusively deal in quantitative approaches, despite their shortcomings in recording the gender dimension of violence.

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In contrast, gender-motivated political violence cannot draw on quantitative measures because it is grounded in interpretation of actors' intent and thus relies on qualitative research methods. Emerging research indicates that both GDPV and GMPV are pervasive worldwide and exist regardless of the level of national economic development, history of conflict, socioeconomic status, or political orientation of the victim. Within-type variation of violence appears to exist based on these (and other) variables; however, no systematic study of this exists to date. In the case of symbolic violence, incidence cannot be measured because the violence is collective, and frequently both the victim and perpetrator are unconscious of its existence.

A comparative study of election violence in six countries found significant differentiation in manifestations of election violence according to gender (Bardall, 2011).⁸ Women were victims in 36% of cases where the gender of the victim could be identified (n = 1528), including as exclusive victims in 7% of cases and as victims together with men in 29% of cases. The proportion of intimidation and psychological acts of violence experienced by women was nearly three times the same proportion among men, while men experienced more than three times the levels of physical violence as did women in the study. Women were more likely than men to experience economic forms of violence and appeared to be especially vulnerable as voters, journalists, and in rural locations. These results are significant given the strong bias for minimizing or excluding VAWIP in the quantitative study's methodology.



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Figure 4. Gender Differentiated Election Violence: Within Category Distribution of Violence by Sex of Victim (n unique female victims = 92, n unique male victims = 1233)⁹.

Source: Bardall (2016).

A separate study of GDPV surveyed 55 women parliamentarians from 39 countries on their experience with violence (IPU, 2016).¹⁰ The study found that 81.8% of respondents had been subjected to one or more acts of psychological violence, 21.8% had been subjected to one or more

acts of sexual violence, 25.5% had experienced one or more acts of physical violence,¹¹ and 32.7% had experienced one or more acts of economic violence. Other regional or country-specific studies show similar findings, confirming that (1) both sexes are victims of political violence, (2) women appear to experience significantly high rates of psychological violence as well as other differentiations in the experience of violence. (Archenti & Albaine, 2013; Biroli, 2016; Boesten, 2012; Boone, 2011; Bjarnegård et al., 2015; Bjarnegård, 2016).

Just like GDPV, GMPV appears to exist worldwide, although geographically varying in nature in intensity. In particular, VAWIP has been the subject of increasing qualitative research. In order to document GMPV, intent must be registered by recording the stated

intent of the perpetrator, the interpretative understanding of the act by the victim or the interpretation of the broader community. This challenging exercise is rendered even more difficult when applied to violence occurring in the domestic sphere, where it is believed a significant amount of VAWIP takes place.¹² Thus, the field relies on heavily anecdotal but profoundly telling evidence. An ever-growing body of academic literature and practice-based oral documentary projects is recording these stories, building a narrative of a harrowing and clearly intentioned form of violent repression of women's political involvement (Archenti & Albaine, 2013; Biroli, 2016; Bjarnegård, 2016; Boesten, 2012; Hubbard, 2015; ParlAmericas, 2017; Piscopo, 2017).

Before moving on, it is worth noting that some overlap exists between GMPV and GDPV in the empirical recording of individual incidents. GDPV casts a broad net on data points of individual incidents of violence. Deeper analysis within those findings often reveals that some of the presumed politically motivated acts are, in fact, acts of GMPV. The use of mixed qualitative and quantitative methods in this area is crucial.

Why Does It Occur?

Actors have chosen violent means to achieve their political ends for a plethora of reasons from time immemorial. But what makes gender-motivated political violence more or less likely? And why does gender-difference occur across the types and forms of political violence?

There are two theories tied to the causes of GMPV. The first approach suggests that GMPV is connected to the causes of other forms of GBV (see Bardall, 2017A). In this literature, no single factor makes GBV more likely to occur, but rather there is a combination of factors (called an "ecological framework") at the individual, relationship, community, and structural levels that is linked to increased likelihood of being either a victim or a perpetrator (Heise, 1998). A second approach to GMPV suggests that the rise of women in positions of public authority triggers a backlash response among men, resulting in an increase in the incidence VAWIP (Archenti & Albaine, 2013; Albaine, 2014; Cerva Cerna, 2014; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2016; Piscopo, 2016; Biroli, 2016). Backlash can be a conscious act (Susan Faludi [Faludi, 1991] describes the backlash to feminism as "hostility to female independence" and "fear and loathing of independence") (pp. xviii-xix). It can also come about as "a result of completely unorganized, unconscious, perhaps even institutionalized, resistance to change" (Superson & Cudd, 2002, p. 10). As such, backlash motives can be attributed across the typology of both interpersonal and collective forms of violence, including being a physical byproduct of institutionalized symbolic violence. In empiric terms, backlash indicates a rise in violence corresponding to a parallel rise in women's political participation. While narrative evidence of this is emerging, particularly

in Latin America, there is as of this writing insufficient baseline and longitudinal evidence to evaluate backlash theory in political violence.

The causes of GDPV are independent of a gender-specific backlash and instead are more closely tied to broader patterns of political violence, structural inequality, and differentiated risks in societies. The question here is to understand why women and men tend to experience different types of violence in these cases. One answer for this is that GDPV occurs according to gendered scripts that reflect the normative roles and expectations that women and men play in any society (Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2016; Bardall, Bjarnegård, & Piscopo, 2017). These are intimately tied to socioeconomic inequality and cultural practices, rather than explicit misogynistic intent. Specifically, women find themselves in different circumstances because of the different roles they play in their societies. Less access to economic resources or arms, lower levels of literacy or access to technology, greater restrictions on movement or more substantial duties in child- and family-care shape the spaces women occupy, the risks they face, and the types of violence they more frequently experience. Gender difference is also frequently visible in the expression of political violence. Although violent acts may be entirely attributed to political motives, they may be expressed in gender-specific terms, including sexualized language. Introducing gender analysis into political risk assessment at a national or subnational level is used to interpret the effect of these scripts in the manifestation of violence.

Current Debates in the Study of Gender, Violence, and Politics

The study of the gender dimensions of political violence has multiplied rapidly in less than a decade, highlighting a number of divergences in concept formation and challenges in methodological approach. This final section will map out some of the most important of the conceptual questions that challenge the current field and outline paths forward for the research agenda. The associated empirical next steps are no less important (indeed, there is a pressing need to address the data shortcomings described above); however, given space limitations, the following discussion will be dedicated solely to theoretical concerns.

There are two central conceptual debates in contemporary literature around which other, secondary questions of definition and research methodology take their direction. The first of these is determining what constitutes gender-motivated political violence, particularly for VAWIP. Scholars rooted in the feminist tradition have adopted classic definitions of GBV/VAW to the political sphere and thus include “1) aggressive acts aimed *largely or solely* at women in politics; 2) because they are women, often *using gendered means of attack*; and 3) with the goal of deterring their participation in order to preserve traditional gender roles and *undermine democratic institutions*” (Krook, 2017, p. 83,

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emphasis added). Here, the victim's interpretation is a significant determinant in interpreting perpetrator motivation. Within this scholarship, the distinction between GDPV and GMPV is minimized or omitted.

In contrast, scholars oriented toward political violence theory parse this definition to exclude acts not motivated by misogynistic intent, even if they predominantly or exclusively impact women and use gendered means. Motivation is generally identified according to the perpetrators' stated intent or situational factors (e.g., a clear connection between the individual target and the political process). Casting a narrower net, they attribute gender differentiation in violence to scripts and societal norms, not a conscious or unconscious effort to maintain the patriarchy of the state (as this article has done in the preceding pages). This is notable, because GDPV adherents view these scripts as the backdrop to political violence, whereas gender theorists view them as implicitly tied to the occurrence of violence.¹³ Similarly, regarding the connection to democracy, where feminist scholars identify the motivating intent to undermine democratic institutions through GMPV, political violence scholars see the harm and exclusion caused by this violence (i.e., negative effects on democracy) as collateral outcomes of actions undertaken to control state institutions and resources. While recognizing the inherent challenge of establishing intent and noting that multiple motives may exist in any given act (refer to studies of intersectionality such as Crenshaw, 1991) these ontological contrasts and empirical guideposts are the primary determinants that characterize gender-motivated and politically motivated violence.

This divergence in defining the object of study brings forth some basic questions for the broader field of violence studies. For one, to what extent can violence be defined by the victims it targets? If the presence of female victims constitutes VAW, and the presence of victims in political roles constitutes political violence, must it follow that the presence of victims that are both in some political role and of the female sex is sufficient to qualify as VAWIP? Perpetrator intent must factor in here, if only to distinguish VAWIP from acts of common criminality, terrorism, domestic violence, everyday accidents, among other factors. Yet, supposing one can reliably identify intent, can a perpetrator be motivated equally by misogyny and a political objective, or must one supersede the other? What about multiple/intersectional motivations? The contrasting interpretations also suggest that violence could be identified by the means it employs. But can we confidently claim that all acts of rape or of sexual assault or aggression are necessarily gender-motivated, or do they reflect broader norms in society that dictate differential treatment of men and women? Homicide in political violence overwhelmingly affects men, yet few would suggest that it is an expression of a distinctly masculine violence or a form of gender-motivated political violence against hegemonic men.

This final question leads into the second major concern, regarding what constitutes "violence." The typology in Figure 2 is the product of an evolving body of thought. In measuring political violence, dominant classic scholarship has an entrenched practice of recognizing a single, distinct type physical harm (related deaths) (Gleditsch, Petter, Wallensteen, Erkiison, Sollenberg, & Strand, 2002; Sarkees & Wayman, 2010). A few

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exceptions to this exist, notably in the subfield of electoral violence where some scholars also measure nonlethal violence, intimidation, and damage to property among the forms of recognizable political violence (Höglund, 2009; Birch & Fischer, 2017; Fischer, 2002; Reif, 2009; Straus, 2011). Other related fields have also moved in this direction; see, for example, Raleigh, Linke, Hegre, and Karlsen (2010) and Bueno de Mesquita (2015), both of which extend conflict data to include violent protests and human rights data such as the Political Terror Scale (Gibney, Cornett, Wood, Haschke, & Arnon, 2016), which extends beyond body counts in a related but not identical field to political violence). Application of an explicitly gendered lens to political violence extended the categories of physical harm to include sexual harm in addition to (and distinct from) other forms of bodily harm and systematized socio-psychological and economic harm within the typology (Bardall, 2011). Building ever further out, feminist scholarship has added the fifth category (symbolic violence) to the typology (Albaine, 2014; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2014, 2016; Krook, 2017) while lawmakers in various countries have connected acts of harassment, discrimination, abuse, and sexism to the phenomenon of gender-motivated political violence (see Archenti & Albaine, 2013; Piscopo, 2016).

Is all of this “violence”? What are the pros and cons of such a broad umbrella? The answer lies in the object of the study. To political scientists concerned with identifying and interpreting patterns of violence, it is necessary to establish clear parameters. In this case, the distinction between GDPV and GMPV cannot be disregarded and it is vital to include both men and women in data initiatives. Distinct perpetrators must be discernible and make conscious, rational decisions to engage in interpersonal acts of violence that result in some form of direct harm to a clearly identifiable victim. Extending the definition of violence to include acts of harassment, sexism, discrimination, or abuse diffuses the understanding of “harm,” necessarily decreases the reliability of comparative data, and introduces problems of mixed intent (i.e., were acts of discrimination or sexism motivated by a political objective or by misogyny?). Furthermore, to researchers with this type of objective, “symbolic violence” is an inoperable concept, at least as a comparable category to the interpersonal forms of violence. Symbolic violence cannot be identified or measured in the same ways as interpersonal forms of violence because it does not necessarily have an identifiable, unique victim or perpetrator but acts at a collective, societal level, often through media portrayals. Victims are complicit in their subjugation, and both victims and perpetrators may act unconsciously or be unaware of the existence of violence. Acts of omission play an important role in symbolic violence and cannot be measured according to frequency or prevalence. Thus, researchers pursuing quantifiable trends in political violence will do well to selectively extend their field of study to those interpersonal acts that directly result in or threaten physical harm.

Yet, where a broadened scope of “violence” limits one line of research, it creates rich opportunities for another. Feminist scholars of gender-motivated political violence (especially VAWIP) have been greatly limited by the necessity of citing studies of GDPV to support their claims (such as the data in Bardall, 2011; IPU, 2016). Intentionally departing from quantitative methods (IFES, 2016; Kuberberg, 2016; Piscopo, 2016) and building a base

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of qualitative proof is essential to move the field forward, as is developing sound indicators for both types of measurement (Ballington, 2016). Incorporating a broader range of identifiably misogynistic acts is a constructive way of achieving this. Furthermore, the addition of the category of “symbolic” violence adds a new dimension of theory to the field by embedding the concept in sociological patterns of oppression, taking it beyond political science theory of power relations and gender theory definitions of GBV/VAW. As the field moves away from empirical proofs and toward theoretical framing, this will be an increasingly valuable contribution.

Outside of these two core topics of debate, numerous other variations are still the subject of conversation within this field. Although this article highlighted the women- and election-specific subfields of political violence, the field could equally be viewed through various lenses focusing on subsets of victims or perpetrators (e.g., only parliamentarians [IPU, 2016], only non-hegemonic men or other genders, and so on), or focused on the location of violence (such as in the cyber sphere (Bardall, 2013, 2017B) or in the domestic sphere (an area particularly in need of further research)).

Consensus is still absent over a number of other key definitional aspects. Are researchers studying the most pertinent victims, or at least, the same categories of victims? Significant emphasis has been placed on studying female candidates and MP victims, although the vast majority of incidents of interpersonal violence against women appear to occur against women’s participation in roles other than these (Bardall, 2011, 2016). The categories of victims of this violence are identified variously across the literature, ranging from limited definitions of the objects of violence,¹⁴ to broad ones,¹⁵ to hybrids.¹⁶

Connecting this field to its theoretical antecedents is still challenging. Some authors view this form of violence as a subset of GBV/VAW (Krook, 2015; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2014, 2016; ParlAmericas, 2014), while others assume the reverse and view it as a subfield of political or electoral violence (IDEA, 2008; USAID, 2013), or both (NDI, 2015; SAP, 2006, 2010). As previously noted, the introduction of symbolic violence now links the field to sociological theory as well.

Heavy emphasis has been placed on studying women victims; however, empirical research suggests that men are victims of interpersonal forms of political violence in 90% of cases (Bardall, 2011). Scholars such as Bjarnegård have made a compelling case to systematically include men in comparative research in this area (2013, 2016). The slow but steady global increase in participation of people of nontraditional gender identities, nonhegemonic men, transgender people, among others is further cause to maintain a balance. Finally, there is an indication that women are involved as perpetrators of violence as often as they are victims of violence (Bardall, 2011).

Finally, the issue of objectives of this violence is inconsistent. The goal of VAWIP has been variously described as to compel women to “step down as candidates or resign a particular political office” (Krook & Restrepo-Sanín, 2016), to “prevent and discourage” (IDEA, 2008), “breach, obstruct or curtail” (SAP, 2010) and “prevent or

control” (NDI, 2015) women’s participation. It is important to distinguish between seeking to reduce or eliminate women’s voices and coercively controlling these voices. Where women’s voices can be effectively controlled and coerced, the objective of violence may actually be to *increase* women’s participation as voters, MPs, and such. Furthermore, as the notion of symbolic violence is increasingly explored it will become necessary to reconcile factors such as unconscious involvement in violence, victim/perpetrator complicity, and acts of omission with these objectives of violence. Likewise, although they have larger repercussions, these objectives are limited to impacts against individual victims. Forward research that seeks to embed these concepts in theories of democratization and political development will need to connect gendered forms of political violence to broader theories of state co-optation and control.

Concluding Thoughts: Why is it Important to Look at the Gendered Nature of Political Violence?

Political violence defines political institutions and power relations—not only between competing ideological groups but also between the sexes. Failure to understand the gendered nature of violence results in failure to grasp the forces that shape these power structures. It also diminishes our understanding of political violence as a whole. Political violence of all forms threatens democracy by destabilizing its institutions and coercively decreasing inclusivity and representation. Violence that targets or disproportionately affects marginalized or under-represented groups such as women results in the gross imbalances that characterize most political systems worldwide in the 21st century. Above all, the victims of political violence are victims of tragic human rights abuse that limits their freedoms and can also put their lives at risk. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and to have a right of equal access to public service in his or her country. Understanding the dynamics of violence, politics, and gender is critical to protecting that right.

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Notes:

(1.) Alternately termed “gender-based political violence” (Bardall, 2016).

(2.) Men who belong to their country’s structurally dominant cultural, ethnic, or religious group—see Hughes (2011).

(3.) This literature suggests that both gender-motivated and gender-differentiated violence exist in other forms of violent conflict, including civil war, terrorism, and genocide. While recognizing this, the present article focuses on political violence outside of wartime and terrorism.

(4.) DEVAW states that “violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women” and that “violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.”

(5.) CEDAW GR 19 and DEVAW

(6.) Sources in this citation all explicitly identify physical, sexual, economic, and psychological forms in their typologies of gender and political or electoral violence. In some cases, sexual and economic forms of violence are grouped within physical and psychological types, respectively. In others, physical and often psychological harms are further disaggregated in typology. These sources do not include symbolic forms of violence within their typologies.

(7.) These sources explicitly recognize symbolic violence in addition to (not exclusive of) the physical and non-physical forms,

(8.) NB: n sample = 2000. Data from Bangladesh, Burundi, Guinea, Guyana, Nepal, Timor Leste. Each incident of election-related violence was reported by locally trained monitors under IFES’ EVER program, using consistent verification methodology (two or more sources, including at least one witness account or official report—hospital, police, etc.). The study only recorded verifiably individual incidents of bodily harm and psychological and economic violence occurring in public and private locations. It excluded sexual violence and domestic and cyber-sphere violence, as well as all forms of symbolic violence. It applied to a broad range of potential victims, including voters, candidates, party supporters, journalists, election observers, and poll workers. For more on EVER methodology, see Lisa Kammerud, “Managing Election Violence: The IFES EVER Program” (IFES, 2009), for more on the cross-national gender study, see Bardall (2011, 2016).

(9.) NB: the N sample in Table 4 exceeds 100% of cases overall because incidents could receive up to three classifications according to their type (i.e., a single incident could be coded as a case of verbal harassment, destruction of materials, and physical harm). Figures are calculated proportionally by victim’s sex (i.e., as the relative number of incidents of a given type calculated according to the full number of incidents experienced by that sex group).

(10.) Most of the surveys were conducted among participants of a joint IPU-UNWomen event in New York, while others were conducted by phone or Skype. For more information on methodology, contact the IPU, postbox@ipu.org.

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(11.) Note: because the survey dealt with sitting MPs, it did not cover more serious forms of bodily harm that either debilitated the woman or ended her life.

(12.) Limited research demonstrates the existence of VAWIP in the domestic realm (Bardall, 2011; IFES, 2016), and it is expected that further research will expand on this. Research on violence against women shows that (1) up to 70% of women will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes (UN Women) and that (2) VAW is severely underreported. Based on the relationship between VAWIP and other forms of VAW, this finding is extrapolated into VAWIP.

(13.) The much-cited definition by Bloom (2008, p. 14) states that “Gender-based violence (GBV) is the general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society.”

(14.) Restricted to candidates, MPs, and appointed officials (British Group-IPU, 2013; Krook, 2015; Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2014).

(15.) NDI (2016); ParlAmericas (2014); Tariq and Bardall (2016); UNW (2014) and the present article.

(16.) For example, IDEA (2008), SAP (2006, 2010) include male and female family members of female candidates/office holders but exclude female voters, party supporters, etc.

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